

Google taken to court

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Stichting Bescherming Privacybelangen and the Consumers Union are taking the next step in their fight against Google: the tech company is being taken to court today for large-scale privacy violations. Amongst other things, in the lawsuit it is demanded that Google stops with its constant surveillance and the sharing of data in online ad auctions, and also pays damages to consumers. Since the announcement of this action on May 23, more than 82,000 Dutch people have already joined the mass claim.

Google is acting in violation of Dutch and European privacy laws. Through its services and products, the tech giant collects users' online behavior and location data on an immense scale, without having provided (adequate) information about it and without users' consent. Google then shares their data, including highly sensitive data concerning health, ethnicity and political affiliation, with hundreds of parties through its online advertising platform. An Irish study ([link](#)) shows that the Internet activity and locations of residents in Europe are exposed to RTB ad auctions an average of nearly 380 times a day.

Ban on practices

Ada van der Veer, president of Stichting Bescherming Privacybelangen: Google is constantly monitoring everyone. Including through the use of third-party cookies - which are invisible - Google continues to collect data through others' websites and apps, even when someone is not using its products or services. This allows Google to monitor virtually the entire Internet behavior of its users. In addition, Google continually collects users' physical locations, even when they are not actively using their devices and think they are 'offline'.

Discussions had no result

The company combines the collected data and turns it into in-depth profiles of consumers' lives. Google sells those profiles without permission to other parties through its products and services, while it is totally unclear what they do with it. Google also transfers data to countries outside Europe, exposing Dutch consumers to the risk of surveillance by foreign governments. Van der Veer: 'The Foundation has spoken with Google about all of this, to no avail. It is now up to the courts to put a stop to Google's practices.'

Compensation

Sandra Molenaar, director of Consumers Union: 'In addition to Google having to stop its far-reaching privacy violations, the tech giant must also compensate consumers for the fundamental breach of their privacy. Therefore, the lawsuit also demands an amount of € 750 in damages for each consumer who has used Google plus another amount to be determined by the court for the value of their data that has been collected and shared by Google.'

Stand-up against Google

Already more than 82,000 consumers have signed up for the Google claim. Molenaar: 'We call on other consumers to follow suit. Everyone uses one or more Google products and services, so everyone has been harmed. The more people join this action, the bigger the fist we can make together against Google.'

Collaboration

The Stichting Bescherming Privacybelangen represents the interests of users of Google's products and services residing in the Netherlands who have been harmed by Google's privacy violations, and is working with the Consumentenbond in the case against Google. Consumentenbond Claimservice, a partnership between the Consumentenbond and ConsumentenClaim, processes the registrations of the aggrieved parties.

Links

- The Consumers' Association had Internet users use a counter to experience Google's frequent presence in unexpected places and made a video of this ([link](#))
- Sign up: <https://www.claimservice.nl/googleclaim>
- More about the Google-claim on <https://www.consumentenbond.nl/google> and <https://www.stichtingbeschermingprivacybelangen.com>

This is a joint press release from Stichting Bescherming Privacybelangen and the Consumentenbond.

