

Popular Dating, Health Apps Violate Privacy

Leading Consumer and Privacy Groups Urge Congress, the FTC, State AGs in California, Texas, Oregon to Investigate

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Nine consumer groups today [asked](#) the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), congressional lawmakers and the state attorneys general of California, Texas and Oregon to investigate several popular apps available in the Google Play Store. A [report](#) released today by the Norwegian Consumer Council (NCC) alleges that the apps are systematically violating users' privacy.

The report found that 10 well-known apps – Grindr, Tinder, OkCupid, Happn, Clue, MyDays, Perfect365, Qibla Finder, My Talking Tom 2 and Wave Keyboard – are sharing information they collect on users with third-party advertisers without users' knowledge or consent. The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation forbids sharing information with third parties without users' knowledge or consent.

When it comes to drafting a new federal privacy law, American lawmakers cannot trust input from companies who do not respect user privacy, the groups maintain. Congress should use the findings of the report as a roadmap for a new law that ensures that such flagrant violations of privacy found in the EU are not acceptable in the U.S.

The new report alleges that these apps (and likely a great many others) are allowing commercial third parties to collect, use and share sensitive consumer data in a way that is hidden from the user and involves parties that the consumer neither knows about nor would be familiar with. Although consumers can limit some tracking on desktop computers through browser settings and extensions, the same cannot be said for smartphones and tablets. As consumers use their smartphones throughout the day, the devices are recording information about sensitive topics such as our health, behavior, religion, interests and sexuality.

"Consumers cannot avoid being tracked by these apps and their advertising partners because they are not provided with the necessary information to make informed choices when launching the apps for the first time. In addition, consumers are unable to make an informed choice because the extent of tracking, data sharing, and the overall

complexity of the adtech ecosystem is hidden and incomprehensible to average consumers,” the letters sent to lawmakers and regulators warn.

The nine groups are the American Civil Liberties Union of California, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, the Center for Digital Democracy, Consumer Action, Consumer Federation of America, Consumer Reports, the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG. In addition to calling for an investigation, the groups are calling for a strong federal digital privacy law that includes a new data protection agency, a private right of action and strong enforcement mechanisms.

[View this release online](#) to see quotes from groups that signed the letters.