

How Business and Government are trying to manage your Google experience

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Governments and businesses are continually trying to interfere with how users find their web content. Not by the same means as developers and marketers, IE good SEO principles and an actual strategy, but by trying to change fundamental elements of the search system.

Two- recent cases of Google tampering have re-opened a wider discussion on how users interact with search engines and just what sort of influence government and business can exert over them.

The French Supreme Court....

Recently ruled that Google should censor the words 'torrent', 'rapidshare' and 'megaupload' from its Instant and Autocomplete search services.
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2012/07/19/french_court_google_copyright/

Now the motivation behind this is clear, they are trying to stop piracy, or at least the locating of pirate material based sites. Disappointingly they are not trying to make competing legal services more attractive or more competitively priced, they are simply trying to make the pirate option harder.

Controversially this now means that rather than getting a view on what other users are search for my auto complete results are being pre-processed based on recommendations from the French supreme court?
In an open and non prejudice internet how is that ok?

The BPI...

Says Google has become a directory for piracy. They are trying to instigate a plan for Google to alter the search rankings of results to make pirate related results less populare. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-18892655>

Google is incredibly protective of its search and ordering logic and delivery so a request by a commercial institute to alter its ranking so that it appears higher is ridiculous. The web has an established system of search and follow in place, quite a lot of which was established by Google. For any financial institute to ask Google to alter their search results in their favour is shameful. The sooner the BPI realise that they have to work with the same system as the rest of the country then the sooner they may be able to influence it in a direction they want.

Instead of spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on legal cases spend the same money on bringing their technology and business models up to date. Hire competent technical and marketing staff to become SEO giants and actually out-do your competition (legal or otherwise), and adapt to the new model of online sales rather than trying to enforce an old out of date process that the general public obviously isn't following anymore.

Develop a system that makes it easier for people to find and purchase, at a sensible price, legitimate music. Piracy works for the public because its simpler then the legal route. Take that away and you've got an argument.

Personal issues or Policy change?

What's worse is that these decisions are targeted specifically At Google. They are not policy wide decisions; they are specific individual attempts to make one search engine more regulated. Now I'll concede that Google services a large majority of users search requests but it is not, nor will it be the only search engine in existence.

If you are going to try and change the user bases search habits by restricting terms or managing search results the least you could do is put it forward as an all-encompassing principle, rather than a Google centric policy. Otherwise I'll just use Yahoo! Or the next search engine start up that isn't so tightly regulated.