



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS



Statement of Chairwoman Edith Ramirez, and Commissioners Julie Brill and Maureen K. Ohlhausen regarding the Google Investigation

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The Federal Trade Commission conducted an exhaustive investigation of Google's internet search practices during 2011 and 2012. Based on a comprehensive review of the voluminous record and extensive internal analysis, of which the inadvertently disclosed memo is only a fraction, all five Commissioners (three Democrats and two Republicans) agreed that there was no legal basis for action with respect to the main focus of the investigation – search. As we stated when the investigation was closed, the Commission concluded that Google's search practices were not, "on balance, demonstrably anticompetitive."

Contrary to recent press reports, the Commission's decision on the search allegations was in accord with the recommendations of the FTC's Bureau of Competition, Bureau of Economics, and Office of General Counsel.

Some of the FTC's staff attorneys on the search investigation raised concerns about several other Google practices. In response, the Commission obtained commitments from Google regarding certain of those practices. Over the last two years, Google has abided by those commitments.

The Commission works vigorously to protect consumers and promote competition in the marketplace and does not hesitate to act on behalf of consumers when the facts warrant an enforcement action. In fact, on the same day that it closed the search investigation, the Commission settled a complaint alleging that Google's conduct with regard to certain standard essential patents constituted unfair methods of competition under the FTC Act.

Today's Wall Street Journal article "Google Makes Most of Close Ties to White House" makes a number of misleading inferences and suggestions about the integrity of the FTC's investigation. The article suggests that a series of disparate and unrelated meetings involving FTC officials and executive branch officials or Google representatives somehow affected the Commission's decision to close the search investigation in early 2013. Not a single fact is offered to substantiate this misleading narrative.

Finally, we regret the inadvertent disclosure of confidential documents and information in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. The Commission takes seriously its obligation to maintain the confidentiality of business and other sensitive information provided to the agency by all parties involved in our investigations. We are taking additional steps to ensure that such a disclosure does not occur in the future.

Note: Neither Commissioner Joshua D. Wright nor Commissioner Terrell McSweeney was at the Commission at the time of the decision on the Google search investigation.

The Federal Trade Commission works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices and to provide information to help spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint in English or Spanish, visit the FTC's online [Complaint Assistant](#) or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). The FTC enters complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to more than 2,000 civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad. The FTC's website provides [free information on a variety of consumer topics](#). Like the FTC on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), and [subscribe to press releases](#) for the latest FTC news and resources.

PRESS RELEASE REFERENCE:

[Google Agrees to Change Its Business Practices to Resolve FTC Competition Concerns In the Markets for Devices Like Smart Phones, Games and Tablets, and in Online Search](#)

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