

## Is Siri Secretly Listening?

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You ever feel like your phone is listening to you? You ever mention a product in casual conversation, and then suddenly start seeing ads for it? There's a good chance that's exactly what's going on—or at least that's what a lawsuit against Apple says.

In early January 2025, Apple agreed to pay \$95 million to settle a class action lawsuit accusing the company of using its Siri voice assistant to violate consumer privacy rights. The five-year old lawsuit alleged that Apple, for over a decade, has surreptitiously activated Siri to record conversations through iPhones and other devices that have Siri functionality. The lawsuit alleges that devices have been capturing private conversations even when people didn't use the trigger words, "Hey Siri." Additionally, Apple then shared these recorded conversations with advertisers, so that the advertisers can target consumers with ads of goods and services that seem more relevant and personal.

While Apple did not admit any liability or wrongdoing as part of the settlement agreement, the lawsuit contradicts CEO Tim Cook's commitment to protecting the privacy of its customers. Regardless of executive's comments, these allegations raise major concerns about consumer privacy. If voice assistants could be activated and record without users knowing, what other data leaks could be occurring? This is just one example of legal scrutiny surrounding voice activated technology. Voice assistants like Siri, Alexa, or Google have assured users that their devices are only listening when activated, but lawsuits like these suggest otherwise.

Although this lawsuit is being settled, the settlement still must be approved by a U.S. District Judge. The lawyers have proposed a judicial settlement conference for February 14. If approved, tens of millions of consumers who owned Apple devices from September 17, 2014, through the end of 2024 could file claims and receive compensation. For all readers who own Apple products, don't quit your day job. Each consumer could receive up to \$20 per Siri-equipped device, the payment could vary based on the volume of claims. The court documents suggest only 3% to 5% of eligible consumers are expected to file a claim. Eligible consumers will be limited to seeking compensation for a maximum of five devices.

The proposed \$95 million dollar settlement does seem large, but it's a fraction of the \$705 billion in profits Apple has netted since September 2014. It's also a small portion of the estimated \$1.5 billion that Apple could have been required to pay had this case gone to trial and resulted in a judgment against Apple. Additionally, the settlement fund may shrink considerably after attorney's fees are factored in. The attorneys who filed the lawsuit may seek up to \$29.6 million from the settlement fund to cover their fees and other expenses, according to court documents. While "justice" may be coming soon, there are still significant concerns over data privacy, meaning that regulators may need to push for stricter laws governing how companies collect and use audio recordings. As voice assistants continue to evolve, one thing remains clear—our devices might be more attentive than we realize.

For more information, check out the full article [here!](#)