

**IN-FLIGHT WIFI
AND OUTLETS
AT YOUR SEAT**

GRAB A SEAT NOW



The Spy in Your Pocket

By Kristina Dell | Sunday, Mar. 19, 2006

Like 3 Tweet 4 +1 0 Share

Wesley Clark built a campaign for President as an expert in national security. But he recently discovered a hole in his personal security--his cell phone. A resourceful blogger, hoping to call attention to the black market in phone records, turned the general into his privacy-rights guinea pig in January. For \$89.95, he purchased, no questions asked, the records of 100 cell-phone calls that Clark had made. (He revealed the ruse to Clark soon after.) "It's like someone taking your wallet or knowing who paid you money," Clark says. "It's no great discovery, but it just doesn't feel right." Since then, Clark has become a vocal supporter of the movement to outlaw the sale of cell-phone records to third parties.

Email Print
 Share Reprints
 Follow @TIME

The U.S.'s embrace of mobile phones--about 65% of the population are subscribers--has far



THE MAGAZINE

[Subscribe](#)



Drone Home

[Man in the Middle](#)

[BlackBerry's Last Stand](#)

outpaced efforts to keep what we do with them private. That has cleared the way for a cottage industry devoted to exploiting phone numbers, calling records and even the locations of unsuspecting subscribers for profit. A second business segment is developing applications like anonymous traffic monitoring and employee tracking. It's not just the con artists who are a worry. Every new mobile-phone technology, even a useful, perfectly legal one, comes with unintended privacy concerns.

Clark's allies in Congress drafted a bill to ban the sale of wireless-phone records, but it stalled in the Senate last week. In the meantime, spy outfits pose as subscribers to obtain records, then sell them to private investigators, divorce lawyers or anyone else with a credit card. Verizon Wireless and other carriers shut down one notorious data broker, [Locatecell.com](#) "There are thousands of companies doing this," says Robert Douglas, a security consultant and former private investigator. He notes that there are about 60,000 licensed private investigators in the U.S. "Unfortunately, anyone worth his salt knows who to turn to for phone records," he says. Wireless carriers are also revamping their practices to deter infiltration. Most will no longer release calling records by fax or e-mail. They have even tightened rules about giving records to people who claim to have lost a cell phone.

Before widespread cell-phone use, lawmakers tried to address privacy with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. But it appears the law never envisioned the booming software industry that grew out of the demand for wireless-phone data. Most mobile phones are powerful tracking devices, with global-positioning systems (GPS) inside. Companies like Xora combine GPS data with information about users to create practical applications. One similar technology allows rental-car companies to track their cars with GPS. California imposed restrictions on the practice last year after a company fined a customer \$3,000 for crossing into Nevada, violating the rental contract.

Other applications have not yet been challenged. For about \$26 a month per employee, a boss can set up a "geofence" to track how workers use company-issued cell phones or even if they go home early. About 1,000 employers use the service, developed by Xora with Sprint-Nextel.



[Table of Contents](#)

[Subscribe Now](#)

[Online Issue Archive](#)

MOST READ

[Why Beyonce Will Make No Bills, Bills, Bills for Her Super Bowl Performance](#)

[Israel Hints at Responsibility for Syria Airstrike](#)

[American Cipher: 1 in 2.5 Million](#)

[Chris Kyle, Author and Former Navy SEAL Sniper, Dies at 38](#)

[The 10 Greatest Books of All Time](#)

[What the Pygmies Can Teach Us About Child Rearing](#)

[The U.S. Embassy Bombing in Turkey: The Unusual Suspects](#)

[Beyonce Rocks the Superdome, Reunites with Destiny's Child](#)

[How Your Brain Tells You When It's Time for a Break](#)

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE

by Taboola



Controversial Video Spreads Virally After Being Banned
Moneynews



Robot Chicken Takes on PlayStation All-Stars
Daily Motion - IGN



Obama: Doctors to Ask About Guns in Home
Newsmax



Dallas Travel (Slideshow)
Away.com

WE RECOMMEND

- ▶ **What You Need to Know About Sugar**
- ▶ **Why Japan Is Still Not Sorry Enough**
- ▶ **Drone Home**
- ▶ **Princess Diana's Mystery Man: Person in 'Not to Be Published' Photo Identified**
- ▶ **Road to Nowhere**

FROM AROUND THE WEB

▶ **Alabama Hostage Crisis Enters Day 5** (ABC)

LIFE at the First Super Bowl: Rare Photos

MOST EMAILED

Mister Taxman: Why Some Americans Working Abroad are Ditching Their Citizenships

What the Pygmies Can Teach Us About Child Rearing

The Oklahoma City Bombing: A Look Back

Pope's Dove of Peace Attacked by Seagull of Irony

Friday Flicks: Why Is Just About Every Star in Hollywood Appearing in 'Movie 43'?

Chris Kyle, Author and Former Navy SEAL Sniper, Dies at 38

Drone Home


The Best and Worst Super Bowl Commercials of 2013

What the Pygmies Can Teach Us About Childrearing

Has The Fight For Abortion Rights Been Lost?

Alabama Hostage Crisis Enters Day 3  (ABC)

- ▶ **11 Foods You Can't Buy Anywhere Anymore** *(The Fiscal Times)*
- ▶ **Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner Leave the SAG Awards** *(Zimbio)*
- ▶ **Unusual Traffic Laws in the United States [SLIDESHOW]** *(Allstate Blog)*
- ▶ **Finally Chemotherapy Game Changer for Stage 4 Cancer** *(Enviva)*

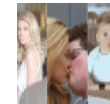
Recommended by **Outbrain** 

MORE NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

Slate

- **Why Did Ray Lewis Have "Psalms 91" on His Undershirt?**
- **A Surprise Super Bowl Halftime Duet: Beyonce and Vince Lombardi**
- **Super Bowl Power Outage Stops Play**

THE HUFFINGTON POST



Super Bowl Commercials 2013: Watch Ads Aired During Ravens, 49ers Matchup (VIDEO)




Zosia Mamet, 'Girls' Star, Flashes Major Sideboob In Cut-Out Dress (PHOTOS)



Chris Kyle Dead: Author Of 'American Sniper' Shot And Killed At Gun Range

**GET 4 FREE
PREVIEW ISSUES**
Plus FREE Tablet/Online access!



FULL NAME	<input type="text"/>
ADDRESS	<input type="text"/>
CITY	<input type="text"/>
ST/PR	<input type="text"/>
ZIP/PO	<input type="text"/>
E-MAIL ADDRESS	<input type="text"/>

EMAIL ADDRESS



iPad



iPhone



Android



TIME TV



Populist



The Page

[NewsFeed](#) | [U.S.](#) | [Politics](#) | [World](#) | [Business](#) | [Tech](#) | [Health](#) | [Science](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Photos](#) | [Videos](#) | [Lists](#) | [Magazine](#)

© 2013 Time Inc. All rights reserved | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Your California Privacy Rights](#) | [RSS](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [Mobile](#) | [TIME For Kids](#)

[Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Reprints & Permissions](#) | [Help](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Ad Choices](#)  | [Custom Content](#)

TIME

our partners



