

California Gets Serious About Stopping Data Brokers

February 4, 2026 - California has some of the toughest privacy laws on the books. But that hasn't made it much easier for consumers who don't want to be tracked by advertisers or have their data sold. Having your name removed from the lists of data brokers has required substantial individual effort. In most cases you've had to write letters to each broker individually and then manually track the progress of having your data removed. But all of that is changing with the introduction of a new, state-run website that allows you to opt-out of having your information sold with a few simple clicks.

The California Privacy Protection Agency (Yes, that is a real state agency) has introduced a web page by the name of DROP, which stands for Delete Request and Opt-out Platform. Residents of the state can use it to have their information removed from data broker lists.

The way DROP works is pretty simple for users. You are asked to supply various pieces of personal information. Your full name, nick names, email addresses, current and past street addresses, automobile VIN numbers and some other personal identifiers used by advertisers. If you are like me, you may not know where to find all of the information required. My advice, go to ChatGPT and ask it where to look for the information. That worked for me. **IMPORTANT NOTE HERE.** The site DOES NOT ASK for your SSN or payment information of any kind. I only bring this up because I only expect some enterprising criminals to attempt to replicate the site at some point.

The entire process took between five and ten minutes and was fairly painless. Once it was complete and submitted, I was given a personal ID that I can use when I return to the site to track the progress of my removals.

Since all data brokers operating in the state - and there are hundreds of them - have to register with the state, DROP knows who to contact to have your data removed. And the best thing about DROP is that it handles all of the requests to data brokers. Filling out a DROP request is a one-and-done sort of deal.

That said, having your data removed may take a little time initially. DROP doesn't have any real legal teeth until August 1, 2026. Until then, data brokers can continue to use your information. But after that, they have to remove your data within 45 days of a request or they can face some serious penalties. These include fines of \$200 per day per ignored request and other administrative fines under the CCPA. In addition to removing data they already have on file for you, data brokers must also continue to remove any new data they receive on you every 45 days. So once you have opted out, you stay opted out.

If you live in California and you're concerned about personal privacy, DROP could be your new best friend. You can find the website at <https://privacy.ca.gov/>.

by Jim Malmberg

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