



Digital Intelligence Unit

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Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Communications** has decided to set up a **Digital Intelligence Unit (DIU)** as a nodal agency to deal with complaints of unsolicited commercial communication (UCC) and cases of financial fraud, especially in the digital payments space.

- Apart from the DIU a Telecom Analytics for **Fraud Management and Consumer Protection (TAF COP)** will also be set up at all the 22 license service area levels.
- It would also ensure strict compliance of the **Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preferences Regulations (TCCCPR)** 2018 which provides a revised regulatory framework aimed at regulating '**unsolicited commercial communication**' (UCC) in India.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - Recently, the Delhi High Court (HC) ordered the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** to ensure “complete and strict” implementation of the regulation issued by it in 2018 for curbing **Unsolicited Commercial Communications (UCC)**.
 - Earlier in November, 2020 **TRAI had imposed fines of up to Rs 30 crore on telecom companies** such as Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, Vodafone Idea and Reliance Jio Infocomm for not putting enough measures to control UCC, which occurred over their networks between April and June 2020.
 - The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** had, in its annual report for 2018-19, said frauds related to misuse of credit and debit cards, cloning of identities, and spam amounted to Rs 220 crore in the year. DIU could mitigate this menace.

- **Digital Intelligence Unit**

- **Objective:**

- To coordinate with various law enforcement agencies, financial institutions and telecom service providers in investigating any fraudulent activity involving telecom resources.

- **Significance:**

- **Checking Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC):**

- The issue of UCC has been a major area of concern for the Telecom Ministry as well as the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)**. It has from time to time fined telecom operators for not following its directives on stopping UCC.

- **Effective Redressal of Complaints:**

- Along with DIU, a web and mobile application as well as a SMS-based system shall be developed for effective redressal of complaints.

- **Instilling Trust In the Digital Ecosystem:**

- The DIU system will strengthen the trust of people in the digital ecosystem and will make financial digital transactions primarily through mobile more secure and reliable, which will result in promotion of Digital India.

- **UCC on over-the-top (OTT) Service Providers:**

- TRAI is also about to come up with a consultation paper to deal with **UCC on over-the-top (OTT) service providers**. The launched systems does not address the issue of UCC on over-the-top (OTT) service providers such as **WhatsApp**.

- **The Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulation, 2018** tightened the norms for all

- stakeholders in the telecom ecosystem to have facilities for users to complain against unsolicited calls or SMS. However, OTT players have thus far remained untethered from regulations as far as UCC is concerned.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

- **Statutory Body:**

- Established by an Act of Parliament (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997)

- **Objectives:**

- **To regulate telecom services**, including fixation/revision of tariffs for telecom services.

- **Provide a fair and transparent policy environment** which promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition.

- **Recent Amendment:**

The TRAI Act was amended in the year 2000 to establish a **Telecommunications Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)** to take over the adjudicatory and disputes functions from TRAI.

Source:IE