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JUDGE ORDERS ONLINE COMPANY TO PAY \$1.2 MILLION FOR AUTOMATIC-RENEWAL VIOLATIONS

Santa Cruz County District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell announced today that the online company, *J2 Global, Inc.*, has been ordered to pay over \$1.2 million in a court-ordered judgment arising from an action about its sales practices. The internet services company automatically renewed subscriptions in violation of state law.

Prosecutors with the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, and other members of the California Auto Renewal Task Force (CART), found that the Hollywood-based firm did not properly disclose to its customers that their fax service subscriptions would be automatically renewed after a trial period. The Task Force also includes the District Attorney's Offices of Santa Clara, San Diego, Los Angeles Counties, and the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office. Under California law, online businesses must clearly and conspicuously disclose all automatic renewal charges and terms and get affirmative consent of those recurring charges from the consumer.

The lawsuit filed in the Los Angeles County Superior Court, alleged that the violations occurred between April 2012 and November 2016 and involved a service sold by *J2 Global* that allows people to send, receive and store faxes without a fax machine.

The \$1.2 million includes \$585,000 in restitution plus penalties and administrative costs. The company is required to notify, by email, California consumers who are eligible for restitution.

District Attorney Rosell said about the judgement, "As members of this Task Force, our office is committed to protecting consumers from those businesses that automatically renew contracts without prior approval. We will continue to hold them accountable for their deceptive practices."