

EU probes new Google privacy policy

February 3 2012, By GABRIELE STEINHAUSER , AP Business Writer



The European Union's data protection authorities have asked Google to delay the rollout of its new privacy policy until they have verified that it doesn't break the bloc's data protection laws.

Google publicized its new [privacy rules](#) - which regulate how the Web giant uses the enormous amounts of [personal data](#) its collects through its search engine, email and other services - with much fanfare last week.

Since then, it has launched a huge publicity campaign informing its users around the globe of the new policy, which is set to come into force on March 1.

But that launch date may now be under threat.

In a letter to [Google](#) Chief Executive [Larry Page](#), Jacob Kohnstamm, the chairman of the group of 27 national privacy regulators in the EU, said the French [data protection agency](#) has launched an investigation into the new rules and how they will affect Google users in the EU.

"We call for a pause (in the rollout of the new rules) in the interests of ensuring that there can be no misunderstanding about Google's commitments to information rights of their users and EU citizens, until we have completed our analysis," Kohnstamm wrote in the letter, which was sent Thursday and published on Friday.

Google's search engine has a [market share](#) of more than 90 percent in the EU, with rival services like Microsoft's Bing gaining little traction. The EU's competition authorities are already examining whether Google uses this dominance to stop other search engines from entering the market.

A spokeswoman for Kohnstamm, who is also the head of the Dutch data protection agency, did not immediately answer questions on how long the investigation is expected to take or whether there were specific concerns over the new rules that triggered the probe.

Google spokespeople in Brussels did not immediately respond to requests for comment. However, in its descriptions of the new privacy policy, Google says its main aim is to simplify the more than 60 different set of privacy rules for its different services into one that is easier to understand for users.

©2012 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: EU probes new Google privacy policy (2012, February 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-02-eu-probes-google-privacy-policy.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.