

He Who Controls the Information Controls the World

Google's Behavioral Modification Goals Include the De-ranking of Christian Websites

Presented to John Ehrett, Deputy Counsel to Senator Josh Hawley on August 27, 2020 at his request

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BIO

Greg Outlaw is a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) practitioner and consultant. Greg was successfully implementing what would become known as SEO in late 1995—two years before the term Search Engine Optimization was coined. Greg has spoken at the NRB, CLA, Internet Evangelism Coalition, Christian Internet Marketing Conference, and Liberty University on SEO. Greg has consulted for numerous Christian ministries including Biblica, Compassion International, Focus on the Family, Got Questions, Reasonable Faith and others. Greg co-founded All About GOD Ministries, Inc. (AAG) in 2002 and is its President and CEO. AAG is one of the largest evangelical outreaches in terms of impact on the Internet primarily using SEO to drive surgically targeted traffic. As of 2019, nearly 430 million visitors have come to the AAG's websites resulting in nearly 370 million gospel presentations.

ABSTRACT

At least 70 non-profit Christian websites have lost an average of 44.8% of their organic traffic coming from Google since June 2019. Google has overstepped its bounds in its mission to organize the world's information and has positioned itself to become the arbiter of facts and truth. This arrogance by its liberal leadership and workforce has been embodied into an AI (Artificial Intelligence) that was trained on a corpus of liberal websites that has led to clear viewpoint discrimination against political conservatives and conservative Christian values/worldview. Further, that workforce continually reinforces the deep learning bias of the AI developed by Google by subjectively applying their discriminatory "Search Engine Evaluator Guidelines" that lead to a cycle of de-ranking conservative and Christian content in Google's search results. Additionally, certain worldview search terms that have regularly been used by conservative Christian websites to share their beliefs and the gospel are being replaced with liberal websites leading to behavioral modification of those people that use Google. This SEME (Search Engine Manipulation Effect), as termed by Dr. Robert Epstein, Senior Research Psychologist, at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology, is by design. Considering the state of America today, George Orwell's warning may have been prescient, "Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present, controls the past." Put more succinctly, "He who controls the information controls the world."

Is Google Organizing or Controlling the World's Information?

Google's mission statement is to “**organize** the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.”¹ Its vision statement as spoken in 2004 by Larry Page, its co-founder, is to “provide an important service to the world instantly delivering **relevant** information on virtually any topic.”² In 2019, Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google and Alphabet, emphasized a renewed mission to allow people “to get things done!”³ More importantly, “The switch and change in its approach are critical to understanding as Google will be developing tools that **control** a larger part of the users' experience.”⁴

In organizing the world's information should Google determine relevance of a query by deciding what are facts and what is truth?⁵ Or, is that manipulating the world's information? Perhaps, these questions were answered in 2005 when Charlie Rose asked Eric Schmidt, Chairman and CEO of Google at that time, “...where is the future of search going?” Schmidt answered, “When you use Google, do you get more than one answer? Of course you do. Well, that's a bug. We should be able to give you the right answer just once. We should know what you meant. You should look for information. We should get it exactly right.”⁶ Can Google steer searchers to only a single, perfect result without controlling truth and thereby manipulating behavior?

The Algorithmic and Human Recipe for Viewpoint Discrimination

Suffice it to say that Google has developed a useful search algorithm and AI (Artificial Intelligence)⁷ and trained it using a corpus of sources they determined to be trustworthy, thereby introducing bias.⁸ Google states, “In 2019 we ran over 464,065 experiments, with trained external Search Raters and live tests resulting in more than 3,620 improvements to Search.”⁹ Perhaps the acronym GIGO (Garbage In, Garbage Out) is meaningful here. Google contracts with 10,000+ external Search Raters to review websites and webpages¹⁰ and these Raters are instructed¹¹ to use a 168-page document called the “Search Quality Evaluator

¹ <https://www.google.com/search/howsearchworks/mission/>

² Janet Lowe, “Google Speaks: Secrets of the World's Greatest Billionaire Entrepreneurs” (2009): 123. See also: <https://fourweekmba.com/google-vision-statement-mission-statement/>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyRPyRKHO8M> (quote starts at 1:59 in)

⁴ <https://fourweekmba.com/google-vision-statement-mission-statement/>

⁵ <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22530102-600-google-wants-to-rank-websites-based-on-facts-not-links/>. See also the whitepaper for Knowledge-Based Trust: Estimating the Trustworthiness of Web Sources: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1502.03519.pdf>

⁶ <https://charlierose.com/videos/17574> Rose's question and Schmidt's answer begins at 28:07 in the video.

⁷ <https://martechtoday.com/how-machine-learning-works-150366>

⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ricl5t66cj8&list=PLI28DU_o6d0Ojylu4vVKc33gFt_zBR2g&index=9. Senior Google Engineer Greg Coppola who reports directly to Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet and Google, says there is a political bias in Google's algorithm. Coppola states, “CNN is the most commonly used source on Google News... 20% of all searches for Donald Trump are from CNN and when that's the entire Internet of millions of sites... one has to wonder how it got to be that way.”

⁹ <https://www.google.com/search/howsearchworks/mission/users/>

¹⁰ <https://searchengineland.com/library/google/google-search-quality-raters>

¹¹ <https://blog.searchevaluator.com/search-engine-evaluator/>

Guidelines”¹² in combination with their own subjective judgment to determine content quality.¹³ This is very problematic as the people that Google employs or contracts with are—like themselves¹⁴—rarely conservative¹⁵ and even more rarely conservative Christians. Those that may be conservative, typically don’t last long. It’s axiomatic that if Google’s Search Raters tasked with judging the quality of content do not share nor tolerate a Christian worldview the search results will be crafted to show liberal content and non-biblical values. Thus, this subjective assessment done by biased humans to verify whether a biased AI’s experiment in new search ranking modifications yields “better” results becomes self-reinforcing and recursive. Iterate through this cycle for a few more years and sooner or later we will find there is no true non-compromising conservative or Christian content that ranks well in Google. This is the danger.

Excerpts from Google's Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines

Ben Gomes, VP of Search, Google Assistant and News for 21 years at Google said, “You can view the rater guidelines as where we want the search algorithm to go. They don’t tell you *how* the algorithm is ranking results, but they fundamentally show what the algorithm *should* do.”¹⁶ One criterion used by Google's contracted Search Raters is **YMYL (Your Money or Your Life)**. YMYL is, according to digital free speech attorney Craig Parshall, “Google’s cleverly phrased way of breaking down user interest into two categories of finance, professional opportunity, employment, etc. (**Money**), or lifestyle, social values, activities, personal health, etc. (**Life**). The second category is fraught with problems based on the subjective judgment of the 10,000+ external Search Raters, and thus, more rigid, objective metrics would be needed to reign in the personal opinions of these contractors. That is, if Google really wanted objective ranking in the first place. The broader and more elastic a category of user interest is, the more objective, concrete, and clear the guidelines need to be for up and down ranking.”¹⁷ I could not have stated

¹² <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0v5woejh6xpv36b/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf?dl=0>

¹³ Section 2.3, pg. 10 of the December 5, 2019 version of the Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines states, “*Other: there are many other topics related to big decisions or important aspects of people’s lives which thus may be considered YMYL, such as fitness and nutrition, housing information, choosing a college, finding a job, etc. Please use your judgment.*” Additionally, Ben Gomes, VP of Search, Google Assistant and News for 21 years at Google said, “You can view the rater guidelines as where we want the search algorithm to go... they don’t tell you *how* the algorithm is ranking results, but they fundamentally show what the algorithm *should* do.” (emphases mine)

¹⁴ <https://www.govpredict.com/blog/alphabets-political-contributions/>. Also see this journal article on how hiring “is a process of cultural matching between candidates, evaluators, and firms”:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122412463213>. See this journal article for how political ideology informs person-organization fit:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S105348221830010X>

¹⁵ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/kc1vvh94w1j1r6r/BroockmanDE-Wealthy-Elites-Policy-Preferences-Tech-Entrepreneurs.pdf?dl=0>. Link to download this study was found at

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/06/technology/silicon-valley-politics.html>. Should the Dropbox link not be adequate the paper itself can be sourced online at <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/working-papers/predispositions-political-behavior-american-economic-elites-evidence>.

¹⁶ <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/09/17/google-tests-changes-to-its-search-algorithm-how-search-works.html>

¹⁷ Quote provided via email on July 7, 2020 by digital free speech attorney Craig Parshall. Craig is the Special Counsel to the ACLJ, Founder of the John Milton Project and former General Counsel to the NRB.

it more succinctly myself. Notice the following subjective language in the three excerpts from Google's "Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines" listed below.

Excerpt 1: *"There are many other topics related to big decisions or important aspects of people's lives which thus may be considered YMYL, such as fitness and nutrition, housing information, choosing a college, finding a job, etc. Please use your judgment."*¹⁸ Google's Search Raters use their own subjective judgment on websites and pages that appear to them to be "big decisions or important aspects of people's lives." What is the biggest decision that a person can make? **Clearly, YMYL includes the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** (Please keep in mind that each of the de-ranked pages I mention moving forward contain the gospel at the bottom of the article.)

Excerpt 2: *"...information about or claims related to groups of people, including but not limited to those grouped on the basis of race or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, nationality, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity"*¹⁹ are YMYL pages. Thus, if we state the Bible says homosexuality is sin then our content will have a problem ranking long-term in Google. AllAboutGOD.com held the #1 ranking article on Google, asking "Is Homosexuality a sin?" from January 2015 to August 2019.²⁰ It ranks on page three now and nearly every article on page one shares an unbiblical view of this issue. Additionally, we ranked #1 for "pro-choice abortion" (AllAboutPopularIssues.org) from November 2006 to July 2012²¹ where we would engage the debate from a biblical perspective. Not only has that ranking been lost, the traffic from Google for that website has dropped by 97.4%.²² And finally, if you weren't convinced by the former excerpts this last one should nail it for you.

Excerpt 3: *"Understand the true purpose of the page. Websites or pages without any beneficial purpose, including pages that are created with no attempt to help users, or pages that potentially spread hate, cause harm, or misinform or deceive users, should receive the Lowest rating. No*

¹⁸ Section 2.3, pg. 10 of the December 5, 2019 version of the Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines found at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0v5woejh6xpv36b/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf?dl=0>

¹⁹ Section 2.3, pg. 10 of the December 5, 2019 version of the Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines found at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0v5woejh6xpv36b/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf?dl=0>

²⁰ This screen captured video is from SEMRush filtered for "is homosexuality a sin" on AllAboutGOD.com: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/onwzt3dc2gj96j2/SEMRush-is-homosexuality-a-sin-1-15-to-8-19.mov?dl=0>. For thoroughness, here is the SpyFu.com image albeit the data only starts for this phrase in its database on April 2019: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/iulptwzk0u4i5fp/SpyFu-is-homosexuality-a-sin-4-19-to-9-20-A.png?dl=0> and ends on September 2020: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1sf3uxlicrqr7wk/SpyFu-is-homosexuality-a-sin-4-19-to-9-20-B.png?dl=0>

²¹ These images are from SpyFu.com. This is the start date of the top ranking for "pro-choice abortion": <https://www.dropbox.com/s/vm0kxkoglebjg7e/SpyFu-pro-choice-abortion-11-06-to-7-12-A.png?dl=0>. This is the ending data of our top ranking: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/y34ny1ts4qcb8d0/SpyFu-pro-choice-abortion-11-06-to-7-12-B.png?dl=0>. These are the sites now ranking there: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/7xbolqnz0vh1yqb/SpyFu-pro-choice-abortion-11-06-to-7-12-C.png?dl=0>

²² <https://www.dropbox.com/s/6dserel1kvrqcpy/SEMRush%20SEO%20Eval-June%202019-20%20Google%20US%20Only-7-29-20.xlsx?dl=0>. NOTE: If Google determines some of your articles are hateful it can negatively impact the entire website's ranking.

further assessment is necessary.²³ How many websites claiming to be Christian might be seen through worldly eyes as “potentially spreading hate” because we love God and others enough to write an article about what the Bible declares as truth? To put it bluntly, Google’s Search Raters are basically told to think if they believe our content causes harm or deceives people it should get the “Lowest” rating. Many of our pages have been marked as “Lowest” quality and are thus penalized from ranking well **due to content alone**. If enough pages on one website are marked “Lowest” in terms of quality this can negatively impact the entire website’s ability to rank thus effectively causing so called “High” or “Highest” quality pages on the website to also be de-ranked.²⁴ This is clearly seen in our AllAboutPopularIssues.org website that lost its #1 “pro-choice abortion” ranking in July 2012 as well as most of its traffic by June 2013 suggesting this viewpoint discrimination has been going on longer than just this past year.²⁵

One More Example of Censored Content

Every month in America 22,200 people search Google.com for “how to commit suicide.”²⁶ We used to have the #1 ranking page from December 2007 to July 2012²⁷ entitled “How to commit suicide?”. Our AllAboutLifeChallenges.org website was the only Christian website on page one pointing those people to the gospel and connecting them to get immediate help. Apparently, Google thinks that only worldly solutions should be ranked today.²⁸ How do you think a non-Christian Google Search Rater would assess our motives in trying to address a searcher’s problem from a spiritual perspective? Maybe they believe we are trying to suck people into a “cult” and take their money. Would they understand our love for others compels us to introduce that hopeless person to Jesus, as well as, connect them to a professional counselor?

Lucas Chae, a non-Christian designer and recent graduate, who struggled with depression in college gets it. He wrote an article on FastCompany.com named “How Search Engines are Failing Suicidal Users.”²⁹ The first page of Google for a query on “How to Commit Suicide” is bereft of any connecting story of a survivor. Chae believes that help lines, articles about how to actually commit suicide and other automated methods of getting help just don’t work. Expressing what he thinks is a great way to help, Chae writes, “Upon reading real-life stories that users can relate

²³ Section 3.0 pg. 19 of the December 5, 2019 version of the Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines found at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0v5woeih6xpv36b/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf?dl=0>

²⁴ <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/google-low-quality-signals/306277/>

²⁵ This screen captured video is from SEMRush on AllAboutPopularIssues.org. That website directly emphasizes a Christian worldview and the gospel is at the bottom of every article. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ztmud285xv2iomt/SEMRush-AllAboutPopularIssues-orgnaic-traffic-losses-6-2013.mov?dl=0>

²⁶ Data sourced on 6-30-20 from SEMRush.com for searches in the US on Google.com only.

²⁷ These images are from SpyFu.com. This is the start date of the top ranking for “how to commit suicide”: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/g7gwr6mbgkqa9hh/SpyFu-how-to-commit-suicide-12-07-to-3-11-A.png?dl=0>. This is the ending data of our top ranking: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/otlajzpwsh9jdau/SpyFu-how-to-commit-suicide-12-07-to-3-11-B.png?dl=0>

²⁸ “Some types of pages or topics could potentially impact a person’s future happiness, health, financial stability, or safety. We call such pages “Your Money or Your Life” pages, or YMYL.” Excerpted from Section 2.3, pg. 10 of the December 5, 2019 version of the Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines found at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0v5woeih6xpv36b/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf?dl=0>

²⁹ <https://www.fastcompany.com/90230313/how-search-engines-are-failing-suicidal-users>

to, they will want to know more about ways to get support and live through their tragedies just as the survivors did.”³⁰ Our “How to Commit Suicide” article³¹ did exactly what Chae recommends. It’s a story of a survivor who found hope in Jesus that is nearly impossible to find in Google because it’s buried so deeply due to being de-ranked.

70 Christian Websites De-ranked

At least 70 Christian websites have lost an average of 44.8% of their organic traffic from Google from June 2019 to June 2020.³² A few major sites besides AllAboutGOD.com you may recognize that have been negatively impacted are FocusOnTheFamily.com, AnswersInGenesis.org, CBN.com, GotQuestions.org and BillyGraham.org. The data indicates that Christian websites that are very bold with the gospel and worldview issues have been de-ranked substantially while those that are more Bible study/Discipleship oriented that primarily deal in search terms specific to what the Church queries are de-ranked less.

Scripture websites with multiple translations that primarily offer commentary on the Bible and/or just the scripture itself have mostly grown in rankings. As an observation of this data, it seems that as long as you keep your beliefs to yourself or deal solely in presenting scripture you are rewarded or are just de-ranked mildly. In my opinion, that’s viewpoint discrimination combined with some behavioral modification goals. Basically, the message to Christianity is: Keep your beliefs to yourself or inside the four walls of the church (the very antithesis of the gospel) and you are okay—for now.

Google and Behavioral Modification

Tongue-in-cheek, I ask you what can possibly go wrong when one company knows the emails and texts you send and receive; your contact network; your calendar; your to-do list, the videos/photos you take, watch and share; the phrases you search on; the websites you visit, where you are located every second of every day; and, surveils the conversations you have? That makes me think of the leaked internal Google video called “The Selfish Ledger”³³ in which Google says that behavioral modification is possible with enough user data stating, “The ledger could be given a focus shifting it from a system which not only tracks our behavior but offers direction toward a desired result.”³⁴

³⁰ <https://www.fastcompany.com/90230313/how-search-engines-are-failing-suicidal-users>

³¹ <https://www.allaboutlifechallenges.org/how-to-commit-suicide.htm>

³² <https://www.dropbox.com/s/6dsere1kvgcpsy/SEMRush%20SEO%20Eval-June%202019-20%20Google%20US%20Only-7-29-20.xlsx?dl=0>. NOTE: Percentages in red represent losses in organic traffic while green are gains. Data gathered from SEMRush.com is based on searches occurring within the US on Google only. Organic traffic losses are not simply a COVID19 anomaly. On average organic traffic losses as measured by SEMRush.com were clearly correlated with search engine ranking drops and the timing of the announced Google core updates. Some websites have been verified via Google Analytics as a comparison to SEMRush.com accuracy.

³³ Created for internal use by Google in 2016 which The Verge published in 2018:

<https://www.theverge.com/2018/5/17/17344250/google-x-selfish-ledger-video-data-privacy>

³⁴ Quote begins at 7:46 into the video: <https://www.theverge.com/2018/5/17/17344250/google-x-selfish-ledger-video-data-privacy>

Dr. Robert Epstein, a research psychologist for nearly 40 years has published a scientific paper on what he calls the Search Engine Manipulation Effect (SEME).³⁵ In Epstein's June 16, 2019 testimony to the United States Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution he wrote, "SEME is one of the most powerful forms of influence ever discovered in the behavioral sciences, and it is especially dangerous because it is invisible to people – "subliminal," in effect. It leaves people thinking they have made up their own minds, which is very much an illusion... Worse still, the very few people who can detect bias in search results shift even farther in the direction of the bias, so merely being able to see the bias doesn't protect you from it. Bottom line: biased search results can easily produce shifts in the opinions and voting preference of undecided voters by 20 percent or more – up to 80 percent in some demographic groups."³⁶

Google appears to be intentionally modifying behavior. Epstein says, "SEME is an example of an "ephemeral experience," and that's a phrase you'll find in internal emails that have leaked from Google recently. A growing body of evidence suggests that Google employees deliberately engineer ephemeral experiences to change people's thinking."³⁷

Based on the evidence prepared in this paper I am convinced more than ever that "He who controls the information controls the world."

Conclusive Evidence that Demands Action

While Google's mission to organize the world's information may have started as a noble goal, they have missed the mark by deciding "what is truth?" and enforcing their liberal ideology through behavioral modification on a world that increasingly needs to hear diverse viewpoints.

When you stack "The Selfish Ledger" video³⁸; Dr. Robert Epstein's research³⁹; my spreadsheet of 70 de-ranked Christian websites⁴⁰; the 950+ pages of internal Google documents⁴¹ released by Whistleblower Zach Vorhies⁴²; all the Google patents I have digested over the years; the

³⁵ <https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/112/33/E4512.full.pdf>

³⁶ <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Epstein%20Testimony.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Epstein%20Testimony.pdf>. Links to commentary and quotes in Google's emails regarding an ephemeral experience are <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=18036353> and <https://reason.com/2018/09/21/google-travel-ban-emails-conservative/>.

³⁸ <https://www.theverge.com/2018/5/17/17344250/google-x-selfish-ledger-video-data-privacy>

³⁹ <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Epstein%20Testimony.pdf> and

<https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/112/33/E4512.full.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/6dsere1kvgrcpy/SEMRush%20SEO%20Eval-June%202019-20%20Google%20US%20Only-7-29-20.xlsx?dl=0>. NOTE: Percentages in red represent losses in organic traffic while green are gains. Data gathered from SEMRush.com is based on searches occurring within the US in English on Google.com only.

⁴¹ Download the internal Google docs that were also given to the DOJ at my Dropbox:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/smlih8k03ne75d7/Don%27t%20Be%20Evil.zip?dl=0> or at:

<https://mega.nz/#!IF0iVIYB!fUmHXN9ttJOMIQCyYbhP8E8-S5-x10LY5g2KytOQM4>. IMPORTANT NOTE: Review this video about Machine Learning Fairness and the manipulation of the audience by the AI that has been trained on a liberal corpus of websites:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6U7OeIT27A&list=PLI28DU_o6d00jylu4vVKc33gFt_zBR2g&index=6

⁴² <https://www.zachvorhies.com>

Project Veritas Big Tech videos⁴³; and, Google’s Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines⁴⁴ together I think there is a smoking gun that is undeniable to any reasonable person.

It’s clear that any cultural engagement with the mission to share the gospel boldly and address worldview issues from a biblical standpoint is considered YMYL (Your Money or Your Life) to Google and will be severely de-ranked and/or penalized for the foreseeable future.

Recommendations

When considering recommended next steps, I reached out to digital free speech attorney Craig Parshall who said, “A precise remedy for monopolistic Big Tech manipulation and suppression of viewpoints is something on which reasonable minds can reasonably differ. Silicon Valley has had a long track record of stubborn intransigence and broken promises. Repeated invitations for those companies to voluntarily correct that behavior have been *unsuccessful*. I believe it is time for congressional action. Conservatives should be looking for an effective, smaller government approach to a big communications censorship problem.”

Parshall’s strategy certainly appeals to me as a conservative. Parshall continues, “I personally prefer empowering citizens and organizations to bring private rights of action against Big Tech companies when they discriminatorily abuse their ubiquitous, monolithic chokehold over online ideas and information. Those private lawsuits are currently not successful because of the extraordinary legal protection that Big Tech gets under section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. Thus, 230 needs to be amended to open the courthouse doors to internet users who have been suppressed, blocked, or throttled and down-ranked into oblivion because of the inherent bias of Silicon Valley companies. This kind of litigation, historically, has been proven to be a successful incentive in modifying corporate conduct. Legislation that amends 230 by providing for private rights of action by internet users should provide federal agencies like the FTC with a precise, limited role to play in evaluating the *technical issues* that arise in holding Big Tech companies to a realistic free speech standard.”⁴⁵

As an informed SEO Expert, technologist and ministry leader, I will say Dr. Robert Epstein’s recommendation may be warranted considering the amount of power that is being wielded by Google. Epstein said, “The solution to The Google Problem is to declare Google’s massive search index – the database the company uses to generate search results – to be a *public commons*, accessible by all, just as a 1956 consent decree forced AT&T to share all its patents. There is precedent in both law and in Google’s own business practices to justify taking this step.”⁴⁶

⁴³ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLI28DU_o6d00jyIlu4vVKc33gFt_zBR2g

⁴⁴ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0v5woejh6xpv36b/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf?dl=0>

⁴⁵ Quote provided via email on July 10, 2020 by digital free speech attorney Craig Parshall. Craig is the Special Counsel to the ACLJ, Founder of the John Milton Project and former General Counsel to the NRB.

⁴⁶ <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Epstein%20Testimony.pdf> and <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-07-15/to-break-google-s-monopoly-on-search-make-its-index-public>

While Dr. Epstein’s recommendation may seem extreme it may well be justified. Considering the AI has learned to be so liberally biased through reinforcement by human Search Raters, if Google does not have competition, it may ultimately require that the AI be destroyed and the code open-sourced to others to actually level the playing field. Before the United States Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution on June 16, 2019, Epstein stated, “Declaring Google’s index a commons will quickly give rise to thousands of search platforms like Google.com, each competing with Google, each providing excellent search results, each serving niche audiences, large and small, exactly like newspapers and television networks and websites do now. Search will become competitive, as it was during its early years, and democracy will be protected from Google’s secretive machinations.”⁴⁷

Considering how long a legal solution may take and how much visitor traffic non-profit conservative Christian websites that share their worldview and the gospel have lost in the past year a group of people I work with have been making intentional technological steps toward one or more solutions for Christians and Conservatives. While we have not figured out everything, we have a well-defined resilient framework and working prototypes. We believe the next collaborative step is the formal creation of a round table of leaders whose organizations are experiencing viewpoint discrimination and/or are concerned about liberty. We call this the Resilient Truth project⁴⁸ and believe it may be able to slow organic traffic loss from Google and other Big Tech companies; augment traffic from alternative online sources; and, ultimately ensure Christians and Conservatives maintain a voice online long term.

After all, how many organizations can afford losses of 44.8% in organic traffic? How much more can Christian non-profits sustain in loss of outreach potential and loss of donations? The gospel must be able to be shared online unhindered. Thank you, Senator Hawley, for your efforts on our behalf to address this situation legally. You and your team will be in our prayers.

Acknowledgements in Alphabetical Order

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⁴⁷ <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Epstein%20Testimony.pdf>

⁴⁸ <https://ResilientTruth.com>