

Google to Face Senate Hearings

by nano *Sunday, Sep 18 2011, 11:37am*

international / mass media / commentary

Before I proceed with surveillance and information juggernaut Google, I would like to address the “too big to,” issue.

Only a few decades past, media concentration laws prohibited the formation of the HUGE information and media companies that exist today -- a direct result of relentless political lobbying and ‘sweetening’ by minority interests. I would also like to draw attention to the changes in society’s mobility, freedoms and liberties that have contracted as media concentration in fewer hands has increased - an undeniable correlation exists between the two phenomena.



Today society suffers from an overwhelming amount of real news OMISSIONS, selective reporting and outright fabrications and misrepresentations - the Bin Laden assassination stor-ies for example and before that Iraq -- and a huge increase in salacious distractions and mindless twaddle at the expense of critical and necessary information required to maintain a high level of social awareness.

It appears that efforts have been made to intentionally limit the amount of newsworthy material reaching the public in democratic societies - reporting on Libya is a very good example of inaccurate and deceptive reporting, not coincidentally from the same media giants that reported on the illegal Iraq invasion!

It is also no secret that major media owners, Rupert Murdoch among them, belong to a very private New York club known as the CFR or ‘Council on Foreign Relations,’ a title that thinly veils a “perception management” and propaganda organisation! Furthermore, the same faces that attend the CFR also attend the meetings of another shady organisation known as the Bilderberg group, which also, not coincidentally, includes leading serving and retired politicians.

Now if Obama, Hillary Clinton, Murdoch, Fed chairman Bernanke and Google CEO Schmidt all attend the same meeting, which the mass media religiously fails to cover time and again, we can safely conclude a certain commonality of purpose or goals, especially in view of the fact that a uniform political agenda has been followed from the Bill Clinton presidency through to the Obama presidency.

I would like to clearly state at this stage that I am NO conspiracy theorist, however, I also have no

difficulty seeing the nose on my face, but to return to the major issue of companies and corporations that are allowed to grow disproportionately large at the expense of the competition and to the expense of society, as is CLEARLY occurring today.

Google, a company that once pledged that it would never abuse its power, promptly did exactly that when it was in the position to do so. Today Google is in bed with the CIA for surveillance purposes, and 'shapes' searches according to unfair profit driven motives, which have nothing whatsoever to do with broad information searches. But perhaps Google's most sordid abuse is the conscious backgrounding of some sites and the favouring of others, again at the expense of broad IMPARTIAL information searches. Google is clearly failing to honour its responsibility to society and to the corporate community.

Most good web loggers these days clearly indicate the number of hits that emanate from Google searches, some loggers even list the search key phrases and the page number on Google from which the hit occurred. Other information from logs also indicates general search PATTERNS and trends in graphical form, what I am highlighting here is that it is a VERY simple matter today to monitor Google searches to a particular site.

Now to a provable account of flagrant Google BIAS for any anti-trust court that wishes to have log and other hard material submitted as evidence.

Readers would note that the site, Cleaves Newswire, has a range of topics, including poetry and prose and as the site is primarily a news site it has a section for re-posts or for material from other sites. So what, I hear Google CEO, Eric Schmidt say; well Mr Schmidt, choke on the following information. This site has been running for six years with considerable poetry content for most of that time, BUT logs indicate that it has never received hits from a poetry key phrase search! It was only AFTER Google was dragged before European anti-trust regulators that the site 'magically' began receiving poetry key phrase searches from Google!

Also, hits 'spiked' - radically bucking organic trends -- by thousands within weeks of Google appearing before European anti-trust regulators. Clearly certain blocking algorithms and/or other 'shaping' search features were hastily removed by Google staff. However, in their rush they appeared to forget that these radical changes could easily be monitored and recorded - in fact, Google is as easily monitored as the users and sites it monitors.

Another obvious trick Google employs to disadvantage certain sites is by failing to list, in front line searches, popular names or phrases. Famous and popular authors are heavily searched on all SE's including Google; however, Google has chosen not to list the names of these heavily searched writers on this site (and other sites) thereby reducing hits and by consequence lowering rankings, which in turn decreases visibility and popularity.

Many more indications of Google's PARTIALITY exist, however, they are of a highly technical nature and cannot be discussed in a general paper. Nevertheless, any court that wishes to view this information need only make a request.

What I am highlighting for the brow-beaten public is that a small band of skilled and dedicated activists are easily able to effectively compromise one of the world's leading criminal Corporations but now to the cherry on the cake.

After our system administrator called a meeting to explain Google's behaviour we decided to try some social engineering in the hope that we would get a bite, so we [panned Eric Schmidt](#) good and

proper and bite he did, like a white pointer. Within 12 hours hits from Google ceased altogether, an unprecedented event, it was only after pointing out that we were logging his thin skinned, girlish behaviour that hits slowly returned.

It was truly gratifying to have Mr 'Bilderberg CIA' Schmidt dancing to our tune and to view this man's character or lack thereof. If this man is typical of today's corporate ruling elite then we can assure readers their time in the sun has come to an end -- what a bunch of reactive, insecure, weak, fairies!

It becomes evident that Mr Schmidt hits a couple of keys on his office computer to see what is being written about him on the web - well, we hope he chokes on this one too!

Clearly, if society is to evolve in a balanced and healthy manner it is IMPERATIVE that media ownership and concentration must be tightly regulated and that no company is allowed to become too big to fail or too big to unfairly monopolise a particular market.

Report from Politico follows:

Google's algorithm for Hill hearings

by Michelle Quinn

SAN FRANCISCO—When Google's Eric Schmidt takes the oath at a Senate hearing Wednesday, he's expected to present the Internet giant as a cool innovator that just wants to improve Web searches — not a ruthless firm that controls what people see online and squashes competitors.

And over the past few weeks, Google has done everything it can to help him make that case.

The company last week brought a search guru to Washington to explain search algorithms. It's made acquisitions and changed business practices, and it's pitched itself as an underdog facing a unified front of enemies to whoever will listen.

"It's just like the schoolyard bully, when the teacher is watching, they will be on better behavior," said Gary Reback, the Silicon Valley lawyer who spearheaded the Microsoft antitrust case and who is representing vertical search services, such as comparison shopping sites, in pressing antitrust complaints against Google.

The company denies it has changed practices.

"We're always looking for ways to improve our services and we value the feedback we get from users and policymakers," said Mistique Cano, a Google spokeswoman. "We understand with success comes scrutiny, and we're looking forward to the hearing and answering any questions senators may have about our business."

Google is facing antitrust probes in the U.S., Europe and South Korea. The FTC is focusing on the company's search business, particularly as it relates to mobile. The Department of Justice, meanwhile, is reviewing Google's recent bid to purchase Motorola Mobile for \$12.5 billion.

At the Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearing Wednesday titled, "The Power of Google: Serving Consumers or Threatening Competition," Schmidt will testify first, followed by a panel that includes Google competitors who have complained that Google is a gateway to the Internet in the U.S. because of its market share in search. Witnesses include representatives of Nextag, a shopping site; Yelp, a local search firm; and Expedia, the online travel site.

Critics are expected to argue that Google has a monopoly position and from that, it can give its own services prominent placement in what consumers see.

But in many ways, the company's image has been a moving target for critics.

Over the summer, Google stopped using snippets of content from other review companies for its Google Places service after competitors Yelp and TripAdvisor complained that Google was not only "scraping" their content but giving its own service better placement in a Web search.

Google said it changed its practices "based on careful thought about the future direction of Place pages, and feedback we've heard over the past few months."

Some of Google's recent moves make as much political as business sense. When Google bought the restaurant review publisher Zagat two weeks ago, observers saw the purchase as giving the company a trove of local reviews and content while helping counter criticisms from rivals that Google builds new products on the backs of other businesses.

The Zagat purchase helps "Google address some of the concerns" regulators have had, said Kartik Hosanagar, a Wharton professor of operations and information management. Once Google begins incorporating Zagat reviews into its products, review companies like Yelp and others "can no longer complain that Google is using their content," he said.

In the months leading up to the hearing, the company's representatives have also sent emails to professors and industry critics with information clarifying its positions on issues. Google "has always tried to do the right thing by its users and to compete fairly," read one email to professors in June when the FTC announced its probe.

In Washington, Google believes that it needs to do a better job explaining how its technology works. The company has decided to make Schmidt available to testify out of a desire to better explain what it does in the face of a cadre of ever more vocal critics — some underwritten by the company's corporate foes.

In fact, Google claims to be the victim of a patent cabal, of sorts.

In August, the company's chief counsel wrote in an unusual outburst that the company was an underdog in a multifront battle against Microsoft, Oracle and Apple over patents.

"Microsoft and Apple have always been at each other's throats, so when they get into bed together, you have to start wondering what's going on," Google's chief counsel David Drummond wrote. "Instead of competing by building new features or devices, they are fighting through litigation." At the company's request, Justice is looking into whether the companies acquired Nortel patents for anti-competitive means.

Soon after, Google announced it was purchasing Motorola Mobility for \$12.5 billion, a move that many view as a way to defend itself in patent wars. Justice is reviewing that proposed deal, too.

“It’s very much like a political campaign,” said Greg Sterling, an analyst who researches the mobile Internet. Like a political campaign, positions are hardened on both sides with few in the middle. “There are audiences predisposed to believe one way or another.”

Sterling doesn’t see the company leaning back — and points to the recent decision by Google to roll out its first travel service, albeit in a low-keyed way, from its purchase of ITA travel service. That acquisition was approved by the DOJ earlier this year with conditions, after foes like Expedia, TripAdvisor, Microsoft and other companies cited antitrust concerns.

Perhaps the biggest recent news affecting the company’s image was something Google probably couldn’t avoid — its \$500 million settlement with the DOJ in the criminal case over Canadian pharmaceutical ad case. While it is believed the company made the settlement to avoid criminal prosecution, it hurt the company’s image. “The contention that Google was doing something knowingly illegal really flies in the face of their do-no-evil company motto,” he said.

Scott Cleland, a research analyst and president of Precursor, a consultancy, said Google has in recent months worked to gain new allies and neutralize critics. “They need Republican free market views to protect them,” he said.

He noted that the company has said little after launching Google+ in June, widely seen as a strong competitor to Facebook.

“Google is trying to have a lower profile right now because any news attracts connections to their problems,” said Cleland, whose firm has done work for Google competitors.

Whether any of the company’s moves will impact the Senate antitrust subcommittee’s questioning remains to be seen, but some say it can’t hurt.

However, the steps taken that may alter Google’s image do not address the chief concern over how Google presents search results for competitors alongside its own products, some argue.

Reback suggested that search results are mattering less as the company has shifted to other techniques for presenting its products and services, such as a Google map in the upper right hand corner, which users are more likely to click on. “They know the eyeballs are drawn to a map in the upper right corner,” he said. As Google tinkers with what consumers see, the actual search ranking “is not as important.”

Google’s response to criticism is that its end goal is to serve the user and that if a user isn’t happy, other search engines are easily available, only a click away. Some agree. “It’s hard to monopolize a market where consumers are free to move,” said Herbert Hovenkamp, a law professor at the University of Iowa. “The bottom line is that the service is free and the alternatives are free.”

And perhaps, as Schmidt rises to testify, he will have a unique opportunity to present the firm as an American innovator, one that grew quickly and garnered in the process an axis of enemies.

“In my mind,” said Hovenkamp, “there's too many people trying to control Google.”

© 2011 Politico LLC

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0911/63725.html>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-2735.html>