Google, Getty Images enter a multi-year global licensing partnership



Late last week, Google parent Alphabet and Getty Images announced a sweeping partnership that effectively ends a long-standing copyright and antitrust dispute between Getty and Google, which was filed in early 2016.

The newly announced deal was characterized by Getty as “a multi-year global licensing partnership, enabling Google to use Getty Images’ content within its various products and services.” As part of that deal, Google will be using Getty images across many of its “products and services.”

Another change, according to The Verge, is that Google will make copyright attribution and disclaimers more prominent in image search results and will remove view links to stand-alone URLs for Getty photographs.

Getty’s complaint against Google alleged traffic and revenue losses to its customers’ sites because users could see (and potentially copy) images directly from Google Image Search results. Getty claimed that the ability to save and download images promoted copyright infringement and “piracy.” Getty is not the only party to have made these types of claims against Google over the years.

Part of Getty’s EU complaint against Google was that it felt coerced into participating in Image Search and complying with Google’s image format requirements despite its copyright-related objections. However, those charges have now reportedly been withdrawn in the wake of the just-announced deal.

Historically, Getty, the world's largest repository and licensor of images, has been a very aggressive litigant (a "copyright troll") in its effort to protect licensing revenues or extract additional revenue from as many infringers as possible, some of whom were unwitting.

Call it business development by way of litigation and regulatory intervention.

About The Author



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