The Data Protection Commission has published an opinion in the Irish Times clarifying its role in regulating Google, after reports emerged of potentially illegal data gathering practices by the search engine giant.

The Associated Press recently reported that Google’s smartphone services store users’ locations even when privacy settings are adjusted to shut these features off. While the company asks permission for users to share location information on its applications, it doesn’t halt tracking services when users pause location history. Google maps, for instance, grabs information when a user opens the app, and automatic daily weather updates on Android phones give an approximation of user location.

Computer-science researchers at Princeton University confirmed the Associated Press’s findings.

The reports have led to a lawsuit accusing the search engine of unlawfully invading users’ privacy and intentionally complicating the opt-out process. The suit is being brought by Californian resident Napoleon Patacsil.

Google admitted that its option to ‘pause’ the gathering of location data doesn’t apply to its maps and search apps, which will continue to track users even when they specifically choose to halt such monitoring. The search engine defended the practice, saying “there are a number of different

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