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# Google ads support 7 out of 10 websites with fake news

Google, AppNexus, and Criteo alone account for 85 percent of ad revenue for websites with fake news and disinformation.

The independent organization Global Disinformation Index has analyzed 20,000 websites with fake news and disinformation.

And fake news is a profitable business. A very profitable business: The websites have annual advertising revenues of nearly a quarter-billion dollars (US\$235 million/NOK 2.1 billion/SEK 2.3bn/DKK 1.5bn).

And the question is: Who's responsible for stopping the funding of fake news? Ad tech companies or advertisers?

[Download the report.](#)

What you need to know:

1. Google is the dominant player, and Google ads are present on 70 percent of websites with fake news and disinformation.
2. To put it into perspective: AppNexus ads are present on only eight percent of the website and Criteo on only four percent.
3. But: In terms of money, Google accounts for 37 percent, followed by AppNexus (25%) and Criteo (23%).
4. The reason is that ad tech from Google is most popular overall (especially on low-traffic websites), while a limited number of high-traffic sites use AppNexus and Criteo.
5. The Global Disinformation Index found ads from several major advertisers on the website. Among these are Audi, Honda, American Airlines, Oxford University, Sprint, and Azul Systems.

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## Google uses media support to curb political pressure, report claims

A new report claims Google's recent interest in journalism is not about corporate social responsibility, but buying goodwill in countries that are threatening them with regulations.

Please note: The report was written by Campaign for Accountability and funded by Google competitor Oracle. Google claims the report is a smear campaign and that there is no link between political pressure and where Google News Initiative distributes its money.

[Download the report.](#)

Three main findings:

1. The money Google distributes to media organizations seems to follow a clear pattern: the greater the threat of regulations, the more money is funneled to journalism in that region. When regulations are implemented, or the threat level is lower, the financial support in the area drops dramatically.
2. France and Germany are two of the most eager countries in Europe when it comes to proposing regulation of technology companies. 285 media organizations in the two countries have received financial support (that's more than 20 percent of all media support Google has provided).
3. The increased political pressure in the United States over the past two years is consistent with increased support for American media organizations - at the expense of Europeans.



# There is no such thing as neutral platforms

According to a research article in the journal American Behavioral Scientist, even claiming that a platform is neutral, is an action with political consequences.

Both Facebook, Google, and Twitter play the neutrality-card every time someone criticizing them for allowing politicians to freely spread disinformation and lies on their platforms (Twitter have now announced that they will ban political advertising from November 22th).

The reasoning is simple: they think they are neutral platforms, which only protect freedom of expression. Then it becomes up to society and the media industry to uncover what is falsehood and what is true.

But the authors of a new research article believes the world is far more complicated: They argue that the platforms get stuck in an illusion and hurt the communities they think they are helping.

[Download the report.](#)

Here are the six main arguments from the article:

1. Strategic silence was most effective when gatekeepers had significant control of public discourse. Deliberately not discussing or addressing issues no longer works.
2. Platforms must accept that information is never neutral and cannot be weighted equally. There are many ways to create content, and these differences give the content different values and degrees of credibility.
3. Publishing and making information available has a cost and has implications for society.
4. A fragmented and democratized information flow – which is governed by the interests of the majority (read: search engine algorithms) – could marginalize minority groups and promote and reinforce unwanted attitudes (read: hate groups).
5. A direct consequence is a need for strategic reinforcement of information through ethical and responsible choices.
6. Governance processes need to be developed to highlight reliable and credible information that serves the public.



# 75 percent of Norwegians want less surveillance online

There is an overwhelming majority in Norway to tighten rules for the use of cookies and online tracking.

This is stated in a new report from the Norwegian Computing Center. The report is using findings from two national surveys in Norway on attitudes to sharing personal data.

The report is part of the research project Alert, which is a collaboration between NTNU, the University of Bergen, the Norwegian Research Center, and the Norwegian Consumer Council.

[Download the report.](#)

Six main findings:

1. 75 percent believe it should be more difficult to store personal data and information that can be used to create digital profiles. Only 10 percent disagree, and the majority are between 18 and 29 years.
2. The researchers wanted to investigate people's real willingness to share data. Therefore the participants were asked to disclose all information from the survey so that it could be linked to data from Facebook that would form a digital profile. 26 percent gave their consent.
3. When a control group was first asked about privacy, personal data and how they are used, the number giving consent dropped to 17 percent.
4. Interesting: Information about the Cambridge Analytica scandal does not affect participants' willingness to share data.
5. Fun fact: People who scored highly as 'intuitive' in the CRT reflection test more often share personal data than others.
6. Those who share data have experienced more phishing, ID theft, and other adverse events (such as sharing infringing pictures or videos).

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# Stagnation of social media usage in Sweden

For the first time since the survey began in 2010, the number of users on social media in Sweden no longer increases.

This is one of the most interesting findings in the report 'Swedes and the Internet 2019', which is published annually by the Swedish Internet Foundation.

The report goes in-depth and provides a complementary picture of the Swedes' digital life. You will find figures for banking, e-commerce, search, social media, news consumption, gaming – yes, the whole shebang.

[Download the report.](#)

Five of the main findings:

1. 83 percent of Swedes use social media – this is the same number as last year.
2. The daily use of Facebook is falling (to 51%), while Instagram (41%) and Snapchat (24%) are increasing.
3. There is also a significant decline in sharing of content on social media: uploading photos (31%), sharing other people's posts (30%), writing own posts (28%), and sharing news (24%).
4. For the first time, the report also asked the recipients what activity they perceived as meaningful. 60 percent think it makes sense to use news apps. Only 12 percent say the same about mobile games. It is worth noting that only one in four Swedes (24%) perceives time spent on social media as meaningful.
5. 55 percent of Swedes have listened to a podcast, while nine percent listen daily – and more pay for digital content: Music (58%), video (57%), and news (32%).



# Google and Facebook dominating digital advertising in Denmark

Both Google and Facebook are strengthening their positions in Denmark, an annual summary of the development of the media from the Danish Ministry of Culture shows.

The report concludes (not surprisingly) that Danes are becoming increasingly digital.

[Read the report online.](#)

Three interesting findings:

1. 61 percent of digital advertising revenue in Denmark now goes to foreign companies (primarily Google and Facebook). An increase of three percentage points in one year.
2. Danes spend less money on access to content (TV subscriptions, streaming services, mobile, newspapers, etc.). The decline is not dramatic, but worth noting.
3. 49 percent of the Danes have listened to podcasts, and the proportion is increasing in all age groups.





# Study: YouTube does not radicalize their users

YouTube represents the true democratization of political media in the medium that has consistently proven the most popular and most powerful: Video.

But do people get radicalized by YouTube's recommendation algorithms? – No, there is (actually) no evidence to support this claim, a Penn State University study shows.

Instead: The assumption that YouTube algorithms are to blame for more radical far-right opinions in the public sphere seems to be caused by a continually repeating of this theory in traditional media – and is not backed by science.

[Download the report.](#)

Six main findings:

1. The rise of alternative (mostly right-wing) political media on YouTube is a consequence of both supply and demand for content.
2. Yes, YouTube has made it easier for people with sympathy for these opinions to express themselves and gain an audience – and YouTube's algorithms have been a critical factor in helping them reach their audience.
3. The increased consumption of videos that promote white nationalism is due to the fact that there has always been an audience that has demanded the content. Not that former politically moderate users are being radicalized and consuming the content.
4. The increase in the number of conservative voices on YouTube (both on the production side and the number of viewers) can be largely explained by the fact that many traditionally conservative people have started using YouTube over the past two years.
5. Although the most extreme all-right groupings have been declining since mid-2017, YouTube's algorithms helps them find their audience.
6. This is because YouTube users with sympathy for the Alt-Right movement are more engaged than other YouTube users: They watch and like more videos and comment more often. This is interpreted by YouTube algorithms as a positive behavior.



# Journalists are still failing to protect sources online

Only 25 percent of journalists use encrypted email, a global survey from 149 countries shows.

The study is conducted by the International Center for Journalists, which concludes that journalists have become better at digitally protecting their sources. In fact, as many as two out of three journalists and editors secure parts of their digital communications. This is a 50 percent increase since 2017.

But: Almost all growth is due to the use of encrypted messaging apps from Facebook (WhatsApp and Messenger), Telegram, and Signal.

[Download the report.](#)

Six key findings:

1. Only 25 percent of journalists use encrypted emails, only 18 percent encrypt phone calls, and nine percent encrypt chat with sources and internally.
2. 32 percent state that they do not use any form of encryption in their communications.
3. Media organizations and journalists in Europe and North America more often use encryption in their communications than journalists in other parts of the world.
4. Editors (75%) are much more concerned about disinformation than journalists (48%).
5. ...but editors are far less skeptical of social media than journalists. 20 percent of journalists believe social media makes the quality of journalism worse – only six percent of their editors share this view.
6. One in three media organizations has now hired dedicated fact-checkers.