

Florida AG files lawsuit against big streamer

Says Roku collects, sells sensitive data of kids

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The Florida Attorney General's office has filed a lawsuit against Roku, accusing the company of unlawfully collecting and selling the sensitive personal information of children.

The complaint was filed against the streaming giant and its Florida subsidiary in Collier Circuit Court, saying the illegal activity has occurred in the county – and across the state.

Attorney General James Uthmeier announced the lawsuit Oct. 14, via X.

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Lawsuit

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The legal action was brought under the Office of Parental Rights.

Jack Evans, a senior director for corporate and international communications for Roku, said the company didn't have "any comment at the moment."

The suit alleges the California-based technology company has ignored "clear indicia of the presence of children on its platform," and willfully disregarded its sharing of their personal data without obtaining parental consent in violation of state laws.

Roku is accused of violating the Florida Digital Bill of Rights and the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act.

In a statement, Uthmeier said: "Florida families deserve to know what is happening with their children's personal information. Parents – not technology companies – direct the upbringing of their children. We will hold any company that conceals or exploits that information accountable."

Roku provides access to a vast library of apps for movies, TV shows, live news and other entertainment content. Many of its users are children.

The complaint alleges that Roku shares children's viewing habits, voice recordings and other personal information, including their location, with "intrusive" data brokers and advertisers – without authorization or "meaningful notice" to Florida families.

According to the suit, one of the data brokers Roku sells information to is Kochava, a company that has "constructed profiles of tens of millions of children and physically tracks and discloses individuals' precise geolocation data collected from their personal devices."

Roku is accused of misrepresenting the effectiveness of its privacy controls and opt-out tools.

The lawsuit states: "Roku has developed a reputation as a company that invades its users' privacy. The Mozilla Foundation has called Roku the 'nosy,



Attorney General James Uthmeier attends the Speaker Designate Ceremony on Oct. 9.

ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

gossipy neighbor of connected devices.'"

According to the suit, Roku is in nearly half of U.S. households and earns billions of dollars every year by collecting data used to facilitate targeted advertising. It's accused of "burying its head in the sand" so it can continue profiting off the sale of valuable information about children.

The Attorney General's office is asking for civil penalties and injunctive relief to stop the illegal activity. It wants to ensure that Roku provides transparent disclosures, implements lawful parental-control mechanisms, and stops the unauthorized sale or processing of children's data.

If awarded, civil penalties could be as high as \$150,000 per violation under Florida's Digital Bill of Rights, and as much as \$10,000 per violation under the state's Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act.

Naples attorney Tom Grady is serving as counsel for the Attorney General's office.

"Roku does business throughout the state of Florida such that the venue would have been appropriate in any circuit," he said.

Asked why the complaint was filed in Collier, he said its circuit court has "outstanding judges and clerks, and a record of moving cases along to a prompt conclusion."

He added: "And yes, we have evidence of Roku use in Collier County."