

# Google reaches deal with French publishers on book scans (Update)

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The screen of a computer shows a Google Book search on the home page of Internet giant Google's website. Google has reached a deal with French publishers and authors on scanning books and putting them online, ending a six-year legal battle over copyrights.

Google has reached a deal with French publishers and authors on scanning books and putting them online, ending a six-year legal battle over copyrights, publishers' group SNE said Monday.

"The two parties reached an agreement enabling us to encourage initiatives to publish digital books and creative diversity while respecting the rights of the author," the SNE, which represents some 600 publishing houses, said in a statement.

"This announcement marks a positive advance for updating France's

print heritage under copyright and contributes to expanding the availability of digital books."

The deal puts an end to Google's appeal of a 2009 court decision that ruled the US Internet giant had "committed acts of copyright violation" by digitising French books and putting them online.

The Paris court had ordered Google to pay 300,000 euros (\$375,000) in damages to three French publishers owned by La Martiniere group and a symbolic sum of one euro to the SNE and the SGDL Society of Authors.

SNE president Antoine Gallimard said the SGDL, which represents some 6,000 authors, had been key to negotiating the deal.

"The authors will be able to say yes or no to the indexing of their works," Gallimard said.

"It is now up to each publishing house to decide if it wants to sign a framework accord with Google on authorship rights or not," he added.

Under the deal, Google and the publishers will develop a catalogue of books that are eligible to be digitised.

Publishers will be able to decide whether a given title can appear on Google's search engine or be sold in digital form, and will retain the right to withdraw a work or prevent it from being scanned.

Google will give money to develop an SGDL list of authors and copyright holders.

It will also give money for an SNE programme called "Little Champions of Reading" that will promote reading aloud among primary school students.

Google Books France director Philippe Colombet called the deal "a key phase" in Google's relationship with the French publishing world, saying it would give authors and publishers control over how their works are sold.

"All conditions are now in place for Google to participate in developing digital books in France and contribute to spreading French culture," he said.

Google has scanned more than 20 million books in over 400 languages since 2005.

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