



Baroness Stowell
Chair, Lords Communications and Digital Select Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

20 November 2024

Response to Financial Times letter of 18th October

Dear Baroness Stowell,

It was a pleasure to host you and the Committee members in Mountain View as part of your Future of News inquiry. I do hope you found it a productive visit and I know my colleagues were grateful for the opportunity to discuss Google's ongoing support for the UK news ecosystem.

In the context of the inquiry, I wanted to address claims made in a letter from the *Financial Times* to the Committee, dated 18th October 2024. The letter claims that Google-Extended only applies to training and does not prevent the use of opted out content in "Retrieval Augmentation Generation (RAG)". Specifically, the letter claims that Google uses content, including opted out content from the "search scraper...to enable Google's LLMs, and those of third party companies...to respond accurately to user queries in real time". It adds that "there is presently no option to prevent the use and sale of IP for RAG purposes from occurring, other than to opt-out of Google Search entirely."

This is not an accurate description of how our products work and we welcome the opportunity to clarify this for the Committee.

"Retrieval Augmentation Generation (RAG)" or "grounding" is the ability to connect a generative AI model's output to sources of information. If you provide models with access to specific data sources, then grounding can guide the models' output and reduce the chance of inventing content.

Google provides grounding as a service in our third party AI developer products (for example, Vertex AI API) through tools like Grounding with Google Search. **Grounding with Google Search does not use web pages for grounding that have implemented our publisher control, Google-Extended**, while these sites are able to remain in Google Search.

Google-Extended lets publishers manage whether their sites help improve Gemini Apps and Vertex AI generative APIs, including future generations of models that power those products. If



a publisher has deployed Google-Extended we do not use their data for grounding in these products. This is explained in our developer documentation [here](#).

Use of Google-Extended does not impact a site's inclusion or ranking in Google Search. It provides an effective way for publishers to exclude their content from this grounding service without opting out of Google Search.

The control offered by Google-Extended to opt out of many uses of content while remaining in Google Search is in addition to [extensive content controls](#) within Search itself. This includes controls to eliminate or limit the length of text from the page used to generate a search result page. Those content controls apply to search features including Featured Snippets, Discover and AI Overviews, among others.

We appreciate the opportunity to update the Committee and hope this underscores Google's commitment to providing all web publishers with appropriate controls for their content.

Yours sincerely,

Katie O'Donovan
Director, Government Affairs and Public Policy