

Google Must Let Websites Opt Out Of AI Search Features In UK via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

The UK's Competition and Markets Authority has imposed a new conduct requirement on Google Search that will let publishers opt out of having their content used in AI search features.

The requirement follows the CMA's decision to designate Google with strategic market status in general search. It sits under the UK's digital markets competition regime, the framework created by the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act.

For clarity, designating Google with that status is not a finding that the company broke competition law.

What Google Has To Do

The requirement places three obligations on Google.

Google must provide a way for websites to opt out of AI search features like AI Overviews and AI Mode. The CMA says greater control can strengthen publishers' bargaining power with Google.

Additionally, Google needs to give websites a way to opt out of having their content used to train AI models. According to the CMA, this publisher opt-out is a world first.

Google must also attribute publisher content with clear links in AI-generated results.

Cardell said:

“With features like AI Overviews rapidly reshaping online search, it is crucial that content publishers, including news organizations, have appropriate bargaining power over how their content is used. At the same time, these measures will help tens of millions of UK search users better understand and trust the information presented to them.”

Timeline And Oversight

Most of the requirements come into effect six months after publication. Google has nine months to introduce page-level controls for AI search features.

Google will also have to submit compliance reports to the CMA every six months for the first year. The CMA expects Google to publish a summary or a non-confidential version so we can learn more about the impact of these changes.

Google hasn't said how the opt-out will work, including whether publishers will manage it via a robots.txt directive, Search Console, or another method.

Why This Matters

The main way to keep content out of AI Overviews has been the nosnippet directive, which also strips standard search snippets. A control that separates AI-feature use from normal indexing, if it works as the CMA describes, would remove that tradeoff for publishers whose content reaches UK users.

Looking Ahead

The CMA said it will announce further action on Google's search business in the coming weeks. The regime took effect in 2025, and the agency has since opened four strategic market

status investigations into Google, Apple, and Microsoft.

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