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From: Luca Casonato [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 February 2022 14:28
To: Mobile Ecosystems
Subject: Comment on the mobile app ecosystem report

Hello,

I am a web developer and iOS user. My day job involves developing complex web applications for my employer.

Apple's ban on third-party browsers on Safari (through **App Store rule 2.5.6**, requiring all browsers on iOS to use its WebKit engine) has several severe negative impacts on my privacy and data control as a user, and ability to ship fast, reliable, and comprehensive web applications as a developer. To elaborate:

As a user I am often exposed to significant security vulnerabilities in the Safari browser for multiple weeks before being patched, because Apple does not allow the browser engine to be updated independently of the host operating system. On other operating systems I have the ability to use a different browser to circumvent this issue. Not having the ability to freely choose which browser engine to use, and when to update it, puts my personal data at risk. A recent example of a serious issue in the WebKit engine that allowed arbitrary sites to view identities and data from other sites: <https://fingerprintjs.com/blog/indexeddb-api-browser-vulnerability-safari-15/#:~:text=The%20leak%20was%20reported>. This issue was reported to Apple in November 2021, made public on January 14th 2022, but was only patched in an iOS release on January 26th 2022. In these 12 days all iOS users could have had personal data stolen, with no way to remedy the issue. This is undeniably a problem.

As a developer I am often limited in what my web applications can do by Safari's lack of many features that are essential for modern applications: push notifications, Progressive Web App install prompts, the Fullscreen API, a working implementation of the IndexedDB API, PWA app shortcuts, web share targets, and many more. This severely hinders my ability to build experiences on the web that rival native apps. On other platforms this is not an issue: I can always ask a user to install a different browser if their current browser does not support all necessary features. On iOS this is not possible.

I would welcome competition between browsers on iOS. This would push Apple towards funding their WebKit engine more adequately to reflect the importance of the web. Having a single vendor control access to an open platform is never a good place to be.

Kind regards,
Luca