

Google sued by Gab over Play Store booting

'Free speech' Twitter alternative alleges antitrust foul

By [Shaun Nichols in San Francisco](#)

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A social network that fancies itself a "free speech" competitor to Twitter is suing Google after its app was removed from the Play Store.

Gab – a recently launched social network that says it is "focused on free speech that would provide a platform for conservatives in the West and dissidents globally" and has become a favored landing spot for right-wing personalities who were booted from Twitter – accuses the Mountain View advertising giant of violating both the Sherman and Clayton Antitrust Acts by removing its mobile app from the Play store for hate speech violations.

Apple, which is not named in the suit, also pulled the Gab app from the iOS App Store, alleging content on the site violated its terms and conditions.

The [suit](#) [PDF], filed Thursday in the US District Court of Eastern Pennsylvania, claims that when Google suspended the Gab app from the Play Store, it effectively shut out Gab from any access to Android. This, the suit claims, is because the Play Store has become the only trusted source for Android apps on the market.

Therefore, Gab says, Google had used its control over the market to shut the Gab app out of the market. Gab's lawyers say this is not because the app was in violation of the Play Store T&Cs, but rather because a conservative social network posed a threat to Google and its partners.

"Google Play and Android have monopoly power in the app store market, and Google's apps YouTube and Google+ compete directly against Gab," said Gab attorney Marc Randazza.

"Google's intimate partnership with Twitter, which also competes against Gab, makes Google's control of all Android apps available through the Play Store a serious restraint of trade issue."

The suit also references the recent [EU decisions](#) against Google as evidence that the company has monopoly status and is abusing that power to keep Gab from the Play Store.

The complaint seeks damages and fees, as well as an injunction that would bar Google from "further monopolizing behavior." ®