

Google nears copyright deal with French newspapers

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The news comes on the eve of a court ruling sought by Google whether France's competition authority overstepped its jurisdiction in ordering the tech firm to negotiate with French media groups

Google said on Wednesday it was close to a digital copyright deal with French newspapers, which would be the first under EU rules aimed at ensuring news publishers are paid for content displayed in search results.

The main points of a deal have been hammered out, including Google's agreement to share ad revenue generated from displaying news results, the firm said in a joint statement with an association representing French [newspaper](#) publishers.

The news comes on the eve of a court ruling sought by Google whether France's competition authority overstepped its jurisdiction in ordering the tech firm to negotiate with French media groups.

The US internet giant is in a standoff with European media groups including Agence France-Presse over its refusal to comply with a new European Union "neighbouring rights" law.

The law seeks to give some [copyright protection](#) to media firms when their work features on websites, search engines and [social media platforms](#).

France was the first European country to ratify the law in 2019 and in April this year the French competition authority ordered Google to open talks about compensating news publishers.

But Google, which dominates internet searches, had insisted that articles, pictures and videos would be shown in [search results](#) only if media groups consent to let the tech giant use them for free.

The firm says it should not have to pay to display items produced by [news](#) companies since they benefit from seeing hundreds of millions of visits to their websites.

"Google's offer covers neighbouring rights as defined by the law," said the statement.

The head of the Les Echos—Le Parisien newspaper group, Pierre Louette said the talks "have clarified numerous points and confirmed that Google accepts the principle of remuneration for newspapers".

If a deal is finalised it will be the first time Google has acknowledged it must pay media firms under the EU law and could have huge repercussions for the future of the press as it grapples with the decline in traditional print sales.

The statement said the deal also foresees the participation of the French newspapers in News Showcase, a project where Google will invest \$1 billion in [media](#), which will then put original reporting on a new Google app.

Google is holding separate talks with French magazine publishers and Agence France-Presse.

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