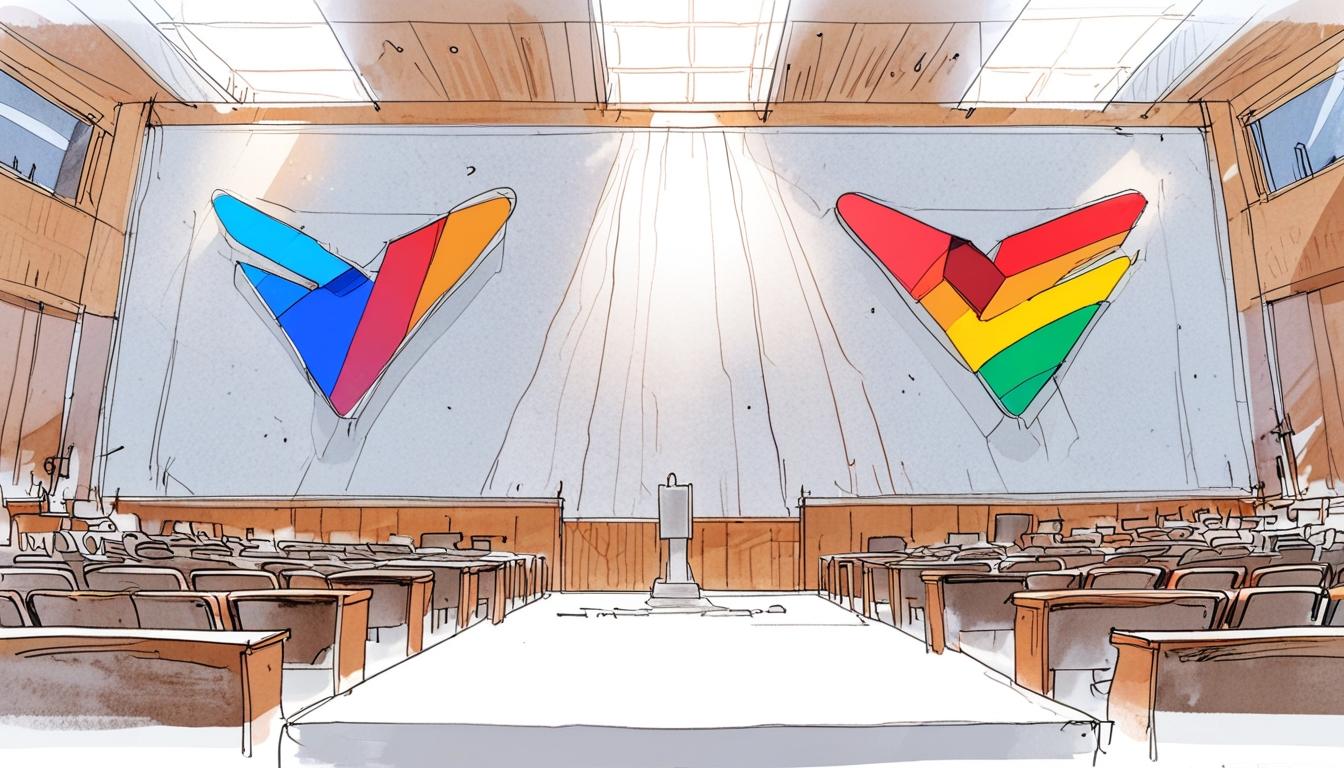
# Google and Meta face landmark antitrust trials amid record revenues and prolonged litigation



This week has seen significant developments in high-profile antitrust proceedings involving two of the world’s largest technology companies, Google and Meta, marking an unprecedented moment as both face trials concurrently within the same courthouse in Washington, D.C.

On Monday, Judge Amit Mehta initiated hearings focused on potential remedies to dismantle Google's alleged unlawful monopoly in search. Meanwhile, just two floors below, Judge James Boasberg continued the Federal Trade Commission's antitrust trial against Meta, underscoring the rare occurrence of two trillion-dollar-plus tech giants simultaneously undergoing intense legal scrutiny.

Despite these legal processes, Google's recent quarterly earnings report, delivered on Thursday during a Wall Street call, showcased staggering revenue figures of $34 billion for the past three months. Remarkably, analysts refrained from probing into the ongoing antitrust risks during the call, with only a passing reference made to user engagement with Google's AI search app, Gemini, which emerged during the trial. Similarly, Meta's investors appear unperturbed by their company's ongoing antitrust litigation.

The apparent disconnect between Wall Street's indifference and the legal battles’ substance prompts closer examination. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has presented a compelling case against Google, with the central proposed remedy being a forced sale of its Chrome browser. Evidence demonstrated that Chrome is a significant revenue generator and a cornerstone of Google's search distribution. Rival companies including DuckDuckGo, Perplexity, OpenAI, and Yahoo have expressed interest in acquiring Chrome. The trial revealed that Google employs design tactics effectively steering users toward Chrome, underscoring the browser’s strategic importance in maintaining Google's monopoly.

Moreover, the DOJ’s case highlights Google's pivotal role in shaping artificial intelligence development, alleging the company unfairly influences which competitors flourish or falter. The government’s proposed remedies insist that Google must cease obstructing rivals through restrictive contracts, share vital data and search capacity, and possibly divest Chrome. So far, the evidence has held up well before Judge Mehta, although his final ruling remains pending.

In parallel, Judge Leonie Brinkema announced plans to expedite proceedings concerning Google's alleged monopoly in advertising technology. Google has faced setbacks in prior legal challenges, losing three antitrust cases: one involving Epic Games over its app store, the search monopoly case, and the advertising software lawsuit. Additionally, Google's local reviews monopoly is being challenged, with Yelp recently winning a significant motion to dismiss ruling. Collectively, these rulings create a compounding legal landscape that could heavily influence future cases related to Google’s business practices.

The FTC's case against Meta is also progressing favourably from the government’s perspective. Instagram co-founder Kevin Systrom testified that post-acquisition by Meta, his company was deliberately starved of resources, effectively demonstrating Meta's dominant market power. Venture capitalists involved with WhatsApp alleged that Meta’s acquisition aimed to eliminate potential competition. Furthermore, TikTok executives underscored their distinction as a non-social network competitor in contrast to Meta’s suite of social applications. Despite this, Meta’s CEO Mark Zuckerberg reportedly offered a settlement of just $450 million.

A striking feature common to both trials is the extended duration of such antitrust litigation, which appears to temper investor concerns. Google’s initial lawsuit was filed by the DOJ in 2020; four years later, in 2024, Judge Mehta found Google liable for maintaining its monopoly unlawfully. Yet actual implementation of remedies, after appeals and compliance periods, may not occur until around 2027. During this prolonged timeline of legal proceedings, Google has continued generating what could be considered illicit profits.

An analysis illustrating this issue showed that from 2020 to 2024, Google’s revenue increased from $182 billion to $350 billion, with net profits rising from $40 billion to $100 billion annually. The excess revenue and profits during the trial years, if attributed to unlawful monopoly maintenance, total approximately $468 billion and $166 billion respectively—representing 39% of total revenue in that period.

Similarly, Meta’s antitrust case began in 2019 and continues through discovery and trial stages, with a final resolution unlikely before 2028. Meta’s revenue more than doubled between 2019 and 2024, from $71 billion to $164 billion, and profits surged from $18.5 billion to $62.4 billion. If the ongoing litigation ultimately finds Meta liable, these incremental earnings during the trial period—amounting to $266 billion in revenue and $112 billion in profit—may be considered resultant from disputed business practices.

The lengthy nature of such antitrust cases contrasts with faster proceedings seen in merger reviews, which typically resolve within 12 to 18 months due to differing corporate incentives and judicial approaches. The incentives for monopolists involved in conduct cases are markedly different; their substantial ongoing revenues provide a rationale to protract litigation, defying the usual urgency to conclude disputes promptly.

While some judges and jurisdictions have adopted more rapid timelines—such as the Eastern District of Virginia’s so-called "rocket docket," and Judge Arun Subramanian’s swift ruling in the recent Department of Justice case against Ticketmaster—broad systemic shifts could reduce antitrust litigation delays. Proposals to align incentives might include requiring companies under investigation to escrow additional profits pending outcome, instituting executive compensation structures contingent on final findings, imposing profit confiscation retroactive to liability determinations, or applying treble damages more rigorously.

Beyond the principal cases, the week’s antitrust and monopoly-related news include Airbnb’s compliance with junk fee restrictions imposed by Federal Trade Commission chair Lina Khan, political disputes involving Senator Bernie Sanders and other figures around the use of terms like "oligarchy," the Department of Justice’s closure of its consumer fraud division amid challenges in obtaining legal representation following former President Donald Trump’s numerous lawsuits, as well as various trade-related updates.

This series of events underscores an active period of legal scrutiny into the conduct of major technology companies, highlighting challenges in effectively applying antitrust laws in the context of modern digital markets and the considerable financial stakes involved for all parties.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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