

Google and Facebook Hit with \$8.8 Billion in Lawsuits in Accordance to New EU Privacy Laws

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Accusing Facebook, Google, WhatsApp, and Instagram of "intentionally" violating Europe's strict new privacy rules that officially went into effect on Friday, Austrian lawyer and privacy activist Max Schrems filed [four lawsuits](#) against the tech companies arguing they are still "[coercing users into sharing personal data](#)" despite rolling out new policies ostensibly aimed at complying with the new regulations.



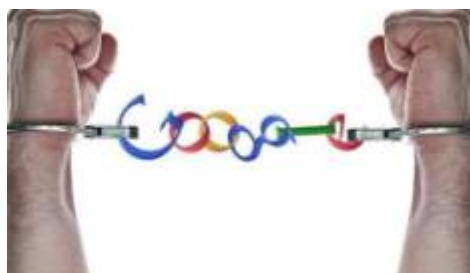
Titled the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the new rules require companies to explicitly and clearly request consent from users before mining their data, and Schrems argues in his complaints—which seek [fines totaling \\$8.8 billion](#)—that Google, Facebook, and the Facebook-owned Instagram and WhatsApp are still utilizing "forced consent" strategies to extract users' data when "the law requires that users be given a free choice unless a consent is strictly necessary for provision of the service," TechCrunch [explains](#).

"It's simple: Anything strictly necessary for a service does not need consent boxes anymore. For everything else users must have a real choice to say 'yes' or 'no,'" Schrems wrote in a statement. "Facebook has even blocked accounts of users who have not given consent. In the end users only had the choice to delete the account or hit the 'agree'-button—that's not a free choice."

While Facebook—which is currently embroiled in international controversy following the [Cambridge Analytica scandal](#)—insists that its new policies are in compliance with Europe's new regulatory framework, Schrems argues that Facebook and Google aren't even attempting to follow the new law.

"They totally know that it's going to be a violation, they don't even try to hide it," Schrems [told](#) the Financial Times.

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