

Belgian French-language news publishers, authors societies and Google reach partnership agreement

Brussels 13 December 2012 - The Belgian French-language news publishers, the authors' societies and Google announced today a set of agreements that will favor business partnerships and end legal proceedings. The agreements will see the Belgian French-language news publishers partner with Google to generate business opportunities regarding online content aimed at driving traffic and increasing user engagement and revenue on publisher sites.

The parties had been engaged in legal proceedings since 2006, over claims by Belgian French language news publishers, represented by Copiepresse, and by authors, represented by SAJ and Assucopie, that Google infringed its copyright. Most recently, the case was submitted to the Belgian Supreme Court.

Google, the publishers and the authors, even if they retain different legal positions, agree upon the opportunity to end the legal proceedings and to leave those disagreements behind. Google will pay the legal fees and work with the publishers on mutually beneficial business partnerships and innovation.

As key players in the digital media market, every day the Belgian French-language publishers drive a major audience to their news sites with extensive quality content. Publishers are willing to further leverage these audiences and to build new business models to further optimize their monetization both on the advertising market and on the readers' market.

Parties also agreed to use their respective media to promote each other's services, e.g. by optimising AdWords campaigns to attract readers to the newspapers' websites, and by placing Google advertising in publishers' media.

In addition to this partnership, publishers can, on a voluntary basis, re-enter Google News.

Francois Le Hodey, representative of the publishers, said: "In 2006, the publishers of the Belgian French media had no contact person at Google in Belgium and did not have a clear view on the intentions of Google in these markets during the launch of Google News. Today, and especially since the arrival of a new Google management in Belgium, a more constructive relationship has been established with these publishers, opening the door to further synergies with them."

Frans Wauters, spokesperson for the Authors' Societies said: "The Authors' Societies are also supportive of the initiatives of the publishers to develop new digital business models, in the interest of their members."

"We are very pleased to be able to leave behind the disagreements of the past," said Thierry Geerts, Google's Managing Director for Belgium. "In partnership with the news publishing industry, we can achieve much more, and we are excited to implement new products that will earn revenue and help the news industry to thrive online."

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About Rossel Group:

Decentralized and diversified, the Rossel Group is active in following press: online (lesoir.be, sudinfo.be, lavoixdunord.fr, cinenews.be, etc.) and printed national (Le Soir, L'Echo/De Tijd) and regional (La Meuse, La Nouvelle Gazette, La Province, La Capitale and Nord-Éclair in Belgium; La Voix du Nord, Le Courrier Picard, etc. in the Northern France) and in free (Vlan and Metro) or periodical (Le Soir Mag) format. It also keeps participations in the broadcasting in Belgium and in the North of France. It moreover is an industrial group with four printing centers.

About IPM Group

IPM Group is a Belgian media company active in Internet (lalibre.be, dh.be, logic-immo.be and cinebel.be), daily newspapers (La Libre Belgique and La DH Les Sports), magazines (Belgian editions of Paris Match, Courrier International and Logic-Immo) and radio (Twizz).

About L'Avenir.

Les Editions de l'Avenir sa is the publisher of the regional quality newspaper L'Avenir (9 regional editions) and the newssite lavenir.net.

Les Editions de l'Avenir is a subsidiary of Corelio, also publisher of the flemish newspapers De Standaard and Het Nieuwsblad and of the free weekly Passe-Partout.

About Copiepresse

Copiepresse is the copyright management company established by French-language and German-language Belgium printed publishers to ensure the promotion and defense of their rights as well in print as on digital devices.

About SAJ

SAJ represents author-journalists of the Belgian written, audiovisual and digital press. It was founded in 1995 by journalists associations AJP and VVJ.

About Assucopie

Assucopie is a society representing the rights of pedagogical, scientific and academic authors.

About Google Inc.

Google is a global technology leader focused on improving the ways people connect with information. Google's innovations in web search and advertising have made its website a top Internet property and its brand one of the most recognized in the world.

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