

OTHER VIEWS

Big tech uses journalism, big tech should pay for it

The power that Google and Facebook have over economic and political power in society — especially over the news industry — has caught the attention of lawmakers in Washington, D.C. After a close election and many worries over the quality of public debate, many ask if social media have played a role in the misinformation that erodes our free press and plagues our democracy.

Nowhere is this power more daunting than in the social media giants' use of news organizations' reporting, which the platforms use without compensation to journalists. Google and Facebook have a duopoly of the distribution of digital news content, which drives people to the social media platforms where the owners make money. The platforms hoard critical data and use clever tactics, like reframing stories in rich previews, to keep users on their sites — siphoning off the advertising revenue that small and local publishers need.

Every hour that goes by, Google and Facebook generate millions of dollars in U.S. advertising revenue. That amount could fund dozens of local journalists. But local newspapers in many communities that are funding the people who report on fair and free elections are struggling to meet payroll.

It is time for a change, before we head into another brutal and divisive election season leading up to the 2024 elections. America needs real, factual and independent news reporting more than ever. While national media may be treated with skepticism, research shows that local news media are generally trusted. But will they have the revenue to do the job?

Congress must take action to curb undue influence of Big Tech on the news media industry and make sure the work of local news-gatherers is fairly compensated. The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act aims to do just that.

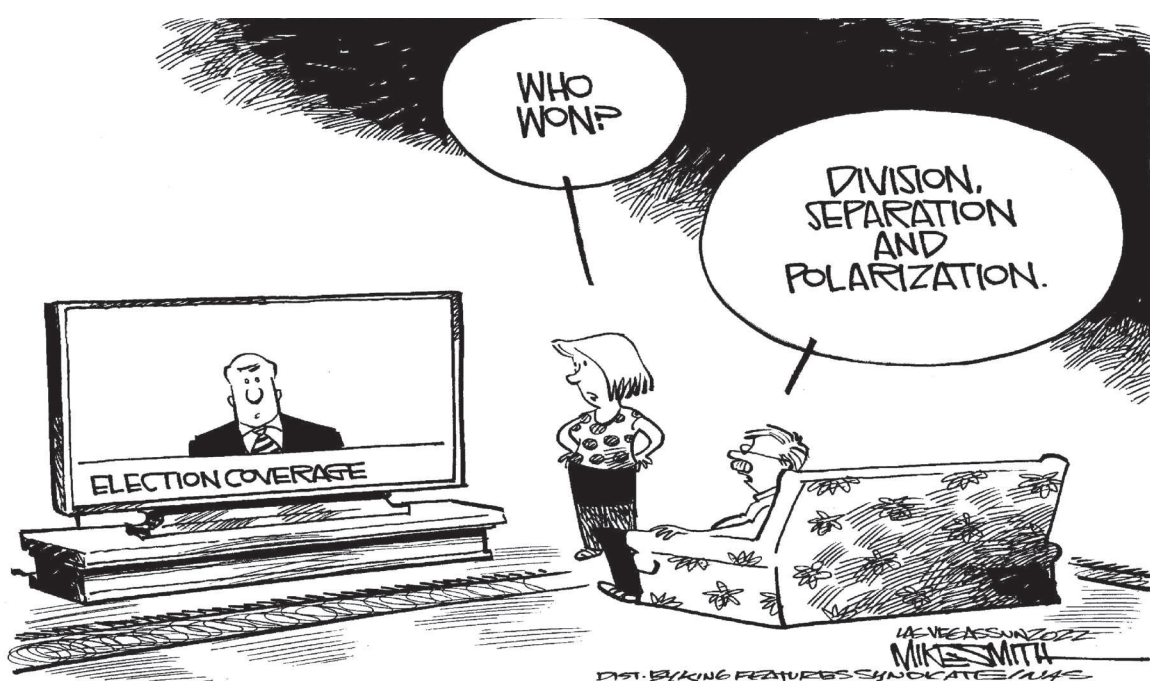
The JCPA is specifically designed to make sure Google and Facebook pay for what they use. The proposed legislation would provide a temporary, limited antitrust safe harbor for small and local news publishers to collectively negotiate with Facebook and Google for fair compensation for the use of journalists' content. The policy also incentivizes and rewards publishers who invest in their journalists and newsroom personnel, awarding outlets with demonstrated investments in their staff a larger portion of the funds that result from the negotiations.

By addressing Google's and Facebook's monopoly power and ensuring more subscription and advertising dollars flow back to publishers, the JCPA not only protects and promotes quality news, but also encourages competition. Congress has made progress on this legislation. It should finish the job before the end of the year.

John Galer is the chair of the National Newspaper Association, a 137-year-old organization representing community newspapers. Galer publishes newspapers in central Illinois.



Galer



OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Memories of a list-maker

I confess. I'm a compulsive list-maker. Someone mentions a drive into town and I grab paper and pencil and hand them a what-we-need list: lawn rake, lawnmower fuel, milk, bread, chili peppers, wild bird seed, booklet titled "Attracting Birds to Your Backyard."

A week later someone says, "I'm running some errands. Need anything?"

I hand them my list: apples, carrots, laundry soap, antacids, booklet titled "Removing Birds' Nests from Your Chimney."

Who needs sheep to count at bedtime? I mentally make a list all of the nuts I can think of: walnut, filbert, pecan, almond, peanut — wait, I think that's a legume — cashews, zzzzz.

List-making can come in handy. One year, employees where I worked attended a seminar in a stuffy room at a convention center. The topic — as interesting as oatmeal with no milk or fruit. The employees struggled to keep their attention focused during the morning lecture. After lunch, we reluctantly returned to our seats in the lecture hall — the air warm, moist, and seemed to have most of the oxygen sucked out. Records were set for how fast the attendees were able to prop up their bodies to give the



Jean Moultrie

impression they were still alert, hiding the fact most had fallen asleep.

List-making came to my rescue. I pulled out paper and pen, and began writing a list of every dried bean a person could have in their kitchen pantry: pinto, kidney, garbanzo, small red, large lima, small lima ...

The instructor droned on. "As shown on this graph, although hard to see, the trend ..."

At that point, I wasn't sure if he had mentioned oatmeal; probably not. I continued my list-making, writing even faster before I forgot bean names coming to my mind: fava, black bean, white bean, navy ... I covered my list with my arms in case a co-worker would arouse from a terminal case of heavy boredom and glance at the list.

Should the boss in the back of the room spot me writing away, I didn't want to overdo the enthusiasm, only look like a conscientious employee taking lecture notes.

I started to lag a little until the presenter displayed two more unreadable graphs. I got my second wind: soy bean, adzuki bean ...

Sometimes a person can sense a presence before actually seeing it.

The hairs on my neck stood up. My boss leaned over to my ear and hissed, "What in the world are you doing?" He scanned my bean list.

I pulled out fresh paper and attempted to sketch out the "exciting-as-oatmeal" graph.

That incident did not discourage me from list-making.

One of my most rewarding lists: a list of people to send thank-you notes to.

Several people on my thank-you list had retired or I knew years ago. Some tips I learned: Don't make this a guessing game. Remind the recipient where I knew them (school, work, neighborhood, etc.), the time frame, and maiden name if needed.

Thank you notes are NOT a graded English essay. I try to make the list doable, the message simple.

Examples: "Thanks for ... I learned ... You inspired me to ... I remember ..." and end with a thank-you. Receiving a thank-you note in the mail seems special. A text message or email — better than nothing.

Time to make more lists: garden seeds for next summer, this month's family birthdays, 25 ways to cook with oatmeal.

Jean Ann Moultrie is a Grant County writer. She notes peanuts are a legume but are counted as a nut as they have nut-like characteristics.



Sheriff was acting within the law

To the Editor:
From ORS 206.010: General duties of sheriff: The sheriff is the chief executive officer and conservator of the peace of the county. In the execution of the office of sheriff, it is the sheriff's duty to:

1) Arrest and commit to prison all persons who break the peace, or attempt to break it, and all persons guilty of public offenses.

2) Defend the county against those who, by riot or otherwise, endanger the public peace or safety.

Sheriff McKinley was within the laws set forth for sheriffs in the county in the state of Oregon, which he serves.

Marsha Christensen
John Day

Urban renewal is legal, beneficial

To the Editor:
In his recent letter to the editor, Mr. Tom Sutton questioned the legality of John Day's urban renewal agency. He claimed it siphoned tax dollars from other cities, including Canyon City, Mt. Vernon, Dayville, Monument and Long Creek.

Nope. He further questioned whether a taxing district could be sued for "spending money" outside the scope of its mission.

Wrong again. This is, sadly, another example of misinformation working hard in Grant County.

There are 137 urban renewal agencies in Oregon. All are organized and operate under the authority of Oregon Revised Statute Chapter 457 — Urban Renewal.

Urban renewal districts exist in 28 of Oregon's 36 counties. Together, they receive about \$300 million in yearly tax revenue, roughly 4.5 percent of all property taxes collected statewide. The aver-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

age district receives \$2 million a year.

John Day's urban renewal district is relatively small by comparison. It nets about \$65,000 a year. That amount is expected to increase as the agency's mission is fulfilled, which is to address blighted conditions that have led to the underproduction of housing and buildable lands in Grant County.

And it is working. John Day's urban renewal district has incentivized a dozen new dwelling units and about a hundred new lots currently under construction in three new subdivisions — Ironwood Estates, Holmstrom Heights and The Ridge.

Each lot will create about \$600 in new taxes and an additional \$3,000 once the homes are built. As a result, tax receipts will grow to \$300,000 a year once 100 new homes are built — doubling our current tax base.

These funds will be available to every tax jurisdiction currently deferring revenue once the incentives are repaid.

So to answer Mr. Sutton's questions:

No. It doesn't siphon tax revenue. It creates it, which is the whole point.

No. You can't take legal action against an agency for using a lawful process to create economic value.

Yes, John Day's city council had the foresight to address a critical housing shortage for our residents and workers. They shouldn't be criticized for that. If you're thanking anyone, it should be them.

Nick Green
John Day

I stand behind Sheriff McKinley

To the Editor:
When taking office as the elected Grant County sheriff, Todd McKinley swore to uphold law enforcement code of ethics: My fundamental duty is to serve society; to safeguard lives and property, to pro-

tect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all people to liberty, equality, and justice. On Oct. 19, Sheriff McKinley did exactly what he was sworn to do, even though that meant going against an employee of the U.S. government that is protected by a union representing over 110,000 federal employees.

We as the citizens of the U.S. have quietly sat by for too long when it comes to allowing those who we pay, through our taxes, to manage our lands to do whatever they want whenever they want. As their employer we never hold them accountable for destroying our land and the lands of those neighboring federal lands. What if the Holiday Ranch would have begun a prescribed burn that day that traveled onto the USFS land? Would the USFS have them arrested for non-control of a fire, maybe even charge them with arson?

It goes further than the burning of our timber and grasslands. As a result of terrible decisions to supposedly improve creeks for fish, the USFS and the Department of Fish and Wildlife have defaced the creeks in the Galena area to the point where they have destroyed the meadows along the creeks. Their poor management of our forest lands have caused many fires to spread quickly, making it increasingly harder to extinguish. As a USFS employee in the 1960s, we never saw fires grow like they do now. The timber was thinned and harvested, keeping fires to minimal growth, and we jumped on them quickly.

I am now 81 and have held jobs continuously since I was 14. I have always been, and expected to be, held accountable for any mistakes I may have made at any job.

I firmly stand behind Sheriff McKinley!

Rusty Clark
Monument

WHERE TO WRITE

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 • **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: 503-986-1180. Website: leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
 • **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313, oregonlegislature.gov.

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