

DOJ's Google Search Trial: What If Google Must Sell Chrome? via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern



The next phase of the DOJ's antitrust case against Google started Monday. Both sides presented different views on the future of search and AI.

This follows Judge Amit Mehta's ruling last year that Google illegally kept its dominance by making exclusive deals with device makers.

DOJ Wants Major Changes to Break Google's Control

Assistant Attorney General Gail Slater made the government's position clear:

"Each generation has called for the DOJ to challenge a

behemoth that crushed competition. In the past, it was Standard Oil and AT&T. Today's behemoth is Google."

The Justice Department wants several changes, including:

- Making Google sell the Chrome browser
- Ending exclusive search deals with Apple and Samsung
- Forcing Google to share search results with competitors
- Limiting Google's AI deals
- Possibly selling off Android if other changes don't work

DOJ attorney David Dahlquist stated that the court needs to look ahead to prevent Google from expanding its search power into AI. He revealed that Google pays Samsung a monthly sum to install Gemini AI on its devices.

Dahlquist said:

"Now is the time to tell Google and all other monopolists that there are consequences when you break the antitrust laws."

Google Says These Ideas Would Hurt Innovation

Google disagrees with the DOJ's plans. Attorney John Schmitlein called them "a wishlist for competitors looking to get the benefits of Google's extraordinary innovations."

In a blog post before the trial, Google VP Lee-Anne Mulholland warned the changes would:

"DOJ's proposal would also hamstring how we develop AI and have a government committee regulate our products. That would hold back American innovation when we're in a race with China for technology leadership."

Google also claims that sharing search data would risk user privacy. They say ending distribution deals would make devices more expensive and hurt companies like Mozilla.

Perplexity Suggests “Choice” as Better Solution

AI search startup Perplexity offers a middle-ground approach.

CEO Aravind Srinivas doesn't support forcing Google to sell Chrome, posting:

“We don't believe anyone else can run a browser at that scale without a hit on quality.”

Instead, Perplexity focuses on Android's restrictive environment. In a blog post called “Choice is the Remedy,” the company argues:

“Google stays dominant by paying to force a subpar experience on consumers—not by building better products.”

Perplexity wants to separate Android from the requirements to include all Google apps. They also want to end penalties for carriers that offer alternatives.

AI Competition Takes Center Stage

The trial shows how important AI has become to search competition. OpenAI's ChatGPT product head, Nick Turley, will testify Tuesday, highlighting how traditional search and AI are now connected.

The DOJ argues that Google's search monopoly enhances its AI products, which then direct users back to Google search, creating a cycle that stifles competition.

What's Next?

The trial is expected to last several weeks, with testimony from representatives of Mozilla, Verizon, and Apple. Google plans to appeal after the final judgment.

This case represents the most significant tech antitrust action since Microsoft in the late 1990s. It shows that both political parties are serious about addressing the market power of Big Tech. Slater notes that the case was “filed during President Trump’s first term and litigated across three administrations.”

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