Google lobs lawsuit at search result scraping firm SerpApi

Google has filed a lawsuit to protect its search results, targeting a firm called SerpApi that has turned Google's 10 blue links into a business. According to Google, SerpApi ignores established law and Google's terms to scrape and resell its search engine results pages (SERPs). This is not the first action against SerpApi, but Google's decision to go after a scraper could signal a new, more aggressive stance on protecting its search data.

SerpApi and similar firms do fulfill a need, but they sit in a legal gray area. Google does not provide an API for its search results, which are based on the world's largest and most comprehensive web index. That makes Google's SERPs especially valuable in the age of AI. A chatbot can't summarize web links if it can't find them, which has led companies like Perplexity to pay for SerpApi's second-hand Google data. That prompted Reddit to file a lawsuit against SerpApi and Perplexity for grabbing its data from Google results.

Google is echoing many of the things Reddit said when it publicized its lawsuit earlier this year. The search giant claims it's not just doing this to protect itself—it's also about protecting the websites it indexes. In Google's blog post on the legal action, it says SerpApi "violates the choices of websites and rightsholders about who should have access to their content."

It's worth noting that Google has a partnership with Reddit that pipes data directly into Gemini. As a result, you'll often see Reddit pages cited in the chatbot's outputs. As Google points out, it abides by "industry-standard crawling

protocols” to collect the data that appears on its SERPs, but those sites didn’t agree to let SerpApi scrape their data from Google. So while you could reasonably argue that Google’s lawsuit helps protect the rights of web publishers, it also explicitly protects Google’s business interests.

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