

Google vows to do more to protect your voice data

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Google came under fire after media reports revealed that its contractors listened to customer audio recordings captured by the company's virtual assistant this year.

Now, Google wants to be more transparent with you about "how your data is used and why."

The search giant released a blog post on Monday promising to do more to protect your privacy when using its Voice assistant, saying, "It's clear that we fell short of our high standards." The Google Assistant is available on Google Home speaker along with Android and iOS smartphones.

"Recently we've heard concerns about our process in which language experts can listen to and transcribe [audio data](#) from the Google Assistant to help improve speech technology for [different languages](#)," the tech company said.

Google said it immediately stopped having humans transcribe and launched an investigation into the matter. It also vows not to store your audio data by default.

"By default, we don't retain your audio recordings. This has been the case, and will remain unchanged," Google said. The company is shifting to an opt-in privacy model, where you can review your settings and confirm your preferences before humans can listen to samples of your recorded audio.

The company also says it's on a mission to vastly reduce how much audio information it stores by the end of the year.

Google is far from alone in using your voice data to improve its service offerings. Apple, Facebook and Microsoft have each admitted to listening in on a limited basis in recent months.

Apple's Siri is baked into over 1 billion iPhones. Facebook's Messenger app allows people to send audio recordings, which were transcribed by

contractors at one point. And Microsoft listened in for Skype's translation feature, not Skype calls.

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