



# Department of Justice

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## **STATEMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF CIVIL ANTITRUST LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST GOOGLE**

This morning the Department of Justice, along with eleven states, filed a civil lawsuit against Google for unlawfully maintaining a monopoly in general search services and search advertising in violation of the U.S. antitrust laws. This is a monumental case for the Department of Justice and, more importantly, for the American consumer.

Today, millions of Americans rely on the Internet and online platforms for their daily lives. For years, there have been broad, bipartisan concerns about business practices leading to massive concentrations of economic power in our digital economy. Hearing those concerns, I have made it a primary commitment of my tenure as Attorney General for the Department of Justice to examine whether technology markets have been deprived of free, fair, and open competition.

To that end, the Department of Justice formally opened a review of online market-leading platforms in July 2019. One part of this review is the Antitrust Division's investigation of Google. Over the course of the last 16 months, the Antitrust Division collected convincing evidence that Google no longer competes only on the merits but instead uses its monopoly power – and billions in monopoly profits – to lock up key pathways to search on mobile phones, browsers, and next generation devices, depriving rivals of distribution and scale. The end result is that no one can feasibly challenge Google's dominance in search and search advertising.

This lack of competition harms users, advertisers, and small businesses in the form of fewer choices, reduced quality (including on metrics like privacy), higher advertising prices, and less innovation.

The complaint filed today against Google is based on violations of the U.S. antitrust laws and is separate and distinct from concerns raised about content moderation and political censorship by online platforms. As part of the Department's broader review of market-leading online platforms, we listened to myriad public concerns about how online platforms fail their users. While many of the concerns we heard were competition-related, others were not – like online child exploitation, public safety, and censorship. Outside the Antitrust Division, the Department has considered these issues separately, including by advocating for Section 230 legislative reforms. Our antitrust investigation of Google, by contrast, is based solely on

traditional antitrust principles and is aimed at promoting consumer welfare through robust competition.

Twenty-five years ago, the Department of Justice sued Microsoft, paving the way for a new wave of innovative tech companies – including Google. The increased competition following the *Microsoft* case enabled Google to grow from a small start-up to an Internet behemoth. Unfortunately, once Google itself gained dominance, it resorted to the same anticompetitive playbook. If we let Google continue its anticompetitive ways, we will lose the next wave of innovators and Americans may never get to benefit from the “next Google.” The time has come to restore competition to this vital industry.

Today’s challenge against Google – the monopoly gatekeeper of the Internet – shows the tremendous efforts of the Department, in particular the hardworking men and women of the Antitrust Division, and our state partners to restore competition in markets beholden to an unlawful monopolist. This is an important milestone, but not the end of our review of market-leading online platforms. The Department will continue to vigorously investigate and enforce the antitrust laws where appropriate to protect and promote competition in the digital economy for the benefit of the American consumer.

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