

# US senators urge end to drunk driver 'apps'

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Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, shown here in 2010, and US senators on Tuesday pressed Google, Apple, and Blackberry maker Research in Motion to pull the plug on applications that can help drunk drivers use smart phones to elude police checkpoints.

US senators on Tuesday pressed Google, Apple, and Blackberry maker Research in Motion to pull the plug on applications that can help drunk drivers use smart phones to elude police checkpoints.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and fellow Democratic Senators Chuck Schumer, Frank Lautenberg and Tom Udall urged the high-tech giants to stop selling the software unless it is stripped of the drunk-driving feature.

"We appreciate the technology that has allowed millions of Americans to have information at their fingertips, but giving drunk drivers a free tool to evade checkpoints, putting innocent families and children at risk, is a

matter of public concern," they wrote in a letter released by Reid's office.

"We hope that you will give our request to make these applications unavailable immediate consideration," they wrote.

The applications rely on driver-generated databases of speed traps, speed cameras, or even drunk driving checkpoints and include audible alerts.

PhantomAlert, which the USA Today newspaper called "one of the most popular," asks potential customers on its website: "Tired of traffic tickets? The embarrassment, the time, the points, the frustration, the money?"

"You will be alerted as you approach: Railroad Crossings, Dangerous Intersections, Dangerous Curves, Speed Bumps, Speed Traps, Speed Cameras, Red Light Cameras, School Zones, DUI Checkpoints."

DUI means "driving under the influence," or intoxicated.

PhantomAlert chief executive Joe Scott called the lawmakers' appeal "a knee-jerk reaction" and said his company was helping to "deter drivers from drinking and driving" by making them more aware of the risk of arrest.

Scott told AFP that the company had received one testimonial from a man who had been set to drive after drinking but "got scared" upon learning that there were checkpoints nearby, and got a ride home from sober friends instead.

The letter went to [Google](#) chief executive Eric Schmidt; Scott Forstall, senior vice president for iPhone Software; and Research in Motion co-chief executive officers James Balsillie and Michael Lazaridis.

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