

Trudeau slams Facebook for threatening to block Canadian news

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Meta's decision to block news for Canadian Facebook in response to a proposed law demanding the social media giant pay news outlets for the journalism content it uses is 'not just flawed, but dangerous to our democracy,' said Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Tuesday slammed Meta after executives said it would block news for Canadian Facebook and Instagram users in response to a proposed law that would require digital giants to pay for local journalism content.

In February, Google announced it also tested restricting Canadians' access to news in preparation for the passing of the Online News Act, which is currently before the Senate.

The two [tech giants](#) have criticized as overbroad the bill meant to help a news sector a government official has said "is in crisis" after hundreds of news publications closed in the last decade.

Their position and news blocking plans were outlined again by a Meta Canada executive in testimony this week at a Commons committee.

Trudeau said their arguments against the proposals are "not just flawed, it's dangerous to our democracy, to our economy."

"Woodward and Bernstein weren't influencers," he commented, in reference to the pair of Washington Post journalists who led reporting on the Watergate scandal that saw President Richard Nixon resign in 1974.

"Someone reporting on the horrors in Bucha (in Ukraine) is not trying to get likes on their Facebook page," he said.

"Rigorous, challenging, independent journalism is essential and the fact that Facebook is still saying that it doesn't want to pay journalists for the work they do shows how deeply irresponsible and out of touch they are."

The new law would require digital giants to make fair commercial deals with Canadian outlets for the news and information that is shared on

their platforms, or face binding arbitration.

It builds on Australia's New Media Bargaining Code, which was a world first, aimed at making Google and Meta pay for [news content](#) on their platforms.

Australian regulators, too, had accused the companies, who dominate online advertising, of draining cash away from traditional news organizations while using their content for free.

Big tech firms had fiercely opposed the Australian legislation initially, fearing it would threaten their business models, but with amendments it was easily passed by lawmakers.

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