

# Google 'forgets' stories on BBC, UK newspaper sites

July 3 2014, by Alice Ritchie

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Google restricts access to a BBC blog posting and several British newspaper stories under a legal ruling granting people a right to be "forgotten" in search engines

Google has restricted access to a BBC blog posting and several British newspaper stories under a legal ruling granting people a right to be "forgotten" in search engines, it emerged on Thursday.

BBC economics editor Robert Peston complained that Google had

"killed this example of my journalism" after being informed that a 2007 posting about former Merrill Lynch chairman Stan O'Neal had been removed from certain searches in Europe.

The Guardian newspaper also said it had been notified that six links to its stories had been removed from [search results](#), three of them about a 2010 controversy involving a now-retired Scottish Premier League referee.

The newspaper said it was given no reason and had no appeal against the decision, the result of a ruling by the European Court of Justice in May that the paper said was a "huge, if indirect, challenge to press freedom".

The court ruled that individuals have the right to have links to information about them deleted from searches in certain circumstances, such as if the data is outdated or inaccurate.

Google, the world's leading [search engine](#), has said that each request would be examined individually to determine whether it met the ruling's criteria.

Mail Online, the world's biggest news site, said it had received notification that links to a story about the same Scottish referee, Dougie McDonald, had been removed from certain searches.

Other stories restricted include one about a couple caught having sex on a train, and another about a Muslim man who accused the airline Cathay Pacific of refusing to employ him because of his name.

- 'Like burning books' -

"These examples show what a nonsense the right to be forgotten is. It is the equivalent of going into libraries and burning books you don't like,"

said Martin Clarke, the publisher of Mail Online.

He said the website would regularly publish lists of articles removed from Google's European search results, while the BBC and The Guardian also published links to the restricted stories.

The links remain visible on Google.com, the US version of the site, and the restrictions only appear to relate to certain search terms.

A commentary in The Guardian noted that a search for Dougie McDonald no longer brought up its story on Google.co.uk, but a [search](#) for "Scottish referee who lied" worked fine.

According to the story, McDonald was found to have lied about his reasons for granting a penalty in a Celtic v Dundee United match.

Google told the BBC that it had since received 50,000 requests for articles to be removed, although they remain anonymous.

A spokeswoman told AFP: "We have recently started taking action on the removals requests we've received after the European Court of Justice decision.

"This is a new and evolving process for us. We'll continue to listen to feedback and will also work with data protection authorities and others as we comply with the ruling," she said.

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