

PRESS RELEASE

[Under embargo until 30 November 2017, 12:01 am GMT](#)

British consumers launch unprecedented legal action against Google over mass data collection

Google You Owe Us, has today, 30 November 2017, launched a legal action against tech giant Google. The group, led by veteran consumer champion and former Executive Director of *Which?*, Richard Lloyd, aims to secure compensation for the millions of people across Britain who are believed to have had their personal information unlawfully collected by Google. The campaign is encouraging consumers to spread the word, in order to hold Google to account.

This is the first representative action of its kind in the UK against a major tech company that is centred on the alleged mass misuse of personal data.

What happened?

Between June 2011 and February 2012, it is alleged that Google unlawfully harvested the personal information of millions of people in the UK by bypassing the default privacy settings on the Apple iPhone. Google's algorithms allowed them to trick people's iPhones into releasing personal data from the phone's default browser, Safari. This has become known as the 'Safari Workaround'.

Google's business model is based on using data, like this, to send targeted advertisements to consumers. In 2016, they earned \$80bn from advertising revenues alone. While tech companies monetising online data isn't a new concept, UK data protection laws state that this must be done in accordance with a set of principles designed to protect individual's privacy. In this case it is alleged that Google breached those principles.

Approximately 5.4 million individuals were affected between 2011 and 2012, and could now be eligible for compensation. *Google You Owe Us* believes that this mass data haul was against the law and a violation of trust. A legal action is being brought on behalf of all those iPhone users. *Google You Owe Us* wants as many of Britain's affected consumers to know about the claim.

Standing up for your rights

The representative claimant in the case, Richard Lloyd, has over twenty five years' experience challenging the world's biggest companies on behalf of consumers, and helped draft some of the UK's most important consumer rights laws.

Lloyd said:

"I believe that what Google did was quite simply against the law. Their actions have affected millions, and we'll be asking the courts to remedy this major breach of trust.

Through this action, we will send a strong message to Google and other tech giants in Silicon Valley that we're not afraid to fight back if our laws are broken.

In all my years speaking up for consumers, I've rarely seen such a massive abuse of trust where so many people have no way to seek redress on their own. That's why I've taken on one of the biggest fights of my life in representing this legal action, which is the first case of its kind in the UK against a major tech company for misusing our valuable personal data.

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I want to spread the word about our claim. Google owes all of those affected fairness, trust and money. By joining together, we can show Google that they can't get away with taking our data without our consent, and that no matter how large and powerful they are, nobody is above the law."

Spreading the word

Those in England and Wales who had an iPhone in 2011 or 2012 may be one of approximately 5.4 million people eligible for compensation.

Google You Owe Us want as many of these people as possible to be aware of the case and to understand how valuable their personal data is to big companies. *Google You Owe Us* believes that this claim will help to prevent similar violations in the future.

Those affected do not have to pay any legal fees, conduct any research or (at this stage) contact any lawyers. They are already part of the claim and will be updated on the progress of the claim through the website and social media. Richard Lloyd and his legal team are bringing this claim on behalf of all those affected. Those affected can, however, choose to leave the claim if they want. They must notify us of this. Details can be found on the campaign's website, YouOweUs.co.uk.

People are encouraged to share the news online, and speak to their friends and family, so everybody knows that the claim is being brought.

The representative action

A representative action is a procedure where a representative claimant represents a group of people with a shared grievance. A representative action is a type of collective action. Often collective actions allow individuals to bring a claim against powerful organisations where they would not otherwise be able to. The *Google You Owe Us* case therefore has strength in numbers, and people are encouraged to spread the word.

The legal action is supported by law firm Mishcon de Reya, who specialise in large scale litigation.

Further information

You can view the campaign's website, from the day of launch, at YouOweUs.co.uk where affected consumers can find further information or withdraw from the claim if they wish.

Please see the attached document for a list of Frequently Asked Questions.

Richard Lloyd is also available for interview opportunities.

For further information please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Richard Lloyd represents the consumers bringing this legal case against Google. He aims to ensure that as many of Google's 5.4 million alleged victims are aware of the case and have the opportunity to be compensated for Google taking their personal data. For more information about Google You Owe Us, please visit: YouOweUs.co.uk

Richard Lloyd is one of the UK's foremost consumer rights champions. He has more than 25 years' experience of campaigning and policy-making for consumer groups, charities, housing agencies and national government.

From 2005 – 2008, Lloyd worked as Chief Executive for *Consumers International* – the international federation of consumer groups – which supports 250 affiliate organisations spanning 120 countries. Subsequent to this, he spent two years working at Number 10 Downing Street as a Special Advisor to the Prime Minister.

His most recent role saw him lead *Which?* (the UK Consumers' Association) as Executive Director from 2011 – 2016. He oversaw numerous high profile, public campaigns backed by hundreds of thousands of people. Richard was also central to consumer interests being represented at the highest levels of UK government, most notably through the drafting of the *Consumer Rights Act* and a series of major investigations into the energy, banking and telecoms markets. He also chaired the Government's Taskforce on Nuisance Calls.

Mishcon de Reya is a leading UK-based law firm with extensive experience working on high profile litigation and campaigns including the *News of the World* phone hacking case, the RBS rights issue litigation and the Article 50 claim on behalf of Gina Miller.

Mishcon de Reya is providing legal support to Richard Lloyd.

The Advisory Committee is made of experts selected by Richard Lloyd who he may consult on key decisions as the case progresses.

Sir Christopher Clarke

Sir Christopher is a former High Court Judge and Lord Justice of Appeal. The widely respected former QC has experience arbitrating many high profile commercial disputes.

Dominic McGonigal

Dominic is Chair of C8 Associates, specialising in shaping organisations for the online world. He has a background in music and formerly advised the UK Government.

Christine Farnish CBE

Christine is the Chair of the Peer2Peer Finance Association and Non-Executive Director of Ofwat and Ofgem.

Martin Lewis OBE

Martin is a journalist, broadcaster and founder of moneysavingexpert.com and the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute. He has led major financial justice campaigns.