

From: [REDACTED]
Sent on: Friday, February 4, 2022 12:07:13 PM
To: Mobile Ecosystems <MobileEcosystems@cma.gov.uk>
Subject: Mobile browser market

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: limitations to genuine competition and choice in the market for mobile browsers.

I write this in an individual capacity, and not on behalf of any organisations. Because of my role, please allow this submission to remain anonymous.

I was part of the engineering team at the [X] from 2012-2015. The [X] was one of the first (and arguably most sophisticated at the time) to use a “web app” to provide a native app like experience on iOS. This meant we relied purely on the Safari browser on iOS, and the web technologies available.

Despite the concerted efforts of a team of developers and multiple testers, it proved impossible to rely solely on Safari, for several reasons:

- undocumented and non standard behaviour
- no transparency over changes to functionality
- changes which broke the web app experience (particularly around offline reading), with no acknowledgement of a remedy, often requiring extensive workarounds
- unreliable behaviour when it came to things like adding the web app to the homescreen

Ultimately it was deemed too challenging to continue to pursue, and [X] switched to a native iOS app in 2016/17.

Given the richer functionality native applications enjoy (such as push notifications), there are excellent reasons to utilise native apps instead of web apps, and I acknowledge the excellent work both apple and google have done in enabling great experiences on mobile through native apps.

However, limiting to a single browser engine on iOS puts developers on a very difficult spot, and eliminates any really alternative to using native apps. Competing browser engines would compel progress towards a better

experience, more comparable to native apps and reducing the cost and barrier to entry for developers.