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SOUTH CAROLINA SUES MONOPOLIST GOOGLE FOR VIOLATING ANTITRUST LAWS



South Carolina Joins DOJ and 10 other states in Filing Complaint Against Google to Restore Competition in Search and Search Advertising Markets

(COLUMBIA, S.C.) – October 20, 2020 – Today, South Carolina Attorney General Alan

Wilson — along with the Department of Justice and ten other state Attorneys General — filed a civil antitrust lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to prevent Google from unlawfully maintaining monopolies through anticompetitive and exclusionary practices in the search and search advertising markets. The participating state Attorneys General offices represent Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, South Carolina, and Texas.

“Google’s monopoly is hurting consumers in South Carolina and across the country and we think the company’s actions violate federal laws,” Attorney General Wilson said. “This affects every device that has access to the internet, from computers to cell phones.”

As one of the wealthiest companies on the planet with a market value of \$1 trillion, Google is the monopoly gatekeeper to the internet for billions of users and countless advertisers worldwide. For years, Google has accounted for almost 90 percent of all search queries in the United States and has used anticompetitive tactics to maintain and extend its monopolies in search and search advertising.

As alleged in the Complaint, Google has entered into a series of exclusionary agreements to lock up the primary avenues through which users access search engines, and thus the internet, by requiring that Google be set as the default or exclusive search engine on billions of mobile devices and computers worldwide. In particular, the Complaint alleges that Google has unlawfully maintained monopolies in search and search advertising by:

Entering into exclusivity agreements that forbid preinstallation of any competing search service.

Entering into tying and other arrangements that force preinstallation of its search applications in prime locations on mobile devices and make them undeletable, regardless of consumer preference.

Entering into long-term agreements with Apple that require Google to be the default – and *de facto* exclusive – general search engine on Apple’s popular Safari browser and other Apple search tools.

Generally using monopoly profits to buy preferential treatment for its search engine on devices, web browsers, and other search access points, creating a continuous and self-reinforcing cycle of monopolization.

These and other anticompetitive practices harm competition and consumers, reducing the ability of innovative new companies to develop, compete, and discipline Google’s behavior.

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South Carolina Sues Monopolist Google For Violating Antitrust Laws

Oct 20, 2020

South Carolina Joins DOJ and 10 other states in Filing Complaint Against Google to Restore Competition in Search and Search Advertising Markets (COLUMBIA, S.C.) – October 20, 2020 – Today, South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson — along with the Department of Justice and ten other state Attorneys General — filed a civil antitrust lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to prevent Google from unlawfully maintaining monopolies through anticompetitive and exclusionary practices in the search and search advertising markets. The participating state Attorneys General offices represent Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana,...

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Horry County Man Arrested on Child Sexual Abuse Material* Charges

Oct 16, 2020

(COLUMBIA, S.C.) – Oct. 16, 2020 – South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson announced the arrest of Ryan John Hibma, 33, of Myrtle Beach, S.C., on 11 charges connected to the sexual exploitation of minors. Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force investigators with the Horry County Sheriff’s Office made the arrest. Investigators with the Attorney General’s Office, also a member of the state’s ICAC Task Force, assisted with the investigation. Investigators received a CyberTipline report from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) which led them to Hibma. Investigators state Hibma distributed and possessed files of child...

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The antitrust laws protect our free market economy and forbid monopolists from engaging in anticompetitive practices. They also empower the South Carolina Attorney General as *parens patriae* on behalf of South Carolina citizens to bring cases like this one to remedy violations and restore competition. Decades ago DOJ's and a state AG coalition's case against Microsoft recognized that the antitrust laws forbid anticompetitive agreements by high-technology monopolists to require preinstalled default status, to shut off distribution channels to rivals, and to make software undeletable. The Complaint alleges that Google is using similar agreements itself to maintain and extend its own dominance.

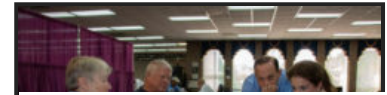
The Complaint alleges that Google's anticompetitive practices have had harmful effects on competition and consumers. Google has foreclosed any meaningful search competitor from gaining vital distribution and scale, eliminating competition for a majority of search queries in the United States. By restricting competition in search, Google's conduct has harmed consumers by reducing the quality of search (including on dimensions such as privacy, data protection, and use of consumer data), lessening choice in search, and impeding innovation. By suppressing competition in advertising, Google has the power to charge advertisers more than it could in a competitive market and to reduce the quality of the services it provides them. Through filing the lawsuit, South Carolina seeks to stop Google's anticompetitive conduct and restore competition for American consumers, advertisers, and all companies now reliant on the internet economy.

Google is a limited liability company organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware, and is headquartered in Mountain View, California. Google is owned by Alphabet Inc., a publicly traded company incorporated and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware and headquartered in Mountain View, California.

You can read the [complaint here](#).

PHOTO GALLERY

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Attorney General Wilson attends Greenwood V.A.L.O.R. clinic free legal help for veterans, active-duty and Reserves

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