

March 31, 2014

To: Interested Parties

Fr: Anzalone Liszt Grove Research

Re: Americans Concerned about Privacy from Corporate and Government Surveillance

The public overwhelmingly supports proposals to limit corporate surveillance, rejects corporate arguments that these practices benefit consumers, and is deeply concerned about keeping sensitive information private from corporate and government surveillance based on a national poll recently conducted by Anzalone Liszt Grove Research.¹ Below are some of the key findings from this research on Americans' attitudes towards online and digital privacy:

- **Americans overwhelmingly support proposals to limit corporate surveillance.** At least three-quarters of Americans support each of the six proposals tested to limit corporate surveillance, with two-thirds or more supporting each strongly. This robust support extends across both demographic and partisan lines, with at least 70% of both whites and communities of color in favor of each proposal and Democrats, Republicans and Independents all strongly supporting them as well. These proposals focus on increasing transparency, limiting the selling and sharing of info, reducing the length of privacy policies, and giving internet users more control over how their personal information is treated online.²
- **The public rejects claims that online tracking benefits consumers.** By an overwhelming 68-point margin, Americans say that it is unacceptable for companies to track what they do online without permission, even if they get free services or lower prices in return. This sentiment is equally strong among communities of color and Americans under the age of 35, with 80% of each group saying it is unacceptable for companies to track what they do online without permission. The public also strongly refutes the notion that companies' collection of their information benefits them as consumers, with 62% saying such practices violate their right to privacy rather than helping them get the products or services they want.
- **The public is concerned about their privacy but they don't know how to protect it.** Americans recognize that their private information is vulnerable online, but that they also feel powerless about how to protect it. Two-out-of-three (65%) agree with the statement "I'm concerned about my privacy, but I don't know what to do to protect it," with agreement rising to 73% among communities of color, suggesting that people need more information about the steps they can take to better protect their privacy online.

¹ This memo is based on the results of a national poll conducted by Anzalone Liszt Grove Research. The poll was of N=851 adults (801 National + OS of 50 Asian Americans) focused on corporate surveillance and was conducted December 2-8, 2013. At least 30% of all interviews were conducted via cell phone and interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. The margin of error for is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

² Full list of proposals tested and results on page 2.

- **Younger Americans are even more supportive of stronger privacy protections.** Our research findings contradict the conventional wisdom that younger generations value their privacy less than older ones. Americans under 34 are even more supportive of proposals to rein in corporate surveillance than Americans overall.
- **Personal financial information is seen as most important to protect from government and corporate tracking.** Our research shows that no piece of personal information is seen as more important to keep private than people's personal financial information, such as their credit card number, credit rating, Social Security number and bank account. Over three-quarters (78%) of Americans say it is *extremely* important to keep their financial or Social Security information private from corporate surveillance, higher than any other piece of information.
- **The public is especially concerned about government workers having access to their personal information.** Of the dozen different privacy harms tested related to corporate and government surveillance, the two that the public found most concerning focused on how these programs allow federal government workers and contractors to have access to Americans' personal financial information and their emails. Companies selling the personal data they collect and their tracking of the online behavior of children were also particularly concerning.

Support for Limits on Corporate Surveillance	% Support (Overall)	% Support (Ages 18-34)
Requiring companies to delete any personal information they collect about someone online if the person requests.	94	96
Requiring websites' privacy policies to be shorter and more understandable.	93	95
Requiring companies to inform people if the companies are collecting information about them online.	90	94
Giving people the ability to stop companies from tracking the websites they visit.	83	85
Making it illegal for companies to sell or share information they collect about someone online to other companies.	80	85
Requiring companies to get permission from teens ages 13 to 15 before collecting any personal information about them or sending them targeted ads based on their online activities.	78	82

Importance of Keeping Personal Information Private from CORPORATE Tracking	% Extremely Important	% Ext + Very Important
Your financial information - such as your credit card number, credit rating or bank account	78	96
Your Social Security number	78	96
Information about your kids	65	89
Information on your medical history	62	86
The content of your emails	54	76
Personal information such as your gender, age and address	48	70
The phone numbers that you call or text with	45	69
Your internet search history	34	55

Importance of Keeping Personal Information Private from FEDERAL GOVERNMENT Tracking	% Extremely Important	% Ext + Very Important
Your financial information - such as your credit card number, credit rating or bank account	65	76
Information about your kids	57	75
Information on your medical history	55	76
The content of your emails	48	69
Personal information such as your gender, age and address	38	56
The phone numbers that you call or text with	36	55
Your internet search history	30	52

Concern with Corporate and Government Tracking	% Extremely Concerning	% Ext + Very Concerning
The federal government giving low-ranking government employees and contractors the power to read any American's emails	62	86
Federal government workers and contractors having access to our personal financial information such as our credit card numbers, credit rating, and banking information	59	82
Companies collecting data about people online and then selling that information to other companies	54	79
Companies tracking the websites children and teens visit and collecting personal information about them based on their online activities	51	77
Email providers scanning their users' emails and using that information to sell advertising space to other companies	45	71
Companies monitoring their customers' online activity to determine their credit rating, their ability to get a credit card, health insurance or a home loan	45	69
Companies collecting data about people online and then turning that information over to the federal government	45	66
Local law enforcement using license plate readers to track cars visiting places of worship	43	65
Stores using customers cell phone signals to track their movements in the store	39	62
Cell phone companies tracking people's location through the GPS on their cell phone	38	56
Companies tracking the websites people visit and collecting personal information about them based on their online activities	37	64
Stores charging different prices on their website depending on how close you live to a competitor's store	29	52