

French court says has jurisdiction in Facebook vagina case

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A Paris court ruled US-based social media site Facebook can be judged in France, in a case brought by a French user whose account was blocked

A Paris court ruled Thursday that it has jurisdiction to judge a case against US social networking site Facebook which blocked the account of a French teacher who posted an image of a vagina.

The [court](#) ruled that Facebook's clause forcing all users to agree that any litigation must be based in California, where the [site](#) is based, was "abusive".

Facebook is being sued by a French father of three whose account was blocked after he posted a 19th century picture by Gustave Courbet, "The Origin of the World", depicting a vagina.

The irate teacher filed a complaint in a French court saying the site could not differentiate between pornography and art.

But in a hearing on January 22, Facebook's [lawyer](#) Caroline Lyannaz argued that the site did not fall under French jurisdiction as users have to sign a clause agreeing that only a California court can rule in disputes relating to the firm.

The teacher's lawyer Stephane Cottineau hailed the court ruling as a "first victory won by David against Goliath".

"This decision will create jurisprudence for other social media and other Internet giants who use their being headquartered abroad, mainly in the United States, to attempt to evade French law."

The lawyer said this was an "abusive clause" as none of the 22 million Facebook users in France "can ever take recourse to French legal jurisdiction in the event of a dispute."

Facebook said it noted the judgement and was considering its response.

The court will hear the case on May 21.

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