

Apple says Spotify wants ‘limitless’ access to its tools without paying

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Apple has condemned Spotify over the long-running competition complaint filed with the EU that could see the tech company face a huge fine if found guilty. After reports the bloc has concluded its investigation into the music streaming service's claims of anti-competitive behaviour by Apple over its App Store rules, with the prospect of a €500m (£425m) fine, the iPhone manufacturer has accused Spotify of trying to get "limitless" access to its tools without paying. Stockholm-based Spotify filed a complaint with the EU in 2019, claiming that App Store rules limit choice and competition because Apple charges a 30% fee on purchases made through the store including music streaming subscriptions. Spotify argued it is an unfair "tax" that Apple's own competing Apple Music streaming service is not subject to, giving it an unfair advantage. The company has also argued that Apple's rules do not allow it to tell users about cheaper ways to subscribe outside the App Store. In a statement on Thursday night, Apple said Spotify did not offer subscriptions via the App Store and therefore did not pay Apple any commission in the EU. "We're happy to support the success of all developers – including Spotify, which is the largest music streaming app in the world," Apple said. "Spotify pays Apple nothing for the services that have helped them build, update and share their app with Apple users in 160 countries spanning the globe. "Fundamentally, their complaint is about trying to get limitless access to all of Apple's tools without paying anything for the value Apple provides." According to reports earlier this week, the European Commission is close to concluding its investigation. Apple said Spotify, which was formed in 2006, had the option to directly link to its website for account creation and management but chose not to exercise it. The US-based firm added that despite claims of competition concerns and not allowing it to tell users how to subscribe, Spotify had grown into the largest digital music business in the world with more than 50% market share in Europe. It also argued that Spotify and other music streaming services had many open channels, including email marketing and social media, to advertise to consumers and show them how to sign up outside the App Store. Apple has also criticised EU regulators, claiming that despite the issue being examined in different forms for about 10 years, the European Commission had failed to find any evidence of consumer harm or anti-competitive behaviour by the firm in this market. The company said the investigation could just cement Spotify's dominant position as the market leader, rather than promote competition. At the time Spotify filed its complaint in 2019, its founder, Daniel Ek, wrote in a blogpost that Apple had "introduced rules to the App Store that purposely limit choice and stifle innovation".