

# OPPO A96 set for Philippine launch on May 4



OPPO on Tuesday announced it is launching the A96 in the Philippines, the latest addition to its A-Series smartphone line.

The smart device brand said in a statement that the OPPO A96 will be launched in the country on May 4.

“Time and time again, the A-Series has been the go-to smartphone of mobile gamers, which is why OPPO levels up this line to continue providing everyone with a device they deserve. For years, we have been committed to delivering true value-for-money smartphones with uncompromised and superior performance for gaming and even productivity of

Filipinos,” Chiqui Tapawan, head of marketing communications of OPPO Philippines, was quoted as saying in the statement.

“As it is designed to be powerful, we hope the OPPO A96 would be a testament to our commitment,” Ms. Tapawan said.

OPPO said the A96 features a “long-lasting battery, powerful hardware, and software for superior performance” and is geared towards mobile gamers.

The phone is powered by Qualcomm Snapdragon 680 4G Mobile Platform and will come with 8GB memory and 256GB storage for smooth gameplay.

It features a battery capacity of 5000mAh and supports 33W SUPERVOOCTM flash charging.

The OPPO A96 has a 6.59-inch Color-Rich Punch-Hole Display with a 90Hz refresh rate and 1080x2412 FHD resolution.

As for its cameras, the smartphone is equipped with a 16-megapixel (MP) front camera and rear dual camera setup featuring a 50MP main camera and 2MP bokeh or macro lens.

The A95 will come in the OPPO Glow Design and is scratch and fingerprint-resistant. It is available in two colors: Starry Black and Pearl Pink. — **BVR**

## Tech giants duped into giving up clients’ personal data

MAJOR technology companies have been duped into providing sensitive personal information about their customers in response to fraudulent legal requests, and the data have been used to harass and even sexually extort minors, according to four federal law enforcement officials and two industry investigators.

The companies that have complied with the bogus requests include Meta Platforms, Inc., Apple, Inc., Alphabet, Inc.’s Google, Snap, Inc., Twitter, Inc. and Discord, Inc., according to three of the people. All of the people requested anonymity to speak frankly about the devious new brand of online crime that involves underage victims.

The fraudulently obtained data have been used to target specific women and minors, and in some cases to pressure them into creating and sharing sexually explicit material and to retaliate against them if they refuse, according to the six people.

The tactic is considered by law enforcement and other investigators to be the newest criminal tool to obtain personally identifiable information that can be used not only for financial gain, but to extort and harass innocent victims.

It is particularly unsettling since the attackers are successfully impersonating law enforcement officers. The tactic is

impossible for victims to protect against, as the best way to avoid it would be to not have an account on the targeted service, according to the people.

It’s not clear how often the fraudulent data requests have been used to sexually extort minors. Law enforcement and the technology companies are still trying to assess the scope of the problem. Since the requests appear to come from legitimate police agencies, it’s difficult for companies to know when they have been tricked into giving out user data, the people said.

Nonetheless, the law enforcement officials and investigators said it appears the method has become more prevalent in recent months.

“I know that emergency data requests get used for in real life-threatening emergencies every day, and it is tragic that this mechanism is being abused to sexually exploit children,” said Alex Stamos, a former chief security officer at Facebook who now works as a consultant.

“Police departments are going to have to focus on preventing account compromises with multifactor authentication and better analysis of user behavior, and tech companies should implement a confirmation callback policy as well as push law enforcement

to use their dedicated portals where they can better detect account takeovers,” Mr. Stamos said.

A Google spokesperson said, “In 2021, we uncovered a fraudulent data request coming from malicious actors posing as legitimate government officials. We quickly identified an individual who appeared to be responsible and notified law enforcement. We are actively working with law enforcement and others in the industry to detect and prevent illegitimate data requests.”

Facebook workers review every data request for “legal sufficiency and use advanced systems and processes to validate law enforcement requests and detect abuse,” a spokesperson said. Similarly, Rachel Racusen, a Snap spokesperson, said the company carefully reviews each request it gets from law enforcement “to ensure its validity and have multiple safeguards in place to detect fraudulent requests.”

A Discord spokesperson said they validate all emergency requests. Twitter and Apple declined to comment.

Emergency requests typically don’t include a court order signed by a judge, so companies are usually under no legal obligation to provide data. But it is a generally accepted practice that companies

will turn over limited data in response to “good faith” requests by law enforcement involving imminent danger.

Last month, Bloomberg News reported that Apple and Meta, the parent company of Facebook, provided customer data to hackers who masqueraded as law enforcement officials. At that time, three people familiar with the matter said the fake requests appeared to be primarily used for financial fraud schemes.

The exact method of the attacks varies, but they tend to follow a general pattern, according to the law enforcement officers. It starts with the perpetrator compromising the e-mail system of a foreign law enforcement agency.

Then, the attacker will forge an “emergency data request” to a technology company, seeking information about a user’s account, the officers said. Such requests are used by law enforcement to obtain information amount online accounts in cases involving imminent danger such as suicide, murder or abductions. — **Bloomberg**

**FULL STORY**

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## Cisco boosts efforts to address digital gap, skills shortage in PHL

TECHNOLOGY COMPANY Cisco is boosting efforts to help the country address gaps in access to information and communications technology (ICT) resources and limited manpower in the field of technology.

Through its country digital acceleration (CDA) program, the company hopes to help the Philippines achieve inclusive and sustainable digitization, Cisco Senior Vice-President & Global Innovation Officer Guy Diedric said in an e-mailed statement on Wednesday.

“Our CDA program uniquely positions Cisco and our partners to be the bridge between a country’s digital ambitions and the benefits of a digital future,” he added.

According to Cisco, its model is based on engagement across ecosystem partners in the public and private sectors.

“Through CDA, we can support our community leaders in addressing key societal challenges by harnessing strategic

co-investment and relentless co-innovation,” Mr. Diedric said.

The company noted it has invested “hundreds of millions of dollars” over the past five years in more than 40 countries.

It has 1,200 active or completed projects across 44 countries through the CDA program.

“Our local CDA program [was launched] two years ago with the idea to build not just a campaign, but an open platform wherein existing, ongoing, and upcoming ICT-related plans can be enacted on—whether it be through access to Cisco technology, knowledge-sharing, or stakeholder engagement, regardless of sector or industry,” Cisco Philippines Managing Director Zaza Nicart said.

Experts have said the Philippines should continue to develop digital infrastructure in order to drive economic recovery, as the pandemic helped accelerate digital transformation initiatives for both the public and private sector. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

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