# UK’s CMA designates Google with strategic market status to tighten search regulation



Britain’s Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has paved the way for tougher regulation of Google’s dominance in online search by officially designating the company with ‘strategic market status’ (SMS). This landmark decision, confirmed after a nine-month investigation, empowers the CMA to impose targeted measures aimed at ensuring fairer competition within the UK's digital markets. With Google handling over 90% of online searches in the UK, the designation acknowledges the company’s substantial market power in both general search and search advertising services.

The CMA’s move is the first under the UK’s new Digital Markets Competition Regime, designed to address concerns around the influence large technology firms wield over digital markets. According to the CMA, this status will allow it to consider interventions such as encouraging alternative search engines through mechanisms like mandatory ‘choice screens’ and enforcing non-discriminatory practices in how search results and advertisements are ranked and presented. The authority also seeks greater transparency and improved data portability to help competitors innovate and provide rival services. A consultation on the specific rules to be applied to Google is planned for later this year, with the CMA expected to adopt the designation officially by October and begin implementing measures from 2026.

Despite these developments, Google has expressed significant reservations about the proposed regulatory framework. The company warns that excessively stringent rules could stifle innovation and growth within the UK’s technology sector, potentially leading to slower launches of new products and higher costs for consumers. Oliver Bethell, Google’s senior director for competition, highlighted the risk that some suggested interventions could inhibit UK innovation, urging the regulator to avoid the pitfalls seen in other jurisdictions such as the European Union’s Digital Markets Act (DMA). Google also emphasised its recent commitment to the UK’s AI ambitions, including a £5-billion investment over two years, suggesting that favourable regulatory conditions have allowed the UK to benefit from early access to cutting-edge products and services.

While Google’s Gemini AI assistant is currently excluded from the designation, the CMA has indicated it will continue monitoring developments in this area. The new regulatory steps focusing specifically on Google’s search services are distinct from the CMA’s ongoing investigation into Google’s mobile platform dominance, which may result in additional designations in the future, including for Apple’s ecosystems.

The CMA’s intervention reflects broader global moves to regulate the major players in digital markets, aiming to foster healthier competition and greater consumer choice. The UK is positioning itself cautiously but proactively, seeking a balance between regulation and innovation. As Sarah Cardell, the CMA’s Chief Executive, stated, the aim is to increase consumer choice and enable a more competitive tech sector in the UK without imposing undue burdens that might hinder growth or technological advancement.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.newagebd.net/post/telecom/278678/uk-opens-door-to-tougher-regulation-of-google-search), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/4501271f6f3beb2783d1614426524715), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-confirms-google-has-strategic-market-status-in-search-services), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/uk-plans-increase-control-over-google-search-2025-06-24/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/4501271f6f3beb2783d1614426524715), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-confirms-google-has-strategic-market-status-in-search-services), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-takes-first-steps-to-improve-competition-in-search-services-in-the-uk), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/uk-plans-increase-control-over-google-search-2025-06-24/), [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-takes-first-steps-to-improve-competition-in-search-services-in-the-uk)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.newagebd.net/post/telecom/278678/uk-opens-door-to-tougher-regulation-of-google-search), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/4501271f6f3beb2783d1614426524715), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/uk-plans-increase-control-over-google-search-2025-06-24/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.newagebd.net/post/telecom/278678/uk-opens-door-to-tougher-regulation-of-google-search), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-confirms-google-has-strategic-market-status-in-search-services), [[5]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-to-investigate-google%E2%80%99s-search-services), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/uk-plans-increase-control-over-google-search-2025-06-24/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.newagebd.net/post/telecom/278678/uk-opens-door-to-tougher-regulation-of-google-search), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-confirms-google-has-strategic-market-status-in-search-services), [[5]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-to-investigate-google%E2%80%99s-search-services), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/uk-plans-increase-control-over-google-search-2025-06-24/), [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-takes-first-steps-to-improve-competition-in-search-services-in-the-uk)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.newagebd.net/post/telecom/278678/uk-opens-door-to-tougher-regulation-of-google-search> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/4501271f6f3beb2783d1614426524715> - The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has designated Google as holding 'strategic market status' in the online search advertising sector, acknowledging its significant market power with over 90% of online searches in the UK. This designation, the first under new UK digital regulations, allows the CMA to consider measures to promote fair competition, such as encouraging alternative search engines and enforcing non-discriminatory ranking practices. While no immediate actions were announced, discussions are expected to begin later this year, with potential remedies including mandatory 'choice screens' for alternative search engines and fairer presentation of search results. Google acknowledged the anticipated new rules but warned that some proposed interventions could hinder innovation and lead to higher prices for consumers. This move comes amid a broader investigation into whether both Google and Apple's mobile ecosystems should also be classified under the same strategic status, with a decision expected by October 22.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-confirms-google-has-strategic-market-status-in-search-services> - The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has confirmed that Google holds 'strategic market status' in general search and search advertising services. This designation, following a nine-month investigation, enables the CMA to consider targeted interventions to ensure effective competition in digital markets. The CMA plans to consult on possible interventions later this year. Google’s Gemini AI assistant is not included in the designation but will be kept under review. The CMA's decision is separate from its ongoing investigation into Google's mobile platform.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-takes-first-steps-to-improve-competition-in-search-services-in-the-uk> - The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has proposed designating Google with 'strategic market status' under the new Digital Markets Competition Regime. This move aims to improve competition in search services by allowing the CMA to introduce targeted measures to address specific aspects of how Google operates search services in the UK. The CMA has also published a roadmap of potential actions it could prioritise were Google to be designated. The consultation period is open until October, with a final decision expected in October.
5. [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-to-investigate-google’s-search-services](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-to-investigate-google%E2%80%99s-search-services) - The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has launched an investigation to determine if Google has 'strategic market status' in search and search advertising activities. The investigation will assess Google's position in search and search advertising services and how this impacts consumers and businesses, including advertisers, news publishers, and rival search engines. The statutory deadline for this investigation is October 13, 2025. Under the digital markets competition regime, the CMA may designate firms with strategic market status in relation to a particular digital activity, allowing for the imposition of conduct requirements or pro-competition interventions.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/uk-plans-increase-control-over-google-search-2025-06-24/> - The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has proposed designating Google with 'strategic market status' under its new regulatory powers to enhance oversight of the tech giant’s search services. This designation would be the first under a new regime targeting major tech companies and is aimed at promoting fairer rankings for businesses, facilitating access to alternative search engines, and increasing transparency and control for content publishers. Google, which handles over 90% of UK search queries, would also be required to enhance data portability to support innovation among emerging competitors. CMA Chief Executive Sarah Cardell emphasized that these targeted measures are intended to increase consumer choice and foster a more competitive UK tech sector. CMA plans to adopt the designation in October and expand its interventions starting in 2026 to address further concerns, including Google’s handling of rival search services and advertising transparency. Google responded by expressing concern over the scope and evidentiary basis of the proposed actions, suggesting they could significantly affect UK businesses and users.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-takes-first-steps-to-improve-competition-in-search-services-in-the-uk> - The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has proposed designating Google with 'strategic market status' under the new Digital Markets Competition Regime. This move aims to improve competition in search services by allowing the CMA to introduce targeted measures to address specific aspects of how Google operates search services in the UK. The CMA has also published a roadmap of potential actions it could prioritise were Google to be designated. The consultation period is open until October, with a final decision expected in October.