

# China set to register cell-phone users

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Chinese officials said Thursday they were set to begin registering the names of cell-phone users on the first of the year.

Minister of Information Industry Wang Xudong announced that the registration will apply to both phone subscribers and to the estimated 200 million Chinese who use pre-paid phones and until Jan. 1 have not been required to fill out paperwork at the time of purchase.

The program is aimed largely at cracking down on the use of pre-paid phones for fraud or to launch text-message spam.

There have, however, been complaints that the registration is an inconvenience and an intrusion on privacy, the Xinhua news agency said. Some officials agree that it could be difficult to coax pre-paid customers into registering.

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