

Google will promote original reporting with algorithm change

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Newspapers have often blamed Google's algorithm for plummeting online traffic and the industry's decline

Original reporting will be highlighted in Google's search results, the company said as it announced changes to its algorithm.

The world's largest search engine has come under increasing criticism from [media outlets](#), mainly because of its algorithms—a set of instructions followed by computers—that newspapers have often blamed for plumenting online traffic and the industry's decline.

Explaining some of the changes in a blog post, Google's vice president of [news](#) Richard Gingras said stories that were critically important and labor intensive—requiring experienced investigative skills, for example—would be promoted.

Articles that demonstrated "original, in-depth and investigative reporting," would be given the highest possible rating by reviewers, he wrote on Thursday.

These reviewers—roughly 10,000 people whose feedback contributes to Google's algorithm—will also determine the publisher's overall reputation for original reporting, promoting outlets that have been awarded Pulitzer Prizes, for example.

It remains to be seen how such changes will affect [news outlets](#), especially smaller online sites and local newspapers, who have borne the brunt of the changing media landscape.

And as noted by the technology website TechCrunch, it is hard to define exactly what original reporting is: many online outlets build on "scoops" or exclusives with their own original information, a complexity an algorithm may have a hard time picking through.

The Verge—another technology publication—wrote the emphasis on originality could exacerbate an already frenetic online news cycle by making it lucrative to get breaking news online even faster and without proper verification.

The change comes as Google continues to face criticism for its impact on the news media.

Many publishers say the tech giant's algorithms—which remain a source of mysterious frustration for anyone outside Google—reward clickbait, and allow investigative and original stories to disappear online.

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