

Microsoft to cut time holds internet search data

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The US giant, behind the Bing search engine, called on market leader [Google](#) to do likewise during a Brussels press conference.

"Microsoft will remove the entirety of IP addresses from search queries at six months," said John Vassallo, vice president for [European Union](#) affairs, referring to Internet Protocol data identifying individual users.

The company currently holds the information for 18 months and said the new rules will come into force within 12 to 18 months.

The decision marks an abrupt change of stance as previously it said it would only reduce the stockage time if its rivals followed suit.

Analysts said the move was triggered by pressure from European privacy campaigners, but Microsoft said users worldwide would benefit.

In Europe, Bing has just two percent of the market compared to Google's 80 percent.

It is the latest climbdown for Microsoft in Europe after it was forced by Brussels regulators to unbundle both its Media Player and Internet Explorer browser software from new PCs sold in the world's biggest border-free trading market.

Vassallo suggested the company was acting in advance of a possible European Commission initiative to protect users' privacy.

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