

What data does Android share with Google?

You know that Android and Google are sitting on the same front lines. This alliance is becoming a part of your life, and you may or may not feel comfortable knowing that Android and Google are sharing information about you.

But, what exactly are Android and Google sharing?

The relationship between Google and Android

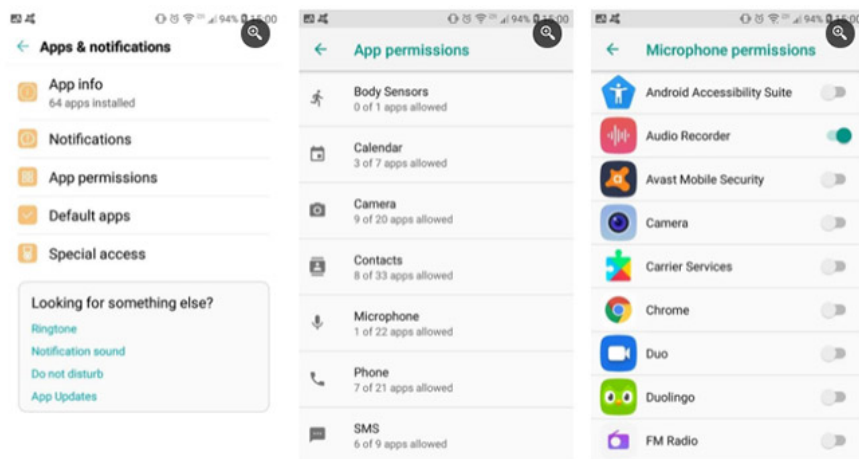
Tech giant Google launched Android as a mobile operating system in 2008. Mobile operating systems and supported devices run their own systems, but they also support (read, "lovely") request") applications and services owned and operated by Google.

There's a lot a mobile operating system can learn about you. At the same time, there's a lot that Google, with all its apps and services, can know about you. But what information does Android send back to Google?

Understand and manage application data

As a general rule, if you give an app permission to collect data, it should be allowed to do so. That's part of the difference between privacy, anonymity, and security. Sometimes, we give up our privacy because we think we are maintaining anonymity. Sometimes, we focus on security and forget how much we give.

You can find out which apps have access to your data and revoke that access in your Android device's settings. Open the Settings menu and select Apps & notifications > App permissions. This screen is sorted by system and information accessed. Within each page, you can toggle which apps you allow that access.



Unfortunately, that's not the end of Android's data sharing with Google. Some applications that are necessary for the phone to work will not run properly if you turn them off. Some share data even if you've never actually used them. And, according to a recent study, some apps share data even without their permission.

Does Android share data without your knowledge?

A recent study by a researcher at Trinity College in Dublin found that Google's Pixel 2 phones send data to Google almost every 4 minutes. This data includes device identifiers, phone numbers, cookies, IP addresses to which devices are connected, and even MAC addresses of nearby devices.

According to the study: "Both iOS and Google Android transmit Telemetry data even though users have explicitly opted out of this."

"Telemetry" is a term that refers to any data recorded at a website other than where the data was collected. According to Google, this data in this context includes:

1. Number of times a device has been rebooted
2. Is the device rooted or not?
3. Details regarding mobile service provider ti?t
4. Device battery level
5. Device volume settings

Such data transmission requires a network connection. Applications that establish and use these connections must ask for permission when they are first opened and used. However, the study authors found that this data could be sent by Android apps that do not receive the following permissions:

"Pre-installed apps/services were also observed to make network connections despite never being opened or used (.). These include the YouTube app, Chrome, Google Docs, Safety Hub, Google Messaging, Clock and Google Search Bar".

In addition to essentially ignoring when users deny permissions to certain devices, Google has a history of pressuring device manufacturers to hide these settings in the first place.

Is this good or bad?

The bad news is that while Google and Android's datasets may be more or less harmless, having Google access to the Android dataset allows them to associate app data with specific users. The good news is, all this data is hard to get.

This data is sent over encrypted connections. The study authors had to use specially modified phones and access points to understand the transmitted data. The authors also identify one potential place to avoid this illegal data collection:

Step 1. Start the phone when the network connection is turned off.

Step 2. Turn off all Google components.

Step 3. Set up the network connection.

The downside of this, of course, is that it will essentially turn your device into a paperweight. After all, even the watch app is detected sending data. So unless you're really comfortable with downloading and using apps from places other than Google's app store, this method is very limited.

There's still more good news: Google has broken the way Android apps collect data. Furthermore, the study was conducted on a device running Android 10, while today's devices running Android 11 and Android 12 are on the rise with a host of new security features.

Do you trust Google? Any other options?

The question of what data Android shares with Google may not have a clear answer. You can ask questions like what Android data does Google have and what Android data users can trust to give Google, but these questions are not as important as knowing if we really have the right. choose or not.

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