

16 arrested for illegally selling Apple user data in China

Chinese police have arrested 16 employees or former employees of an Apple contractor for selling the personal information of iPhone users.

In January, police in Cangnan county of eastern China's Zhejiang Province suspected several employees or former employees of an Apple distributor and a contractor of stealing user data, the county procuratorate said in a statement Friday.

In May, police caught 22 people, 20 of whom worked for the two companies, from Guangdong, Jiangsu and Fujian provinces.

So far, sixteen have been arrested and four remain under investigation.

Fifteen of those arrested work for Guangzhou Telecom Yingke Company, a contractor which provides consulting and after-sales service for Apple.

Prosecutors said that starting from August 2013, the chief suspects Yang, Li and Gan, used their internal system to illegally check personal information of iPhone users.

They illegally obtained names, telephone numbers, email accounts and addresses of Apple customers.

In July, 2014, they were fired by the company, but continued to collude with company staff to steal information until August 2016

Each item of information was sold at 10 to 180 yuan (US\$26.24).

Preliminary investigation showed that they made about 50 million yuan (about US\$7.35 million) of illegal profit.