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Gaming Alert - December 20, 2022



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‘Fortnite’ maker Epic to pay US\$520m in US over child privacy allegations

Epic Games Inc, the maker of video game blockbuster Fortnite, on Monday agreed to pay US\$520 million to the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for contravening child privacy laws, and duping minors and adults into making unintended purchases online.

The FTC said the settlements from one of the biggest names in video gaming set records with Epic being found responsible for knowingly targeting players of Fortnite younger than 13, and subjecting children to harassment and trauma in chat rooms. In its complaint, the FTC said that Epic was aware that many children were playing Fortnite and collected their information without parental consent as is required by US law.

“Even when Epic obtained actual knowledge that particular Fortnite players were under 13, Epic took no steps to comply with [US law],” the FTC complaint said. The FTC also accused Epic of setting online chat defaults that allowed children and teens to play with strangers and subjected them to potential harassment. “Children and teens have been bullied, threatened, harassed, and exposed to dangerous and psychologically traumatizing issues such as suicide while on Fortnite,” the FTC said. For these

contraventions, Epic agreed to pay US\$275 million and is prohibited from enabling chats unless parents of users younger than 13 or teenage users give their direct consent.

In a separate complaint, Epic was accused of engaging in “dark patterns,” the practice of tricking users into making unwanted purchases or opting in to certain settings without their knowledge.

The FTC said that Epic “let children rack up unauthorized charges without any parental involvement” among other contraventions.

The commission also alleged that Epic made refunds or cancelation requests deliberately hard to execute and punished users who questioned payments.

The commission said the company agreed to pay US\$245 million in consumer refunds to resolve that complaint.

In a statement, Epic said that “no developer creates a game with the intention of ending up here.” [READ](#)

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