

# Google developing payment platform for newspapers: Nieman

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A visitor checks out Google's Book Search site at the Google stand of the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2008. Internet giant Google is developing a payment platform for newspapers that would allow them to charge for content online, according to a report on Wednesday.

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Harvard University's Nieman Journalism Lab said that Google had submitted a payment platform proposal to the Newspaper Association of America in response to a request made by the NAA to several major technology companies.

Nieman published the Google proposal on its website, [niemanlab.org](http://niemanlab.org),

and described Google's initiative as somewhat "surprising" given "the newspaper industry's tenuous relationship with Google."

Google's popular [news aggregator](#) website [Google News](#) has drawn fire from some US newspaper publishers for linking to their articles without payment.

Google has dismissed the criticism and countered that it is providing newspapers a free service by driving traffic to their websites.

With print advertising revenue and circulation declining, US newspaper publishers have been looking at ways to begin charging for [content](#) on the Internet and the NAA has been involved in the effort.

The Google document obtained by Nieman said the payment platform under development by the Internet giant, an extension of Google Checkout, would be "available to both Google and non-Google properties within the next year."

"Google believes that an open Web benefits all users and publishers," the document said. "However, 'open' need not mean free.

"We believe that content on the Internet can thrive supported by multiple [business models](#) -- including content available only via subscription.

"While we believe that [advertising](#) will likely remain the main source of revenue for most news content, a paid model can serve as an important source of additional revenue," Google said.

"Google has experience not only with our e-commerce products; we have successfully built consumer products used by millions around the world," it said. "We can use this expertise to help create a successful e-commerce platform for publishers."

Google also suggested it would share revenue with newspapers like Apple does with music companies on its online music store iTunes.

[Google](#) is not the only company seeking to develop a payment platform for newspapers.

Journalism Online, a company launched in April which seeks to help news organizations make money on the Web, announced last month that more than 500 newspapers and magazines have agreed to join the venture as affiliates.

It said a payment platform would go online in the fall which would allow subscribers to access paid content at the websites of the affiliates using a universal Journalism Online account.

The Los Angeles Times also reported last month that Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. has held talks with The New York Times Co., Washington Post Co., Hearst Corp. and Tribune Co., publisher of the Chicago Tribune and Los Angeles Times, on forming a consortium that would charge for [news](#) online.

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