# Tracking Technologies: Part 2:
# A Deep Dive on What They Are and How They Work

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The ancient version of tracking began as footprint and scent detection to aid hunting. It is now powered by satellite uplinks and mobile data telephony to aid wildlife migration mapping.

Online tracking is evolving just like its offline predecessor. While prehistoric tracking was essential for survival, online tracking is essential to B2C business models and many B2B models. Tech evolution is happening both in response to and, in many respects, independent of changing legal mandates. The complexities presented by these ever-shifting sands are numerous.

Online trackers will never be eliminated, but the massive changes in societal attitudes and laws about privacy mean they must be governed. Understanding their forms and methods is the first step.

This second article in a four-part series on tracking technologies takes a deep dive into the technologies that enable the type of digital data collection that is most commonly referred to as “tracking,” but which some constituents, including regulators, privacy activists and plaintiffs’ counsel, are increasingly labelling “commercial surveillance.” Part one looked at the history of legal regulation around online tracking technologies and examined use risks that organizations across the digital ecosystem must consider. Part three will offer a practical governance roadmap for managing digital tracking, and part four will focus on compliance challenges and solutions, including those specific to the advertising industry.