

Are Google and Facebook really the future of journalism? New Policies risk making it so | Columbia Journalism Review

By Emily Bell

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At the end of February this year, Australia passed a law which required Facebook and Google to either negotiate deals for news material and links carried by their services, or be forced into arbitration. If no agreement could be made, the law mandated that the links be taken down from the platforms entirely. Over the past two months, this small regional issue has become a critical test case for ways in which national regulators might start to reshape their media economies, rather than simply surrender to the forces of the global online advertising market as dictated by large online platforms.

As the implications of Australia's News Media Bargaining Code start to sink in around the world, the subject of how technology companies like Google and Facebook support journalism is an issue of growing interest to both newsrooms and policy makers. In the US, the policy conversation has focused on the possibilities of antitrust in tackling the size and impact of advertising platforms. Similarly, there seems to be an increased need for a "digital new deal" to help rebuild independent local journalism.

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