

Report on Supply Chain Compliance Volume 3, Number 16. August 20, 2020

Twitter faces fine for using two-factor identification for marketing

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After Twitter disclosed in October 2019 that it had used sensitive information for marketing purposes, investigations by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) may now result in a fine^[1] of up to USD 250 million. Twitter claimed the use of this data was unintentional in October, stating, “We recently discovered that when you provided an email address or phone number for safety or security purposes (for example, two-factor authentication) this data may have inadvertently been used for advertising purposes, specifically in our Tailored Audiences and Partner Audiences advertising system.”^[2]

The FTC found that the breach violated a 2011 consent order^[3] requiring Twitter to stop lying to its customers about how it used their data. Violating the order carries hefty penalties. The FTC has yet to make a final judgment.

“The matter remains unresolved, and there can be no assurance as to the timing or the terms of any final outcome,” Twitter stated in its 10-Q filing.^[4]

1 Jacob Kastrenakes, “Twitter faces \$250 million FTC fine for misusing emails and phone numbers,” The Verge, August 3, 2020, <https://bit.ly/31Ozi3d>.

2 PTI, “Twitter admits users data may have been used for advertising,” The Financial Express, October 9, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2PSJJNN>.

3 Federal Trade Commission, “FTC Accepts Final Settlement with Twitter for Failure to Safeguard Personal Information,” March 11, 2011, <https://bit.ly/3fTHDrz>.

4 Jacob Kastrenakes, “Twitter faces \$250 million FTC fine.”

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