

Google fined \$425 million for violating user privacy

A San Francisco federal court has ordered Google to pay \$425 million for illegally collecting user data. The class action lawsuit, which has been ongoing since 2020, involves 98 million users and 174 million Android devices.

Google is no stranger to privacy and data-related litigation. In the past, the company has paid up to \$400 to each Nexus 6P owner, faced a \$5 billion lawsuit for tracking users' activity in Chrome's incognito mode, been fined \$60 million in Australia for misleading information about data privacy, and has been in numerous other disputes.

Recently, a federal court in San Francisco ruled to fine Google \$425 million for violating user privacy.

According to Reuters, the class action lawsuit, which began in 2020, involves 98 million users on 174 million Android devices. Although the plaintiffs initially sought \$31 billion in damages, the final figure was still considered a victory for them. The penalty was significantly reduced from the request because the jury concluded that Google did not commit intentional malice.



Specifically, Google is accused of silently collecting data from third-party apps like Uber and Venmo for more than eight years, even when users turned off the "Web & App Activity" feature. Google argues that this data is "non-personal, anonymized, stored separately, secured and encrypted", mainly to improve the experience and personalize the service.

However, the jury did not buy this argument, and found Google liable on two of the three counts. A Google representative expressed dissatisfaction with the verdict, asserting: "This decision misunderstands how our products work. Google's privacy tools give users control over their data, and when they turn off personalization, we respect that choice."

While the plaintiff's attorney expressed satisfaction with the outcome, Google said it would soon appeal.

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