

In Congress's big tech hearing, look beyond 'technology policy' | Brookings

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On July 29, the House Judiciary Antitrust Subcommittee will hold a hearing with some of the nation's top technology CEOs. Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Google's Sundar Pichai, and Apple's Tim Cook are all testifying (remotely), with the hearing focused on the anti-competitive behavior of their respective firms. The House Judiciary Committee started this investigation over a year ago and has collected over 1.3 million documents about these business practices, so there is some reason to believe that this meeting will be more substantive and nuanced than some prior technology sector hearings.

On the other hand, Representative Matt Gaetz (R-FL) just asked the Department of Justice for a criminal investigation into Mark Zuckerberg based on a report from the chronically misleading Project Veritas. So, there is also some reason to believe it will be a circus.

The antitrust considerations are important (there are many specific issues with each company) and will hopefully be seriously engaged. Yet it would be a mistake to look at this hearing and see only a conversation around the size of some technology companies. Democratic governance of technology touches on broad foundational questions of our economic future. These questions will go far beyond what we now consider the tech sector and may define how we work and even what we know.

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