Mobile Spyware in Abusive Relationships

Periwinkle Doerfler
PhD Student, New York University



"The Spyware Used in Intimate Partner Violence"

Accepted at IEEE Security and Privacy 2018

Rahul Chatterjee, Diana Freed, Nicola Dell, Thomas

Ristenpart - Cornell Tech

Sam Havron, Karen Levy - Cornell University

Damon McCoy - New York University



Technology in IPV

1 in 3 women, 1 in 6 men experience IPV Many share passwords and devices

Hundreds of tracking/monitoring apps exist Clear web forums with how-to's for abusers



Spyware vs. Dual Use





Life360 Inc.

Community

http://www.life360.com

@life360

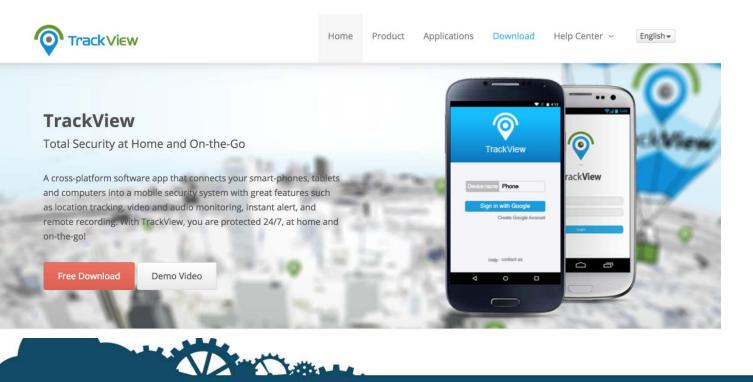
Story: How Life360 Helped Rescue My Daughter





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Demo - TrackView



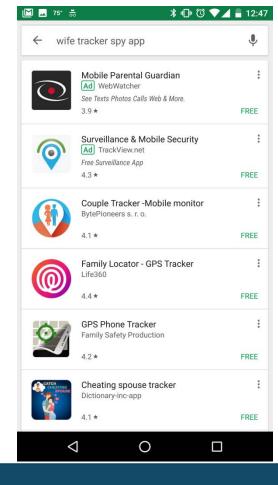


Companies Advertise

Search terms like "spy on cheating wife" yield up to 7 ads on Google search

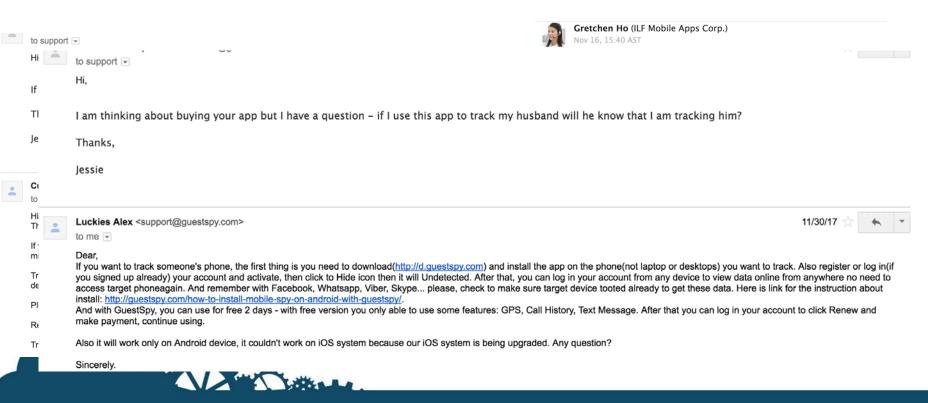
37% of ads were for mobile applications

Ads directly in Play Store (app store)





Companies Are Complicit



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Anti-Spyware is Ineffective

Most apps have some legitimate use case

Virustotal flags only 7% of dual-use apps

Norton catches 13% on-store, 70% off-store



Implications for Survivors

May not know they are being monitored

Extra barrier to escape

Hard to trust technology again



What can be done?

Legislative/Regulatory approaches

Stricter enforcement on app stores

Development of detection tool

