

[Ask an Analyst](#)[Report technical issue](#)

20 December 2018

USA: District Court approves Consumers Union \$16.4M settlement over sale of subscriber information

DataGuidance confirmed, on 20 December 2018, with Richard B. Newman, Attorney at Hinch Newman LLP, that the U.S. Court for the Southern District of New York ('the District Court') had issued, on 4 December 2018, its judgment in *Ruppel v. Consumers Union of United States, Inc.*, in which it formally approved a class action settlement whereby Consumers Union agreed to pay \$16.4 million for the sale of subscribers' personal information ('the Settlement').

Newman noted, "The lead plaintiff alleged that he had received unwanted commercial solicitations, including telemarketing calls, because Consumers Union had sold his personal information to data brokers without consent [...] To some degree, it is ironic that Consumers Union is alleged to have violated Michigan's Preservation of Personal Privacy Act of 1988, because Consumers Union often advocates for stronger consumer regulatory protections".

In addition, Newman highlighted, "The Settlement, believed to be the largest ever reached in a Michigan data privacy case [...] comes on the heels of recently enacted legislation in Vermont that regulates data brokers that buy and sell personal information. Businesses must be very careful and examine data use practices because government plaintiff and consumer-driven privacy litigation will almost certainly accelerate in 2019 as US states continue to pass legislation on the heels of Europe's General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679)."

RELATED CONTENT

NEWS POST

[Ireland: DPC announces inquiry into Twitter data breaches](#)

LEGAL RESEARCH

Opinion of Advocate General Michael Bobek in Fashion ID GmbH & Co. KG v. Verbraucherzentrale NRW e.V. (C-40/17) (19 December 2018)

NEWS POST

District of Columbia: AG files lawsuit against Facebook for failure to protect user data

NEWS POST

EU: AG issues opinion in Fashion ID v. Verbraucherzentrale regarding processing and third-party plugins

NEWS POST

Cyprus: Commissioner publishes 2017 annual report