# Legal battles against Google in the US threaten Canada's local news sustainability



Legal battles in the United States against Google could bring significant changes to the global online news landscape, with particular implications for Canadian publishers. The U.S. Department of Justice has initiated two major antitrust lawsuits addressing Google's near-total control over online search and its dominance in digital advertising. Although these legal actions target American markets, their outcomes could influence how journalism is discovered, funded, and sustained worldwide, including in Canada.

Google's extensive influence extends beyond being a search engine. The company commands both the digital advertising infrastructure and the global search market, controlling the mechanisms advertisers use to purchase ad space and the platforms that determine content visibility online. Critics argue that this dominance allows Google to set the rules of the entire online news economy while claiming a substantial share of its profits.

Smaller news outlets, which have long faced financial and visibility challenges, stand to benefit should Google’s control over ad technology weaken. Publishers could retain more of the advertising revenue, gain fairer visibility in search results, and secure stronger bargaining power to ensure inclusion in revenue-sharing agreements. However, these potential improvements hinge on both the outcomes of U.S. court proceedings and proactive policy actions by Canadian regulators.

Court filings and international investigations indicate Google retains between 30 to 50 per cent of every advertising dollar spent. This disproportionately affects local and regional Canadian news providers, who receive a shrinking share of advertising revenues, leading to consequences such as reduced newsroom staff, closure of community newspapers, and declining coverage of municipal issues. This erosion in local journalism directly impacts communities’ access to vital information and hampers government accountability.

Beyond advertising, Google’s dominance in search exacerbates the challenges faced by smaller outlets. With over 90 per cent of global search traffic routed through Google, Canadian news organisations are heavily reliant on its algorithms. Sudden algorithmic changes can cause sharp declines in readership without warning, often sidelining smaller outlets in favour of larger, more prominent voices. This dynamic threatens media diversity and the quality of democratic engagement.

Canada's 2023 Online News Act sought to address these imbalances by obligating tech platforms like Google and Meta to compensate news outlets for linking to their content. Nonetheless, implementing the law has proven problematic. Meta responded by blocking news content entirely, even during emergencies such as wildfires and floods, severing communities from crucial updates. Google has entered into funding agreements but only after considerable political and public pressure. Furthermore, available funds have largely flowed to major legacy media companies, leaving independent, local, and community newsrooms with limited benefit. This has perpetuated existing hierarchies in the digital environment.

The rise of AI-generated search summaries adds another layer of complexity. When users receive instant answers on search pages, often extracted from original journalism, fewer visits are directed to the source sites. This reduction in traffic diminishes ad revenue, further threatening publisher viability. Additionally, such summaries strip content from its context, obscuring who produced the information, its significance, and its place within broader narratives. This dynamic risks undermining both public trust and the financial sustainability of independent journalism.

While the current lawsuits unfold in American courts, their global repercussions are significant. For Canadian journalism, the stakes are clear: without reform, tech platforms could continue profiting disproportionately from the work of news organisations, accelerating the decline of local news. Successful U.S. efforts to curtail Google’s market power could provide Canada and other nations with an opportunity to renegotiate terms that foster a fairer, more balanced relationship between journalism and digital distribution platforms.

The developments are closely observed by industry stakeholders, highlighting ongoing tensions at the intersection of technology, media, and public interest. The Troy Media is reporting on this evolving story, underscoring the potential for far-reaching impacts on how information is accessed and valued in the digital age.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-sues-google-monopolizing-digital-advertising-technologies> - The U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against Google for monopolizing digital advertising technologies, alleging that Google retains over 30% of advertising dollars due to its anticompetitive conduct.
2. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/us-judge-sets-may-2-hearing-discuss-remedies-google-digital-ads-lawsuit-2025-04-25/> - A U.S. federal judge scheduled a hearing to discuss potential remedies against Google following a ruling that found the company illegally monopolized key digital advertising markets.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/canada-regulator-impose-fee-google-online-news-laws-operating-costs-2025-02-27/> - Canada's regulator announced plans to impose a fee on Google to recover costs associated with enforcing a law that requires large internet platforms to compensate news outlets for linking to their content.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/a1e4446c4870903ed05c03a2a03b581e> - A U.S. District Judge ruled that Google's digital ad network operates as an illegal monopoly, marking the second major antitrust decision against the company in less than a year.
5. <https://www.theweek.com/tech/google-ruled-monopoly-ad-tech-dominance> - A U.S. federal judge ruled that Google's online advertising technology division operates as an illegal monopoly, potentially leading to the forced divestiture of a key segment of its business.
6. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/economy/article/2024/10/10/google-under-pressure-from-threat-of-being-broken-up_6728926_19.html> - The U.S. Department of Justice suggested that Google might need to be broken up to prevent it from abusing its dominant position in online search, potentially involving splitting off services like Chrome, Play, or Android.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMikgFBVV95cUxNekthSEVLSWhzcnhpaHlSdVI3N3ZxU1JYU3ZoZ3F0c2ZnLTdIblJFeUxEb19EWV9WOE9sT0w4QXJPcVJEREw5UkVRMzVoUjFWdU1yLVJqSXdjbVNVT1BRNmZDMVFESkYxWGhrZ2tIYVllSEJIdE9oa2ZIX0VBdmhGVThVUktSNWxLYmt4anZPOEVuUQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data