

Beijing to trial mobile tracking system: report

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Three men use their mobile phones on a street in Beijing in 2009. A system designed to track the location of millions of mobile phone users is to be tested in Beijing, sparking concerns over privacy, state media reported Thursday.

A system designed to track the location of millions of mobile phone users is to be tested in Beijing, sparking concerns over privacy, state media reported Thursday.

The information platform will enable authorities to check on the location of China Mobile's more than 17 million users in the capital, the Global Times newspaper said, citing the Beijing Municipal Science and Technology Commission.

The commission made the announcement in a statement posted on its website on Monday but it was later removed, the newspaper said.

A spokeswoman for [China Mobile](#), the world's largest [mobile phone operator](#), said she could not immediately respond to questions from AFP and no one at the commission was available to comment.

The official Beijing Daily newspaper said Wednesday the project would "round up" information on mobile users' movements around the city including their time of departure, destination and means of transport.

The data will be used to better control traffic and monitor the population, the Global Times said, citing an unidentified employee at the commission.

"Our focus is to get general statistics for better [traffic management](#) and population monitoring," the employee said.

"For example, if you want to determine the number of migrants in Beijing, the platform is far more precise than a door-to-door census."

The system will be tested in two densely populated areas in the city's north by the end of June, the Global Times said.

The announcement has raised concerns that the system will infringe the privacy of mobile users, despite pledges by officials that they would make sure [personal data](#) was not leaked, the Global Times said.

The newspaper said 23 people, some of whom had been employed to handle China Mobile's customer service issues, were currently on trial in [Beijing](#) for selling personal information, such as users' location, on the Internet.

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