

Michigan man learns the hard way that “catch a cheater” spyware apps aren’t legal

Despite being repeatedly told that people were using his product to spy on others without their consent, Fleming helped them with tech support.

A government investigator even opened up an affiliate marketing account for pcTattletale, and Fleming reached out to offer ready-made banner ads with text like “pcTattletale Cheating Husband? #1 catch a cheater spy tracker” and “pcTattletale Husband Cheating? Best Catch a Cheater Spy App.”

Fleming noted in an email that pcTattletale was more successful when marketed at women, because “There are a lot more women wanting to catch their man then [sic] the other way around.” Financial records showed that Fleming was selling around 1,200 pcTattletale subscriptions a year at anywhere from \$99 to \$300.

Based on all this, the government obtained a search warrant in late 2022 and raided the Bruce Township home where Fleming lived.

In 2024, TechCrunch reported that pcTattletale was hacked and much of its data was leaked. Apparently, hackers had gained access to the company’s private keys for the Amazon Web Services account where most of the video data created by the app was stored. Fleming claimed at the time that his company was “out of business and completely done” after the breach.

The feds eventually charged Fleming with selling a product

while “knowing or having reason to know” that the software was “primarily useful for the purpose of the surreptitious interception of wire, oral, or electronic communications.” This week in California, Fleming pled guilty to a single count and was released on his own recognizance while awaiting sentencing.

One piece of stalkerware is off the market; unfortunately, many others remain, and their owners and operators are often harder to find.

<https://arstechnica.com/security/2026/01/michigan-man-learns-the-hard-way-that-catch-a-cheater-spyware-apps-arent-legal/>