

Google faces nationwide antitrust lawsuit challenging control of Android's Play Store

Article

The news: Attorneys general from 36 states and Washington, DC, have mounted an antitrust suit against **Google**, [per](#) Insider. The bipartisan suit, which was filed in the California federal

court, is the **latest high-profile antitrust action** taken against Big Tech firms in the [US](#) and [Europe](#).

The complaint claims Google **monopolized** the distribution of apps on mobile devices running the Android OS by blocking competition through contracts, technical barriers, and other means. A report [by](#) The Verge says Google tried to preemptively “quash” the Samsung Galaxy App Store. In its [response](#), Google called the suit **meritless** saying it ignores “Android’s openness” since the OS allows multiple app stores and permits users to sideload apps.

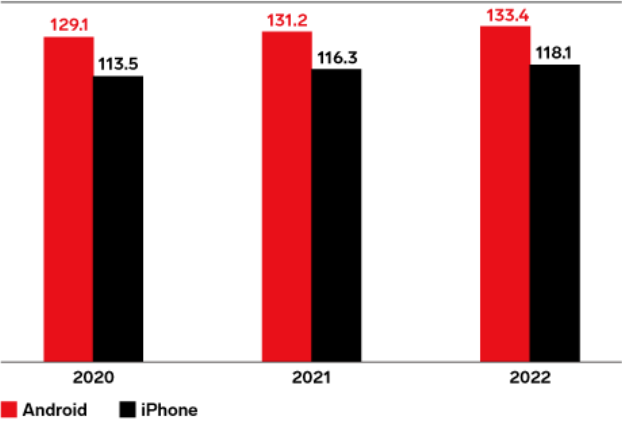
How we got here: This latest action against Google follows a suit in late 2020 where 10 states sued the search giant for [monopolizing](#) the display advertising market.

- This is the **fourth state or federal antitrust lawsuit** filed against Google since October 2020, but the first to single out Play Store practices.
- The states also accuse Google of trying to “buy off” Samsung, a leading manufacturer of Android devices. Google allegedly offered to [compensate](#) Samsung if the latter company would “give up its direct commercial relationships in app distribution with consumers and developers,” the suit claims.
- The suit filed Wednesday came after Google [updated](#) its Play Store policy, requiring developers to use a proprietary application format for apps distributed through its store.
- The lawsuit said that companies in revenue share agreements with Google had to place the Play Store on the home screen, and ensure that it could not be deleted and that other app stores would not be placed more prominently

What’s next: While this is a notable case that adds pressure on Google for alleged monopolistic and anticompetitive practices, it could be **difficult for the states to win**. Unlike Apple iPhone users, who have only one app store to access apps from, Android device users can access apps through a variety of other marketplaces and they can even directly [sideload](#) apps downloaded from the internet.

US Smartphone Users, Android vs. iPhone,
2020-2022

millions



Note: individuals of any age who own at least one smartphone and use the smartphone(s) at least once per month
Source: eMarketer, Feb 2021