

Google Fighting Expansion of EU Right to be Forgotten Laws - Could Impact USA

September 18, 2018 - Google is fighting an expansion of the EU's right to be forgotten. This law allows individuals to demand that their information be excluded from search engine results. Once such a request is made, search engines must remove links to information about the individual making the request and they face hefty fines if they don't comply.

Tweet

```
(function() {
var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];
s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);
})();
```

```
(function() {
var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;
po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);
})();
```

France is now arguing that when a citizen asks to have information about themselves removed, those links should be removed globally; not just on search results within the EU. They made the argument in front of the EU's Court of Justice saying that not removing results in global searches doesn't respect the rights of EU citizens to be forgotten.

The argument presents a real problem for the entire world. If the French argument was adopted, it would allow anyone around the globe to file a request in the EU to have their information removed from the internet. As crazy as it sounds, there would be no reason that a child predator in the Megan's Law database couldn't make such a request. This wouldn't remove them from the database, but it would make it impossible to find links to that person on Google or any other search engine.

We have long argued that consumers should be able to control who has access to their data. But that argument only goes so far. It means that if you provide your information to a potential creditor, that creditor shouldn't be able to share or sell your information to third parties without your express permission. It has never meant that you should be able to post something completely stupid or disparaging about your employer that later comes back to bite you, that you should be able to have it removed from search results. In other words, the right to be forgotten should be to protect you from others; not from yourself.

In the EU, you can have links that you find embarrassing taken down. But whether or not that is the right thing to do in the United States should really be a decision left up to Americans; not the EU. That is, in a nutshell, the argument that Google made before the court. And lucky for them, it is also the argument being made by the European Commission.

How the case will turn out is unknown. A ruling is expected in 2019.

by Jim Malmberg

Note: When posting a comment, please sign-in first if you want a response. If you are not registered, [click here](#). Registration is easy and free.

Follow ACCESS