

Google dropped idea of buying newspaper: CEO

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Google chairman and chief executive officer [Eric Schmidt](#) said the California company had also considered using its charitable arm, [Google.org](#), to support [news](#) businesses seeking non-profit status but was now unlikely to do so.

He told the FT that Google had looked at buying a newspaper but concluded that potential acquisition targets were too expensive or carried excessive liabilities.

The Mountain View, California-based search and advertising company, he said, was "trying to avoid crossing the line" between technology and content.

Instead, Google was working with The Washington Post and other newspapers to improve their online products and with publishers to make their websites "work better" for online advertising, Schmidt said.

He told the FT that "clever ideas" about sheltering newspapers in non-profit structures had been suggested to Google.org but "are unlikely to happen without some massive, massive set of corporate bankruptcies."

US newspapers have been grappling with a steep drop in print [advertising](#) revenue, steadily declining circulation and the migration of readers to free news online.

The FT said Schmidt would not comment on reports this month that Google had been approached about buying a 20 percent stake in the [New York Times](#) Co. owned by hedge fund Harbinger Capital Partners.

It said Schmidt played down industry calls for Google to increase the amount of revenue it shared with news organisations whose content appears on Google News, saying it would have to take money from "another pocket" to do so.

The Google CEO also said it was highly unlikely that people would pay for general news on the Web when so much was available for free.

Subscriptions and micro-payments would work for specialised content, he said, but were unlikely to do so for general news such as political reporting.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. is among the media groups which have

announced plans recently to begin charging readers on the Internet.

The FT said Schmidt, whose name has been mentioned as a possible candidate for governor of California, also ruled out any political ambitions.

"I can assure you I'm not going to run for politics," he said. "There is no second life after Google."

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