# Reading the Bits

A Rapid Survey of Innovations in Protocol Analysis

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QUESTIONS?

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Lawsuits over Google Wi-Fi sniffing pile on

## Lawsuits over Google Wi-Fi sniffing pile on

By Robert McMillan
Created 2010-06-04 04:50AM

Nearly three weeks after admitting that it had
sniffed sensitive data from open wireless
networks around the world, Google [1] is now
facing at least seven U.S. class-action lawsuits
over its practice.

The first lawsuit was filed on May 17 on behalf
of Vicki Van Valin of Oregon and Neil Mertz of
Washington. Since then, the lawsuits haven't
stopped coming. Google is now facing two
more cases in California courts, one in Illinois,
two in Washington, D.C., and another in Florida
[3], brought by Internet service provider Galaxy
Internet Services.

[ Lawyers in class-action suit say Google
wants to patent technology used to 'snoop' Wi-Fi networks [4]. | A new browser add-on
aims to foil Google data collection [5]. | Government regulators have called on Google to
respect users' privacy [6]. | Stay ahead of the key tech business news with InfoWorld's
Today's Headlines: First Look newsletter [8]. ]

The lawsuits claim that Google violated federal wiretapping laws by sniffing wireless traffic --
including the content of emails and Web-surfing activity -- with its Google Street View cars. The
specially equipped cars drive public streets, taking photographs and recording GPS coordinates
to create Street View, a Google map product made up of photographs.

The suits have been brought by users of open wireless networks who believe that Google's
Street View cars sniffed data from their networks.

Jeffrey Colman, a Washington, D.C., plaintiff, used an open Wi-Fi connection to do banking,
shopping, and send email, among other things. He knows that Street View sniffed his network
because he actually saw the distinctive Street View vehicle driving down his street, court filings
state.

For the past three years, Google has been collecting basic Wi-Fi networking data -- MAC (Media
Access Control) addresses of routers, for example -- to help improve the accuracy of its
location-based products, but the company had previously denied that it was also sniffing
so-called "payload" data -- the contents of emails and Web pages for example.

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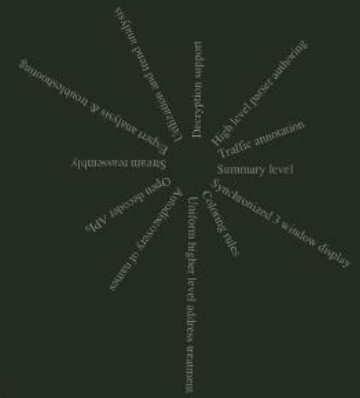
[ Lawyers in class-action suit say Google

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## Caveats

- capture and storage non-trivial
- focus purely on interpretation
- not historian
- not complete
- not a timeline

**Reading the Bits**

## Innovations

High level parser authoring
Decoding and visual mapping
Traffic annotation
Summary level
Synchronized 3 window display
Coloring rules
Uniform higher level address treatment
Open decoder APIs
Architecture set of frames
Stream reassembly
Expert analysis & troubleshooting

## Future Explorations?

Correlations between synchronous captures
Home user accessible tools
Active probing for diagnostics & performance analysis
Passive storage of history
Protocol negotiation validation
Graphic pictorial controls
Rich non-character displays

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# Innovations

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Decryption support

High level parser authoring

Expert analysis & troubleshooting

Traffic annotation

Stream reassembly

Summary level

Open decoder APIs

Synchronized 3 window display

Autodiscovery of names

Coloring rules

Uniform higher level address treatment

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Expert analysis & troubleshooting

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# Future Explorations?

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