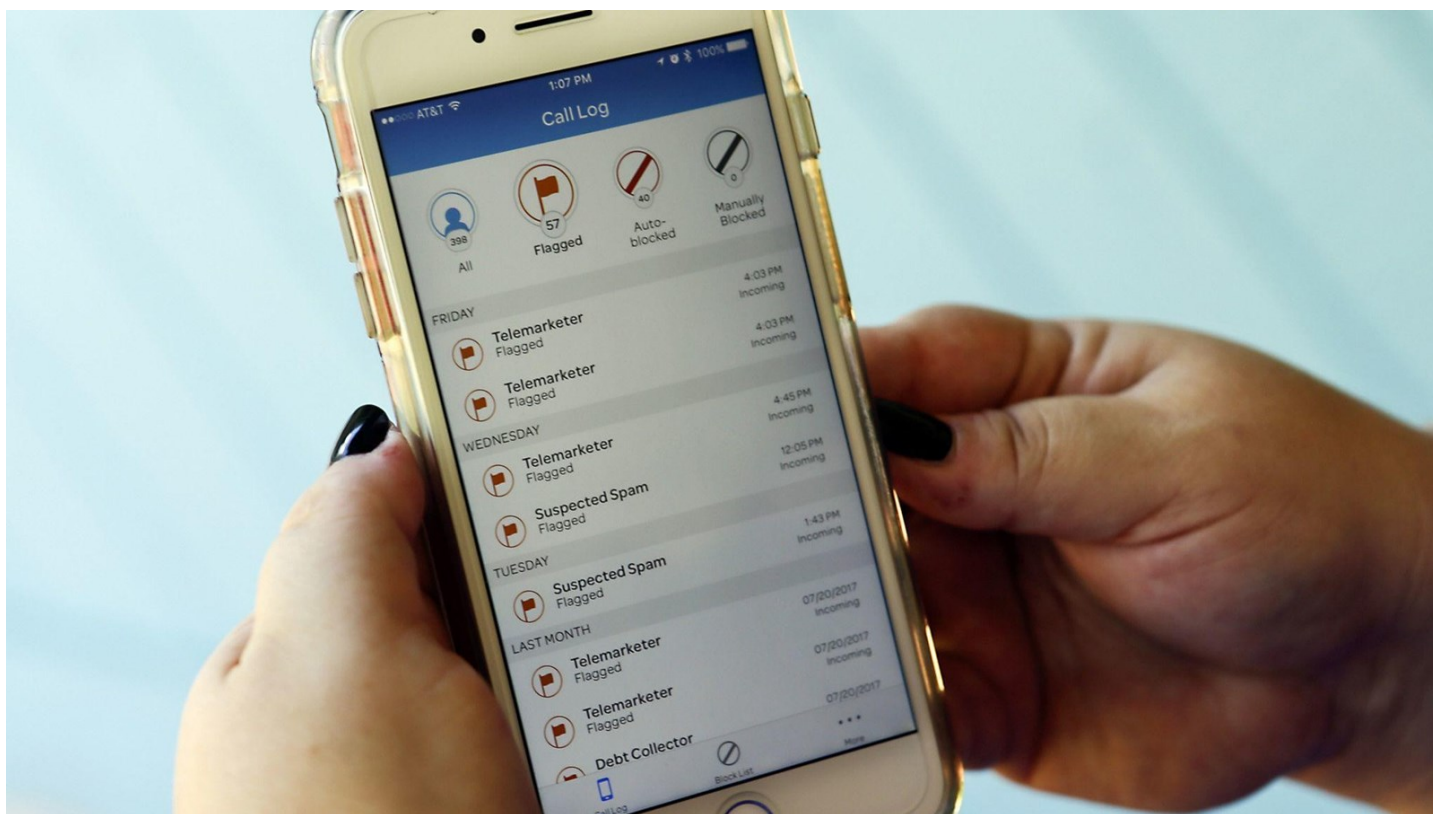


Kissimmee man made millions of illegal robocalls, FTC says



A sweep led by the FTC called “Operation Call it Quits” caught telemarketers responsible for over a billion illegal robocalls. (John Raoux /Associated Press)

BY CAROLINE GLENN

The Federal Trade Commission is suing a Kissimmee man that it alleges made illegal robocalls for a decade with a computer auto-dialer used by his companies and others.

For the past 10 years, Derek Jason Bartoli reportedly operated a computer system he developed for numerous telemarketer clients — many of which are also now facing lawsuits — including those that sold cruises and vacation packages, medical devices, auto warranty, life insurance and debt relief services.

Bartoli has admitted to the illegal activity, according to the lawsuit, which seeks \$2 million in civil penalties.

Over six months in 2017, Bartoli made 57,134,629 illegal robocalls, the FTC says. Even after Bartoli was contacted by the FTC, he continued to run his robocall operation, according to the suit.

The investigation involving Bartoli is part of a joint-agency robocall sweep led by the FTC called “Operation Call it Quits,” in which telemarketers responsible for more than a billion illegal robocalls were implicated.

Neither a phone number nor an attorney for Bartoli was available.

Andrew Smith, the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection director, said at a news conference Tuesday the operation involved serial callers who had made more than 3 billion illegal calls.

Smith said the FTC received 3.8 million complaints about robocalls last year and to date has taken on 145 cases involving illegal calls.

The federal lawsuit, filed in U.S. District court in Osceola County last week, alleges Bartoli used the system to call millions of people listed on the national "Do Not Call" registry, which is prohibited.

Bartoli also is accused of using fake caller IDs to entice people to take his calls and using prerecorded messages to make sales, also prohibited practices.

Bartoli's system is "widely employed in the illegal telemarketing industry," the lawsuit states.

Several companies that Bartoli made robocalls for have also since been sued by the FTC, including Orlando-based companies Lilly Management and Marketing and Hearing Better for Life.

Bartoli was paid by companies that used his system as well as for any sales his system made. Bartoli also made illegal robocalls through several of his now-defunct companies, the suit says.

Got a news tip? You can email Caroline at cglenn@orlandosentinel.com or call 407-420-5685, and follow her on Twitter [@bycarolineglenn](https://twitter.com/bycarolineglenn).