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Apple's Mobile Rules To Get FTC Scrutiny

By Thomas Catan

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WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Federal Trade Commission will investigate whether [Apple Inc.](#)'s business practices harm competition in the market for software used on mobile devices, people familiar with the situation said.

For weeks, the FTC has been engaged in negotiations with the Department of Justice over which agency would review allegations by companies that say they're being shut-out of one of the most important emerging computing platforms.

[Adobe Systems Inc.](#) has been engaged in a public feud with Apple over its decision to ban [Adobe's](#) Flash video technology from Apple devices. This week, [Google Inc.](#) complained Apple's new rules on developers could bar [Google](#) and other rivals from selling ads inside iPhone and iPad applications, such as games.

Apple has also banned software developers from using other companies' tools to develop software for its devices.

Both Apple and the FTC declined to comment. The decision was reported earlier by Bloomberg News.

This may not be the only antitrust investigation Apple faces. Justice Department lawyers recently contacted companies about Apple's practices in the music business. It isn't clear if it would continue that inquiry.

The Justice Department is already investigating whether Apple and a range of other tech companies improperly agreed not to poach each other's employees.

The FTC will have a wealth of information to mine for its probe. It recently completed a six-month investigation of [Google's](#) \$750 million acquisition of AdMob Inc., giving its lawyers knowledge of the mobile-ad market that Apple has also entered.

"The Commission has reason to believe that Apple quickly will become a strong mobile advertising network competitor," the FTC said last month.