

Japan probes Apple's iTunes over bogus credit bills

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The Apple logo. Japanese authorities plan to summon Apple officials this week over complaints that its iTunes online store has billed customers for downloads they never made, officials said Monday.

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In at least 95 cases in Japan involving five major credit card companies, iTunes customers said they had sometimes been charged thousands of dollars, they said.

"We have seen such cases increasing, notably since autumn last year," said an official with Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency.

"The damage in those cases seems to range from a few hundred yen to several hundred thousand yen (from several dollars to several thousand dollars)."

Apple Japan -- the local unit of the Californian maker of the iPod, [iPhone](#) and new iPad [tablet computer](#) -- was not immediately available for a comment.

Its [iTunes](#) offers downloads of music, games, videos and iPhone applications.

The agency official said that in one case "a woman who registered her ID and [credit card number](#) on the music download site several years ago but hadn't used it in recent years received bills of purchases that she wasn't aware of".

"The amount of money she was charged over several bills totalled more than 100,000 yen (1,100 dollars)," he said.

Japan's industry and communications ministries have joined the investigation and are looking into whether personal data has been stolen. They have advised customers to carefully check their bills and report any suspicious orders.

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