

YouTube Faces Suit Over Automatic Renewal Practices

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Last month, plaintiffs filed a class action lawsuit against YouTube (and its parent company Google), alleging that the company violates Oregon laws by automatically renewing paid subscriptions to premium music, television, and video streaming services without adequately disclosing the offer terms or getting consent.

Specifically, the complaint alleges that the company violated Oregon's automatic renewal law by:

- failing to present the automatic renewal offer terms in a clear and conspicuous manner and in visual proximity to the request for consent;
- charging consumers without first obtaining their affirmative consent; and
- failing to provide an acknowledgment that includes the offer terms, cancellation policy, and information on how to cancel in a manner that can be retained by the consumer.

The plaintiffs also allege that YouTube made it “exceedingly difficult and unnecessarily confusing” for consumers to cancel their subscriptions.

We expect that suits involving automatic renewals are likely to increase, so if you offer subscription services, you should take steps to assess your level of compliance. Even if you don't offer subscriptions, it's worth noting how the allegations in this suit fits into some of the broader trends we've written about recently.

For example, the complaint accuses YouTube of using “dark patterns,” a topic that is receiving [increased attention](#) from federal and state regulators. And it questions the effectiveness of the company's disclosures, a topic about which the FTC intends to issue [new guidelines](#).