

Top US court to rule in Apple case over app monopoly (Update)

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The US Supreme Court agreed Monday to hear a case on whether Apple can be sued under antitrust law for monopolizing the distribution of mobile applications on its App Store.

The case which could have important implications for Apple and its mobile ecosystem hinges on whether the iPhone maker has a right to have a "closed" system where only the company can distribute mobile apps.

In the lawsuit filed by buyers of iPhones and iOS apps claimed Apple's monopoly leads to inflated prices and that consumers should be able to purchase the applications from outside parties without Apple's 30 percent service charge.

A lower court dismissed the complaint, but an appellate panel reversed the decision and said the lawsuit court proceed.

The high court thus accepted Apple's appeal and will rule on whether the case can go to trial.

The Justice Department backed Apple's position in the case, which will be heard by the justices later this year.

Apple said in its brief that the case "presents issues of national importance given the increasing prevalence of electronic commerce and the agency sales model."

The case could impact the multibillion-dollar app ecosystem, and efforts by companies like Apple to establish a so-called "walled garden" for software on their devices.

In the case which dates back to an original lawsuit filed in 2011, a California appeals court ruled last year that Apple could be sued because the company rather than developers was selling apps to consumers.

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