

# Missouri attorney general investigating Google

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Missouri's attorney general announced Monday that his office is investigating Google for potential violations of the state's consumer-protection and antitrust laws.

Republican Attorney General Josh Hawley, who also is running for Democratic U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill's seat in 2018, told reporters that he issued an "investigative subpoena" to the tech giant to gather information. Asked whether his Senate bid influenced his decision to investigate, he said the goal is to "protect the people of Missouri."

Hawley's office is checking into what Google does with the user information it collects and allegations that it inappropriately scrapes information from competitors' websites. It's also looking into allegations that the company manipulates search results to favor its own websites over competitors', which has been the subject of recent scrutiny in Europe.

Google spokesman Patrick Lenihan said in a statement that the company has not yet received the subpoena. "However, we have strong privacy protections in place for our users and continue to operate in a highly competitive and dynamic environment," Lenihan said.

The Missouri investigation comes on the heels of a \$2.7 billion antitrust fine issued to the tech giant by the European Union in June for unfairly featuring its own shopping services in its influential [search results](#).

Federal regulators in the U.S. also have investigated the company over antitrust claims, but Google settled with the Federal Trade Commission in 2013 without making any major concessions on how the company runs its [internet search engine](#). Federal regulators didn't find any reasons to impose radical changes.

Hawley's office argues that [federal regulators](#) were wrong not to sue Google and that inaction left an opening for a potential state suit. Hawley said the Federal Trade Commission under former President Barack Obama "did not take any enforcement action against Google, did not press this forward and has essentially given them a free pass."

Hawley's office said Missouri's strong consumer-protection laws could help with a potential lawsuit over user data.

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