

# South Korea considers opt out for child monitoring app

November 20 2015, by Youkyung Lee

---

South Korea is deciding whether it will allow parents to opt out of installing a monitoring app on their children's smartphones following criticism the system encourages a surveillance culture and has security flaws.

Korea Communications Commission chairman Choi Sungjoon said Friday that parliament is considering the issue.

South Korea enacted a law in April to require mobile companies and parents to install one of about a dozen apps that filter objectionable material when people aged 18 or younger purchase a smartphone.

South Korea has not allowed any exceptions. Japan has a similar law but allows parents to opt out.

Critics said the law legalized surveillance of children and jeopardized privacy. Many of the apps not only blocked content that authorities deemed to be unfit for children but also collected data such as web browsing history.

The commission faced heavy criticism when government-sponsored Smart Sheriff, the most popular of the apps, was revealed to have serious [security flaws](#).

Experts at Internet watchdog group Citizen Lab and German software auditing firm Cure53 warned in September that Smart Sheriff's weak

security left the door wide open to hackers and put the personal information of some 380,000 users at risk.

Smart Sheriff was later pulled from the market and it stopped new downloads from November.

In addition to giving an opt-out option to parents, the proposal by 10 lawmakers submitted in October said mobile companies must explain to [parents](#) the functions of monitoring apps in detail, including the type of [personal information](#) collected from children.

Choi, the communications regulator, said the government should continue to play a role in protecting young smartphone users against harmful content.

"I think we have a general understanding that blocking these obscene materials for the kids is good for their personal growth," he said.

© 2015 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: South Korea considers opt out for child monitoring app (2015, November 20) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-11-south-korea-opt-child-app.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>
--