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A woman passes by a google-themed barrier in front of a Google data center in Fredericia, Denmark, on Nov. 30, 2020. (Frank Cilius/Ritzau Scanpix/AFP via Getty Images)

MEDIA & BIG TECH PREMIUM

Google Hit With Suit by 36 states, Washington Over Alleged Antitrust Violations

BY ISABEL VAN BRUGEN July 8, 2021 Updated: July 8, 2021

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[Google](#) was hit by a lawsuit from a group of state attorneys on July 7 over alleged violations of antitrust laws by its Android app store.

Attorneys general for 36 states and Washington are suing the Big Tech company in a 144-page complaint filed in a Northern California federal court. The group alleges that Google's Play Store for Android apps violates antitrust laws.

The complaint centers on the control Google is able to exert on the Play Store, allowing it to collect commissions of up to 30 percent on digital transactions within apps installed on Android-powered smartphones. Those devices represent more than 80 percent of the worldwide smartphone market.

Led by Utah, North Carolina, Tennessee, New York, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, and Nebraska, the filing marks the fourth major antitrust lawsuit filed by U.S. government agencies against the company since October 2020.

Other lawsuits filed against Google include a complaint by a bipartisan coalition of states, as well as one filed by the Department of Justice. It echoes allegations made against the company by mobile game maker Epic Games in August 2020. That case is awaiting trial.

The complaint contends that Google has deployed various tactics and set up anticompetitive barriers to ensure it distributes more than 90 percent of the apps on Android devices—a market share that the attorneys general argue represents an illegal monopoly. It also alleges that Google has been abusing that power to reap billions of dollars in profit at the expense of consumers, who end up paying higher prices to subsidize the commissions, and the makers of apps, who have less money and incentive to innovate.

“Google must be held accountable for harming small businesses and consumers,” Utah Attorney General Sean D. Reyes said in a statement. “It must stop using its monopolistic power and hyper-dominant market position to unlawfully leverage billions of added dollars from smaller companies, competitors, and consumers beyond what should be paid.”

Responding to the lawsuit, Google called the allegations “meritless.”

“We don’t impose the same restrictions as other mobile operating systems do,” Wilson White, Google’s senior director of Public Policy, [wrote](#) on July 7. “So, it’s strange that a group of state attorneys general chose to file a lawsuit attacking a system that provides more openness and choice than others.”

Google didn’t respond to a request for comment by press time.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.