

[REDACTED]

From: Chris Jones [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 February 2022 15:22
To: Mobile Ecosystems
Subject: Apple/Safari investigation feedback

Hello

I am a UK resident, writing in with some feedback on your investigation into Apple, specifically on the topic of Apple's rules on iOS that require Safari (or more precisely, WebKit) be the only browser engine allowed on the platform.

I work for Red Hat UK Ltd (but I do not speak on their behalf, this is entirely my own opinion), and have been a user of, and contributor to, the Free and Open Source community since the late 1990s. Choice and freedom are important to me.

With that background established, I will now argue, somewhat perversely, that Apple's rule with regards to Safari, is actually a good thing for the health of the open web.

One does not have to look far to determine that the browser market leans very strongly towards Google's fork of WebKit, which powers their own Chrome browser product, and Chromium browser project, as well as Microsoft's Edge browser, and many others.

They have approximately 80% of the browser market, Apple has approximately 20%, and Firefox is a rounding error. That's it. That is the open web as it stands today - Google drives the standards and the implementation.

As much as my FOSS instincts tell me that iOS should allow competing browser engines, I think the larger picture here is that if they are compelled to do so, Google will quickly capitalise on the opportunity to drive their browser market share closer to 100%. This cannot be allowed to happen - it is bad that Apple exerts this much control on their platform, but it would be worse if a single entity (i.e. Google) controlled the entire open web.

As such, in my view, Apple's browser rule for iOS is actually the only thing that retains even the pretence of competition in the web browser market.

Cheers,

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Chris Jones