

US anti-trust inquiry into Google, Apple

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A man operates his Apple iPhone in Paris, 2008. US officials have begun investigating whether close ties between the boards of technology giants Google and Apple violate antitrust laws.

US officials have begun investigating whether close ties between the boards of technology giants Google and Apple violate antitrust laws, the New York Times said Tuesday.

According to the daily, citing people briefed on the inquiry, the fact that [Apple](#) and Google share two directors -- Google [CEO Eric Schmidt](#) and Arthur Levinson -- is being examined by the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Federal law prohibits a person's presence on the director boards of two companies that are direct rivals, as it may affect competition between them.

Google and Apple are rivals in the cellphone market, with Apple's [iPhone](#) competing with the Google-produced Android operating system.

Competition between the companies is also increasing in other areas, the daily said, noting the video-sharing website YouTube, owned by Google, and Apple's online entertainment store iTunes.

The investigation "appears to be in early stages," the Times said, and the agency has alerted the companies.

The inquiry comes months after Schmidt was appointed as a top technology aide to US President Barack Obama.

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