Google and Epic announce settlement to end app store antitrust case

Google is in the midst of rewriting the rules for mobile applications, spurred by ongoing legal cases and an apparent desire to clamp down on perceived security weaknesses. Late last year, Google and Epic concocted a settlement that would end the long-running antitrust dispute that stemmed from *Fortnite* fees. The sides have now announced an updated version of the agreement with new changes aimed at placating US courts and putting this whole mess in the rearview mirror. The gist is that Android will get more app stores, and developers will pay lower fees.

A US court ruled against Google in the case in 2023, and the remedies announced in 2024 threatened to upend Google's Play Store model. It tried unsuccessfully to have the verdict reversed, but then Epic came to the rescue. In late 2025, the companies announced a settlement that skipped many of the court's orders.

Epic leadership professed interest in leveling the playing field for all developers on Android's platform. But US District Judge James Donato expressed skepticism of the settlement in January, noting that it may be a "sweetheart deal" that benefited Epic more than other developers. The specifics of the arrangement were not fully disclosed, but it included lower Play Store fees, cross-licensing, attorneys' fees, and other partnership offers.

It's starting to look like both companies want to wrap up this case. For Epic, this all started as a way to avoid paying

Google a 30 percent cut of *Fortnite* purchases—the game has been banned from the Play Store this whole time. Google, meanwhile, is in the midst of a major change to Android app distribution with its developer verification program. After all these years, the end is in sight. So the new settlement includes more explicit limits on Play Store fees and resurrects one of Donato's more far-reaching remedies.

Google's "new era" of apps

Representatives for Epic and Google have both expressed enthusiastic support for the newly announced settlement, which is subject to Judge Donato's approval. The parties say the agreement will resolve their dispute globally, not only in the US.

The settlement affirms that developers in the Play Store will be able to steer users to other forms of payment. This is what got *Fortnite* pulled from the Play Store (and Apple App Store) back in 2020. When developers choose to use Google's billing platform, they'll pay lower fees as well.

https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2026/03/google-and-epic-look-to-bury-the-hatchet-with-new-app-store-settlement/