

# GOOGLE SAYS IT WILL SHUT SEARCH ENGINE IN AUSTRALIA IF FORCED TO PAY FOR NEWS

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: IT, Internet and Communications

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Google said on Friday it will disable its search function in Australia if the government proceeds with a media code that would force it and Facebook Inc to [pay local media companies for sharing their content](#).

Australia is on course to pass laws that would make the Big Tech giants negotiate payments with local publishers and broadcasters for content. If they can't strike a deal, a government-appointed arbitrator will decide the price.

"The code's arbitration model with bias criteria presents unmanageable financial and operational risk for Google," MelSilva, managing director for Australia and New Zealand, told a senate committee. "If this version of the code were to become law, it would give us no real choice but to stop making Google Search available in Australia."

Google's comments drew sharp rebuke from Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison who said the country makes its rules for "things you can do in Australia."

"People who want to work with that in Australia, you're very welcome. But we don't respond to threats," Mr. Morrison told reporters.

The United States government this week asked Australia [to scrap the proposed laws](#), which have broad political support, and suggested Australia should pursue a voluntary code instead.

Australia announced the legislation last month after an investigation found Alphabet Inc-owned Google and social media giant Facebook held too much market power in the media industry, a situation it said posed a potential threat to a well-functioning democracy.

Google's threat to limit its services in Australia came just hours after the internet giant reached a content-payment deal with some French news publishers.

Google's testimony "is part of a pattern of threatening behaviour that is chilling for anyone who values our democracy," said Peter Lewis, director of the Australia Institute's Centre for Responsible Technology.

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Co-founder of Signal Foundation says its non-profit status protects it from 'outside interests demanding rapid returns' and it is ramping up infrastructure.

Facebook bought the platform in 2014, and gradually changed the way it accessed user data from WhatsApp. The social networking company is now showing WhatsApp users a 'take it or leave it' attitude with the latest policy update.

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