

Our deepest sympathies are with all of the families and individuals affected by this horrific attack. We agree that the safety of citizens is an absolute priority. We have worked for many years, and will continue to work, with the UK Government, regulators and law enforcement to deliver this within the bounds of the law.

We hold ourselves to a high standard when it comes to removal of pages from Google search results. Our legal obligations may vary country by country, as different jurisdictions have come to different conclusions about how to deal with these complex topics.

We encourage people and authorities to alert us to content they believe violates the law. We have delisted URLs shared with us by the Home Office when we have determined they are illegal under relevant UK counter terrorism legislation. Of course, whether or not URLs are illegal involves careful consideration of context and intent, especially where there is a need to balance educational, documentary, scientific, or artistic (EDSA) content. While content related to terrorism will often be illegal, the laws in this area are complex and each removal request must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. This approach is informed by and adheres to the laws of the countries in which we operate including the UK.

Rather than hosting content like social media platforms, Google Search indexes content from the open web. We index hundreds of billions of pages across the web and deal with billions of searches a day, so our best protection against low quality or harmful content is a two pronged approach. First, to design systems that rank high-quality, reliable information at the top of our results. This means that the overwhelming majority of searchers receive safe, informative results. Second, we run a huge variety of safety initiatives to limit access to harmful and illegal content. This includes, in the case of illegal content, delisting URLs from Search results.

Building scalable, automated approaches allows us to not only solve these challenges more effectively, but also avoid unnecessarily limiting access to legal content online. We fundamentally design our Search systems to prioritize relevant information from reliable sources. We are using ranking changes to update our algorithms and demote legal content (such as terrorist-related content which does not breach UK law) that could be harmful to users, making such content less prominent for queries without intent, in both web and image search.

A major component of Search's approach to quality, which includes but is not limited to reducing the appearance of legal but harmful content, is to understand when the user's query relates to a topic that is controversial - including but not limited to violent extremism. When Search detects such a query, it makes two significant adjustments to ranking and triggering:

- 1) Search rebalances its major ranking factors in favour of the generalised authority and quality of a page, trading off some relevance (i.e., the closeness of match between the words in the user's query). This has the effect of substantially lowering the ranking of low-quality pages (including pages classified as extremely low-quality by the ranking systems mentioned above.)
- 2) Search refrains from displaying visual results that the user did not ask for, in order to avoid displaying imagery that may correlate with violent extremism.

This has the effect of significantly lowering the presence of violent extremist content in results.

Furthermore, our content policies for Google Search features, such as Autocomplete or Knowledge Panels, disallow [content that promotes or condone violence](#); [content that promotes terrorist or extremist acts](#); [violent or gory content that's primarily intended to be shocking, sensational, or gratuitous](#).

We have not waited to act on safety. We support the goals of the Online Safety Act to keep people safe online and hope the Act will raise the bar across industry. The OSA is one of the most complex pieces of digital regulation anywhere in the world, and we are actively working on the systems and process changes that will support compliance. We are heavily engaged with Ofcom to show how we are meeting the duties set out in the act and codes of practice.

We will continue to work with the UK Government, regulators and law enforcement to keep our users, and citizens, safe.