

# Google rivals pressure EU regulators to end its default search monopoly on browsers

Article

**The news:** Search engines **DuckDuckGo**, **Ecosia**, **Lilo**, and **Qwant** are calling on EU legislators to end Google's "hoarding of default positions" on web browsers like **Chrome**, **Firefox**, and

**Safari** browsers, per Insider.

- “Google would not have become the overall market gatekeeper they are today without years of locking up these defaults,” the rivals said in an open letter to the EU.

**The details:** Google’s rival search services are demanding that regulators implement rules to make it easier for browser users to set up or switch to alternative search engines.

- DuckDuckGo, Ecosia, Lilo, and Qwant want alternative search engines to be easily accessible and to be “only one-click away” in browser settings. For example, changing the default search engine on Android devices takes users 15-plus clicks, [per](#) DuckDuckGo.
- Google reportedly paid Apple \$15 billion to remain the default search engine on the Safari browser on Macs, iPhones, and iPads in 2021, [per](#) Gadgets360. It is also paying Mozilla \$450 million per year to be the Firefox browser’s default search [per](#) Android Headlines.
- Google’s Chrome browser commands **69% of the market** and has Google Search as the default search engine.

**The bigger picture:** Search is Google’s most lucrative business, as it correlates directly with its ad sales business.

- The company generated \$104 billion in “search and other” revenues in 2020, [per](#) CNBC.
- Google is also the market leader in online advertising, and is on track to command 29% share of global digital ad spending in 2021.

**Why it’s worth watching:** Google has demonstrated that it’s using its dominance in smartphones and browsers to further its influence in search and in advertising sales, which could be perceived as monopolistic by regulators.

- Google’s Android OS has **72.45%** smartphone market share; its Chrome browser owns **65.13%** browser [market share](#), per Statcounter.

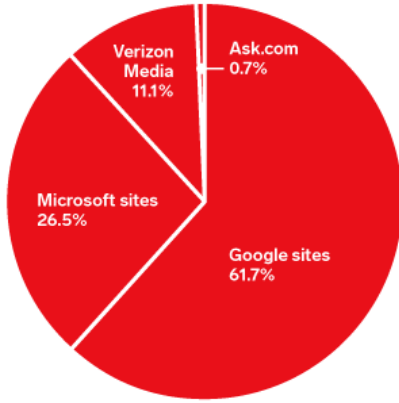
**Why this demand could succeed:** Armed with anticompetitive complaints from smaller search engines, EU regulators could legislate against having Google Search as the default on browsers.

- Furthermore, they could even make a case to separate Google Search and Chrome browser—similar to how regulators fought to unbundle Microsoft’s Internet Explorer browser from

# Windows OS during the antitrust case from 2001.

## Monthly Share of Digital Searches in the US, by Search Engine, Feb 2021

% reach



*Note: home and work locations; desktop only; excludes contextually driven searches that do not reflect specific user intent to interact with the search results*  
*Source: Comscore Media Metrix, May 6, 2021*

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