

Google competitors unhappy at its EU anti-trust remedies

December 12 2013



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The remedy "does not fundamentally change the fact that Google can

present its search results in a way that distorts user choice," said Thomas Vinje, spokesman for industry group FairSearch Europe.

"The proposal does not fix the problem the (European) Commission identified back in 2012. It hurts consumers," Vinje said, citing a study based on a survey of 2,500 users in Britain.

FairSearch includes several of the companies to have complained to the EU about Google, including its huge US rival Microsoft.

Google, under anti-trust investigation since 2010, submitted new proposals in September which EU Competition Commissioner Joaquin Almunia said showed "significant improvements".

Accordingly, the Commission asked for public comment, especially from those who had complained about Google.

Almunia has said previously that if Google's remedies are judged satisfactory, the 2010 probe could be brought to end "next spring."

But if there were objections, the anti-trust investigation would continue.

The Commission has four main grievances against Google.

These are that it gives unfair preference in search results to its own services, copies content without permission, ties up publishers with exclusivity deals, and discourages clients from using other advertising platforms.

Google has offered remedies on all points, such as making [search results](#) show rival websites more prominently.

Google said last month that it had made "significant changes to address

(EU) concerns, greatly increasing the visibility of rival services and addressing other specific issues.

"Unfortunately, our competitors seem less interested in resolving things than in entangling us in a never-ending dispute," it added.

If found at fault in an EU anti-trust probe, a company risks a fine equal to up to 10 percent of annual sales.

Google holds about 70 percent of the search engine traffic in the United States and 90 percent in Europe. In January, US authorities absolved Google of non-competitive practices in a similar case.

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Citation: Google competitors unhappy at its EU anti-trust remedies (2013, December 12)
retrieved 27 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2013-12-google-competitors-unhappy-eu-anti-trust.html>

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