

SKorea fines Apple over iPhone data collection

August 3 2011, By KELLY OLSEN , AP Business Writer



(AP) -- South Korea's communications regulator fined Apple's local operation 3 million won (\$2,830) for what it says is the illegal collection of iPhone user location information.

The Korea Communications Commission announced Wednesday in a statement it has ordered Apple Korea to pay the fine for violating the country's location information laws.

The amount is insignificant for Apple - the Cupertino, California-based tech giant earned \$7.31 billion in its fiscal third quarter - but South Korea's decision to impose the fine might influence regulators elsewhere.

Apple Inc. has faced various complaints and criticisms since revelations in the U.S. in April that iPhones were storing the locations of nearby cellphone towers and Wi-Fi hot spots for up to a year. Such data can be used to create a rough map of the device owner's movements.

"Apple is not tracking the location of your [iPhone](#)," Steve Park, the company's local spokesman, said after the release of the KCC statement. "Apple has never done so and has no plans to ever do so."

South Korean media reported that the fine was the first to be imposed on Apple over the location information issue. Park said he did not know if that was true.

The KCC also demanded that both Apple and [Google Inc.](#) ensure that user location information on their mobile phones be saved in an encrypted form.

"We are currently reviewing the KCC's decision," Google said in a statement. The Internet search company said it has been "cooperating closely" with the commission. Google was not fined.

Mountain View, California-based Google acknowledged in April that phones running its Android software store some location data directly on phones for a short time from users who have chosen to use GPS services.

Apple and Google have said they only record the location of Wi-Fi hot spots and cell towers to improve service, and tracking can be turned off. Apple said a "bug" caused the iPhone to keep location data even when

tracking was disabled.

The fine is Apple's latest legal problem in [South Korea](#). In May, a court ruled in favor of a South Korean lawyer who filed a lawsuit against the company alleging privacy violations over user location information and awarded him 1 million won in damages.

The lawyer, Kim Hyeong-seok, has been planning a class-action suit in a South Korean court against [Apple](#) over the issue.

©2011 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: SKorea fines Apple over iPhone data collection (2011, August 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-08-skorea-fines-apple-iphone.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
