



Google: antitrust issues, more antitrust issues and ... uh ... even more antitrust issues

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8 September 2010 — Being the 800-pound gorilla in the search-engine space ... and seemingly everything else internet related ... Google is probably at the top of the list of most government regulators all over the world. As well as anybody competing against Google. And as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times* have reported, the last few days have seen a Google news tsunami.

So, with a greater number of Posse List members working on Google-related matters, and with more such matters to come, some background material:

- Texas is conducting an antitrust review of Google's core search-engine business, this on top of existing DOJ scrutiny as well as European Commission investigations. The Texas case basically focuses on companies complaining about demoted rankings in search results or the placement of their advertisements on the search engine. For an incredibly detailed analysis with scores of links check out this post from the *Groklaw* web site [click here](#).

- Google agreed to pay \$8.5 million to settle a private class-action lawsuit that alleged its Buzz social networking service violated users' privacy. The allegations: Google violated privacy law in February by exposing their email contacts to users of Google Buzz, which is built into Gmail and borrows elements of Twitter and Facebook. For a nice review from the *Arstechnica* website that includes a link to the settlement agreement [click here](#).

- The DOJ is looking hard at Google's proposed purchase of ITA Software which powers the Web's most popular airline-ticket search and booking sites. Potential concerns: will rivals still have access to ITA's data and whether Google would unfairly steer Web searchers to its own travel services. For the details and some good links from *eWeek* [click here](#).

Note: the *eWeek* post mentions the FTC screw-up over its review of the Google/AdMob deal. The FTC had spoken to several of Google's rivals, mobile ad providers and independent experts, who eventually convinced the FTC that the deal would not stifle competition in the mobile ad sector. But in the process, the FTC ended up with egg on its face after some of the parties it consulted blogged about how lacking the agency's officials were in their expertise about an acquisition bid they had the power to void.

And the Google Book Search deal is still up in the air (the DOJ has already opposed two proposals) with no firm date for resolution. For an analysis including the anticompetitive issue [click here](#).

Plus the Google/Verizon "balkanization" of the internet deal is under increasing scrutiny ([click here](#) and [click here](#)).

Meanwhile over in Europe, the European Commission's "preliminary" antitrust inquiry of Google ([click here](#)) is expected to become a formal investigation this fall.

So fun times for Google ... and more work for Posse List members.

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