

Apple – DOJ says no violation of antitrust law



The US Department of Justice (DOJ) has stated it will not take action against Apple for its recent decision to ban Bitcoin apps.

The announcement comes amid a growing furore among bitcoin users, who were outraged by Apple's decision to remove the official Blockchain app from its App Store earlier this week.

The DOJ stated:

“ We have determined that the information provided does not raise antitrust issues that warrant further review by the Division.”

This response was prompted by Bitcoin enthusiast Andy Chase, who submitted an official complaint to the agency's Citizen Complaint Center.

Chase's complaint was detailed, including an annotated explanation of bitcoin, and a detailed overview of the actions Apple has taken against apps from bitcoin companies, such as Blockchain, Coinbase, Coinjar and Gliph.

Chase summed up his argument with the following conclusion:

“ While Apple may have legitimate claims against the use of these applications in countries where bitcoin use is prohibited, the companies should be provided with the ability to alter and re-submit their applications to operate within the terms and conditions provided by Apple and international law.”

Further, Chase was far from the only person to suspect Apple may be in violation of antitrust laws, with even major industry investors commenting as such publicly:

<https://assignbuster.com/apple-doj-says-no-violation-of-antitrust-law/>

Government response

The DOJ did not elaborate on its decision, and would not comment to CoinDesk to explain its reasoning. Instead, the department sent Chase three web links that it believes clarify why Apple is not in violation of antitrust laws.

These included the Department of Justice main website, a six-page guide called “ Antitrust Enforcement and the Consumer” and a lengthier primer on antitrust issues for law enforcement officials.

It is likely the DOJ’s decision stems from the fact that Apple, which offers no payment services, does not directly compete with the bitcoin companies it has banned.

The complaint process

The Antitrust Division’s Citizen Complaint Center lists four steps that a complaint may take through the agency. Upon examination, Chase’s complaint did not make it far into the process, failing to garner even an additional review.

The CCC creates a record of the information provided.

The CCC conducts a preliminary review.

If the complaint raises concern under federal laws, it is sent to a legal team for review.

If the CCC needs more information, it will contact the claimant within one month.

Chase, commenting on the decision, lamented that this was “ pretty much the lowest level of rejection”. Still, he doesn’t regret reaching out:

“ While I wasn’t very confident that my complaint would lead anywhere (if nothing else, the bitcoin community is fairly small for the DOJ to invest in actions protecting its interests). I wanted to take advantage of the justice system and see if they were willing to look into it.”