A person wearing glasses and a suit

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

[**Link to hi-res photo**](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zzxq7a9MghrVeiZmFbqEo5ftDy905T78/view?usp=sharing)

**Big Tech Uses Journalism; Big Tech Should Pay For It**

By John Galer, publisher of The Journal-News, Hillsboro, IL

Chair, National Newspaper Association

The powers that Google and Facebook have over economic and political power in society – especially over the news industry—has caught the attention of lawmakers in Washington, DC.  After a close election and many worries over the quality of public debate, many ask if social media have played a role in the misinformation that erodes  our free press and plagues our democracy.

Nowhere is this power more daunting than in the social media giants’ use of news organizations’ reporting, which the platforms use without compensation to journalists.   Google and Facebook have a duopoly of the distribution of digital news content, which drives people to the social media platforms where the owners make money. The platforms hoard critical data and use clever tactics, like reframing stories in rich previews, to keep users on their sites – siphoning off the advertising revenue that small and local publishers need.

Every hour that goes by, Google and Facebook generate millions of dollars in U.S. advertising revenue. That amount could fund dozens of local journalists. But local newspapers in many communities that are funding the people who report on fair and free elections are struggling to meet payroll.

It is time for a change, before we head into another brutal and divisive election season leading up to the 2024 elections. America needs real, factual and independent news reporting more than ever. While national media may be treated with skepticism, research shows that local news media are generally trusted. But will they have the revenue to do the job?

Congress must take action to curb undue influence of Big Tech on the news media industry and make sure the work of local news-gatherers is fairly compensated. The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (JCPA) aims to do just that.

The JCPA is specifically designed to make sure Google and Facebook pay for what they use. The proposed legislation would provide a temporary, limited antitrust safe harbor for small and local news publishers to collectively negotiate with Facebook and Google for fair compensation for the use of journalists’ content. The policy also incentivizes and rewards publishers who invest in their journalists and newsroom personnel, awarding outlets with demonstrated investments in their staff a larger portion of the funds that result from the negotiations.

By addressing Google’s and Facebook’s monopoly power and ensuring more subscription and advertising dollars flow back to publishers, the JCPA not only protects and promotes quality news, but also encourages competition. Congress has made progress on this legislation. It should finish the job before the end of the year.

John Galer is the chair of National Newspaper Association, a 137-year-old organization representing community newspapers. Galer publishes newspapers in central Illinois.