

# What applications are secretly recording your phone screen?

A recent investigation by TechCrunch revealed that some mobile software is secretly recording activity in the application. What's worse is that they do that without users knowing.

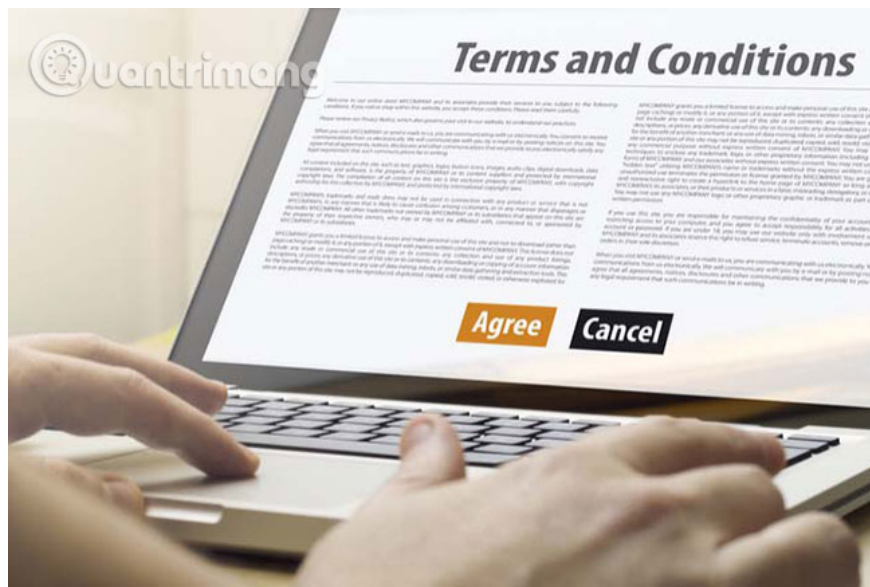
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Big companies like Abercrombie & Fitch, Air Canada and Expedia have been found working with a third-party analytics company. The company secretly records call, press and shopping activities of customers on the phone to learn more about their habits.

This revelation is just one of many stories related to how widespread data gathering without customers are today.

According to reports, there are no applications that reveal to users that they are recording their screen. The application also did not specify that they were sending data back to Glassbox Analytics, a third-party analyst of detailed information.

## Is the cause of this user not reading privacy policies?



Applications are required to disclose any method of tracking or data collection in their terms of service agreement. However, Glassbox has provided another solution for its customers.

Glassbox Analytics provides APIs, allowing them to gather information about their customers. API conceals sensitive information such as credit cards or passport numbers. Glassbox said that they only provided technology, not disclosing any information related to customers.

According to Glassaron's chief executive, Mr. Yaron Morgenstern, this tool is mainly used to detect problems, such as errors, in the application.

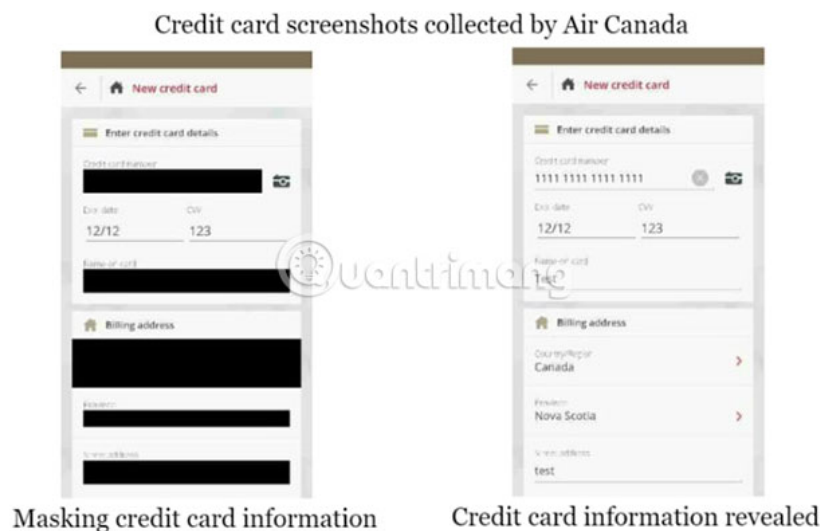
According to The Atlantic, the collected information is then used to provide a better customer experience. This means that marketers make changes that allow them to easily motivate customers to take the desired action.

After this disclosure, Apple announced plans to "crack down" secret applications that record the user's screen. The App Store principle states that every activity of logging, monitoring or recording the screen must be included in the terms of service. If a company fails to notify consumers, they violate Apple's regulations and will be forced to withdraw from the App Store.

## No guarantee that sensitive information is protected

Not every company involved in this process has successfully secured customer data. App Analyst took a closer look at AirCanada's efforts to protect user data and found that it did not do so well.

AirCanada has been breached data in August 2018. It is important to note here that the company did not hide customer data. Instead, the company takes a screenshot of the user's password.



So even though Glassbox may not cause this type of violation, their customers (such as AirCanada, for example) can mishandle data out of Glassbox's control.

## Do users need to worry about this?

As Mr. Morgenstern stated, this technology is not used to record user activity. Instead, they should only monitor habits when users move on the site.

For example, if you shop on the Hollister app, the company may find that you have put any items in the basket but did not complete the payment. Or, they may find that you went straight to the discounted item section and will send a notice to you when there is a next promotion.

This is what all websites are currently doing. They track user activity to make suggestions that customers really want. Except that every website provides some small pop-up cookies, let you know it's designed to help users have a better experience.

Apple says customers should know about how companies collect data. In this way, customers can choose whether to proceed with the application download. This received a lot of approval comments.

Obviously, all companies collect customer data in one way or another, including Apple, but lack transparency on this issue.

Detecting some stealthy applications that record a user's phone screen means that other well-known applications are doing the same thing.

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