# Liberal Democrat MP accuses Apple and Google of profiting from stolen phones amid rising UK thefts



Martin Wrigley, a Liberal Democrat MP serving on the UK Parliament's technology committee, has raised serious allegations against tech giants Apple and Google, accusing them of profiting from an ongoing epidemic of mobile phone theft. During a recent committee meeting, Wrigley claimed that the companies continue to benefit financially as stolen devices are not adequately removed from their systems, allowing them to resell replacement units without addressing the underlying issue of theft. This assertion underscores a growing concern regarding the responsibility of major tech firms in the enabling of stolen smartphone resales.

The UK has witnessed a significant rise in mobile phone thefts, particularly in urban areas like London. In a recent analysis, the Metropolitan Police revealed that a large portion of stolen iPhones were being reconnected overseas, indicative of lapses in device security. The police have urged manufacturers, including Apple and Google, to implement stronger security measures that would prevent stolen phones from being reactivated on international networks. This includes making International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) numbers visible on locked devices, which could assist in identifying and returning stolen items.

Historically, Apple’s iPhone has been the most sought-after brand for thieves, according to Home Office data, which found that the iPhone was implicated in a significant number of the approximately 70,000 mobile phone thefts recorded in London in 2015. The allure of high resale values makes these devices particularly appealing to criminals. Apprehensions about device security are not entirely new, as the market has repeatedly been confronted with similar concerns, prompting calls for more stringent measures from manufacturers.

Moreover, the tech landscape surrounding these companies is currently under scrutiny. The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is investigating both Apple and Google for their dominance in the mobile ecosystem, which includes operating systems and app stores. This investigation follows a year-long study aimed at understanding the extent of their market control, which can affect competition and consumer choice. These proceedings come at a time when Britain's competition watchdog is enforcing new digital market rules that could redefine how these giants operate, potentially designating their mobile ecosystems as “strategic market status.”

As discussion continues around the responsibilities of tech companies in relation to user security and ethical business practices, Wrigley's accusations highlight a pivotal moment for the industry. While tech giants may argue that they are taking steps toward addressing these issues, the tangible outcomes of such measures remain to be seen. In an environment where profits are closely tied to the integrity of business practices, the scrutiny these companies face may spark necessary changes in how they manage stolen devices and contribute to an environment of accountability.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2025/jun/03/mp-accuses-apple-and-google-of-profiting-from-stolen-phones-video), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2025/jun/03/mp-accuses-apple-and-google-of-profiting-from-stolen-phones-video)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://news.met.police.uk/news/met-police-urges-phone-manufacturers-to-fix-security-issues-fuelling-thefts-in-the-capital-491202)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/23/apple-iphone-remains-the-thiefs-most-wanted-brand/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-22/apple-google-probed-by-uk-over-stranglehold-on-mobile-devices), [[7]](https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uk-watchdog-targets-apple-google-mobile-ecosystems-new-118015669)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2025/jun/03/mp-accuses-apple-and-google-of-profiting-from-stolen-phones-video> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2025/jun/03/mp-accuses-apple-and-google-of-profiting-from-stolen-phones-video> - Martin Wrigley, a Liberal Democrat member of the UK parliament's technology committee, has accused Apple and Google of profiting from phone-snatching operations. During a committee session, Wrigley stated that both companies continue to profit and sell more phones because these devices are not removed from their systems. This accusation highlights concerns over the role of major tech companies in the resale of stolen smartphones.
3. <https://news.met.police.uk/news/met-police-urges-phone-manufacturers-to-fix-security-issues-fuelling-thefts-in-the-capital-491202> - The Metropolitan Police have urged phone manufacturers to address security vulnerabilities contributing to mobile thefts in London. Analysis revealed that a significant percentage of stolen iPhones were reconnected overseas, indicating a flaw in device security. The Met calls for manufacturers to prevent stolen devices from reconnecting internationally and to make IMEI numbers visible when devices are locked, aiding in the identification and return of stolen phones. ([news.met.police.uk](https://news.met.police.uk/news/met-police-urges-phone-manufacturers-to-fix-security-issues-fuelling-thefts-in-the-capital-491202?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/23/apple-iphone-remains-the-thiefs-most-wanted-brand/> - Apple's iPhone remains the most targeted smartphone for theft, according to data from the Home Office. The HTC M8 and Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge were also among the top stolen devices. The figures were based on Metropolitan Police data on 70,000 mobile phone thefts in London in 2015, highlighting the high demand and resale value of Apple devices among thieves. ([telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/23/apple-iphone-remains-the-thiefs-most-wanted-brand/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2023/11/13/google-gives-apple-36pc-of-ad-revenue-from-safari-browser/> - Google pays Apple a 36% share of advertising revenue generated from searches made through the Safari browser. This revenue-sharing agreement, dating back to 2002, was revealed during an antitrust trial against Google, where the company is accused of maintaining its monopoly by paying to remain the default search engine on smartphones and browsers. ([telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2023/11/13/google-gives-apple-36pc-of-ad-revenue-from-safari-browser/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-22/apple-google-probed-by-uk-over-stranglehold-on-mobile-devices> - Apple and Google are under investigation by the UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) for potentially having a 'stranglehold' over mobile devices. The CMA is examining their dominance in operating systems, app stores, and web browsers, following a year-long study into the mobile ecosystem. ([bloomberg.com](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-22/apple-google-probed-by-uk-over-stranglehold-on-mobile-devices?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uk-watchdog-targets-apple-google-mobile-ecosystems-new-118015669> - Britain's competition watchdog has launched investigations into Apple's iOS and Google's Android ecosystems under new digital market rules. The Competition and Markets Authority is assessing whether these mobile ecosystems should be designated as 'strategic market status,' which could mandate changes in their practices to promote competition. ([abcnews.go.com](https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uk-watchdog-targets-apple-google-mobile-ecosystems-new-118015669?utm_source=openai))