

Google hits back against German copyright law

November 27 2012



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The one-minute Internet video, entitled "defend your net", shows consumers using the search engine to find what they want on the web.

"For more than 10 years, you have been able to find the things that move you. A planned law will now change that," the firm says in the video.

"Do you want that to happen? Get involved," ends the message, offering users the possibility to sign an [online petition](#) against the law, due to be debated in the Bundestag lower [house of parliament](#) on Thursday.

The draft law—dubbed the "Lex Google" as the giant US search engine is seen as the main target—would force search engines to pay a fee to publishers when [Internet users](#) click through to their content.

Demanded for many years by powerful media groups such as Axel Springer and Bertelsmann, which want to retain the copyright over their content, the [draft legislation](#) is backed by Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#)'s ruling coalition.

The media groups also argue that a user of "Google News" can simply read the short summaries offered on the front page to get his or her fix of the daily news, rather than clicking through to the paper concerned.

But the head of Google Germany, Stefan Tweraser, hit back, saying: "The majority of citizens have never heard of this draft law even though it could affect all Internet users in Germany."

Tweraser said the law would restrict the content citizens could access on the web and result in higher costs for companies.

However, Justice Minister Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger noted that consumers did have a choice.

"There are other search engines than Google," she told business daily Handelsblatt in its Wednesday edition.

France is also pushing [Google](#) to compensate media websites.

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Citation: Google hits back against German copyright law (2012, November 27) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-11-google-german-copyright-law.html>

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