

Amazon and Meta settle UK investigations with pledges to refrain from unfair practices

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An Amazon company logo is seen on the facade of a company's building in Schoenefeld near Berlin, Germany, on March 18, 2022. Amazon and Meta settled separate U.K. antitrust investigations by agreeing to stop practices that give them an unfair advantage over merchants and customers using their platforms, the watchdog said Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File

Amazon and Meta settled separate U.K. antitrust investigations by

agreeing to stop practices that give them an unfair advantage over merchants and customers using their platforms, the watchdog said Friday.

The Competition and Markets Authority said it accepted the commitments from the U.S. tech companies to close the investigations into their online marketplaces.

The watchdog had been investigating whether Amazon was harming [competition](#) and hurting consumers by giving preference to merchants paying for extras like storage, packaging and delivery.

It also looked into how Amazon chooses suppliers for the so-called buy box, which shows customers one-click "buy now" or "add to basket" options and the collection and use of data.

The CMA said Amazon will no longer be able to use data from third-party sellers to give itself an edge. Sellers can negotiate their own delivery rates with independent delivery services and they'll get a fair shot at the buy box, it said.

Amazon welcomed the deal, saying it "engaged constructively with the CMA." The company settled a European Union antitrust case involving the buy box in December by agreeing to make major changes to its [business practices](#).

The U.K. watchdog's Meta probe focused on whether the social media company's collection and use of data gave it the upper hand over competitors providing classified data and online dating services.

Regulators were examining whether the way Facebook Marketplace is embedded into the social network allowed it an advantage in reaching customers and shutting out competing sites.

"Going forward, competitors of Facebook Marketplace that advertise on Meta platforms can 'opt out' of their data being used to improve Facebook Marketplace," the CMA said.

Meta has also pledged to limit how it uses ad data when developing products, the [watchdog](#) said.

Meta said it welcomed the decision to close the case. The EU has accused Meta of antitrust breaches in a similar ongoing case.

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