



# Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021: Monthly Transparency Report

In accordance with the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("IT Rules"), Google is publishing monthly transparency reports with details of complaints received from users in India and the actions taken, as well as removal actions taken as a result of automated detection processes across Google's platforms that are classified as "Significant Social Media Intermediaries" ("SSMIs"). This report is in addition to the various reports we already provide that publish data that shed light on how and why users raise complaints, how we respond to those complaints, how we enforce our Community Guidelines and content policies, and how we comply with local laws to keep users safe.

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## Overview

This report outlines the volume of complaints Google receives in India through its designated complaint channels during the specified one-month reporting period,<sup>1</sup> any subsequent removal action taken on complaints during the one-month reporting period, and the number of removal actions taken as a result of automated detection mechanisms used by Google's SSMI platforms. This report captures information for the period from October 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023. We expect to publish subsequent reports with monthly data 30 days following the last day of the reporting period to allow sufficient time for data processing and validation. We are committed to improving the report over future iterations.

<sup>1</sup>The time range for complaints received / actions taken is based on United States Pacific Time.

## Complaints received

The figure to the right reflects the total number of complaints received from individual users located in India via designated mechanisms during the one-month reporting period. These complaints relate to third-party content that is believed to violate local laws or personal rights on Google's SSMI platforms.

October 2023

Number of complaints received

22,257

## Complaint reasons

The complaints received, as outlined above, consist of various categories. Some requests may allege infringement of intellectual property rights, while others claim violation of local laws prohibiting types of content on grounds such as defamation. When we receive complaints regarding content on our platforms, we assess them carefully.

October 2023



- Copyright: 20,551 (92.4%)
- Trademark: 1,075 (4.8%)
- Other Legal: 256 (1.2%)
- Defamation: 209 (0.9%)
- Court Order: 52 (0.2%)
- Counterfeit: 47 (0.2%)
- Impersonation: 31 (0.1%)
- Circumvention: 26 (0.1%)
- Graphic Sexual Content: 10 (0.0%)

## Removal actions taken on complaints

As described above, we receive complaints for a variety of reasons. Each unique URL in a specific complaint is considered an individual "item". A single complaint may specify multiple items that potentially relate to the same or different pieces of content. While the previous section of this report provides information on the volume of complaints received, this section summarizes the volume of removal actions taken on items contained in complaints received. When we receive complaints from individual users regarding allegedly unlawful or harmful content, we assess each item to determine if the content violates our Community Guidelines or content policies, or meets local legal requirements for removal. The figure to the right shows the total number of removal actions taken during the one-month reporting period.

October 2023

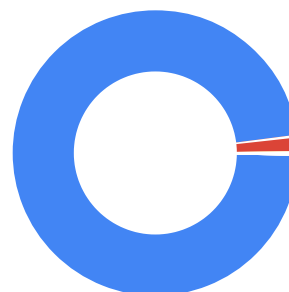
Number of removal actions as a result of user complaints

65,659

## Reasons we take removal action

We evaluate content reported to us under our Community Guidelines, content policies and/or legal policies. Based on this review, removal action may be taken for one of the request reasons shown in the chart on the right.

October 2023



- Copyright: 64,313 (98.0%)
- Trademark: 1,213 (1.8%)
- Court Order: 57 (0.1%)
- Counterfeit: 51 (0.1%)
- Impersonation: 19 (0.0%)
- Defamation: 4 (0.0%)
- Other Legal: 2 (0.0%)
- Circumvention: 0 (0.0%)
- Graphic Sexual Content: 0 (0.0%)

## Automated detection

October 2023

In addition to reports from our users, as outlined above, we invest heavily in fighting harmful content online and use technology to detect and remove it from our platforms. This includes using automated detection processes for some of our products to prevent the dissemination of harmful content such as child sexual abuse material and violent extremist content. We balance privacy and user protection to: quickly remove content that violates our Community Guidelines and content policies; restrict content (e.g., age-restrict content that may not be appropriate for all audiences); or leave the content live when it doesn't violate our guidelines or policies. Automated detection enables us to act more quickly and accurately to enforce our guidelines and policies. The figure to the right shows the number of removal actions taken on content from users in India across our SSMI platforms as a result of automated detection processes during the one-month reporting period. These removal actions may result in removing the content or terminating a bad actor's access to the Google service.

Number of removal actions as a result of automated detection

636,128

### Please note:

\* For data related to automated detection processes, we are including data where the sender or creator of the content is located in India. In order to attribute a location to an individual sender or creator, we use data signals such as location of account creation, IP address at the time of video upload and user phone number, as available. Please note that senders or creators of content may attempt to evade detection through location-concealing mechanisms. While Google is committed to revealing any bad actors through industry-leading detection tools, reporting based on location attribution should be interpreted as a directional estimate.

\* As required by the IT Rules, this report includes complaints received from individual users (including those with an accompanying court order). Data on government requests to remove content can be accessed in our existing [government transparency report](#).

\* Based on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) relating to The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in October 2021, Google updated the "Significant Social Media Intermediaries" ("SSMIs") reported in the December 2021 data and will carry these changes through subsequent reports.

\* We will continue to improve this report in future iterations.

# Frequently asked questions

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## What is a "Significant Social Media Intermediary"?

As defined in the IT Rules, a "Significant Social Media Intermediary" means a social media intermediary having a number of registered users in India above a certain threshold as notified by the Central Government.

## What types of complaints are covered by this report?

This report provides information on complaints received from users in India through the updated India Grievance Mechanism launched on May 25, 2021 and the actions taken on content on Google's platforms that are classified as "Significant Social Media Intermediaries" ("SSMIs").

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## What is a removal action?

For user complaints, the "removal actions" number represents the number of items where a piece of content was removed or restricted during the one-month reporting period as a result of a specific complaint. For automated detection, the "removal actions" number represents the number of instances where we removed content or prevented the bad actor from accessing the Google service as a result of automated detection processes.

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## Have you actioned all of the content removal requests received?

When we receive complaints regarding content on our platforms, we assess them carefully. There are many reasons we may not have removed content in response to a user complaint. For example, some requests may not be specific enough for us to know what the user wanted us to remove (for example, no URL is listed in the request), or the content has already been removed by the user when we process the complaint.

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## What are the reasons for taking a removal action?

A removal action may be taken on a complaint if the content violates our Community Guidelines, content policies, or local legal requirements. For automated detection processes, a removal action is taken if content violates our Community Guidelines or content policies.

# Frequently asked questions

## Why do there appear to be significantly more removal actions taken versus complaints received?

A single complaint may specify multiple URLs, referred to in the report as "items", that potentially relate to the same or different pieces of content.

## Where can I submit a complaint?

Users can submit a complaint for in-scope SSMLs via the relevant webforms available on the Grievance Officer page for India.

## What are the different types of complaint reasons?

**Defamation** - Requests that relate to harm to reputation. This may include, but is not limited to claims of libel, slander, and corporate defamation.

**Circumvention** - Requests related to content with tools to bypass copyright technological protection measures.

**Copyright** - Requests related to alleged copyright infringement, received under notice and takedown laws such as the US Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

**Counterfeit** - Requests related to sale or promotion for sale of counterfeit goods.

**Court Order** - Individual user requests where the user has provided a valid order of a competent court that is related to the claim at hand as the basis of their request. This report does not include other government requests to remove content - you can access this data in our existing [government transparency report](#).

**Graphic sexual content** - Requests made by an individual or any person on their behalf, in relation to content that exposes the private areas of such individual, shows such individual in full or partial nudity, or shows such individual in any sexual act or conduct, under Part II, Rule 3(2)(b) of the IT Rules.

**Impersonation** - Requests related to claims that involve the malicious usurpation of an individual's identity under Part II, Rule 3(2)(b) of the IT Rules.

**Trademark** - Requests related to claims of infringement and misuse of trademarks.

**Other Legal** - Report content for a legal reason not already listed.

## Does this report include government removal requests?

As required by the IT Rules, this report includes complaints received from individual users (including those with an accompanying court order). Data on government requests to remove content can be accessed in our existing [government transparency report](#).

# IT Rules: Monthly Transparency Report

Google provides information about removals contained in this report in accordance with the IT Rules