Right to be Forgotten (RTBF)

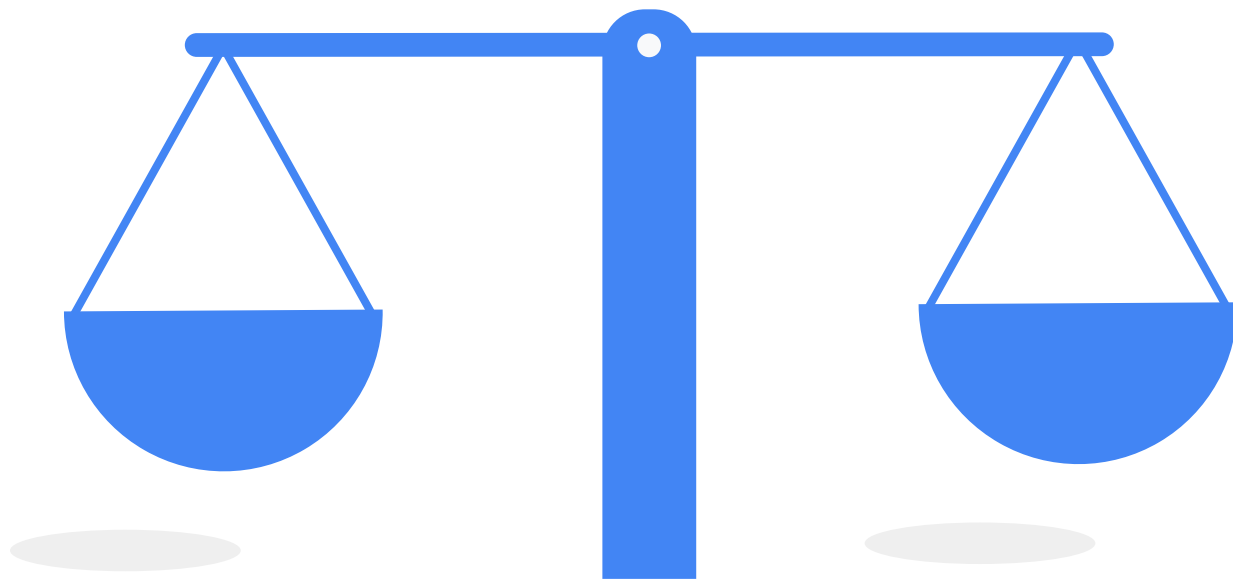Delist "**inaccurate, inadequate, irrelevant, or excessive**" information surfaced by search queries containing the name of the requester.

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Balancing between individual privacy, public interest

Google

Security and Privacy Group
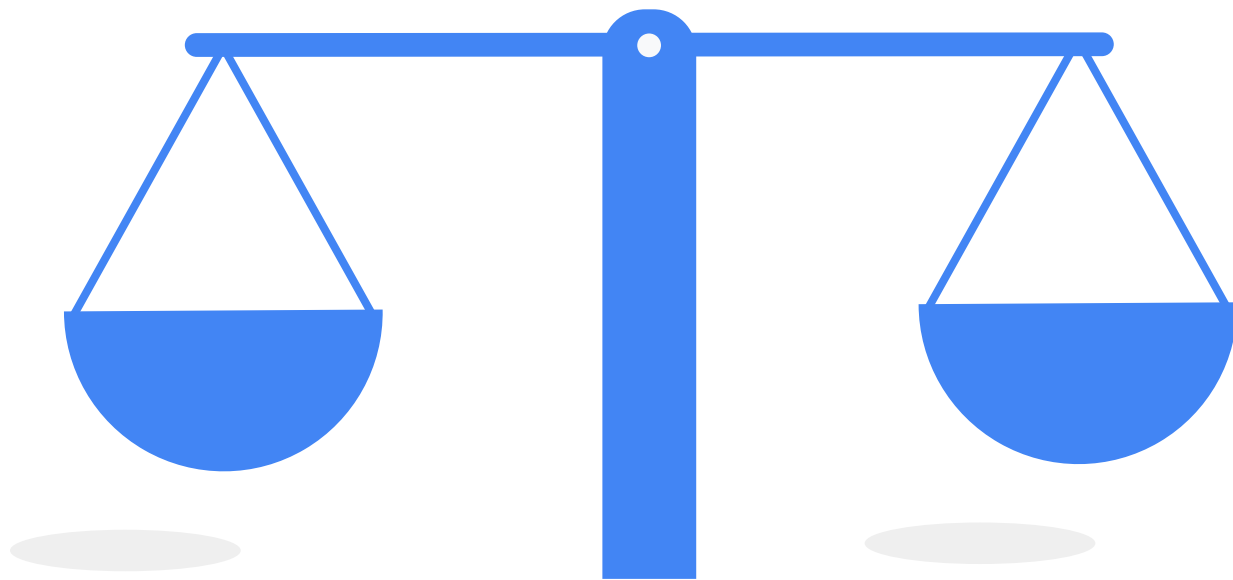
Balancing between individual privacy, public interest

Decision made by search provider via manual review

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Example of balancing test

Request

A former politician requested to delist 3 URLs from Google Search reporting on his recent departure from politics in connection with a drug scandal.

Outcome

Google delisted the 3 URLs as they disclosed the politician's private home addresses, not just information about the scandal.

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Example of balancing test

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A former politician requested to delist 3 URLs from Google Search reporting on his recent departure from politics in connection with a drug scandal.

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Google

Security and Privacy Group

Over the last five years then...

3M
Requested URLs
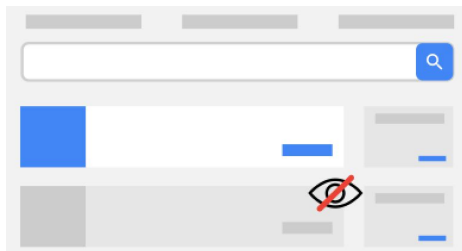
45%
URLs delisted

502,000
Requesters

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Our measurement study

Types of sites requested

Information present on site

Entities creating requests

Security and Privacy Group

Provider greater transparency around how the RTBF is applied in practice

Review process & dataset

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Data present in a request

- [ ] Email address

- [ ] URLs to delist

- [ ] Country

- [ ] Timestamp

YOUR INFORMATION

Country of origin *

Choose your country/region ▼

Contact email address *

The URL(s) for the content containing the personal information you want removed *

Click here for help with finding the URL.

Please enter one URL per line (Max 1000 lines)

Reason for removal *

For example: "(1) This page is about me because a, b, and c. (2) This page should be removed because x, y, and z."

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Manual annotations added during review

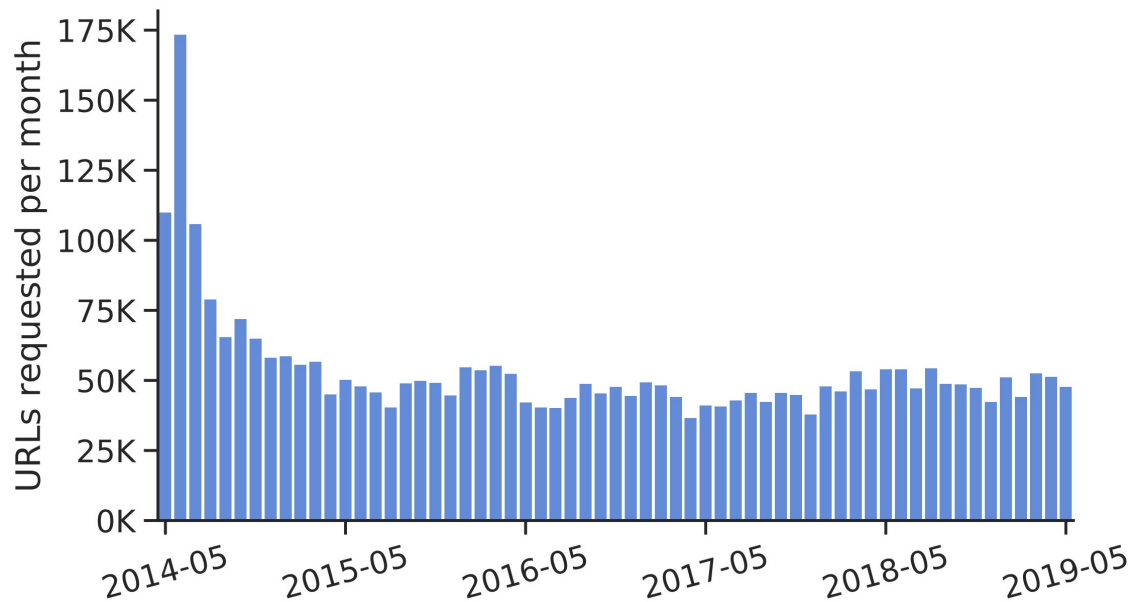☐ Type of site

Social, directory, news, government records

☐ Information on page

Personal information, professional information, crime, political, self-authored ...

☐ Requesting entity

Minor, government official, corporate entity...

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Five years of data, since implementation

(Bar chart) Y-axis: URLs requested per month, ranging from 0K to 175K. X-axis: dates from 2014-05 to 2019-05.

47,000
Average URLs per month

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Average time to arrive at a decision

85 days

2014

Security and Privacy Group

Average time to arrive at a decision

85 days

6 days

2014

2019

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Which sites are requested for delisting?

Security and Privacy Group

Two dominant intents for delistings

16% Directory   **13%** Social media

Personal information

19% News   **2%** Government

Legal history

Google   Security and Privacy Group
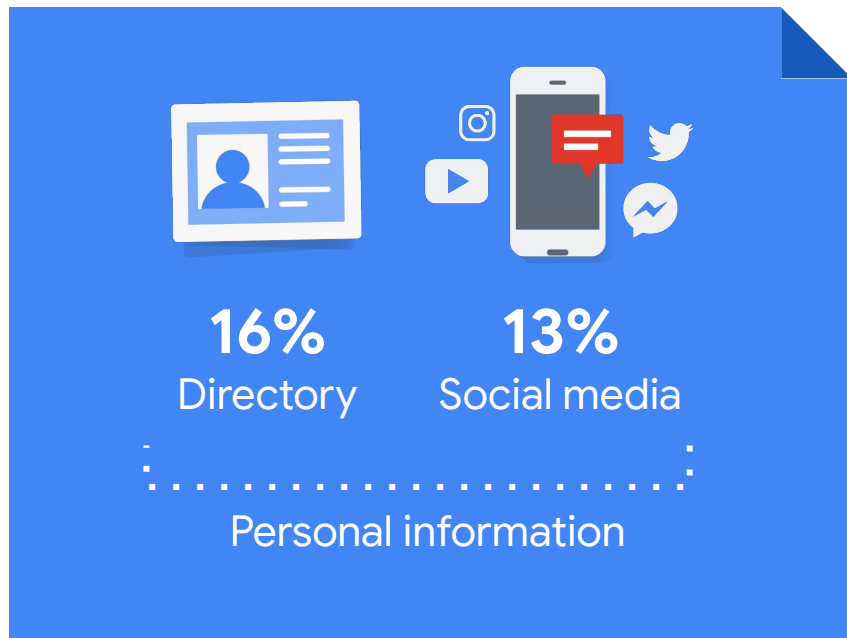
Influenced by regional privacy attitudes and local norms

France

Italy

Spain

42%
Directory, Social media
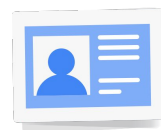(vs. 29% across Europe)
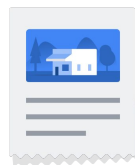
33%
News
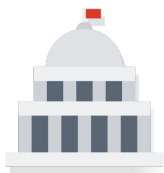(vs. 19% across Europe)

10%
Government
(vs. 2% across Europe)

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Delisting rates reflect public interest balancing

19%
Government

35%
News

53%
Directory,
Social media

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Increasing share of requests to news

Monthly URL breakdown (y-axis, 0.0% to 25.0%) plotted against time from 2016-01 to 2019-01.
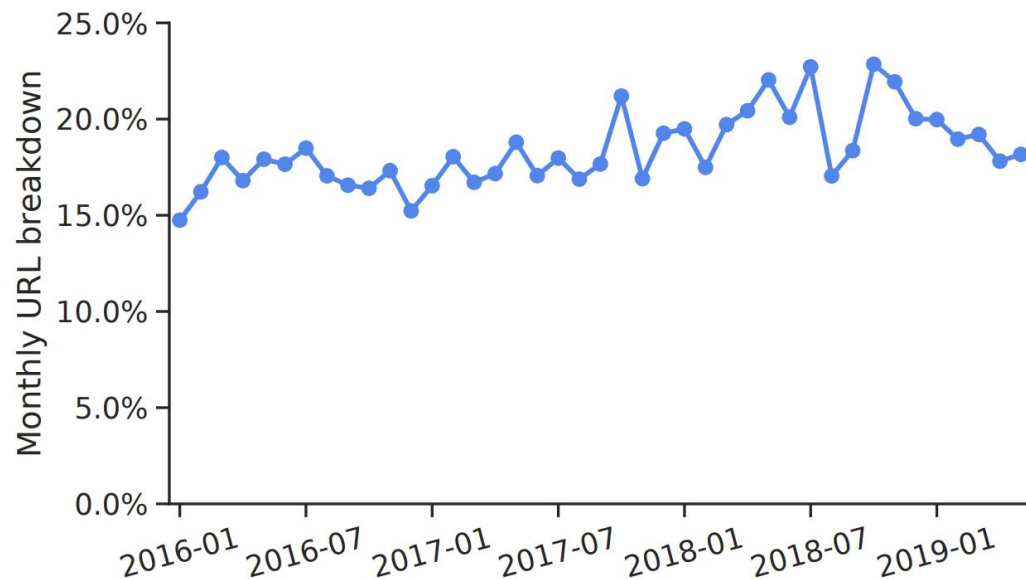
Examples include:

dailymail.co.uk
ouest-france.fr
telegraph.co.uk
repubblica.it

Google   Security and Privacy Group

Declining share of requests to social media
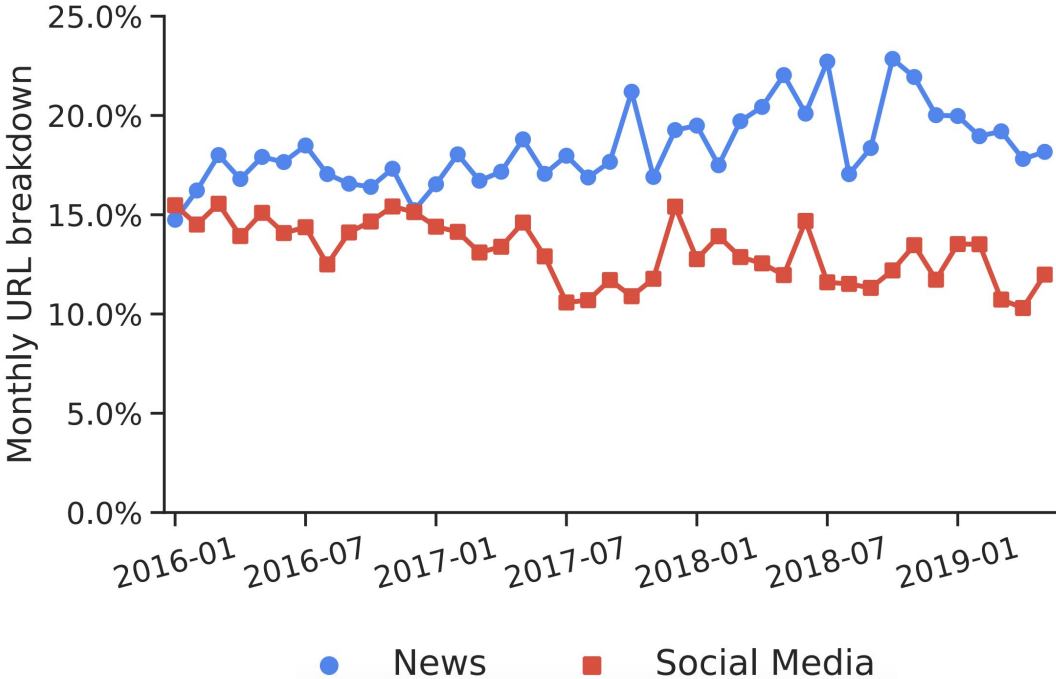
Examples include:

facebook.com
twitter.com
youtube.com
plus.google.com
instagram.com

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Influence of GDPR on directory requests
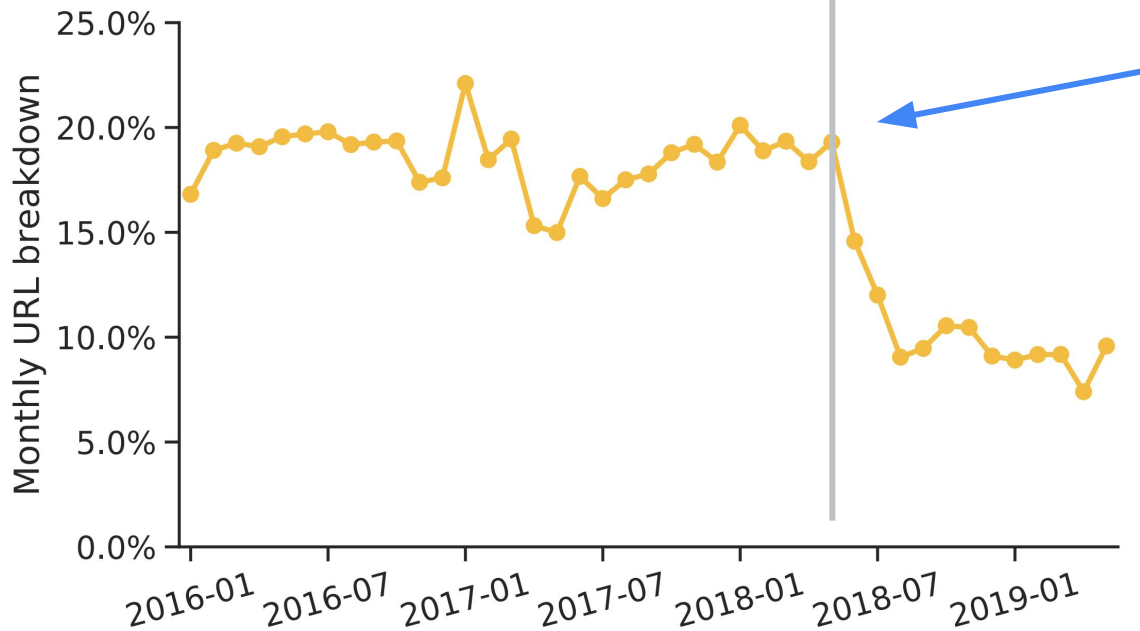
After GDPR, only 55% of the top 500 requested directory sites remain online.

Examples include:

118712.fr

societe.com

192.com

Google

Security and Privacy Group

What information is requested for delisting?

Professional & personal information most common

Professional information

Personal information

2% Sensitive personal information

24%

8%

**34% of all
requested URLs**

Professional activities, contact information,
phone numbers, and mailing addresses.

Google

Security and Privacy Group
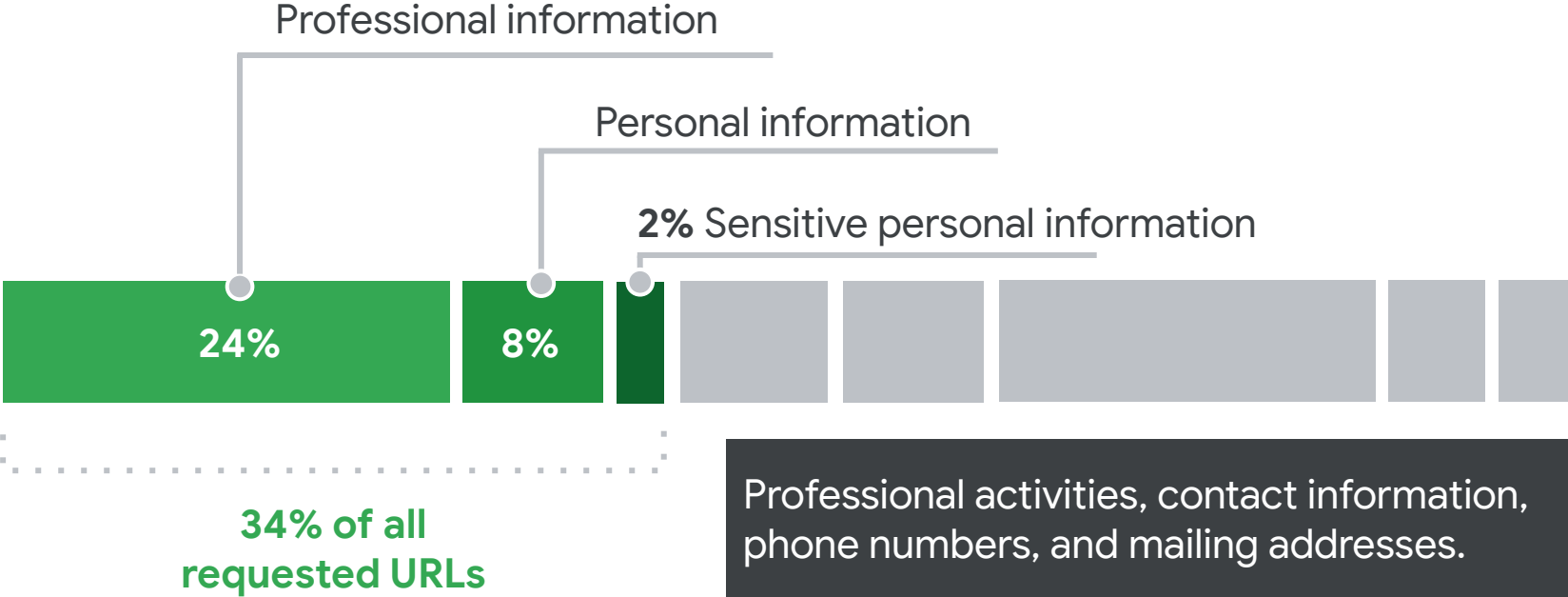
Criminal records and negative reviews also common

Crime

Professional wrongdoing

9%   8%

Convictions, acquitals, or negative reviews.

17% of all requested URLs

Google

Security and Privacy Group
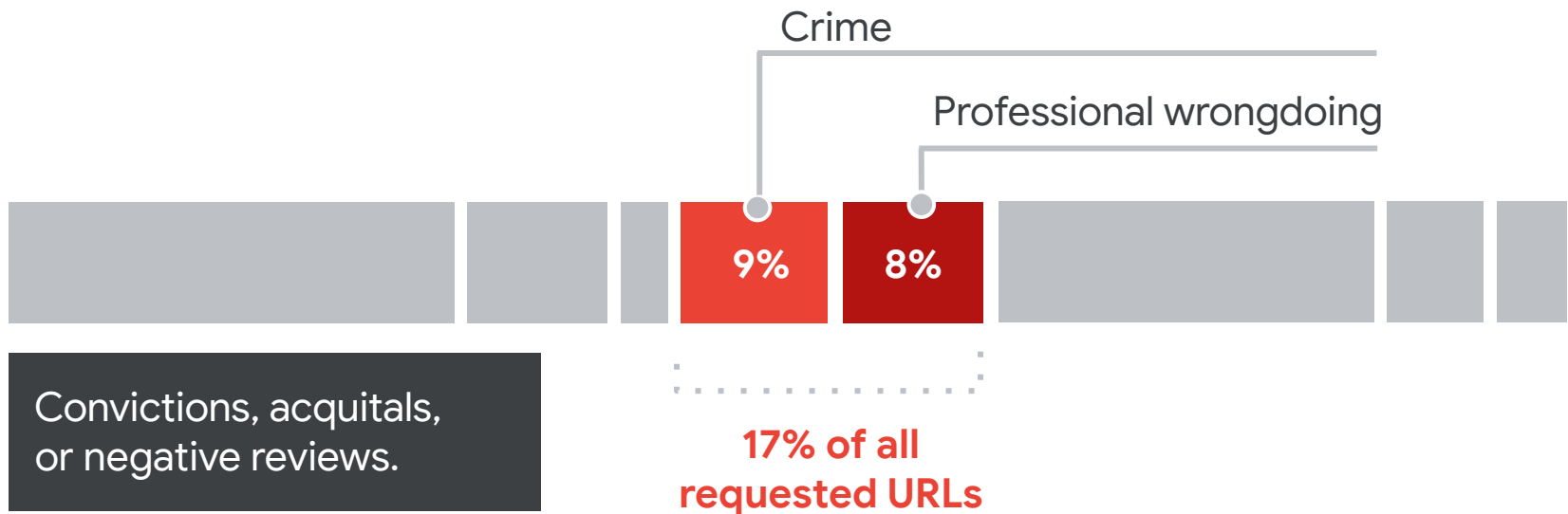
Remaining types of common information
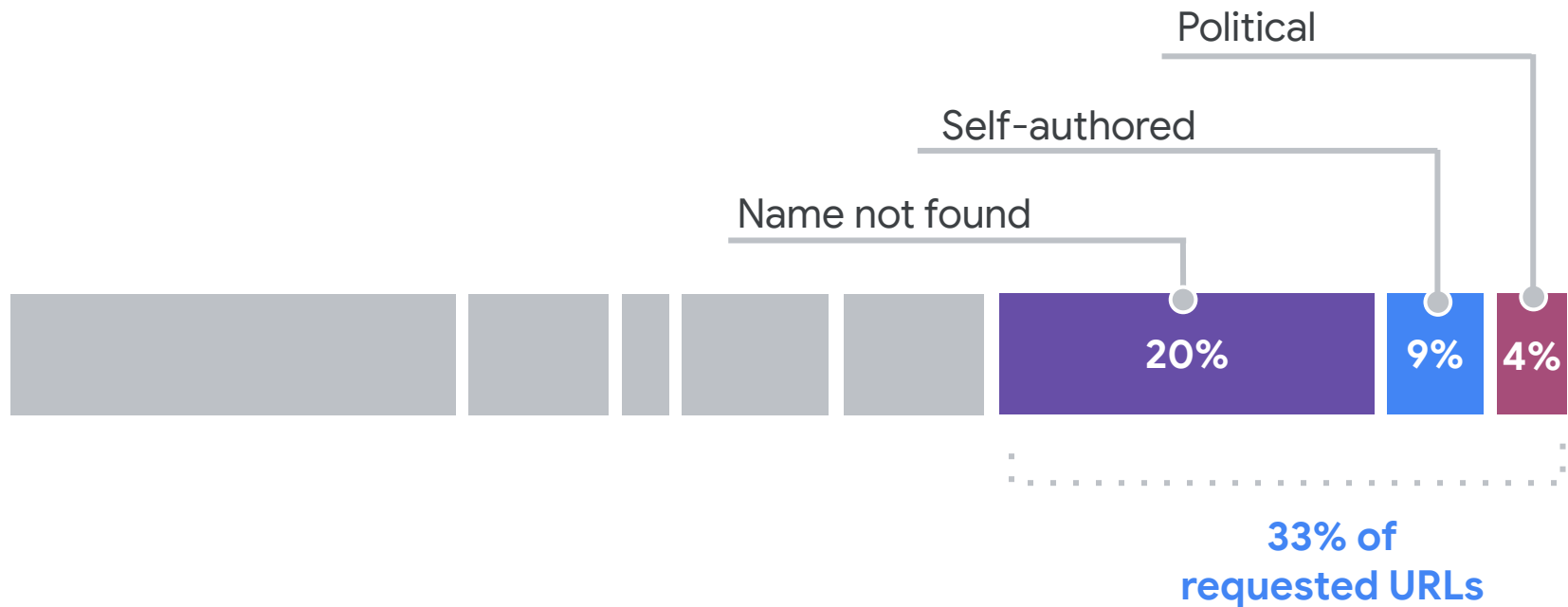
Political

Self-authored

Name not found

20% **9%** **4%**

33% of requested URLs

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Affinity of types of information to different sites

	News
Professional information	18%
Personal information	3%
Crime	22%
Professional wrongdoing	22%
Self authored	5%
Name not found	10%
...	

Google

Security and Privacy Group
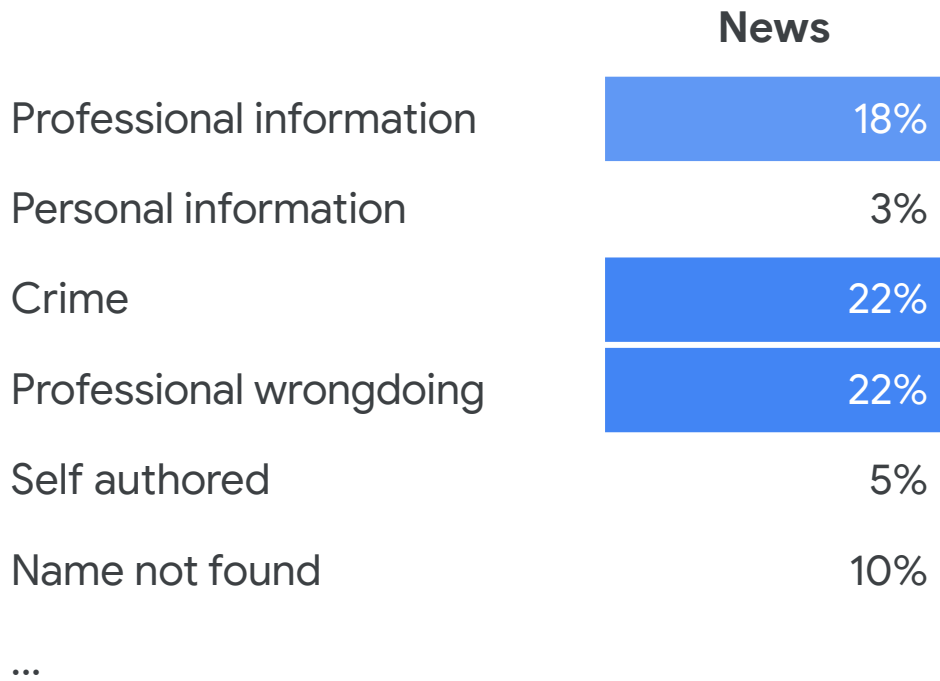
Affinity of types of information to different sites

	News	**Social Media**
Professional information	18%	8%
Personal information	3%	5%
Crime	22%	3%
Professional wrongdoing	22%	2%
Self authored	5%	33%
Name not found	10%	29%
...		

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Delisting rates reflect public interest

Criticism of platform or activities

Personal addresses, contact info, photos

3%
Political

48%
Crime

97%
Personal information

Google

Security and Privacy Group
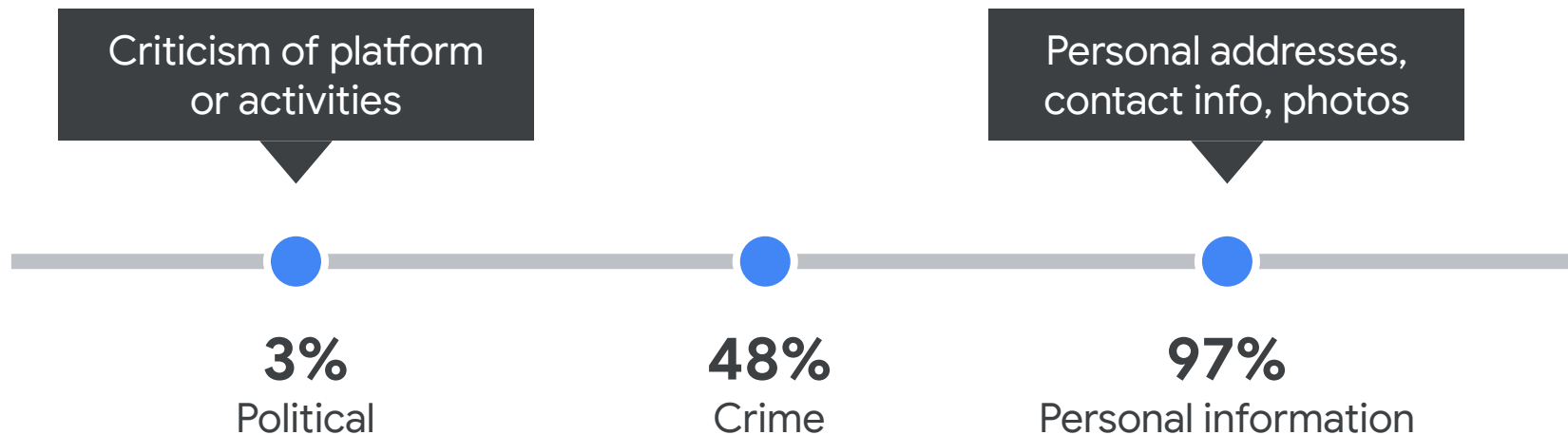
Who makes delisting requests?

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Majority of requested URLs come from private individuals

84%
Private individual
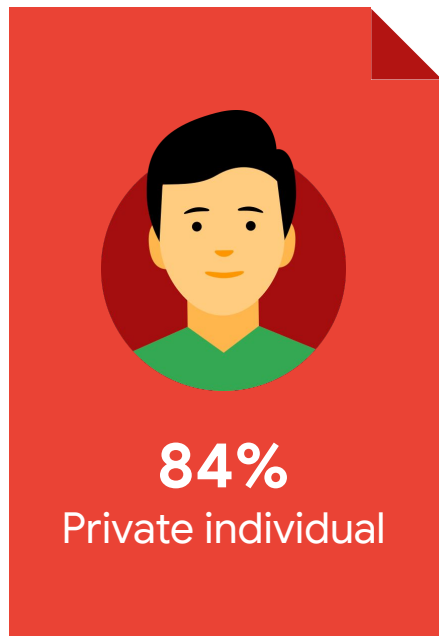
6%
Minor

4%
Public figure
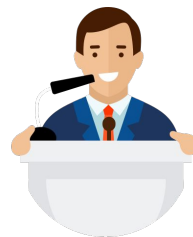
4%
Politician

2%
Corporate entity

Google

Security and Privacy Group
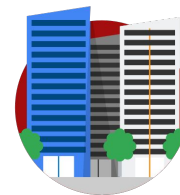
Small number of requesters make heavy use of RTBF

34%
Requested URLs from just 10K requesters

Google

Security and Privacy Group
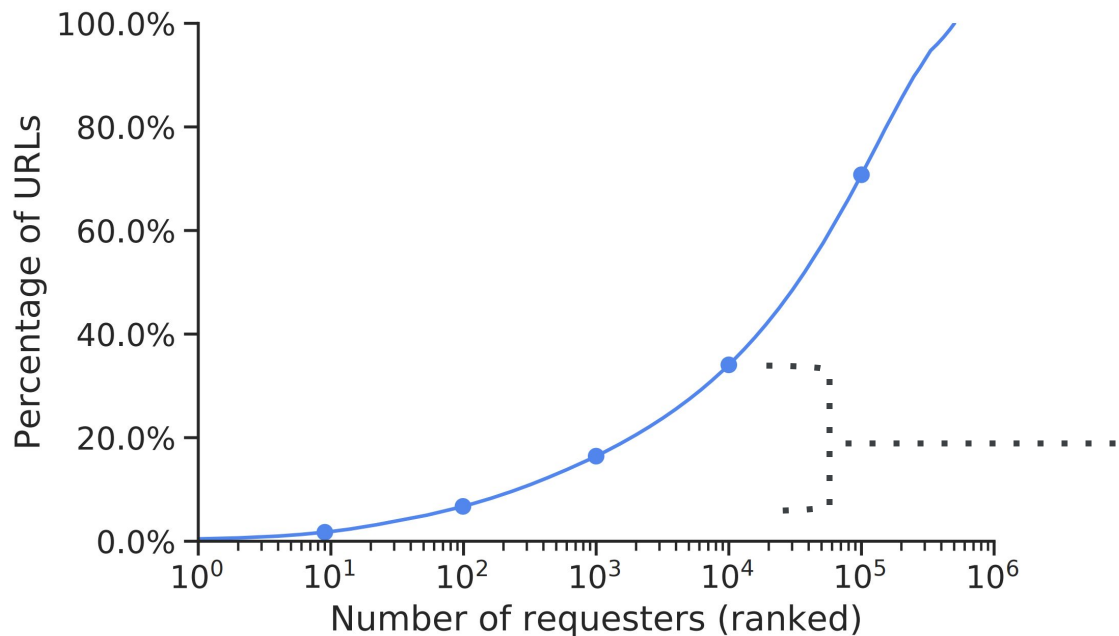
Long tail of hundreds of thousands of requesters
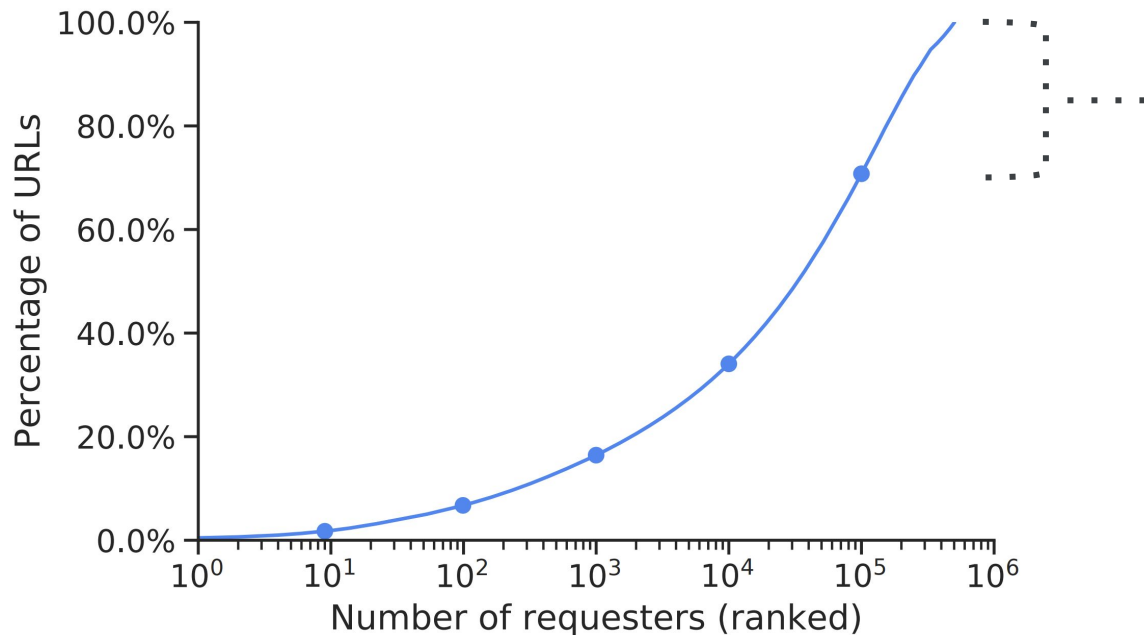
29%
Requested URLs from
400K requesters

34%
Requested URLs from
just 10K requesters

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Requester activity varies by country

URLs requested per 1000 Internet users

France	12
Italy	7
Greece	3

Google

Security and Privacy Group
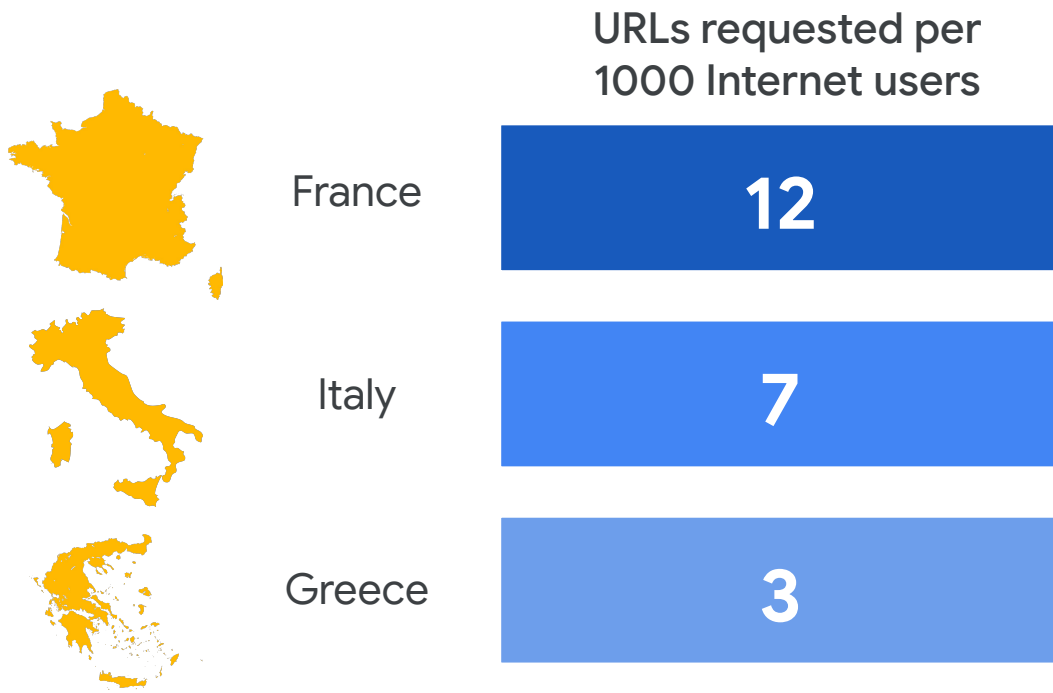
Decreasing number of new requesters
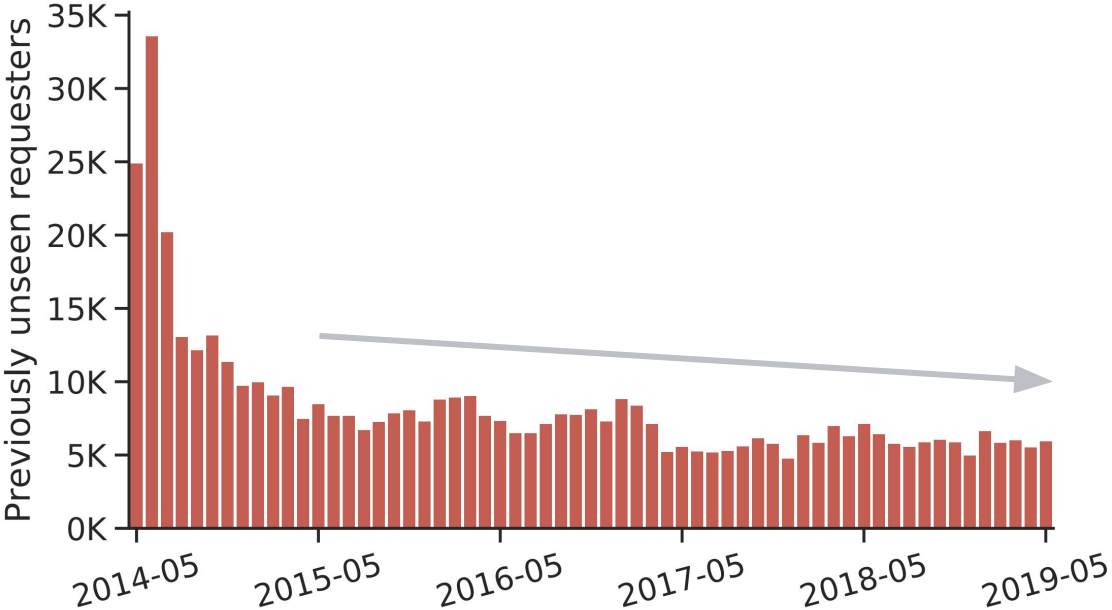
6,800
Average new requesters per month

Google

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Relationship between requester's origin and audience

Origin of requester, by volume of requested URLs

News Site	Belgium	Germany	Spain	France	UK
hln.be	89%	0%	0%	1%	2%
nieuwsblad.be	93%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Over 89% of requests to top Belgian news sites come from local requesters

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Relationship between requester's origin and audience

Origin of requester, by volume of requested URLs

News Site	Belgium	Germany	Spain	France	UK
hln.be	89%	0%	0%	1%	2%
nieuwsblad.be	93%	0%	0%	0%	0%
bild.de	0%	96%	0%	1%	2%
elmundo.es	0%	1%	96%	1%	1%
elpais.com	0%	0%	97%	1%	0%

Google

🛡 Security and Privacy Group

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nieuwsblad.be	93%	0%	0%	0%	0%
bild.de	0%	96%	0%	1%	2%
elmundo.es	0%	1%	96%	1%	1%
elpais.com	0%	0%	97%	1%	0%
ouest-france.fr	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
lefigaro.fr	0%	0%	0%	99%	0%
bbc.co.uk	0%	0%	0%	0%	97%
dailymail.co.uk	0%	1%	0%	2%	92%

Google

Conclusion

Nuanced, dynamic usage of the RTBF over last five years.

Influenced in part by local privacy concerns and media norms.

Challenge in providing transparency without de-anonymizing specific requesters.

Google

Security and Privacy Group

Research now reflected in Transparency Report

http://transparencyreport.google.com/eu-privacy/

Requests to delist content under European privacy law

In a May 2014 ruling, the Court of Justice of the European Union found that individuals have the right to ask search engines like Google to delist certain results about them. This report provides data on the volume of requests, the URLs delisted, the individuals submitting requests, and the content of websites and URLs identified in requests.

Delisting URLs from Google Search for privacy

Requests to delist

859,846

URLs requested to be delisted

3,231,694

Google

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Thanks!

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