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Google: friend or foe?



Germany's justice minister, Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, is fuming about Google's book project. She told the [FAZ](#) that the proposed [settlement](#) with authors for allowing Google to scan out-of-print but in-copyright books would automatically apply to German authors and that they would have to opt-out to be excluded. This turns copyright on its head, she said. In a [brief](#) to the N.Y. court overseeing the settlement, her ministry said the deal would create a new worldwide copyright regime without any input from German authors. A minimal solution, she said, would be to exclude German copyright holders. Czech authors weren't represented in court, but Zdeněk Svěrák's recent case against Bauhaus suggests that some Czech authors take their rights very seriously. While Germany was preparing to battle Google in court on Feb. 18, PM Jan Fischer was rubbing shoulders with Google's brass in Menlo Park.

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