

SKorea clears Google after 2-year Android probe

18 July 2013, by Youkyung Lee

(AP)—South Korea's fair trade commission said Thursday a two-year investigation found that Google making its search service the default in Android-powered smartphones did not limit competition in the online search market.

Kwon Chul-hyun, a director at the commission, said the regulator found no evidence that Google Inc. unfairly used its power as the Android operating system maker to limit Korean search rivals.

NHN Corp. and Daum Communications Corp., which operate South Korean Web portals and search engines, filed a complaint against the U.S. company in 2011.

Kwon said Google's service being the default search engine in Android devices had little impact on the market. NHN continues to dominate online search in South Korea with around 70 percent market share. Google has been struggling with around 10 percent.

He also said consumers can easily download other search applications.

Naver, a search engine operated by NHN, and Daum, operated by a namesake company, are the two largest Web portals and online search engines in South Korea.

The deeply wired country is one of the few in the world where Google has failed to surpass local companies in online search.

But rapid adoption of smartphones in South Korea has helped Google achieve some improvement in its once negligible presence in the country's online search market.

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