

# Japan lawyer calls for Google autocomplete change

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A Japanese lawyer on Tuesday urged Google to make its "autocomplete" function more flexible, after a court [ordered the search giant to modify the feature](#) to prevent embarrassment for his client.

Hiroyuki Tomita said his unidentified client was suffering reputational damage because Google's [algorithm](#) generated a suggestion linking him to a crime he had not committed when users typed his name.

"We are not asking for the entire 'suggest function' (autocomplete system) to be switched off," Tomita told AFP, clarifying reports Monday that he wanted the function disabled by Google in Japan.

"We are asking Google to follow what was issued by a Japanese court," the lawyer said.

The [Tokyo District Court](#) last week approved a petition by the man to have his name delinked from autocomplete suggestions, ruling that the function violated his privacy.

The Google function linked the man to [criminality](#), damaging his reputation and making it hard for him to find work in recent years, according to Tomita.

Autocomplete is a function provided by many search engines that suggests what a user may be seeking as they type queries.

Query suggestions are typically based on what other people have searched for when they typed the same initial letters or words.

In the United States, Google said it was reviewing the Japanese court ruling.

"A Japanese court issued a provisional order requesting Google to delete specific terms from autocomplete," a spokesman for the California-based company confirmed on Monday.

"The judge did not require Google to completely suspend the autocomplete function. Google is currently reviewing the order," he said in a statement.

Tomita expressed frustration that [Google](#) in Japan had been unable to handle the matter, and accused the company's US headquarters of dragging its feet.

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