



CIVIL

India's Department of Telecommunications (DoT) Issues Advisory to Social Media and Application Hosting Platforms on Removing Content Promoting Telecom Identifier Tampering

AUTHOR Rahul Sundaram

PUBLISHED 20 February 2025

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the Ministry of Communications, Government of India, has issued a significant advisory to social media platforms and application hosting platforms regarding the removal of content or applications that promote or enable the tampering of telecommunication identifiers. This advisory, dated February 18, 2025, is a response to the growing concern over the misuse of telecommunication systems, particularly the practice of CLI spoofing, which poses a serious threat to the integrity of communication networks and user security.

Table of contents

- [Background](#)
- [Legal Provisions Under the Telecommunications Act, 2023](#)
- [Requirements for Social Media and Application Hosting Platforms](#)
- [Consequences of Non-Compliance](#)
- [Significance of the Advisory](#)
- [Conclusion](#)

Background

The advisory was prompted by an incident where an influencer used a social media platform to demonstrate how to change a Calling Line Identification (CLI) number during calls, making the called party see a different number. This act, known as CLI spoofing, is a form of telecommunication identifier tampering, which is strictly prohibited under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. The DoT has emphasized that such practices not only violate the provisions of the Act but also undermine the security and reliability of telecommunication networks.

Legal Provisions Under the Telecommunications Act, 2023

The advisory highlights specific sections of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, which address the tampering of telecommunication identifiers:

- **Section 42(3)(c):** This section explicitly prohibits the tampering of telecommunication identification. Any act that alters or manipulates identifiers such as CLI numbers, IP addresses, or IMEI numbers is considered a violation.
- **Section 42(3)(e):** This section prohibits obtaining subscriber identity modules or other telecommunication identification through fraudulent means, including fraud, cheating, or impersonation.
- **Section 42(7):** Offences under this section are cognizable and non-bailable, with penalties that may include imprisonment for up to three years, fines up to fifty lakh rupees, or both.
- **Section 42(6):** This section provides for the same punishment for those who abet or promote offences under the Act.

Requirements for Social Media and Application Hosting Platforms

The advisory mandates that all social media platforms and application hosting platforms must:

1. **Remove Content Promoting Telecom Identifier Tampering:** Any content or applications that allow or promote the tampering of telecommunication identifiers must be removed immediately. This includes tutorials, guides, or applications that facilitate CLI spoofing or similar activities.
2. **Comply with Legal Provisions:** Platforms are required to ensure that their services do not facilitate or promote activities that violate the Telecommunications Act, 2023.
3. **Submit Compliance Confirmation:** Platforms must submit confirmation of compliance by February 28, 2025.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

The advisory warns that failure to comply with these requirements may result in legal action under Section 42 of the Telecommunications Act, 2023. Entities found to be involved in making or promoting content that aids in committing offences under the Act may face severe penalties, including imprisonment and hefty fines.

Significance of the Advisory

This advisory is a crucial step in ensuring the security and integrity of telecommunication networks in India. By requiring platforms to remove content that promotes telecom identifier tampering, the DoT aims to prevent the misuse of telecommunication systems and protect users from potential fraud and security threats. The advisory also underscores the importance of compliance with legal provisions and the need for platforms to actively monitor and regulate content that may violate the law.

Conclusion

The advisory issued by the Department of Telecommunications **to Social Media and Application Hosting Platforms on Removing Content Promoting Telecom Identifier Tampering** is a clear indication of the government's commitment to maintaining the integrity of telecommunication networks and protecting users from potential security threats. Social media platforms and application hosting platforms must take immediate action to comply with the advisory to avoid legal consequences. This move is expected to significantly reduce the incidence of telecom identifier tampering and promote a safer digital environment for all users. For further details write to contact@indialaw.in