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## Google site ranking system thrown into question by lawsuit

Small website demoted to zero cries foul

by Amber Maitland published on 30 October 2006

Google is being sued by a small parenting website, KinderStart, for downgrading the site's ranking to a "zero".



A federal judge, Jeremy Fogel of a US District Court in California, is to determine whether Google defamed the company by leaving it out of its search ranking system, or whether the company is allowed to choose which site it ranks and features.

KinderStart alleges not just defamation, but violations of free speech and libel in its lawsuit.

Judge Fogel, however, in his opening statements, is unsure if the allegations show grounds for defamation, saying, "Assuming Google is saying that KinderStart's website isn't worth seeing, why can't they say that? That's my question".

The case isn't going anywhere fast, as Judge Fogel said that he would need until the end of the year to make a ruling about whether the case should go forward or be dismissed.

Google's fighting its corner zealously, with one of its lawyers, David Kramer, saying, "This is a case that challenges Google's very right to operate. It is not a case about KinderStart's free speech.