

NATIONAL CALL FOR ANTI-TRUST LAWSUITS AGAINST PARTISAN SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES

Antitrust should be used to break up partisan tech giants like Facebook, Google, Gawker-Univision

By Selwyn Duke, contributor



© Getty Images

How much face time will your news story get on Facebook? How many eyes will ogle it on Google? Too often, this is apparently determined not by whether the story is “fake” news or newsworthy, but by whether it’s politically correct. And it’s time to break up the Internet’s left-wing, information-conduit oligopoly.

If “knowledge is power” and “The pen is mightier than the sword,” entities controlling what pens you see are powerful indeed. C that Facebook and Google “account for 75% of all the referrals major news and entertainment sites now receive,” [according](#) to a Politico report in July.

Facebook [boasts](#) a 40 percent share of the social media market and 1.5 billion users worldwide, making this Internet “nation” more populous than any country on Earth. [Upwards](#) of 40 percent of American adults get news from the site.

Google [accounts](#) for 64 percent of all U.S. desktop search queries. In Europe, the figure is a [whopping](#) 90 percent. The company also owns YouTube, the world’s most popular video-sharing website.

How is this power used? Earlier this year, ex-Facebook employees [admitted](#) they routinely suppressed conservative news and were ordered to place relatively unpopular but company-favored (read: liberal) stories in their “trending” news section. And trending means mind-bending because people are influenced by what’s “popular.” Make an article appear more or less so and you can cause some readers to embrace it as “consensus” or dismiss it as a fringe view. It snowballs, too: prominent placement makes a piece more popular, which makes it more prominent, which makes it yet more popular, which makes...well, you get the idea.

Now the social-media site — [dubbed](#) “Fakebook” by many — [states](#) it will label and essentially bury “fake news,” using as fact-checkers liberal outlets such as Snopes.com, Politifact and ABC, which themselves have peddled falsehoods (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

And Google? In its June piece “The New Censorship,” U.S. News and World Report lists nine blacklists Google maintains. The site asks, “How did Google become the internet’s censor and master manipulator, blocking access to millions of websites?” Moreover, the search giant [announced](#) last year that it was considering ranking sites not just based on popularity (which reflects the market), but on “truthfulness” — as determined, of course, by Google’s [Democrat-donating](#) techies.

Blacklisting can be devastating, too, as what befell two normal businesses illustrates. As U.S. News also reported, “Heading into the holiday season in late 2013, [an online handbag business](#) suffered a 50 percent drop in business because of blacklisting. In 2009, it took [an eco-friendly pest control company](#) 60 days to leap the hurdles required to remove Google’s warnings, long enough to nearly go broke.”

Likewise, stigmatize a media website with blacklisting or, more deviously, by burying its result on the eighth search page (Web users generally examine only the first few pages), and you could dry up its revenue — and readership. Thus, this tactic sends politically incorrect views to Internet Siberia, where few will hear the dissenters except their fellow Google-gulag inmates.

One victim was combative PC Magazine columnist John Dvorak, whose website and podcast site were [blacklisted](#) in 2013. This prompted him to ask, “When Did Google Become the Internet Police?” Answer: a long time before. In 2006, the company [terminated](#) its news relationship with some conservative news sites critical of Islam.

So is it time to break up Facebook and Google? In principle, I may object to such things. But here’s the issue: if antitrust laws are unjust, eliminate them. But if we’re going to have them, they should be applied where most needed. As for Google, most people admits it’s “a de facto monopoly.” Libertarian

tech investor Peter Thiel and ex-Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer both think so, and even “Google chairman Eric Schmidt has admitted "we're in that area."

The breakup of AT&T’s Bell System was mandated in 1982. That came even without Bell denying service to people, blocking their calls or hiding their phone numbers based on the content of their conversations. The Internet and social media may be more like a [party line](#), but that doesn’t mean they should reflect only the Democrat Party line.

