

Google faces French ruling on copyright row with media groups

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France's competition regulator said Friday that it would issue a ruling Tuesday on whether Google was negotiating "in good faith" with news publishers over payments for using their content alongside search results.

The long-running legal battle centres on claims that the US internet giant is showing articles, pictures and videos produced by media groups when displaying [search results](#), without adequate compensation despite the seismic shift of advertising revenue online.

In April 2020, France's competition authority ordered Google to negotiate "in [good faith](#)" with media groups, after it refused to comply with a new EU law governing digital copyrights.

The so-called "neighbouring rights" aim to ensure that [news](#) publishers are compensated when their work is shown on websites, search engines and [social media platforms](#).

But last September, news publishers including Agence France-Presse (AFP) filed a complaint with regulators, saying Google was refusing to move forward on paying to display content in web searches.

The competition authority will rule on this point, before issuing a final ruling later this year on Google's alleged abuse of monopoly power in internet news searches.

News outlets struggling with dwindling print subscriptions have long seethed at Google's refusal to give them a cut of the millions of euros it makes from ads displayed alongside news [search](#) results.

The US giant counters that it encourages millions of people to click through to media sites, and it has also spent heavily to support media groups in other ways, including emergency funding during the COVID-19 crisis.

In the meantime, Google announced in November that it had signed "some individual agreements" on copyright payments with French newspapers and magazines, including top dailies Le Monde and Le

Figaro.

AFP did not sign the accord, but its chief executive Fabrice Fries said he was "optimistic" about improved relations with Google and other internet giants such as Facebook and Apple.

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