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**What Google’s monopoly ruling means for local newspapers

By Dean Ridings, CEO, America’s Newspapers**

****Not that many years ago, the best way you could find out about businesses in town would be through your local newspaper. Your local newspaper is still a great source of advertising information, but if you’re looking for something, chances are you're going to start by "Googling it." Have you ever wondered why that's become our go-to move? Well, a recent court ruling has shed some light on this, and it's not a pretty picture.

Recently a federal judge ruled that Google has been running an illegal monopoly in the search engine market. Now, you might be thinking, "So what? Google's just really good at what they do, right?" Well, it’s not quite that simple. The judge found that Google has been using tactics that squash competition and keep themselves at the top of the heap.

This is admittedly a complex issue, but this monopoly hasn't just hurt other tech companies; it's been slowly suffocating your local newspapers and, by extension, your communities.

How? Well, a few years ago if a local business wanted to advertise, they'd come to the local newspaper, the most effective place to promote a local business. That advertising revenue was used to pay journalists to cover your town hall meetings, high school sports and local events. Newspapers were the watchdogs, keeping an eye on your local government and celebrating your community's achievements.

Enter Google. As they exerted their influence on the advertising market, those local advertising dollars started flowing to them instead of your hometown newspaper. The impact was significant and newspaper advertising revenue has continued to decline. The result? Fewer reporters on the street. Less coverage of your local issues. Some newspapers have even had to shut their doors completely. And since Google has no local reporters (they take the content from local newspapers and other sources), local news and information gets harder to find.

Google’s actions have had a very real impact on your community. When local news suffers, studies show that voter turnout drops, corruption goes unchecked and people feel less connected to their neighbors.

So, what’s next? This ruling is a good start. It's a recognition that the playing field needs to be leveled. But it's just the first step. There are legislative efforts underway aimed at giving news publishers a fighting chance. The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (JCPA) is a bipartisan bill in Congress that would allow news publishers to collectively negotiate with tech giants like Google for fair compensation for our content. And another bill, the Community News and Small Business Support Act, would provide tax incentives to local newspapers based on the number of reporters they have covering the local market. With each of these bills it's not about handouts; it's about getting a fair shake for the value that newspapers bring to the table.

The next time you "Google" something, remember that convenience comes at a cost. And it's a cost we've all been paying, often without even realizing it. It's time to have a real conversation about how we can create a digital world that doesn't just work for Big Tech, but for our local communities, too.

Whether it's through antitrust actions, new legislation or a combination of both, we need to find a way to ensure that local journalism doesn't just survive but thrives in the digital age. Because at the end of the day, a Google search might tell you where to find the closest pizza place, but it's your local newspaper that's going to tell you what's really going on in your community. And that's something worth fighting for.

Our democracy depends on it.

**About America’s Newspapers:**

On behalf of its approximately 1,700 newspaper and Solutions Partner companies, America’s Newspapers is committed to explaining, defending and advancing the vital role of newspapers in democracy and civil life. We put an emphasis on educating the public on all the ways newspapers contribute to building a community identity and the success of local businesses. Learn more: [newspapers.org](https://newspapers.org)

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