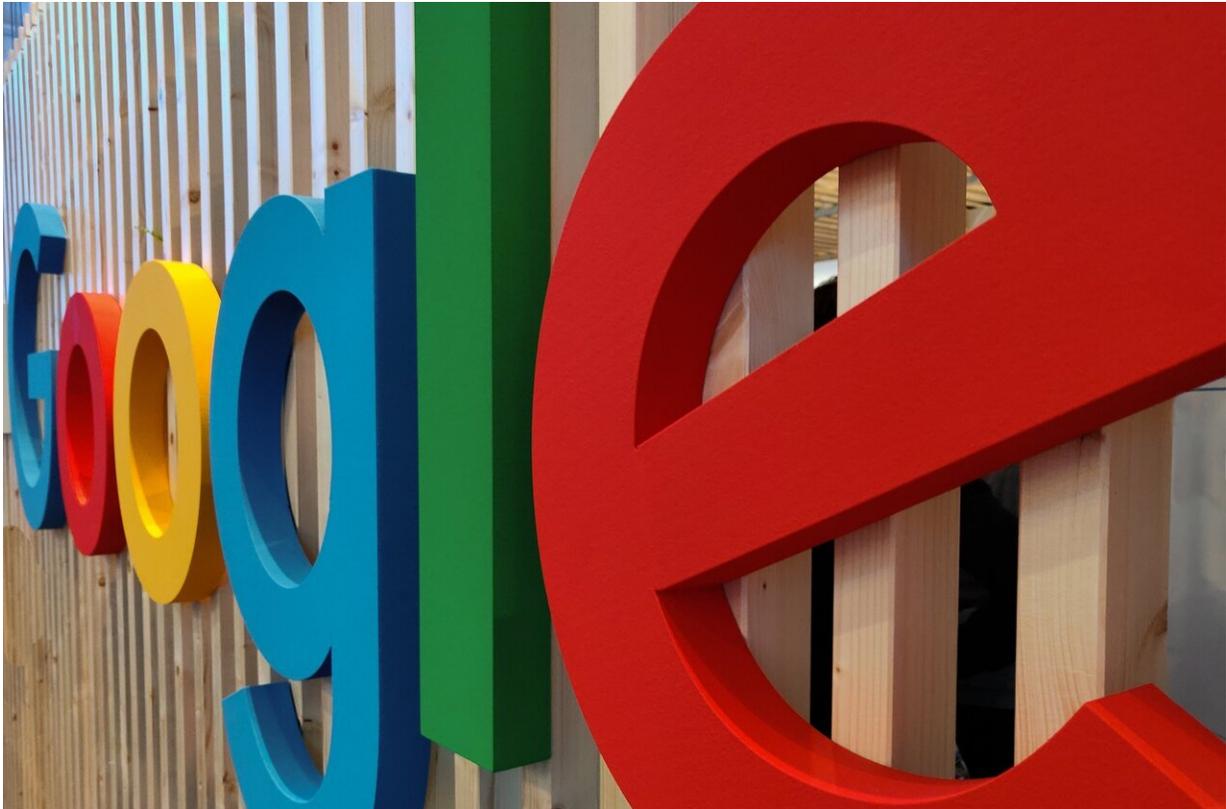


Wisconsin newspapers sue Google, Facebook

April 20 2021



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A group of Wisconsin newspapers have filed a federal lawsuit claiming Google and Facebook's monopoly on digital advertising threatens the publications' existence and violates antitrust law.

The lawsuit claims the internet giants' monopoly threatens the existence

of local newspapers nationwide as well as a "profoundly [negative effect](#) on American democracy and the civic life," [the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported Tuesday](#). Google unlawfully exercised monopoly power over the [digital advertising](#) market and illegally conspired with Facebook to engage in anti-competitive conduct, according to the filing.

The two dozen newspapers include the Tomahawk Leader, Antigo Times and the Kewaskum Statesman.

The lawsuit is one of about a dozen similar complaints filed by newspaper publishers across the country, Michael Fuller Jr., an attorney leading the Wisconsin publications' lawsuit, told the Journal Sentinel. He said he expects the lawsuits will be consolidated before a single federal judge and could attract larger newspaper chains as additional plaintiffs.

The lawsuits come as newspapers across the country have lost ad revenue as advertising has shifted online to search and social media. According to the Wisconsin filing, nearly 1,800 U.S. newspapers have closed or merged since 2014, leaving about 200 counties without a newspaper.

Google and Facebook have denied engaging in any illegal practices designed to stifle competition.

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Citation: Wisconsin newspapers sue Google, Facebook (2021, April 20) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-04-wisconsin-newspapers-sue-google-facebook.html>

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