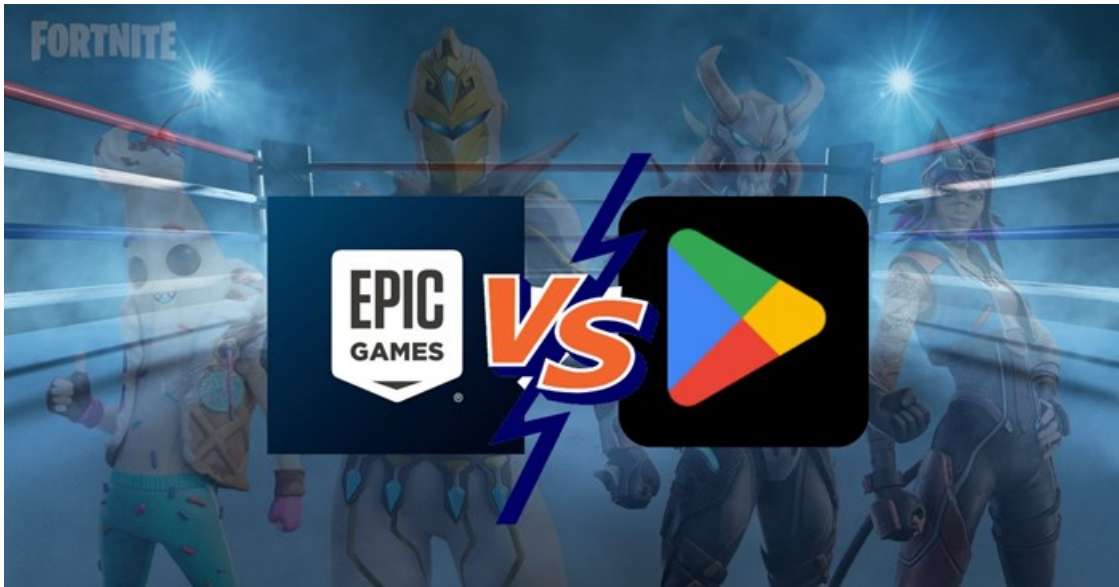


Epic Games takes Google to court in battle to end app store fees

By  Lindsey Schutters

7 Nov 2023

Epic Games has taken Google to court in an antitrust lawsuit as part of its continued efforts to fight platform fees. The trial, which began on 6 November 2023 in a US district court in San Francisco, is expected to last several weeks.



Epic Games is taking Google to court in its fight against app store fees for in-app purchases in Fortnite and other games. Source: Lindsey Schutters

The dispute dates back to August 2020 when Epic Games, the developer of the popular game *Fortnite*, introduced an “Epic Direct Payment” option into the mobile in-game V-Bucks store. This move violated app store rules, leading to the [removal of Fortnite](#) from first the Apple App Store and then the Google Play Store.

Despite users being able to sideload *Fortnite* directly from the web, Epic Games alleges that Google has abused its power in the Android apps market.



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The gaming company accuses Google of charging excessive fees for using its Google Play payment system and imposing technical and contractual barriers for sideloading apps. Epic Games aims to offer a separate payment option to circumvent Google’s 15% to 30% fee on digital goods and services.

Initial filings

In a [letter to the state attorneys general](#), Epic Games outlined a draft injunction and its proposed remedies to open the Android app distribution market, remedies to open the Android in-app payment solution market, and remedies to prevent circumvention.

The draft injunction also specified the conduct that Google is prohibited from engaging in, as well as the conduct that Google is allowed to engage in as bona fide competition on the merits.

Epic explained its goal “to end Google's anticompetitive conduct, restore competition, and prevent Google from engaging in similar conduct in the future.”

The company warned that “any settlement that falls short of addressing the three issues will rubber stamp Google's illegal behaviour and harm innovation and consumers for years to come.”

Google refutes allegations

Google, however, refutes these allegations. The tech giant argues that it allows developers to distribute apps through multiple app stores and that its fees are fair and comparable to other platforms. Google further states that its policies are designed to protect users from malware and security risks.



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Should Epic Games lose this case, it will have a dismal record against smartphone platforms after the US Supreme Court in August [declined to lift a decision](#) that delayed implementing an injunction that would bar certain Apple App Store rules.

A judge ruled in [September 2021](#) that Apple is not unfairly monopolising mobile apps with its iOS in-app purchasing system, but ordered the company to remove its anti-steering policies that prohibit developers from marketing other purchase methods to users.

ABOUT LINDSEY SCHUTTERS

Lindsey is the editor for ICT, Construction&Engineering and Energy&Mining at Bizcommunity

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