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AG Schmitt Joins Multistate Lawsuit Against Google for Anticompetitive Practices and Deceptive Misrepresentations in Online Display Advertising

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Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt joined a multistate coalition of 10 states in filing a lawsuit against Google for multiple alleged violations of federal and state antitrust laws, including anticompetitive conduct, exclusionary practices, and deceptive misrepresentations in connection with its role in the multibillion-dollar online display advertising industry.

"In this lawsuit, we allege that Google has repeatedly engaged in anticompetitive behavior and stifled competition in their dominance of the online display advertising industry. If the online display advertising industry were an auction, Google would be the buyer, seller, the auctioneer, and the owner of the auction house - that's unacceptable," said **Attorney General Schmitt**. "It's imperative that we ensure that even the biggest of big tech companies, including Google, are held accountable for their actions, and that's what this coalition of attorneys general intend to do with this lawsuit."

Google's monopolization of online display advertising includes an anticompetitive agreement with Facebook, misrepresenting customers, suppressing competition and harming consumers in violation of antitrust and consumer protection laws.

In addition to representing both the buyers and the sellers of online display advertising, Google competes directly against the buyers and sellers they separately represent, all while operating the largest exchange of these products. Google's exchange trades in billions of ad impressions a day.

The lawsuit alleges that Google monopolized, or attempted to monopolize, products and services used by advertisers and publishers in online display advertising. The complaint also alleges that Google engaged in false, misleading and deceptive acts while selling, buying and auctioning online display ads. These anticompetitive and deceptive practices demonstrably harmed publisher's ability to monetize content, increased advertiser's costs to advertise and directly harmed consumers.

The lawsuit plainly states, "Google has repeatedly and brazenly violated antitrust and consumer protection laws. Its *modus operandi* is to monopolize and misrepresent. Google uses its powerful position on every side of the online display markets to unlawfully exclude competition."

In describing the online ad exchange, the lawsuit explains, "Indeed, nearly all of today's online publishers (be they large or small) depend on one company—Google—as their middleman to sell their online display ad space in "ad exchanges," i.e., the centralized electronic trading venues where display ads are bought and sold. Conversely, nearly every consumer goods company, e-commerce entity, and small business now depend on Google as their respective middleman for purchasing display ads from exchanges in order to market their goods and services to consumers. In addition to representing both the buyers and the sellers of online display advertising, Google also operates the largest exchange, AdX."

Read a copy of the lawsuit here: [https://ago.mo.gov/docs/default-source/press-releases/20201216_1-complaint-\(redacted\).pdf?sfvrsn=dbcfcc76_2](https://ago.mo.gov/docs/default-source/press-releases/20201216_1-complaint-(redacted).pdf?sfvrsn=dbcfcc76_2) (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__ago.us20.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D55bd24fd8f5e7d3dc227d1072-26id-3D9edf24f4ee-26e-3D9a8c31b236&d=DwMFaQ&c=GSntNbUav5AC0JJlyPOufmfQT3u3zl7UKdoVzPd-7og&r=py8R0gvpn0PLF00UDUlsKysl_r9a5XqZ4UYYmIDkMic&m=iWAzyYfPboSJ2iXILA5aAmCZWcYDPolnh4DoAt9G9qE&s=piZY8xEgDlcZY05DVbUPxsDs\FJtmjtu-xx2pZOk&e=)

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