

Google, EU 'near deal' on search probe

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The Google logo is seen at the Google headquarters in Mountain View, California on September 2, 2011. The US Internet giant is preparing changes to its dominant search system to satisfy EU anti-trust authorities, the Financial Times has said.

US Internet giant Google is preparing changes to its dominant search system to satisfy EU anti-trust authorities, the Financial Times said on Saturday.

In a five-year accord with Brussels, [Google](#) has promised to make users

"clearly aware" when promoting its own search services in specialised areas such as restaurants, finance and shopping, the FT said, citing people familiar with the deal.

It will also highlight links to rival specialised search services.

EU Competition Commissioner Joaquin Almunia told the New York Times on Tuesday that Google had to clearly differentiate its services from others but stressed that the company would not have to change the key underlying algorithms which drive the product.

Almunia spokesman Antoine Colombani declined to comment directly on the report but noted that Google had submitted a list of detailed remedies in January.

"The European Commission recently completed a preliminary review formally setting out its concerns and on this basis, Google then submitted its own formal proposals," Colombani said.

The EU launched its investigation of Google in November 2010 following a complaint by several companies, including US software giant Microsoft.

In February, Brussels said it had received proposals aimed at ending the probe and was examining them with a view to announcing its decision by the middle of the year.

Earlier, the US [Federal Trade Commission](#) dropped a similar investigation, saying it lacked a legal basis to bring a case against Google.

Critics say Google controls about 70 percent of the Internet [search market](#) and the advertising that goes along with it.

The search probe is one of a series of [regulatory problems](#) facing Google.

This week, a group of major companies, including Microsoft and Oracle, complained to the European Commission over Google's offerings for its Android-powered mobile phones.

Last week, six European countries, including France and Britain, launched joint action against Google to get it to scale back new monitoring powers that watchdogs believe violate EU privacy protection rules.

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