

# France fines Google 150,000 euros in data privacy row

January 8 2014

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Google's logo at the Google cultural hub in Paris on December 10, 2013

France's data protection watchdog on Wednesday fined Google 150,000 euros (\$205,000)—the maximum possible—for failing to comply with its privacy guidelines for personal data.

The watchdog, the CNIL, also ordered the US Internet giant to publish a statement relating to its decision on its French homepage for at least 48

hours within the next eight days.

Google was informed of the decision on January 3, the CNIL said in a statement.

France's move follows Google's introduction last year of a new privacy policy which enables it to track user activity across its search engine, Gmail, the Google+ social networking platform and other services it owns, which include YouTube.

The changes make it easier for Google to collect and process data that could be used by advertisers to target individuals with tailored offers, thereby increasing the company's revenue potential.

The CNIL had asked Google to inform web users in France on how it processes their [personal data](#) and to define exactly how long they can store the information.

It had also requested that the US giant obtain user permission before storing cookies on their computers, referring to files that track web surfers and allow companies to target them with tailored commercials.

Google has always maintained that its treatment of data gathered from users is in line with European law and has previously refused to get into an argument about the specific French requirements.

The issue of data protection has gathered steam worldwide following revelations by Edward Snowden, a former contractor with the National Security Agency, that the US had a vast, secret programme called PRISM to monitor Internet users.

Google has defended the changes it made last year on the ground that they simplify and standardise its approach across its various services.

But critics argue that the policy, which offers no ability to opt out aside from refraining from signing into Google services, gives the operator of the world's largest [search engine](#) unprecedented ability to monitor its users' tastes and purchasing patterns.

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