

Norway to fine dating app Grindr \$11.7M over privacy breach

January 26 2021, by Kelvin Chan



In this Wednesday, May 29, 2019 file photo, a woman checks the Grindr app on her mobile phone in Beirut, Lebanon. Norway is fining gay dating app Grindr \$11.7 million under for failing to get consent from users before sharing their personal information with advertising companies, in breach of stringent European Union privacy rules. Norwegian's data privacy watchdog said Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 that it notified the company of its draft decision to issue a fine for 100 million Norwegian krone, equal to 10% of its annual global revenue. (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar, file)

Gay dating app Grindr faces a fine of more than \$10 million from Norwegian regulators for failing to get consent from users before sharing their personal information with advertising companies, in breach of stringent European Union privacy rules.

The Norwegian data privacy watchdog report last year how Grindr and other dating apps leaked personal information to advertising technology companies for targeted ads in ways the council said violated the EU's tough GDPR privacy rules.

Norway isn't a member of the EU but closely mirrors the bloc's rules and regulations.

"The Norwegian Data Protection Authority considers that this is a serious case," said Director-General Bjorn Erik Thon. "Users were not able to exercise real and effective control over the sharing of their data."

The company has until Feb. 15 to give feedback, which the watchdog will take into account for its final decision.

Grindr said it looked forward to holding a "productive dialogue" with Norwegian regulators about the allegations, which it said date back to 2018 and don't reflect current privacy policy or practices.

The app's privacy approach includes "detailed consent flows, transparency, and control" provided to all users, the company said, adding it has "retained valid legal consent" from all its European users "on multiple occasions."

"We continually enhance our privacy practices in consideration of evolving privacy laws and regulations," the company said in a statement.

The watchdog's preliminary conclusion is that Grindr shared user data with a number of third parties without legal basis. The data included GPS location, user profile information as well as the fact that users are on Grindr, which could indicate their sexual orientation.

Sharing such information could put someone at risk of being targeted, the authority said apnews.com/hub/technology

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