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New Report Confirms US Government's Proposed Divestiture of Google Chrome is Technically Feasible

The detailed technical report offers an engineering assessment of what it would take to separate Chrome from Google – and succeed.

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 1, 2025 – A new report released today by the Knight-Georgetown Institute (KGI) shows that the divestiture of Google's web browser, Chrome – a key remedy proposed in the US v. Google search antitrust case – is technically feasible. The analysis, based on extensive knowledge of browser and web technologies, confirms that an independent Chrome browser can thrive outside of Google and compete with Chrome's major rivals.

Despite Google's doubts expressed during the April-May 2025 remedies trial about whether any other company could maintain Chrome, KGI's analysis [“The Technical Feasibility of Divesting Google Chrome”](#) demonstrates that a divested, independently operated Chrome could leverage well-established browser engineering to continue serving its existing user base of four billion people, with a browser that is on par with Microsoft Edge, Apple Safari, and Mozilla Firefox.

Hours of testimony during the remedies trial left key technical questions about the feasibility of Google spinning off Chrome muddled or unanswered. This report fills a key knowledge gap in the Chrome divestiture debate, laying out how to address the major technical requirements involved in spinning Chrome out from Google, and showing how the court could structure its divestiture order to ensure that Chrome's buyer starts on a solid foundation. A final ruling on the proposed remedies is expected by Judge Amit Mehta by August 2025.

Key Findings

- **An independent Chrome can successfully compete without Google:** Chrome could continue to deliver a high-quality, secure browser at a global scale on par with competitors like Edge and Firefox.
- **Google-operated services and proprietary software components in Chrome can be rebuilt or replaced:** Services that users would expect in any major browser, including Safe Browsing, data syncing, and software updates, would be viable for a new owner to maintain or recreate. Other major browsers operate many of these services

today, providing engineering blueprints. And a new Chrome owner could replace proprietary Google components (that support audio and video streaming) by leveraging available licensing models and proven alternatives in the market.

- **Necessary engineering talent is obtainable:** The required engineering expertise exists both inside and outside of Google, with many engineers having previously moved from one browser vendor to another. Chrome's new owner would need to focus on talent retention and recruitment.
- **Chromium can evolve without Google:** The divestiture order can and should include the Chromium open source web browser project, on which Chrome is based, to ensure that it remains publicly accessible and open source. Under those conditions, Chrome's new owner together with the broader industry can foster Chromium's continued development and governance.
- **User transition can be managed:** While complex, transitioning software updates and user data are solvable engineering tasks, especially with temporary assistance from Google as part of a court-ordered divestiture process.

"Our analysis shows that it is technically feasible for a new Chrome owner to meet the needs of its large user base and compete with its major rivals. For the proposed divestiture to succeed, the court must prevent Google from reentering the browser market for a sufficient period of time – five to ten years or longer if search competition benchmarks have not been reached – to ensure Chrome can change hands and become a thriving, competitive business independent of Google," said Alissa Cooper, co-author of the report and Executive Director of the Knight-Georgetown Institute.

"The Chrome team has built a great browser, but the idea that Google is the only place where Chrome can live is just not right. Apple and Mozilla already offer great browsers built independently of Google and many companies such as Microsoft and Brave offer competitive browsers based on Chromium. This analysis shows that there is a viable engineering path forward for Chrome to be spun out to be independent of Google," said Eric Rescorla, co-author of the report and Senior Research Fellow at the Knight-Georgetown Institute.

About the Knight-Georgetown Institute

The Knight-Georgetown Institute (KGI) is dedicated to connecting independent research with technology policy and design. KGI serves as a central hub for the growing network of scholarship that seeks to shape how technology is used to produce, disseminate, and access information. KGI is designed to provide practical resources that policymakers, journalists, and private and public sector leaders can use to tackle information and technology issues in real time. Georgetown University and the Knight Foundation came together to launch the institute in 2024.

About the report authors

Alissa Cooper is Executive Director of the Knight-Georgetown Institute. She is a recognized leader in the development of global Internet standards, policy, and governance. Prior to joining KGI, Alissa spent a decade at Cisco Systems in senior engineering and executive roles, including Vice President of Technology Standards and Vice President and Chief Technology Officer for Technology Policy.

Eric Rescorla is a Senior Research Fellow at the Knight-Georgetown Institute. He is the former Chief Technology Officer, Firefox, at Mozilla, where he was responsible for setting the overall technical strategy for the Firefox browser. Eric has contributed extensively to many of the core security protocols used in the Internet, including TLS, DTLS, WebRTC, ACME, and QUIC. Most recently, he served as Chief Technologist for the Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Notes to the Editor:

- The divestiture proposal is part of remedies being considered in the U.S. v. Google search case to restore competition in the online search market. To learn more about the need for a robust and comprehensive remedies framework, read [here](#).
- Chrome is a key search access point for Google, with 35% of Google's search volume in the US generated through Chrome. As the most-used web browser with four billion users around the world, Google's control of Chrome has been an important ingredient in maintaining the company's monopoly in online search.
- For technical feasibility, this report assumes that the court would restrict Google from launching a competing browser for a defined period (five to ten years or more), giving the new Chrome owner the time and market stability needed to establish and build a sustainable business.
- This analysis does not address the business case for a potential Chrome buyer. More on that is available [here](#).
- For a detailed explanation of the motivations for including the Chrome divestiture in the remedies package, read [here](#).

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