

Verizon Wireless calls for halt to data mining cell phone numbers

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Company Urges Lawmakers to Protect Americans'™ Privacy

BELLEVUE, Wash. —“ Nearly four years ago, Verizon Wireless said that a wireless directory would be a “dumb idea.” Now, as another company leaks its plans to sell the cell phone numbers of private citizens, Verizon Wireless this week called on that company to halt the mining and sale of these numbers.

“Stop it. This is a violation of Americans'™ privacy. People expect their cell phone numbers to remain private,” said Steve Zipperstein, vice president and general counsel of Verizon Wireless. He added that Verizon Wireless intends to take whatever steps might be necessary, including litigation, to protect its customers'™ numbers and privacy.

According to its Web site, Seattle-based Intelius says that it will charge consumers a fee to find a number that is “unlisted or unpublished” and will identify a consumer's™ wireless service provider. This information is mined from the Internet, personal Web pages and other sources, and has not been authorized by individuals to be sold for this purpose.

“Trolling the Internet, using data mining techniques and simply buying lists to create a directory are actions that clearly violate a consumer's™ right to privacy,” Zipperstein continued. “Verizon Wireless has long refused to release our customers'™ numbers and we call on legislators and policy makers to ensure that what a consumer wants to be private stays that way.”

Verizon Wireless has a long-standing policy not to provide its customers'™ wireless numbers to any directory project or third party. Customers view their wireless phone numbers as private and consider their wireless phones as a place they don't have to face intrusions from telemarketers and other unsolicited calls and messages.

Verizon Wireless has been the leading advocate in the wireless sector of the technology industry fighting to preserve wireless customers' privacy and offer consumer-friendly policies. Over the past several years, the company has successfully brought legal action against telemarketers, winning injunctions, putting several companies out of business and putting others on notice that it will not tolerate these intrusions on its customers' privacy. On behalf of its customers, the company continues to investigate and pursue those who violate the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, which makes it illegal to use an auto-dialer and recorded messages to wireless phones.

Verizon Wireless calls for halt to data mining cell phone numbers by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources