

# IRS' STINGRAY TRACKED 44 CELL DEVICES OVER 4 YEARS BUT THE AGENCY NEEDS ANOTHER

Back in 2010, Daniel Rigmaiden [forced the government](#) to reveal it had used a Stingray to bust him for tax fraud in 2008. Apparently, even in spite of blowing their prosecution of Rigmaiden, the IRS liked what it did, because in 2011, they bought their own Stingray, as John Koskinen [revealed](#) in a response to a Ron Wyden question on the topic.

Koskinen reveals the IRS used its Stingray between 2011 or 2012 and the present in this way:

- On 11 of its own grand jury investigations, largely focused on stolen ID refund fraud, in which it tracked 37 devices total.
- On 1 DEA case, in which it tracked 1 device.
- On 3 state murder and similar cases, in which it tracked 6 devices total.

In other words, over the course of its almost 4 year life, the Stingray has tracked just 44 devices.

That seems to suggest this tracking isn't just a quick one-off, otherwise they wouldn't need another device, as they're currently in the process of getting.

Perhaps however, this is a testament to the obsolescence of these devices. In his response to Wyden, Koskinen doesn't mention the Stingray IRS bought in 2009, suggesting it may not be in

use anymore.

The government is sure blowing through these expensive surveillance toys in quick succession.

Update: My apologies to Rigmaiden for getting his first name wrong and thanks to Chris Soghoian for spotting it.