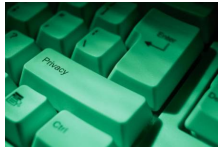


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By: Vlad Constandes, SEO News Editor



All Search Engines Must Bow to the Law

EU regulators say it

Internet data collection is a delicate issue with the search engines and regulators everywhere, the classical example of one pulling against the other. With the users being left in the middle, it cannot go on any longer, so yesterday, European data privacy regulators ruled that even search engines based outside the Old Continent must comply with the EU rules on how private data and preferences are stored. It's final for Europeans, they must consent to having their Internet address and search history collected and also are entitled to query the search engines in order to verify the information apply. The full report from the Article 29 Working Party related to the issue is said to be released somewhere around April this year. "Search engines fall under the EU data protection directive if there are controllers collecting users' IP addresses or search history information, and therefore have to comply with relevant provisions," said the group of national regulators from each EU nation, according to the Associated Press. They had to address this aspect of Internet life because search engines have grown to be more than a simple tool, up to the point to which they are "a daily routine for an ever-growing number of citizens." Out of the three major players in search, only Yahoo! had no comment. Google once again said that it would welcome the report and try to comply with it, in its attempt to work with privacy and consumer advocates and EU regulators, in order to improve privacy online for all of its users. Microsoft wanted to underline that by removing the IP address from the list of data collected, all of the information would make it anonymous. Germany's member on the Article 29 team, Peter Scharr said last December that the IP should be regarded as personal information.