

Sundar Pichai, other Google staffers accused of hiding info

March 23, 2022



Hide And Seek



TECHNOLOGY bellwether Google's senior officials have been accused of wrongfully shielding sensitive information from US federal investigators probing antitrust allegations against the company.

The Google staffers facing the accusation of hiding emails from investigators by invoking legal privilege include its CEO Sundar Pichai.

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In a filing to the US District Court in Washington, DC, the department of justice said Google has been hiding sensitive information for years and the company even trained its employees to do so, a practice which the tech giant said was not specific to it.

"For almost a decade, Google has trained its employees to use the attorney-client privilege to hide ordinary business communications from discovery in litigation and government investigations," the department said in the statement reported by *The Wall Street Journal*.

"Google teaches its employees to add an attorney, a privilege label, and a generic 'request' for counsel's advice to any sensitive business communications the employees or Google might wish to shield from discovery," it said.

It demanded the company be compelled to turn over the emails it withheld or redacted.

The department also cited a purported instance in 2018 when Pichai wrote to YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki to discuss a media s

"Attorney Client Privileged, Confidential, Kent pls advice," Pichai wrote, with a copy to Kent Walker, who was Google's general co-time.

But Walker apparently never replied to the email thread, saying it was "directed to a 'non-attorney' about a non-legal press iss

Google initially withheld the email but de-privileged it when the government challenged the company, according to the department.

In such email chains, "the attorney frequently remains silent, underscoring that these communications are not genuine requests for legal advice but rather an effort to hide potential evidence", it said.

"The historical purpose of the privilege is to give lawyers the ability to be involved in frank conversations with the client so as to deter misconduct—prevent it before it happens—not to protect misconduct against disclosure," Michele DeStefano, a law professor at the University of Miami told *The Wall Street Journal*.



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Makers of Harbhajan Singh's debut film Friendship unveil new poster on his birthday

Indian cricketer Harbhajan Singh is set to make his full-fledged acting debut with the upcoming Tamil film Friendship. On Saturday, the makers raised the curtain on the poster of the film to mark the 41st birthday of the sportsman. This is not the first time Singh is facing the camera. He has previously appeared in the 2018 film *Thalapathy*.

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Rajkummar Rao to explore yet another genre with Raj and DK's comedy-thriller series

Filmmaker duo Raj and DK recently announced their next series that will be headlined by Rajkummar Rao. As reported earlier, award-winning actor Rajkummar Rao has teamed up with the filmmaker duo Raj and DK to headline their next digital venture. The untitled series, which also stars Adarsh Gourav and others, is set to premiere on the platform in the coming months.

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