

Privacy group urges probe of Google cloud services

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The logo of web search engine Google is seen behind a computer keyboard. A US electronic privacy group has called for the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate the security and privacy of Google's Web-based products such as email and photo services.

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"Recent reports indicate that [Google](#) does not adequately safeguard the confidential information it obtains," the Electronic [Privacy](#) Information Center (EPIC) said in the [complaint](#) filed with the FTC.

EPIC said it was petitioning the commission, which is responsible for consumer protection issues, to probe "Google's Cloud Computing

Services to determine the adequacy of the privacy and security safeguards."

Cloud computing services provided by Google include [Gmail](#), the Internet search giant's email program; [Google Docs](#), its online word processing and spreadsheet [service](#); Picasa, a software application for digital photos; and Google Calendar.

EPIC, in the complaint filed on Tuesday, said that it wanted the FTC to determine whether Google has "engaged in unfair and/or deceptive trade practices" regarding its cloud computing products.

It urged the FTC to enjoin the company from offering such services "until safeguards are verifiably established."

"Such action by the commission is necessary to ensure the safety and security of information submitted to Google by American consumers, American businesses and American federal agencies," EPIC said.

In its complaint, EPIC cited an incident with Google Docs this month in which the Mountain View, California company acknowledged that the privacy of some digital documents had been compromised.

Google Docs product manager Jennifer Mazzon said at the time that a "very small percentage of users shared some of their documents inadvertently" because of an unspecified "bug."

There was no immediate reply from Google to a request by AFP for comment on the complaint by the Washington-based EPIC

Google and other Internet firms have been enticing people to rely on applications offered online as services "in the cloud" instead of buying software to install and maintain on their own machines.

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