

# Mobile ecosystems market study

## Progress update

16 February 2022

### Consultation on our interim report

The consultation period for our interim report closed on 7 February. We have received around 70 responses, from a broad range of stakeholders including device manufacturers, app store operators, browser vendors, large and small app and web developers, academics, industry groups, and individuals. We will be considering these responses carefully, alongside the further work we are planning to undertake in the second half of our study.

Although our formal consultation period has closed, we are still keen to hear from people and organisations that have relevant evidence or views – please email us at [mobileecosystems@cma.gov.uk](mailto:mobileecosystems@cma.gov.uk).

We anticipate publishing the responses to our consultation on our case page in early March.

### Important developments relevant to our study

Our interim report highlighted concerns relating to the gatekeeper positions that Apple and Google hold in respect of their operating systems, app stores, and their browsers – as part of this we drew attention to the apparent quasi-regulatory role that both companies often assume in respect of users' privacy, security, and safety online. From a UK perspective, there have been two key relevant developments in this space since we published our interim report.

First, on 11 February 2022, the CMA published its final [decision to accept the commitments](#) offered by Google on its plans to remove third-party cookies from Chrome and replace them with alternative 'Privacy Sandbox' tools. Following consultation, the CMA has concluded that those commitments address the competition concerns that it identified in relation to the Privacy Sandbox Proposals, and that they will provide a robust basis for the CMA's oversight of Google's design, testing, and implementation of these tools. This process also involves the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) assessing the privacy impacts of Google's proposals, and allows third parties to feed into the future development of Google's browser changes. These commitments are an important step towards ensuring that

Google's proposals can enhance its users' privacy without damaging competition or reinforcing Google's market power. However this is just the start of our work. The CMA now has the important job of overseeing Google's development of its Privacy Sandbox.

Second, on 16 February 2022, Google announced its intention to roll out a similar set of privacy-related changes in relation to app advertising within the Android ecosystem, which it is referring to collectively as its Android Privacy Sandbox. Google informed us of its intentions in this area. Google has indicated that it intends to apply – on a voluntary basis – the principles of the commitments mentioned above to its proposed Android Privacy Sandbox. We will continue to monitor this closely and engage with Google and other market participants on the nature and detail of its proposals, before reaching any view on the best way forward. In doing so, we are also conscious of the possible parallels with Apple's App Tracking Transparency (ATT) framework, which has also been a key focus of our market study.

These important developments and our assessment of them will be reflected in our final report.

## **Next steps**

Over the next few months, the CMA will be undertaking further evidence gathering and analysis. The final report of our market study will be published on our [mobile ecosystems case page](#) by 14 June 2022.