

# Facebook fined in South Korea for limiting user access

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A new AI tool created to help identify certain kinds of substance abuse based on a homeless youth's Facebook posts could provide homeless shelters with vital information to incorporate into each individual's case management plan. Credit: CC0 Public Domain

South Korea's telecoms regulator has fined Facebook for illegally

limiting user access to its services from late 2016 to 2017.

The Korea Communications Commission said Wednesday that Facebook should pay 396 million won (\$369,400) as a penalty for violating a law against hurting the interests of users. The regulator also recommended that the company fix its terms of use stipulating it cannot guarantee the quality of its services.

The complaint arose after Facebook rerouted some users' access to its services to networks in Hong Kong or the United States, instead of using domestic networks, without notifying them, the regulator said. That slowed connections for some local users of Facebook. Some complained they were unable to play videos on Facebook. The KCC said connections were as much as 4.5 times slower than before for some users during evening hours.

SK Broadband, a local fixed-line internet provider, received about 10 complaints per day for slow connections while LG UPlus, another [internet service provider](#), received an average of 34 complaints a day.

"Facebook did not actively look into the complaints from local telecoms service providers that users are complaining about slower connections and as a result its service quality was not maintained at an appropriate level," the KCC said in a statement. "When controversies erupted in South Korea about Facebook's rerouting, the company restored the connections to their original state around October and November of 2017."

The KCC said the U.S. social media giant violated a law against limiting access or subscriptions to its services without convincing reasons.

"We are disappointed with the KCC's decision. We strive to deliver optimal performance for all our users and will continue working with

Korean internet service providers toward this goal," Facebook said in a statement.

The probe was launched in May last year after reports it had interfered with some local users' access to Facebook and Instagram.

The KCC probed claims that Facebook intentionally slowed access while it negotiated network usage fees with internet [service](#) providers.

Facebook has gained traction in South Korea in recent years and politicians and celebrities often use it to interact with fans. More than 12 million [users](#) visit Facebook per day in South Korea, according to the KCC.

Facebook said it did not violate the law in part because its terms of use say it cannot guarantee its services will operate without delays or interference. KCC officials rejected that argument, saying the terms were unfair. It recommended the company amend its terms of use.

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