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**In Theaters
Now**

September 8, 2008

H.P. Spied On Writers In Leaks

By DAMON DARLIN

CORRECTION APPENDED

The California attorney general's investigation into the purloining of private phone records by agents of Hewlett-Packard has revealed that the monitoring effort began earlier than previously indicated and included journalists as targets.

The targets included nine journalists who have covered Hewlett-Packard, including one from The New York Times, the company said.

The company said this week that its board had hired private investigators to identify directors leaking information to the press and that those investigators had posed as board members -- a technique known as pretexting -- to gain access to their personal phone records.

In acknowledging Thursday that journalists' records had also been obtained, the company said it was apologizing to each one. "H.P. is dismayed that the phone records of journalists were accessed without their knowledge," a company spokesman, Michael Moeller, said.

In an interview Thursday about the state's criminal investigation of the Hewlett-Packard matter, Attorney General Bill Lockyer said, "A crime was committed." But he added: "It is unclear how strong the case is. Who is charged and for what is still an open question."

Mr. Lockyer said search warrants would be issued to obtain the records of Internet service providers in an attempt to trace the identities of the imposters. He said Hewlett-Packard was cooperating with the investigation into what he said was the first California case of a major corporation using such methods to obtain phone records.

An investigator with direct knowledge of the state's inquiry characterized the list of targets as "extensive," though that person would not elaborate. It could contain people other than journalists or directors.

Travis Dodd, general attorney with AT&T Services in San Antonio, who is working with the California prosecutors, said the records of John Markoff, a reporter for The Times in San Francisco, were a "target of the pretexting" in 2005.