

AG Kaul: Wisconsin, Michigan file motion to join federal antitrust lawsuit against Google

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MADISON, Wis. – Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul and Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel today announced that their states are planning to join the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) in a landmark lawsuit alleging that Google violated federal antitrust laws by entering into exclusionary business agreements that shut out competitors and suppressed innovation. Google’s anticompetitive behavior has unlawfully maintained the company’s monopoly on internet search and search-based advertising at the expense of consumers. Nearly 90 percent of all internet searches in the U.S. are on Google, leaving consumers with little other choice than to accept its less popular privacy practices and data collection policies.

“Google has amassed an enormous amount of data about consumers that it uses to block competition. Replacing Google’s monopoly with fair competition in the market for search services will benefit consumers,” said Attorney General Kaul.

“Google’s alleged aggressive and anticompetitive business practices have allowed it to solidify its grasp on the market and stifled competition to the detriment of consumers,” Attorney General Nessel said. “By monopolizing the internet search functions used by so many, and the lucrative advertisements that are tied to it, the company has established significant control over what marketing products are being pushed out to consumers, the search results users are presented and, most importantly, the data those users have – in some cases, unwittingly – provided. This is an unlawful practice that must be corrected to provide the market with competitive alternatives to improve search-engine capabilities for the benefit of consumers.”

The lawsuit alleges that in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, Google pays billions of dollars each year to device makers like Apple and Samsung, and to carriers like AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile to make Google their default internet search engine. Some of those contracts prohibit similar agreements with competing search engines. Google is the preinstalled default search provider on all Apple devices and on virtually all devices running the Android operating system, among others. On mobile devices, Google's exclusionary agreements cover more than 80 percent of all U.S. search queries. Even for search queries not covered by Google's exclusionary contracts, almost half occur on Google-owned search access points, such as Chrome, its browser, or Pixel, its smartphone.

Google strengthens its monopoly by capitalizing on its immense scale. This anticompetitive behavior prevents new market entrants from developing viable alternatives that could improve the options and quality of online searching. Rival search engines, if enabled to gain market share, could also serve as a market check on Google's practices.

If approved by U.S. District Judge Mehta, the motion filed this week by Wisconsin and Michigan, along with the Motion for Joinder filed last week by the State of California, will mean that fourteen states have joined the U.S. DOJ's lawsuit.

Other states participating in the U.S. DOJ lawsuit are Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, South Carolina, and Texas.

Relevant court documents are [available here](#).