

## Appendix: Notable Investigations and Actions against Big Tech, 2017–June 2023

### 2017

- June—European Commission fines Google €2.7 billion euros for anti-competitive practices on their Google Shopping platform.

### 2018

- July—European Commission fines Google €4.34 billion for anticompetitive use of Android mobile O/S and installing apps on cell phones without permission.

### 2019

- January—French data protection authorities fine Google €50 million for failure to disclose data collection practices.
- March—European Commission fines Google €1.49 billion for stifling competition in the online advertising market.
- June—US House Judiciary Committee announces a bipartisan investigation into competition in digital markets. The investigation focuses on Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google and includes seven hearings, “Online Platforms and Market Power” in 2019–2020, producing a 450-page report in October 2020.
- July—The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) fines Facebook \$100 million for “making misleading disclosures to investors about the risks of misuse of user data.” These charges stemmed from the fact that the company knew about the misuse of user data by Cambridge Analytica since

2015 but did nothing about it for more than two years, and characterized the threat of improper use of data as a mere hypothetical for their investors and the news media.

- July—The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) fines Facebook \$5 billion and orders it to create new layers of oversight after the Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed that the company had deceived its users about the privacy of their personal data.
- July—The FTC opens an antitrust investigation against Facebook.
- September—YouTube (owned by Google parent company Alphabet) is fined \$170 million by the FTC for a COPPA violation of illegally collecting children’s personal information.
- September—A group of attorneys general from forty-eight US states plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia begin investigating Google’s dominance of the ad market and use of consumer data.
- December—The FTC begins investigating Amazon’s retail business and cloud business (AWS).

## 2020

- October—The Department of Justice, along with eleven state attorneys general, opens *U.S. v Google*, the first antitrust case brought against Big Tech since *U.S. v. Microsoft* in 1998. Google is charged with unlawfully maintaining monopolies through anticompetitive and exclusionary practices in the search and search advertising markets.
- November—EU regulators file charges against Amazon regarding its anticompetitive use of data from third-party sellers to develop its own products.
- December—The FTC and a coalition of forty-six state attorneys general, the District of Columbia, and Guam, sue Facebook for its “systematic strategy” to eliminate threats to its monopoly with the “anticompetitive acquisitions” of Instagram in April 2012 and WhatsApp in February 2014. The case is dismissed a month later.
- December—Thirty-eight state attorneys general, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico sue Google over anticompetitive practices related to Google Search.

- December—Ten state attorneys general sue Google over anticompetitive practices in their advertising business and collusion with Facebook; four more states and Puerto Rico join in 2021.
- December—The French Data Protection Agency fines Google €100 million and Amazon €35 million for illegal uses of advertising trackers (cookies) without user consent.

## 2021

- February—Facebook (Meta) settles a privacy class-action suit for \$650 million after violating Illinois' biometric laws with its facial recognition technology that created scans without user consent.
- March—The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) opens an investigation of Apple regarding anticompetitive terms used in its App Store.
- May—The District of Columbia sues Amazon for abusing its monopoly power in the online retail market.
- June—Google agrees to pay French antitrust regulators \$270 million in fines and change its practices to settle a case regarding their dominance of the online advertising market.
- June—The European Commission and British authorities began antitrust investigation of Facebook over its Marketplace classifieds service.
- July—Thirty-six state attorneys general and the District of Columbia sue Google over anticompetitive practices in its app store, Google Play.
- July—Luxembourg's National Commission for Data Protection fines Amazon €750 million for advertising violations.
- September—Ireland's Data Protection Commission fines Facebook (Meta) €225 million for transparency violations regarding WhatsApp data collections.

## 2022

- January—Three states (Texas, Indiana, Washington) and the District of Columbia sue Google over location tracking practices that invade consumer privacy.

- January—The FTC proceeds with a second attempt of its 2020 suit against Facebook for abusing their monopoly power when purchasing Instagram and WhatsApp.
- January—France fines Google €150 million and Facebook €60 million for making it more difficult to refuse cookies (which track browsing habits) than to accept them.
- May—The European Commission brings antitrust charges against Apple for restricting access to competitors in its Apple Pay digital wallet system.
- July—The FTC sues to block Facebook parent company Meta’s acquisition of the VR company Within.
- July—The UK’s Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) opens investigation of Amazon’s digital marketplace for anticompetitive behavior and monopoly abuses.
- September—Google faces a €25 billion lawsuit in the UK and EU for anticompetitive conduct in the digital advertising market.
- September—The Irish Data Protection Commission fines Meta €405 million euros for breaking EU privacy laws with its handling of children’s data on Instagram.
- October—Google settles with the state of Arizona for \$85 million for deceptive and unfair practices related to user location data.
- October—British authorities force Meta to sell Giphy (purchased in 2020 for \$315 million).
- November—Google agrees to pay \$391.5 million to forty states to settle an investigation into privacy violations related to its location tracking features, the largest privacy settlement in US history. This is unrelated to the January 2022 lawsuit over location tracking practices.
- November—Facebook (Meta) reaches a \$90 million privacy settlement in a US class action case regarding allegations of tracking users’ online activity after they were logged out of the site.
- November—Irish Data Protection Commission fines Facebook (Meta) €265 million for major data breach.

## 2023

- January—The Department of Justice launches its second lawsuit against Google, this time for monopolizing digital advertising technologies in

violation of antitrust laws. The DOJ is joined by attorneys general from California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia.

- January—Irish Data Protection Commission fines Meta €390 million in two cases regarding privacy violations, one involving Facebook and another involving Instagram.
- May—Meta is fined €1.2 billion for violating EU data protection rules and ordered to stop transferring data collected from Facebook users in Europe to the US.



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