

Google loosens Europe ad trademark controls

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Ben Novick, spokesman for Google's European advertising arm, pictured at Google's Paris office on August 4. Google shook up its lucrative online advertising service in Europe on Wednesday, saying it would allow sellers to register other companies' brand names as search "keywords" when shopping on the Internet.

Google shook up its lucrative online advertising service in Europe on Wednesday, saying it would allow sellers to register other companies' brand names as search "keywords" when shopping on the Internet.

The US giant currently allows advertisers to demand their brand be omitted from the list of keywords that other companies pay to have linked to their websites to boost the chances their company will appear in online searches.

Spokesman Ben Novick said this practice would be scrapped in many European countries and territories from September 14, in line with its

existing policy in most other countries, after a ruling by Europe's highest court.

"This is beneficial to users. They'll see more relevant ads when they've done a search," Novick told reporters at the Paris office of Google, the world's biggest [Internet search engine](#).

Under Google's current system in Europe a big car company, for example, could prevent the appearance of ads for a separate company selling parts for its cars alongside the results when a user searches using its brand name.

After the change announced Wednesday, the parts firm will be able to have its services included in search results for the other company's brand name, by including it among the keywords it pays for.

The change means "narrowing what brand owners can control," Google lawyer Yoram Elkaim told reporters.

The countries affected include France, where companies including luxury goods group Louis Vuitton sued [Google](#), alleging it infringed their trademarks by allowing other firms to index their brands as keywords.

The European Court of Justice ruled in Google's favour, prompting it to announce the new change which it says will present [web users](#) with a range of [search](#) results less restricted to certain companies.

"Obviously some of our big spenders are trademark owners, but we feel this is right for users," Novick said.

He declined to forecast how the change may boost Google's own earnings from online advertising, which account for 97 percent of its overall revenues, notably through its Adwords service which lets

advertisers bid for keywords.

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