

US DOJ reportedly preparing for sweeping antitrust lawsuit against Apple

Article

The news: The US Department of Justice is in the early stages of framing a sweeping antitrust complaint against Apple, according to Politico. It's focusing on Apple's tight grip on App

Store and payments, business practices, and **Tile's** complaints over **AirTag** trackers, [per Reuters](#).

The Politico [report](#) says the DOJ, which has been investigating Apple since 2019, has not finalized its plans and is likely biding its time while waiting on the outcome of the [Apple vs. Epic Games](#) case, which is under appeal and scheduled to resume October 21.

Four possible areas of focus: The Apple investigation is one of various ongoing antitrust efforts by Congress, the DOJ, and the **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** to regulate Big Tech monoliths. The DOJ has a number of potential areas to use as its tentpole arguments against Apple.

- **Apple's tight control of its App Store, its commissions requirements from developers, and the difficulty of offering alternative app payment options.** The DOJ reportedly [reached out](#) to Apple developers to build its case.
- **The company's penchant for adding features from third-party apps into its native apps and operating systems,** potentially rendering competing apps and features redundant.
- **Unfair competition.** Tile, which makes device trackers that directly compete with Apple's AirTags, has accused the company of using certain features like ultra-wideband technology, which Tile has no access to.
- **More [clarity](#) on Apple's \$70 billion Services segment.** This is the largest business by revenue but is never broken down into its component pieces, leading to confusion from shareholders.

Why could this succeed? It's been a year since various antitrust critics were installed to lead Big Tech investigations, and there's mounting bipartisan pressure for results.

- Other regulators, such as those in the [UK](#), [South Korea](#), [Japan](#), and the [EU](#), have been more aggressive in homing in on Big Tech antitrust. The DOJ could represent the most decisive US attempt at regulation.
- "Outcomes may include the end of any products on the Apple roadmap that mirror the function of existing apps that are doing exceptionally well. This stops the company from finding ways to boot the competing app from its store," said **Babar Khan Javed**, director of public affairs at **Z2C Limited**, a VC firm focused on the media supply ecosystem.
- "Walled gardens will always be attractive for convenience and consistent user experience, so excessive fees and policing are unnecessary," Javed said. "Pigs get fat, hogs get slaughtered."

What's the catch? Apple could make the argument that its own apps account for a relatively small share of app usage among **iPhone** users and that this is the case even though some Apple apps are preinstalled to enable core functionality of the device.

US Mobile App Store Spending and Downloads, by OS, 2021-2026

billions

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Spending						
Android	\$15	\$14	\$17	\$21	\$24	\$27
iOS	\$25	\$29	\$36	\$43	\$51	\$59
Total	\$40	\$43	\$53	\$64	\$75	\$86
Downloads						
Android	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2
iOS	7.6	7.5	7.7	7.9	8.0	8.2
Total	13.1	12.9	13.0	13.2	13.2	13.4

Note: gross revenues from user spending on premium apps and in-app content; includes cut taken by Apple and Google; excludes revenues from in-app advertising; excludes third-party Android stores; numbers may not add up to total due to rounding
Source: Sensor Tower, "2022-2026 Mobile Market Forecast," June 13, 2022

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