

# Competition watchdog launches investigation into Google

Google could be required to hand over data it collects to businesses as the UK competition regulator launched an investigation into the tech giant.

The Competition and Markets Agency (CMA) said it launched the inquiry to assess how [Google](#)'s search and advertising services impact users and businesses such as advertisers, news websites, and rival search engines.

It will be looking to see if Google used its dominant market position to stop others from competing and if barriers are preventing potential rivals from entering the market.

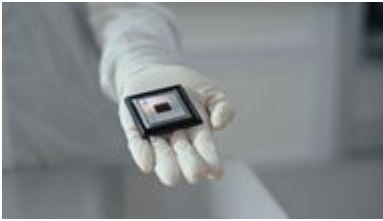
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Of particular interest to the CMA is whether Google can “shape the development” of new [AI](#) services.

Also being assessed is whether Google is using its prime position to preference its own services, such as Google Shopping and Google Flights.

“Potential exploitative conduct” through Google’s collection and use of “large quantities of consumer data” without informed consent will be examined, as will the use of things like news articles without paying the publishers, the CMA said.

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The CMA could compel Google to make collected data available to other businesses or order them to give publishers more control over how their data is used.

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Google is by far the most popular search engine in the UK, answering more than 90% of all general search queries, and hosting more than 200,000 UK advertisers.

The investigation announced on Tuesday is the first launched under the digital markets competition regime which took effect on 1 January.

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The new regime enables the CMA to designate companies with a so-called strategic market status and impose new rules on them as a result.

Effective competition among search engines could keep down the cost of search results advertising, equivalent to nearly £500 per household per year, the CMA said.

## Investigations in EU and US

The UK is just the latest country to look at Google's search engine primacy.

A federal US court ruled in August Google [illegally maintained](#) an online search monopoly.

Meanwhile, an [EU investigation](#) into Google's parent company Alphabet is examining whether it imposed restrictions that made it difficult for developers to promote services by other companies, looking at search results for services such as Google Shopping and Google Flights.

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