

EU turns up the heat on Google

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Following the ECJ's controversial ruling in Google Spain, the world's favourite search engine has had a tough time in seeking to tread the line between respecting the judgment while maintaining its free speech agenda. Google has, to date, had somewhat of a free rein in deciding unilaterally, how to implement the rather vague requirements of the so-called Right to Be Forgotten. And it has made some questionable decisions as to how it proposes to handle deletion requests. So perhaps it is not surprising that the EU has decided that it needs to step in which it has done in the form of the Article 29 Working Party – an independent advisory body on data protection and privacy composed of representatives from the national data protection authorities of EU member states. The Article 29 Working Party has come up with guidelines on the implementation of Google Spain which contain thinly veiled criticisms of Google's actions to date – including importantly, its decision to implement Right to Be Forgotten requests on its European specific search engines alone (.co.uk, .it, .de, etc rather than .com) and informing media outlets when links are removed, provoking a catalogue of articles about the de-linking itself and, in doing so, making the underlying story relevant once again. Whether or not this prompts a change in implementation by the web giant – or whether Google will hold out for legal action and the chance to revise the principles laid out in Google Spain, as clarified in these guidelines – remains to be seen. The guidelines can be read in full [here](#).

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