

# Law Firm Alleges Google Has Monopoly on Mobile Search

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Consumer rights law firm Hagens Berman has filed a class-action lawsuit against Google that accuses the company of having monopolized mobile search.

In a press release, Hagens Berman said it is claiming Google "illegally monopolized, and financially and creatively stagnated the American market of internet and mobile search."

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, alleges that Google's monopoly stems from its purchase of Android as a way of being able to pre-load its own suite of applications onto the devices by way of something the firm calls "secret Mobile Application Distribution Agreements (MADA)."

According to the suit, these agreements were hidden and marked to be viewed only by attorneys.

The suit is similar to one filed by the U.S. Government against Microsoft in the late '90s that alleged Microsoft was in violation of antitrust laws for bundling Internet Explorer with sales of its Windows operating system for PCs.

In its case, Hagens Berman is contending that Google's role in placing a suite of apps, which includes Google Play and YouTube, among others, has hampered the market and kept the price of devices made by competing device manufactures like Samsung and HTC artificially high.

Steve Berman, the attorney representing consumers in the case and a founding partner of Hagens Berman, said in a statement that Google has not achieved this monopoly through offering a better search engine, but through its strategic, anti-competitive placement.

"It doesn't take a forensic economist to see that this is evidence of market manipulation," Berman said. "Simply put, there is no lawful, pro-competitive reason for Google to condition licenses to pre-load popular Google apps like this."

The complaint claims that if device manufacturers bound by Google's distribution agreements were free to choose a default search engine other than Google, the overall quality of Internet search would improve.

"The more use an internet or mobile search engine gets, the better it performs based on that use," Berman said. "Instead of finding a way to legitimately out-compete other internet and mobile search providers, they instead decided to choke

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off competition through this cynical, anti-consumer scheme.”

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