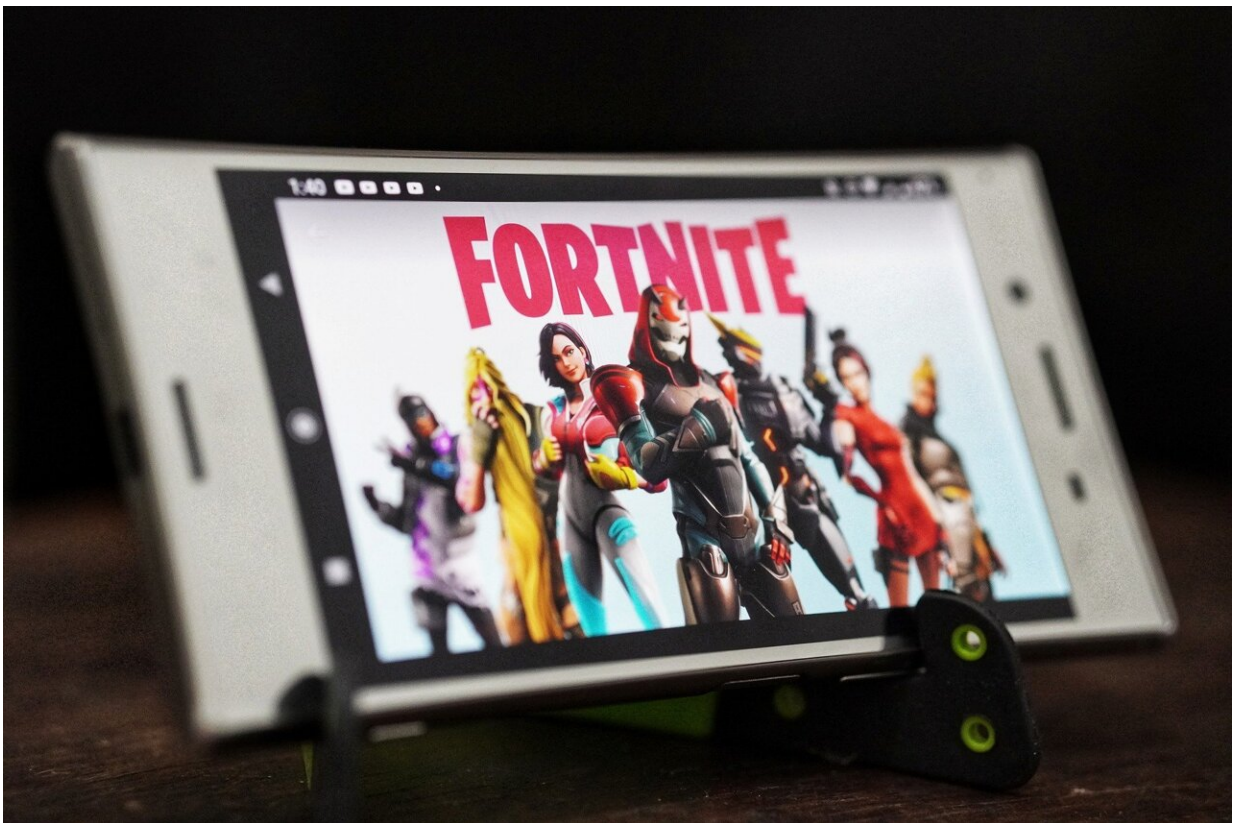


# Fortnite-maker to pay \$520 million over US child allegations

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Epic Games, the maker of video-game blockbuster Fortnite, agreed to pay \$520 million to the US Federal Trade Commission on Monday for violating child privacy laws and duping minors and adults to make

unintended purchases online.

The FTC said the settlements from one of the biggest names in video gaming set records with Epic Games found responsible for knowingly targeting under-13 players of Fortnite and subjecting children to harassment and trauma in chat rooms.

In its complaint, the FTC said that Epic Games was aware that many children were playing Fortnite and collected their information without parental consent as is required by US law.

"Even when Epic obtained actual knowledge that particular Fortnite players were under 13, Epic took no steps to comply with (US law)," the FTC complaint alleged.

The FTC accused Epic of setting online chat defaults that allowed children and teens to play with strangers and subjected them to potential harassment.

"Children and teens have been bullied, threatened, harassed, and exposed to dangerous and psychologically traumatizing issues such as suicide while on Fortnite," the FTC said.

For these violations, Epic agreed to pay \$275 million and is now prohibited from enabling chats unless parents of users under 13 or teenage users give their direct consent.

In a separate complaint, Epic games was accused of engaging in something called dark patterns, the practice of tricking users into making unwanted purchases or opting-in to certain settings without their knowledge.

The FTC said Epic "let children rack up unauthorized charges without

any parental involvement" among other violations.

The commission said the company agreed to pay \$245 million in consumer refunds to resolve that complaint.

In a statement, Epic said that "no developer creates a game with the intention of ending up here."

"We accepted this agreement because we want Epic to be at the forefront of consumer protection and provide the best experience for our players," it added.

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