

Japan's anti-monopoly body orders Google to fix ad search limits affecting Yahoo

April 22 2024, by Yuri Kageyama



The Google logo is photographed at the Vivatech show in Paris, on June 15, 2023. Japan's antitrust watchdog said Monday, April 22, 2024, that U.S. search giant Google must fix its advertising search restrictions affecting Yahoo in Japan. Credit: AP Photo/Michel Euler, File

Japan's antitrust watchdog said Monday that U.S. search giant Google

must fix its advertising search restrictions affecting Yahoo in Japan.

The Japan Fair Trade Commission said in a statement that its recent study of Google's practices showed it was undermining fair competition in the advertising market.

Yahoo Japan Corp., which has since merged with the Japanese social media platform Line, began keyword-targeted search advertising services using Google's technology after the two companies formed a tie-up in 2010.

The FTC alleges that Google had imposed restrictions in its search advertising agreement with Yahoo Japan that for more than seven years hindered its ability to compete in targeted search ads.

An FTC investigation into whether that violated the Anti-Monopoly Law led Google to drop the restrictions.

Google said in an emailed statement that it has cooperated fully with the commission's probe, and stressed the commission has not found it had outright violated anti-monopoly laws. It promised to carry out the commission's directives to offer "valuable" search functions to Japanese users and advertisers.

Line Yahoo declined comment.

Google will be under review for the next three years, to ensure it carries out needed changes, the commission said. It did not impose any fines or other penalties on Google, which remains popular among Japanese.

The commission's move follows another setback for Google in Japan. Last week, Japanese doctors filed a civil lawsuit against the company, demanding damages for what they claim are groundless derogatory and

often false comments.

The Tokyo District Court suit demands 1.4 million yen (\$9,400) in damages for 63 medical professionals, for reviews posted on Google Maps.

Google said in response that it's working "24 hours a day" to reduce misleading or false information on its platform, combining human and technological resources "to delete fraudulent reviews."

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