

Opinion: Google cars data collection warrant scrutiny

By John M. Simpson, Special to the Sacramento Bee

What do autonomous cars driven by robots like those Google is developing have to do with your privacy? If the answer is nothing, then why won't Google and the author of a bill to allow them on California highways accept an amendment requiring that the new technology collect only data necessary for the operation of the vehicle and no other purpose?

You may remember the last time Google deployed high-tech vehicles around the world. The result was "Wi-Spy," the biggest wire-tapping scandal in history when the company's Street View cars sucked up data from tens of millions of private Wi-Fi networks, including emails, health information, banking information, passwords and other data.

We don't want that to happen again. If amended, Sen. Alex Padilla's Senate Bill 1298 could offer privacy protection. The Assembly Transportation Committee heard testimony about the bill last week and held it over for action Monday.

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