

# Attorney General Todd Rokita sues Google over deceptive practices in harvesting Hoosiers' location data

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Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita [filed a lawsuit](#) Monday alleging that Google has misled consumers by falsely representing the extent to which users may control how their location data is accessed, stored, used and monetized by Google.



## Rokita

“Protecting Hoosiers from Big Tech’s deceptive and unfair practices continues to be a major focal point of my administration,” Rokita said. “Consumers tend to believe the promises that companies make to them, and I’m here to hold businesses accountable when they unlawfully betray consumers’ trust.”

Rokita’s lawsuit aims to penalize Google for violations of the Indiana Deceptive Consumer Sales Act and to ensure that going forward consumers can both understand and control the ways in which their personal data is obtained and used.

Attorney General Rokita and his team have worked in bipartisan collaboration with the attorneys general of the District of Columbia, Texas and the state of Washington – all of whom are also filing lawsuits against Google over their handling of location data.

From at least 2014 through the present, Google has falsely indicated that consumers can protect their privacy through settings supposedly enabling them to stop Google from tracking and using their locations. In reality, however, there is effectively no way for consumers to prevent Google from collecting, storing and profiting from their location data.

“Google has prioritized profits over people,” Rokita said. “It has prioritized financial earnings over following the law. We Hoosiers are the first to salute business success, but we also expect companies to be honest and obey the rules.”

Although Google is known for a variety of products and services, most of its revenues come from targeted advertising and advertising analytics. To support this lucrative arm of its business, Google harvests consumers’ personal data in order to pitch them products based on their predicted interests. Google also uses such data to evaluate the effectiveness of its targeted ads in influencing consumers’ purchasing decisions.

The company’s deceptive practices became widely known following [a 2018 story by the Associated Press](#). After that story, multiple states began investigating Google’s location tracking practices.

The states’ investigation revealed that Google purports to offer consumers customizable controls enabling them to choose the data Google collects and uses. But Google’s ambiguous, contradictory and incomplete statements about these controls have all but guaranteed that consumers would not understand when their location is retained by Google or for what purposes.

Even a limited amount of location data, aggregated over time, can expose a person’s identity and routines. Location can be used to infer sensitive personal details, such as political or religious affiliation, income, health status or participation in support groups – as well as major life events such as marriage, divorce and the birth of children.

With this lawsuit, Rokita seeks to ensure that Hoosiers are no longer coerced into trading away their privacy. Further, he seeks to force Google to disgorge all profits and benefits obtained from its unlawful practices. And finally, he seeks to impose civil penalties for Google’s violations of the Indiana Deceptive Consumer Sales Act.

In addition to this lawsuit involving data privacy, Rokita has also pursued antitrust litigation against Big Tech companies Facebook and Google. Further, he has battled Big Tech’s censorship of Hoosier voices with investigations into Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, and Twitter – probing how these companies have potentially harmed Indiana consumers through business practices that are abusive, deceptive, and/or unfair.