

CMA to scrutinise Apple and Google mobile ecosystems

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is taking a closer look at whether the firms' effective duopoly over the supply of operating systems (iOS and Android), app stores (App Store and Play Store), and web browsers (Safari and Chrome), could be resulting in consumers losing out across a wide range of areas.

'Mobile ecosystems' refers to this collection of gateways through which consumers can access a variety of products, content and services, such as music, TV and video streaming, as well as fitness tracking, shopping and banking. These products also include other technology and devices such as smart speakers, smart watches, home security and lighting (which mobiles can connect to and control).

The CMA is looking into whether the two firms' control over mobile ecosystems is stifling competition across a range of digital markets. The CMA is concerned this could lead to reduced innovation across the sector and consumers paying higher prices for devices and apps, or for other goods and services due to higher advertising prices.

The study will also examine any effects of the firms' market power over other businesses – such as app developers – which rely on Apple or Google to market their products to customers via their phones.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA said:

"Apple and Google control the major gateways through which people download apps or browse the web on their mobiles – whether they want to shop, play games, stream music or watch TV. We're looking into whether this could be creating problems for consumers and the businesses that want to reach people through their phones.

"Our ongoing work into big tech has already uncovered some worrying trends and we know consumers and businesses could be harmed if they go unchecked. That's why we're pressing on with launching this study now, while we are setting up the new Digital Markets Unit, so we can hit the ground running by using the results of this work to shape future plans."

This study is part of a broader programme of CMA work, which includes establishing a new pro-competition regulatory regime for digital markets through the Digital Markets Unit. As the CMA works with the Government on these proposals, the CMA will continue to use its existing powers to their fullest extent in order to examine and protect competition in these areas.

The CMA has been investigating [Apple's App Store](#) and [Google's Privacy Sandbox proposals](#) over competition concerns. While both examine issues falling within the scope of this study, the CMA's work into mobile ecosystems is much

broader. The CMA will adopt a joined-up approach across all these related cases, to ensure the best outcomes for consumers and other businesses.

Market studies can make recommendations to government or other bodies, and issue guidance to businesses and consumers as needed, among other options.

Views are welcomed on any of the issues raised in the [statement of scope](#) by 26 July and the CMA is also keen to hear from app developers, via its [questionnaire](#), by the same date. The CMA has 12 months to conclude the study.

All updates on the CMA's work in this area can be found on the Mobile Ecosystems case page.