

Hey Google, Australians embrace innovators but we don't like bullies.

An Open Letter to Google



As a nation we welcomed you into our lives and have made you our home base on the internet. Your search engine was so good that it became a verb, we no longer search the web, we 'google it.'

But with success comes responsibilities and right now our Government, as our elected representative, is asking you to act beyond your narrow commercial self-interest.

The Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC) has reviewed your impact on our media and found the impact of your business model — and that of the other dominant digital platform Facebook — on our national life has been disastrous.

You have exploited your understanding of our personal interests and behaviours to draw advertisers away from traditional media, destroying the business model that supported independent journalism for more than 150 years.

In the past decade more than 5,000 Australian journalists have lost their jobs as your share of advertising has grown and grown.

You have also been happy to use stories written by those journalists as if they were your own work, deriving value from something that isn't yours.

Now the ACCC has asked you to recognise this and contribute some of your massive profits back into media in order for this essential element of our nation's public square to thrive.

With this support there would be more journalists who could keep us informed, give all Australians a voice, monitor the activities of the powerful and ensure that all levels of government are held accountable. **But instead of supporting our national interest, you have chosen to put yourself first.**

So here's a few things we would like to put on the table:

While your service may appear free, you make eye-watering amounts of money by selling access to us.

We don't quite know how you do it all, but you don't make \$4.8 billion in advertising revenue without deriving real value from our usage. So maybe it's time to respect us.

You are using your power as one of the largest companies on earth to threaten us.

When we ask you to consider paying a fair amount for the journalism from which you benefit, you threaten to charge us for your search engine. If you don't want us to use your engine just tell us and we'll go elsewhere.

And in supporting your interests you are prepared to push misinformation:

- Your claim that you will need to hand personal information to media companies is wrong.
- Your claim news publishers are going to receive favourable treatment in the algorithm is wrong.

It's as if you have taken every clause of the code and exaggerated it out of context and then attempted to create a smokescreen to scare and distract people.

Countering these claims is actually why we need an independent media — which is the whole point of the code.

Australians embrace innovators, but we don't like bullies.

If you want our ongoing support, we encourage you to make it mutual and reach a fair arrangement that respects our Australian media.

~ from Australians

Add Your Name to the Open Letter
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