

# Microsoft starts taking EU 'right to be forgotten' requests



A photo illustration shows the Microsoft logo displayed on a Nokia phone in Vienna September 3, 2013.  
REUTERS/HEINZ-PETER BADER

Microsoft Corp on Wednesday started taking requests from individuals in Europe who want to be removed from its Bing search engine results following a court judgment in May guaranteeing the "right to be forgotten."

Microsoft, whose Bing search engine has 2.5 percent of the European search market, follows market leader Google Inc which complied with the ruling in May, and started removing some search results last month.

The Luxembourg-based Court of Justice of the European Union in May ordered Google to remove a link to a 15-year-old newspaper article about a Spanish man's bankruptcy, effectively upholding people's "right to be forgotten" on the Internet.

The ruling, which affects the EU's 500 million citizens, requires that Internet search services remove information deemed "inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant." Failure to do so can result in fines. It only applies to EU countries, meaning links that have been removed in Europe will still appear in search results elsewhere, including the United States.

Microsoft's form, available on its Bing website ([here](#)), is a four-part questionnaire. Microsoft advises those interested in completing the questionnaire that it will "help us to consider the balance between your individual privacy interest and the public interest in protecting free expression and the free availability of information, consistent with European law."

The form states that making a request does not guarantee that a particular search result will be blocked.

European privacy concerns, and tech companies' sensitivity to them, have exploded in the past year after former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden revealed details of mass U.S. surveillance programs involving European citizens and some heads of state.

## TRENDING ON REUTERS



Abbott to buy St. Jude for \$25 billion to boost heart devices 4

Oil hits 2016 peaks again as weak dollar



## BUILD YOUR PERFECT CANDIDATE



Download Reuters' White House Run from the App Store