

France has hailed a victory in its long-running quest for fairer action from tech companies after [Facebook](#) reached an agreement with a group of national and regional newspapers to pay for content shared by its users.

Facebook on Thursday announced a licensing agreement with the APIG alliance of French national and regional newspapers, which includes Le Parisien and Ouest-France as well as smaller titles. It said this meant “people on [Facebook](#) will be able to continue uploading and sharing news stories freely amongst their communities, whilst also ensuring that the copyright of our publishing partners is protected”.

France had been battling for two years to protect the publishing rights and revenue of its press and news agencies against what it termed the domination of powerful tech companies that share news content or show news stories in web searches.

In 2019 France became the first EU country to [enact a directive on the publishing rights](#) of media companies and news agencies, called “neighbouring rights”, which required large tech platforms to open talks with publishers seeking remuneration for use of news content. But it has taken long negotiations to reach agreements on paying publishers for content.

No detail was given of the exact amount agreed by Facebook and the APIG.

Pierre Louette, the head of the media group Les Echos-Le Parisien, led the alliance of newspapers who negotiated as a group with Facebook. He said the agreement was “the result of an outspoken and fruitful dialogue between publishers and a leading digital platform”. He said the terms agreed would allow Facebook to implement French law “while generating significant funding” for news publishers, notably the smallest ones.

Other newspapers, such as the national daily Le Monde, have negotiated their own deals in recent months. News agencies have also negotiated separately.

After the 2019 French directive to protect publishers’ rights, a copyright spat raged for more than a year in which French media groups sought to find common ground with international tech firms. Google initially refused to comply, saying media groups already benefited by receiving millions of visits to their websites. News outlets struggling with dwindling print subscriptions complained about not receiving a cut of the millions made from ads displayed alongside news stories, particularly on Google.

But this year Google announced it had reached a draft agreement with the APIG to pay publishers for a selection of content shown in its searches.

Facebook said that besides paying for French content, it would also launch a French news service, Facebook News, in January – a follow-up to similar services in the US and UK – to “give people a dedicated space to access content from trusted and reputable news sources”.

Facebook reached deals with most of Australia’s largest media companies earlier this year. Nine Entertainment, which includes the Sydney Morning Herald and the Age, said in its [annual report](#) that it was expecting “strong growth in the short-term” from its deals with Facebook and Google.

British newspapers including the Guardian [signed up last year](#) to a programme in which Facebook pays to license articles that appear on a dedicated news section on the social media site. Separately, in July Guardian Australia [struck a deal with Facebook](#) to license news content.

Source: [France hails victory as Facebook agrees to pay newspapers for content](#)