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Hub-and-Spoke Conspiracies: Can Big Data and Pricing Algorithms Form the Rim?

SMU Science and Technology Law Review

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Dallas Partner [Brad Weber](#) authored an article in the SMU Science and Technology Law Review. Weber's article discusses the history, structure and characteristics of hub-and-spoke conspiracies. As explained by Weber, a "hub-and-spoke conspiracy is a metaphor used to describe an antitrust cartel that includes a firm at one level of a supply chain — such as a buyer or supplier — who acts like the 'hub' of a wheel. Vertical agreements up or down the supply chain act as the 'spokes,' and a horizontal agreement among the spokes acts as the 'rim' of the wheel. Courts have considered hub-and-spoke conspiracies for more than 80 years, and there is large body of case law that pertains to the evidence that is necessary for proving this type of antitrust conspiracy." Weber's article also includes observations about agreements among competitors to exchange confidential price information, which itself can result in antitrust violations under certain circumstances, and comments on a new wave of antitrust lawsuits that allege hub-and-spoke conspiracies based on competitors' mutual use of big data and algorithms to set prices.

[Read Weber's full article in the SMU Science and Technology Law Review.](#)

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