

Scoop: Google won't add fact checks despite new EU law

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[Google](#) has told the EU it will not add fact checks to search results and YouTube videos or use them in ranking or removing content, despite the requirements of a new EU law, according to a copy of a letter obtained by Axios.

The big picture: Google has never included fact-checking as part of its content moderation practices. The company had signaled privately to EU lawmakers that it didn't plan to change its practices, but it's reaffirming its stance ahead of a voluntary code becoming law in the near future.

Zoom in: In a letter written to Renate Nikolay, the deputy director general under the content and technology arm at the European Commission, Google's global affairs president Kent Walker said the fact-checking

integration required by the Commission's new [Disinformation Code of Practice](#) "simply isn't appropriate or effective for our services" and said Google won't commit to it.

- The code would require Google to incorporate fact-check results alongside Google's search results and YouTube videos. It would also force Google to build fact-checking into its ranking systems and algorithms.
- Walker said Google's current approach to content moderation works and pointed to successful content moderation during last year's "unprecedented cycle of global elections" as proof.
- He said a new feature added to YouTube last year that enables some users to [add contextual notes](#) to videos "has significant potential." (That program is similar to X's Community Notes feature, as well as new program [announced](#) by Meta last week.)

Catch up quick: The EU's Code of Practice on Disinformation, introduced in 2022, includes several voluntary commitments that tech firms and private companies, including fact-checking organizations, are expected to deliver on.

- The Code, originally created in 2018, predates the EU's new content moderation law, the Digital Services Act (DSA), which went into effect in 2022.

State of play: The Commission has held private discussions over the past year with tech companies, urging them to convert the voluntary measures into an official code of conduct under the DSA.

- Walker said in his letter Thursday that Google had already told the Commission that it didn't plan to comply.
- Google will "pull out of all fact-checking commitments in the Code before it becomes a DSA Code of Conduct," he wrote.
- He said Google will continue to invest in improvements to its current

content moderation practices, which focus on providing people with more information about their search results through features like Synth ID watermarking and AI disclosures on YouTube.

Zoom out: The news comes amid a global reckoning about the role tech platforms should play in fact-checking and policing speech.

- Last week, Meta said it would [end efforts to fact check and reduce policing of speech](#) across Facebook, Instagram, and Threads.
- Elon Musk has significantly reduced content moderation efforts at X since he took over the platform in 2022.

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