



## Obscure Eight Location Brokers

Eight location brokers that hope you never know their names.

### SafeGraph

2016

Denver

CO

SafeGraph

privacy

opt out

crunch

linkedin

● **Description:** SafeGraph provides location-based data and insights. It curates a database of global POIs covering over 200M+ places in over 100 countries. SafeGraph data is collected from a variety of sources, including mobile location data, public records, and social media data. The company holds firm to the industry line that their data is anonymized. But it's been known for over a decade that **precise geolocation points are extremely easy to reidentify**.

● **Issues:** SafeGraph is run by CEO SafeGraph Auren Hoffman, who was one of first people to **sell raw movement data and collect it out of the RTB bid stream**. They are also funded in part by a **former head of Saudi Intelligence**. SafeGraph **sold data to the CDC for government tracking** and COVID restriction enforcement. SafeGraph **sold location data related to abortion clinic visits**. SafeGraph signed a **contract with the US Air Force** and plans to provide information about “sensitive places” and “adversary state-owned enterprises” around the world, telling the military the data can be used for identification of hospitals, schools, and houses of worship to “help avoid collateral damage.” They are now named in a proposed class-action lawsuit as one of several brokers that **bought location data from the family tracking app Life360 without users’ consent**.

● **News:** **SafeGraph Raises \$45M Series B to Become the Ultimate Destination for Physical Places Data / SafeGraph’s Disingenuous Claims About Location Data Mask a Dangerous Industry**

### Outlogic/ X-Mode

2021

Arlington

VA

Digital  
Envoy

privacy

opt out

crunch

linkedin

● **Description:** Outlogic is the parent of and a partial rebranding for X-Mode Social, This follows an acquisition by Atlanta’s Digital Envoy. However, it appears both sites (and orgs?) still operate. Hundreds of Android apps, **far more than originally disclosed in 2020**, sent granular user location data to X-Mode, a data broker known to sell location data to U.S. military contractors. It was so bad that Apple and Google banned apps from sharing location data with X-Mode in 2021. The FTC recently **banned X-Mode from selling any sensitive** location data.

● **Issues:** Apple and Google banned apps from sharing location data with this broker because of **links to U.S. military contractors**.

● **News:** [FTC FTC Bans Outlogic \(X-Mode\) From Selling Sensitive Location Data / Dept of Homeland Security Contracted Firm That Sells Location Data Harvested From Dating Apps / Data Brokers Continue To Use X-Mode Location Tracking in Spite of Ban](#)

## Venntel

2017

Herndon

VA

Gravy  
Analytics

privacy

opt out

crunch

linkedin

● **Description:** [The Markup](#) notes that Venntel recently claimed it was a “pioneer in mobile location information; Venntel supports our national interests through technological innovation, data reliability, and proven results.”

● **Issues:** Venntel collects and sells data from Americans’ mobile phones to government agencies for warrantless tracking. They aggregate location data from smartphone apps and sell it to clients, who include the [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#), the IRS’s criminal investigation division, the FBI, and other government agencies, according to the WSJ: [The Verge Article](#).

● **News:** [DHS bought “shocking amount” of warrantless phone-tracking data, ACLU says / Inside Fog Data Science, the Secretive Company Selling Mass Surveillance to Local Police](#)

## Kochava

2011

Sandpoint

ID

privacy

opt out

crunch

linkedin

● **Description:** [The Markup](#) notes that Kochava offers “rich categorical data from the Kochava Collective with all-in-one or a la carte data feeds,” including “Precision Location.” AKA: Kochava Collective

● **Issues:** The FTC filed a lawsuit against Kochava for selling geolocation data from hundreds of millions of mobile devices that could be used to track consumers. [FTC v Kochava, Inc. \(August 29, 2022\)](#). The suit has recently been dismissed but is unresolved, forcing the location broker industry to change how it handles personal data. Kochava is one of several companies targeted in a 2023 Congressional Inquiry into how Data Brokers buy and sell consumer data. Kochava is also [under fire from a potential class action, Greenley v. Kochava](#), that recently overcame a motion to dismiss.

● **News:** [Republican FTC Commiss Supports Privacy Charges Against Kochava 07/16/2024 / Comscore and Kochava announced partnership / A View from DC: Die Another Day: FTC v. Kochava / Kochava acquires Machine Advertising to improve post-IDFA app marketing](#)

## Veraset

2019

San  
Francisco

CA

SafeGraph

privacy

opt out

crunch

linkedin

● **Description:** [The Markup](#): Veraset claims, “Our core population human movement dataset delivers the most granular and frequent GPS signals available in a third-party dataset. Unlike other data providers who rely on one SDK, we source from thousands of apps and SDKs to avoid a biased sample.”

● **Issues:** Veraset sells raw, disaggregated, per-device location data: [EFF Article](#)

● News: [Bad Data “For Good”: How Data Brokers Try to Hide Behind Academic Research / Data broker shared location data with DC government for coronavirus tracking](#)

## Gravy

2011

Sterling

VA

Gravy  
Analytics

privacy

opt out

crunch

linkedin

● **Description:** [The Markup](#) notes that Gravy's data platform "aggregates raw location signals in the cloud from many different data providers and tens of thousands of apps."

● **Issues:** Gravy was found to be [selling sensitive location information to the US Government](#). Gravy is one of several companies targeted in a 2023 Congressional Inquiry into how Data Brokers buy and sell consumer data.

● News: [Dozens of Brokers Are Selling Pregnancy Data Post-Roe / How Political Campaigns Use Your Phone's Location to Target You](#)

## Mobilewalla

2010

Atlanta

GA

privacy

opt out

crunch

linkedin

● **Description:** Mobilewalla collects consumer data from over 1.5 billion devices across over 30 countries worldwide. A large percentage of the consumer data comes from the ad tech ecosystem. Whenever a consumer opens an ad-enabled app on a mobile device, a signal is sent to the network to show an advertisement on the requesting app.

● **Issues:** Mobilewalla used data to analyze the demographics of attendees at Black Lives Matter protests. In 2017 the company's CEO said the company uses mobile location to identify Americans who visited places of worship to build advertising profiles that can be targeted at religious Americans: [Engadget Article](#)

● News: ['Data broker' Oracle misleads billions of consumers, lawsuit alleges, enables privacy end-arounds / Firm That Tracked Protesters Targeted Evangelicals During 2016 Election](#)

## AtData

2001

New York

NY

privacy

opt out

crunch

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● **Description:** AtData positions itself as an email data solutions provider. But they sell a lot more than email lists. They now also aggregate location and provide identity verification services. Their data assets encompass 4 billion monthly activity signals and 200 million unique emails. AKA: [TowerData](#), [FreshAddress](#), [RapLeaf](#)

● **Issues:** AtData is one of several companies targeted in a 2023 Congressional Inquiry into how Data Brokers buy and sell consumer data.

● News: [AtData Partners with Dodgeball to Elevate Digital Fraud Protection / AtData Enters Strat Partnership with Spec / TowerData and FreshAddress Launch a New Brand Identity: AtData](#)

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