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Sent on: Wednesday, February 2, 2022 10:06:14 AM
To: Mobile Ecosystems <MobileEcosystems@cma.gov.uk>
Subject: Mobile ecosystems market study

Hello,

I read with interest your interim report on this topic, and would like to add my experience and thoughts as a uk-based, UK citizen, web developer of 20 years plus standing.

I believe passionately in the open web and have been frustrated for a long time at the damage native apps are causing to it.

From my experience developing medical applications for my employer I can say that we have been forced into making native apps because of the lack of capability of the browsing engines in the past, particularly mobile Safari as continues to be the case.

There is very little that web applications cannot do nowadays that a native app can, as long as moderate investment is made in the browser, as Android has shown, so it meets agreed modern standards. These web apps are then available on any phone, findable on any search engine, work just as well on a desktop computer, and can conduct their business in any legal manner without a third party gatekeeping or taking a cut of the profits.

Unfortunately due to nothing more than clever marketing native apps are perceived as somehow different, special, or easier, to the point that some organizations will contractually insist on an application being available, and not recognize a web application as equivalent, or in fact better.

Despite this, in the case of one quarter billion dollar revenue product the native app was eventually abandoned because of the restrictions that both Apple and Google place on monetization within the app and their prohibitively high share of that income.

The suggestion to remove the monopoly on browser engines on iOS is absolutely key to addressing many of these issues. Safari will no longer be able to let bugs languish for a long time, or not implement core new apis because other browsers will do so and take market share. More importantly organisations will be able to produce secure, fully-featured web apps rather than being forced into creating native apps to support iOS.

(Please note these are my opinions as an individual professional and not those of my employer. Unfortunately I know that they will not be able to provide an official response by the 7th of February)