

## **WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN LATELY?** **By Brian Zarzycki, MP Integrated Solutions**

R & B artist Rockwell stated it best in 1984 in his lyrics “I always feel like someone’s watching me.” And it is true – there is always someone on the Internet watching your every click, your every Google search, and then every website you go to – and there’s not much you can do about it. But it does not matter if you think it is an invasion of privacy; the Internet is free and part of the public domain.

Well that’s not what the people at Mozilla feel should happen anymore. They have created the new experimental “Collusion” add-on to the popular web browser Firefox. Now some of you might think that Collusion has been around for a while, by definition of the word only. Let’s look at what the word collusion means:

“**Collusion** is an agreement between two or more persons, sometimes illegal and therefore secretive, to limit open [competition](#) by deceiving, misleading, or defrauding others of their legal rights, or to obtain an objective forbidden by law typically by defrauding or gaining an unfair advantage. It is an agreement among firms to divide the market, set prices, or limit production. [1] It can involve "wage fixing, kickbacks, or misrepresenting the independence of the relationship between the colluding parties". [2] In legal terms, all acts affected by collusion are considered [void](#). [3]” – [quoted from Wikipedia](#)

Some people would say that they have been browsing safely for years without being tracked. This is also a true statement. But most of those people invested in software packages to block what they are doing. Hackers have been utilizing this software/hardware technique for a couple of decades or more. As of recent years of favorite browsers like Safari, Internet Explorer and Firefox have add-on or switches that would potentially allow you to surf the Internet without other companies tracking your every move.

So, you might ask – why do I care? Well for most individuals, browsing the Internet is not harmful – but did you ever stop to think why you receive certain SPAM emails. Offers to the [New York Times](#), [Huffington Post](#) or one of my favorite sites: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com). They are all legitimate safe Internet sites that promote news or tell you who is in what movie. But what happens when you go to these sites?

Just by going to IMDB.com, the Internet will open up three tracking sites to see what I am looking at or what ads they believe that I might be interested in. Now let’s browse over to the [New York Times](#) – four more tracking sites to launch. But do not forget about the first three tracking sites that have already been opened. Off to the latest technology report delivered by the [Huffington Post](#) – seven more tracking sites have launched into action. Next is my game reviews handed out by Gamespot.com – six more tracking bots are now watching. Final destination Reference.com – six more tracking sites. Four websites and 26 tracking sites, time to upgrade your ISP monthly charge in

order to still browse at a descent speed. In addition, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media websites all open up tracking software.

Is this against the law? Not that we have been able to determine, but I will leave that answer up to those with law degrees.

What can you do about it? Right now not much, other than to follow a couple basic rules:

1. Have a good anti-virus installed and up to date
2. Keep your Operating System patches up to date
3. Have a good spyware tool installed and up to date
4. Empty your Internet Cache and Operating System temp files at least once a week
5. Keep your data on an external drive and encrypted
6. Have the number of your favorite computer consultant handy

To learn more about how you can take control of who sees you surfing the Internet, to have a choice about sharing that information, or to see the demo of what goes on behind the scenes of your mouse clicks, go to <http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/collusion/>