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Chinese weather app sucks up users' data without warning

A weather forecast application, com.tct.weather, one of the most popular apps in the Google Play store, has been surreptitiously collecting large amounts of personal data from its users, according to research done by Upstream Systems, a London-based security firm. The app, created by Chinese firm TCL Communication Technology Holdings Ltd., collected smartphone users' geographic locations, email addresses and unique 15-digit International Mobile Equipment Identity numbers on TCL servers in China.

Another app, made by Taiwanese company General Mobile Corp., also collected extensive user data, but was eventually acquired by a Los Angeles-based digital ad company, Airpush, Inc. Commenting on the collection of data by firms selling low cost phones into emerging economies, Airpush CMO Justin Montgomery said, "If a user purchases a lower-cost device, they do so with the expectation that certain things will be monetized to help subsidize the cost."

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