

[GB] Co-regulatory code to demote pirated material on search engines

IRIS 2017-4:1/21

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An agreement has been reached to make it less likely that consumers will be led by search engines to copyright-infringing websites. The agreement has been brokered by the UK Intellectual Property Office, the UK governmental body responsible for intellectual property rights, with the assistance of the UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Implementation will be monitored by the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation.

Despite this involvement of official bodies, the code of practice is voluntary and not directly enforced by government. Its effect is to ensure that websites that contain pirated materials will be demoted from the first page of results in search engines. The code will accelerate such demotion of illegal sites following notices from rights holders, and establishes ongoing technical consultation, increased co-operation and information-sharing to develop and improve on the process. It will also enable new practices to be adopted where needed. The Code was agreed on 9 February 2017 and came into force immediately. It sets targets for reducing the visibility of infringing content in search engines by 1 June 2017.

The Code has been signed by Bing, BPI (the record labels' association), the Motion Picture Association, and Google, although Google stated that it already has sufficient measures in place to tackle piracy and does not plan any immediate policy changes. A number of other organisations, including the Premier League and the Publishers' Association, have also indicated agreement as members of the Alliance for IP, representing trade associations across the creative, branded and design industries.

The Code will work alongside existing anti-piracy measures, such as court-ordered site blocking, work with brands to reduce advertising on illegal sites, and work on the "Get it Right from a Genuine Site" consumer education campaign, which encourages fans to value the creative process and directs them to legal sources of content.

Intellectual Property Office, "Search Engines and Creative Industries Sign Anti-Piracy Agreement", 20 February 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/search-engines-and-creative-industries-sign->

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