Opinion: Pokémon Go App causes Privacy Scare

Posted by [Jacqui Atkielski](#) On 07/12/2016

HOLLYWOOD, MD -- If you aren't aware of what [Pokémon Go](#) is, check out this link. Hunting, collecting, and fighting fictional animals in the real world has real threats.

App users have been [Poké-lured](#) to locations by armed robbers, a man causing quite a bit of chaos [on a highway to catch a Pikachu](#), and now there is rumor floating around that if you use your Gmail account that you gave [Niantic access to everything](#) in your Google account (Calendar, Google Docs, etc.).

Allegedly, a principal architect at Red Owl Analytics said Pokémon Go is given 'full account access' to user's Google accounts when they log on with Google on iOS. This is basically handing over your Google account to Niantic, giving them unprecedented access to your account.

I have 41 Pokemon from Abra to Zubat. I wish I had either the Pokemon Trainers Club access, or used an Android phone right now.

While the app did request 'full account access' from some iOS users, it could mean almost anything in tech jargon. The [incriminating Tumblr post](#) the principal architect published claimed Pokémon Go and Niantic has access to do the following:

• Read all your email
• Send email as you
• Access all your Google drive documents (including deleting them)
• Look at your search history and your Maps navigation history
• Access any private photos you may store in Google Photos
• And a whole lot more

[In this article](#), he backtracked his claims, saying he wasn't "100 percent sure" his blog post was true. He also admitted that he had never built an application that uses Google account permissions, and had never tested the claims he makes in the post.
Others have been disputing the Tumblr post's claims, explaining that Google tech support's "full account access" does not mean a third party can read or send email, access files or anything else in the Tumblr post. It means Niantic can only read biographical information like email address and phone number. Which makes sense if they need an account and a geolocation to make the app work for the user.

Google tech support stepped in and said the following: "In this case, we checked that the Full account access permission refers to most of the 'My account settings.' Specific actions such as sending emails, modifying folders, etc, require explicit permissions to that service (the permission will say 'Has access to Gmail')."

[This article](#) clarified some confusion for the more concerned fans.

When you grant full account access, the application can see and modify nearly all information in your Google Account (but it can't change your password, delete your account, or pay with Google Wallet on your behalf).

Certain Google applications may be listed under full account access. For example, you might see that the Google Maps application you downloaded for your iPhone has full account access.

This 'full account access' privilege should only be granted to applications you fully trust, installed on your personal computer, phone, or tablet.

If you've granted full account access to an app you don't trust or recognize, it's recommended that you revoke this permission by clicking the Revoke access button.

Google is the only entity that can clear up just what "full account access" means.
Yesterday, Niantic released a statement saying that "Pokémon GO only accesses basic Google profile information."

The statement also included this quote: We recently discovered that the Pokémon GO account creation process on iOS erroneously requests full access permission for the user's Google account. However, Pokémon GO only accesses basic Google profile information (specifically, your User ID and email address) and no other Google account information is or has been accessed or collected. Once we became aware of this error, we began working on a client-side fix to request permission for only basic Google profile information, in line with the data that we actually access. Google has verified that no other information has been received or accessed by Pokémon GO or Niantic. Google will soon reduce Pokémon GO's permission to only the basic profile data that Pokémon GO needs, and users do not need to take any actions themselves.

So… my advice if you have decided to play Pokemon Go, use a secondary Google account created for the sole purpose of accessing the game.

I've had my say, now what's yours? Let's share.