

Research, analysis and opinion on international media law

Google raises concerns over bill forcing platforms to pay for news



Canada's Liberal bill causes 'serious' concerns among tech companies who say the law could lead to the 'proliferation of misinformation'

Google Canada has raised 'serious' concerns about the country's Liberal bill, which would create a framework within which online platforms must enter into commercial negotiations with news outlets.

Google raised its objections to government in written form on 18 October, stating that 'Unlike the Australian code, C-18 defines Eligible News Businesses extremely broadly, and does not require a publisher to adhere to basic journalistic standards.'

Bill C-18, the Online News Act, was introduced in parliament on 05 April 2022, and outlines a new legislative and regulatory

framework that requires digital platforms to make fair commercial deals with news outlets. The bill essentially aims to reduce bargaining imbalances between platforms and news outlets.

Colin McKay, Google Canada's Head of Public Policy and Government Relations, told a House of Commons committee that the bill 'lacks transparency and benefits large, legacy publishers over small'.

In its prepared remarks, Google Canada ominously stated: 'Our concerns with C-18 are serious.' The statement continues: 'In its current form, C-18 will make it harder for →

Launch of GBP50m global hub for TV, film and media in Wales

Wales has launched a GBP50 million collaboration to develop a global hub for TV, film and media as part of measures to develop a world-leading location for innovation.

The five-year collaboration project, Media Cymru, was launched on 18 October. It provides funding and training opportunities for businesses and individuals.

Media Cymru is led by Cardiff University, with government funding, the Welsh Government through Creative Wales and additional support from Cardiff Council.

Over the next five years, the collaboration will work to strengthen media activity, as well as develop sector start-ups.

Freelancers and SMEs can apply for up to £10,000 to develop ideas for new products and services. Up to £50,000 will be available for businesses to develop research, development and innovation projects that demonstrate clear potential for a tangible product or service. Funding opportunities also include £200,000 for projects of significant scale and ambition with potential to be transformational for the sector, with international impact.

Council Leader, Councillor Huw Thomas said: "This is a golden era for film making and media production in Cardiff, delivering significant growth in the Creative Industries."

Dawn Bowden, the Welsh Government's Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, commented: "The Welsh Government is delighted to be supporting this collaboration to help build on the success our media producers are currently enjoying in Wales." ■

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Tindle Newspapers acquires UK's Cornwall-based Voice Newspapers series of titles

Tindle Newspapers has acquired a series of eight regional titles through its purchase of Cornwall-based Voice Newspapers, from AD Sales Limited.

Tindle Newspapers publishes more than 200 local titles in the country, and is one of the largest privately owned local media companies in the UK.

The acquisition allows Tindle Newspapers to extend its reach into the local Cornwall marketplace, with the series of paid-for titles.

Voice Newspapers, formally owned by Peter Masters, publishes weekly editions covering Newquay, St Austell, Truro, Bodmin, Saltash, Liskeard, Penzance and Camborne.

Commenting on the deal, Scott Wood, Managing Director of Tindle Newspapers, said: "We are excited to strengthen our position in Cornwall by acquiring the popular and trusted Voice series."

He continued: "The Voice titles will complement our current newspapers and websites, generating new opportunities. I look forward to welcoming the team at Voice into the Tindle family."

Surrey-based Tindle Newspapers is owned by The Tindle Group, a British multimedia company operating regional titles and radio stations across the British Isles. The company was founded by the late Sir Ray Tindle. ■

Google raises concerns over Canada's Bill C-18

← Canadians to find and share trusted and authoritative news online. It will also have at best unpredictable outcomes for the evolving Canadian news ecosystem.'

Mr McKay also argued that the bill serves to benefit larger organisations over smaller ones. He explained that Google is already party to 150 agreements with Canadian publishers, 90 per cent of which are either small, local or regional.

Google stated that it shares the legislation's goal of supporting 'a sustainable future for journalism' and the news in Canada.

Mr Kay affirmed: 'We are here because we want to participate in a thorough conversation about the details of this legislation so it can move forward and be implemented in a way that achieves the public policy goals.'

News organisations have largely welcomed the bill, which shares similarities

India amends rules to ensure social media accountability

The Indian government has passed an amendment to the 2021 IT rules as part of measures to ensure accountability among social media companies.

The amendment was released on 28 October and could allow a government panel to overrule platform suspensions, and potentially force social media companies such as Twitter and Facebook to reinstate accounts suspended for breaching guidelines.

Changes are intended to 'enhance(s) due diligence requirements and ensuring accountability of social media and other intermediaries', according to explanatory comments published by the Ministry of Electronics and IT.

The new rules also clarify that complaints regarding content takedowns must be acted on within 72 hours of being reported.

The Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology commented: 'These rules marks new partnership between the Government and Intermediaries in making and keeping our Internet Safe & Trusted and Accountable Internet.'

The amendment states: 'Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Grievance Officer [of a social media company appointed under the IT Rules 2021] may prefer an appeal to the Grievance Appellate Committee.'

The three-member Grievance Appellate Committee, a government panel, will be established by January 2023, and will consist of a chairperson and two full-time members appointed by the union government. ■

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with a bill passed in Australia last year that forces online platforms to pay news outlets for their journalism.

The bill led to Google and Facebook paying Australian media roughly AUD200 million in the past year.

Google insisted that 'The bottom line for us is that Canadians deserve better than what we see in C-18 - which, to be frank, is simply bad public policy.' ■

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