

# FTC Holds Seminar on Mobile Device Tracking

March 6, 2014

On February 19, 2014, the FTC hosted a public seminar on mobile device tracking, the first event in the [FTC's Spring Privacy Series](#) on emerging consumer privacy issues. The seminar included a tutorial on how retail tracking technology works, along with a panel featuring representatives from consumer groups, and the retail, marketing, and technology industries, who discussed the risks and benefits, consumer awareness and perceptions, and the future of mobile device tracking.

The tutorial on mobile device tracking provided a technical overview of how mobile devices collect information and also send information back to the consumer. This discussion also covered the practice of "hashing" which makes the information collected non-personally identifiable, but not completely anonymous.

Following the technical overview, the panel discussed the consumer benefits and privacy concerns of mobile device tracking, mainly in the context of brick-and-mortar retailers. The panel agreed that while the technology has the potential to improve consumers' shopping experience and help businesses identify how best to display popular products and improve line waits at registers, the collection of data via mobile devices is invisible and passive, and it is difficult for consumers to opt out of mobile device tracking.

For a more detailed overview of the seminar, please [click here](#).