

DuckDuckGo Destroys Brand by Embracing Censorship

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✓ Fact Checked

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › In a single tweet March 9, 2022, DuckDuckGo destroyed its brand based on private searches returning unbiased results when the CEO said they were “rolling out search updates that down-rank sites associated with Russian disinformation”
- › If you were unfamiliar with DuckDuckGo, then the move to censorship would not sound out of the ordinary since Google, Bing, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have been blatantly practicing censorship for years
- › Much of the information that was once tagged as "misinformation" is now accepted as fact. While there are many, these are two examples that have negatively impacted health, the environment and the economy: The virus leaked from a lab in Wuhan and the vaccine has limited efficacy and damages health
- › Google moved searches from social signals and crowdsourced information that moved quality information to the top of the results to crowd control that marries industry and government narratives, making users hosts to carry out their agenda

Since early 2020, when the World Health Organization announced a global pandemic and fearmongering by government health experts and mainstream media began, it has become more and more apparent the lengths to which Big Tech will go to censor information you receive.

One lone bastion had been DuckDuckGo, a search engine that ensured users their privacy and search results that were relatively unbiased. However, March 9, 2022,¹ the CEO of DuckDuckGo, Gabriel Weinberg, announced on Twitter that:

“Like so many others I am sickened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the gigantic humanitarian crisis it continues to create at DuckDuckGo, we've been rolling out search engine updates that down rank-size associated with Russian disinformation.”

The move by DuckDuckGo was only one in many made by social media platforms to reportedly clampdown on “disinformation” campaigns stemming from Russia.² And yet, you had to have been living under a rock to not have noticed the number of individuals complaining of censorship and reported removal of “misinformation” and “disinformation” from social media platforms in the last two years.

In fact, Google's move to remove content they didn't agree with cracked down in June 2019 when their algorithm replaced crowdsourcing with crowd control and removed nearly every article published on Mercola.com from the search engines. The move by DuckDuckGo is yet another in a long list of censorship actions designed to keep you in the dark.

Privacy-Focused Search Engine No Longer Unbiased

In this short video, author and comedian Jimmy Dore makes short work of the new DuckDuckGo censorship changes, pointedly asking what is so different about the Ukraine/Russian conflict that prompted policy change, which did not happen during other global issues. Dore notes it is funny that no tech companies acted when the U.S.:³

- Invaded Iraq illegally and killed millions of people
- Invaded Syria because we're now occupying one-third of Syria
- Bombed Libya
- Executed a bombing campaign in Somalia
- Took actions in Afghanistan against the people of the country

Dore also mentions the shelling by the neo-Nazis in the Donbas area for eight years, the Yemen genocide carried out by Saudi Arabia and Israel's attacks on Syria and Palestine.

Referring to the obvious lack of concern for other invasions, Dore comments – "Like so many others, I am sickened only by this one thing [Russia] ever, and I ignore everything else bad that happens in the world."⁴

Commenting on an article in Mashable, Dore notes that Google and Bing didn't take action against disinformation, saying:⁵ "You're taking action on the behest of the state, the security state to shape the narrative. You're only going to give one side of the story. This isn't fighting disinformation."

Mashable⁶ spoke with several social media platforms, including Meta, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat and Tik-Tok, to ask what actions they are taking against "misinformation." Meta runs Facebook and Instagram, which Mashable points out attempted to sway the election by manipulating content. Meta has blocked Russian state-run media and refused a request to stop labeling content.

Twitter says they're monitoring high-profile "vulnerable" users to stop account takeovers. Russia Today has over 4.5 million subscribers on YouTube and received more than 10 billion views across its YouTube channels. On the last weekend in February, YouTube demonetized all Russian state-run media. Snapchat stopped advertising in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia and Tik-Tok announced they would take action against users who spread misinformation.

As Dore asks, "Is DuckDuckGo turning on its users or did they misunderstand the search engine to begin with? Is it your job to decide what's information and what's disinformation? I would say no. I would say I'm a grown-up and I can figure that out."⁷

DuckDuckGo has based their advertising and promotion around delivering "unbiased results,"⁸ which they now claim was based on user privacy policy and not necessarily the results you get in the search engine. However, that's not what they wrote on Twitter, "When you search, you expect unbiased results, but that's not what you get on Google."⁹

Google Extended Their Censorship Reach in June 2019

As Dore quips, “We know Google is biasing their Google results. And they do it whenever they feel like it.”¹⁰ Just months before the pandemic, Google began to extend their censorship reach by changing their algorithm and removing many Mercola.com articles from the search results.

Traffic to Mercola.com from Google plummeted nearly 99% after the Google Broad Core Algorithm Update that took effect June 3, 2019.¹¹ According to Google’s blog August 1, 2019, these core updates were not supposed to target or punish particular sites.¹²

“In fact, there’s nothing in a core update that targets specific pages or site ... One way to think of how a core update operates is to imagine you made a list of the top 100 movies in 2015. A few years later in 2019, you refresh the list. It’s going to naturally change.”

If this were true, then Mercola.com and other authoritative websites would not have lost significant traffic. According to a Search Engine Journal (SEJ) article¹³ published June 10, 2019, Google uses three factors when determining how websites are ranked. These are expertise, authoritativeness and trustworthiness (E-A-T). Yet, SEJ reported several websites that were leaders in their space had lost up to 90% of their traffic from the update on June 3, 2019.

The U.K. news site, Daily Mail, also suffered a major decline in traffic, ostensibly because they published unreliable news and clickbait articles. SEJ fact-checked the fact-checkers at MediaBiasFactCheck.com, that wrote:¹⁴

“In review, the Daily Mail tends to publish stories utilizing sensationalized headlines with emotionally loaded wordings such as “Woman, 63, ‘becomes PREGNANT in the mouth’ with baby squid after eating calamari”, which is a misleading headline.”

While the headline may have been clickbait, the article was indeed based in fact and cited the National Institutes of Health as a true story. Additionally, MediaBiasFactCheck.com uses Wikipedia as a source of finding fake news. As Sharyl

Attkisson revealed on Full Measure, Wikipedia is full of falsehoods and twisted narratives used to convince the public of a specific narrative.¹⁵

Google's extended censorship happened just 10 months before the World Health Organization declared a pandemic in March 2020. Could that have been to prepare searchers to read only the content Big Tech was doling out and not truly independent investigative journalism that invites debate and reporting on both sides of the issue?

Is It a Conspiracy When It Turns Out To Be True?

Mashable reports¹⁶ that for those who are not familiar with DuckDuckGo, the move to downrank websites based on the company's idea of "misinformation" or "disinformation" would not sound too far out of the ordinary. After all, Google, Bing, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have all updated their policies in the past two years to ensure their readers see only what the company wants them to see.

While the current Mashable article is about the Ukraine/Russia conflict, I've written about the pandemic censorship on these platforms for nearly two years. DuckDuckGo users took to Twitter, announcing their displeasure and intent to switch search engines. DuckDuckGo has roughly 3% of the U.S. market share, which DuckDuckGo claims is a user base of 30 million people.

Mashable writes that the search engine was not built to "placate users with a certain political ideology."¹⁷ Yet, the search engine was used as an alternative platform because the search results were not biased. Mashable then writes, "So, whether DuckDuckGo likes it or not, many of those types of users have adopted the search engine."

Exactly who are "those types of users"? Dore asks, "How do we get rid of half the country? I wish there was a bio lab to come up with a solution."¹⁸ The types of users that Mashable is referring to are likely the same who are routinely in Facebook jail or have had their accounts removed or deleted for sharing "misinformation."

To date during the pandemic, people who published research data or questioned the government narrative about the virus or the shot were called conspiracy theorists or

accused of publishing misinformation to lead people away from the “science.”

Yet, much of the information that was once called a conspiracy or misinformation is now accepted as fact. Although I’ve written about other examples in the past, these are two among many that have had a significant impact on health, the environment and the economy.

- **SARS-CoV-2 was a lab leaked virus** – An investigation by the House Foreign Affairs Committee published in August 2021,¹⁹ demonstrated using public and intelligence reports that the virus was manipulated using gain of function and leaked in September, well before the 2021 Military Games were held in Wuhan and close to the date of Event 201²⁰ that simulated the response to a dangerous coronavirus pandemic.

A study^{21,22} published February 21, 2022, in *Frontiers in Virology* claims to have discovered that a sequence of the virus’ spike protein is a 100% match to a modified messenger RNA (mmRNA) sequence patented²³ by Moderna – in 2016.

- **Limited vaccine efficacy and health damage** – Among those banned from social media for claiming the vaccine would not work was former New York Times reporter Alex Berenson, who was banned from Twitter for questioning vaccine mandates and wrote:²⁴

“Think of it – at best – as a therapeutic with a limited window of efficacy and terrible side effect profile that must be dosed IN ADVANCE OF ILLNESS. And we want to mandate it? Insanity”

Since then:

- Pfizer²⁵ and Moderna²⁶ have said people will likely need a fourth shot to maintain whatever protection they may have from the injection.
- CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky told Washington University she wasn’t aware the vaccine efficacy would wane,²⁷ which means she now knows that it does.

- The U.K. finds roughly 90% of cases, hospitalizations and deaths are in vaccinated individuals.²⁸
- The Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) has been inundated with reports of adverse events, permanent health damage and death totaling 1,168,892 reports in 15 months as of March 4, 2022.²⁹

Crowdsourcing Replaced by Crowd Control

Science thrives in an atmosphere of debate, not censorship. Many would call evidence-based public debate essential to understanding and developing public health policy. Yet, DuckDuckGo has followed in the footsteps of other search engines and social media platforms by identifying its own brand of misinformation.

When voices are censored, humanity loses and fascism wins. In 2019, Pinterest banned me, and Google had erased most of my information from the search results. In the following two years, I was forced to take down all my articles after they were online for just 48 hours. What makes me so dangerous?

According to Search Engine Journal, in the late 2000s Google began using social shares and signals to impact their search engine ranking.³⁰ This utilized crowdsourcing so the websites that provided the best answers to your questions made it to the top of the search results.

This was a democratic system that rewarded publishers for sharing quality information. During this time, my information was frequently at the top of health searches because many people found it to be the most valuable. As Google's power grew, their goal of providing a service to you changed.

Instead of serving you quality search results, the new goal is to unite industry and government, forcing their beliefs on readers and manipulating your behavior and your future. Instead of crowdsourcing, Google began using crowd control.

The search engine has changed from looking at users as customers to making users custodians of their will and essentially making you a host to carry out their agenda. It sounds dystopian and like science fiction, but Google has become a puppet master and has learned how to manipulate their readers without them even knowing it.

Google's Centralized Power Controls What You See and Believe

Lawrence Sanger, who co-founded Wikipedia in 2001, bailed ship the very next year,³¹ saying "trolls sort of took over" the site, that "The inmates started running the asylum,"³² and that "In some fields and some topics, there are groups who 'squat' on articles and insist on making them reflect their own specific biases."³³ In this short Ted Talk, Attkisson shares how to recognize those biases and what it means to society.

Considering Wikipedia's history of bias, it's not surprising that the online "encyclopedia" is Google's chosen arbiter of expertise and credibility. As reported by TechCrunch³⁴ in January 2019, Google donated \$2 million to Wikimedia Endowment, Wikipedia's parent organization, and another \$1.1 million to the Wikimedia Foundation.

To help sway public opinion and policy, Google has also recruited law professors to back up and promote its views. According to a 2017 Campaign for Accountability report,³⁵ Google has paid academics in both the U.S. and Europe millions of dollars to influence public opinion and policymakers alike.^{36,37}

When you consider power assessment by looking at lobbying expenditures, Google is leading the pack on corporate spending on lobbying — efforts primarily aimed at eliminating competitors and gaining power over others. According to a June 5, 2019, article³⁸ in The New York Times, "... four of the biggest technology companies are amassing an army of lobbyists as they prepare for what could be an epic fight over their futures."

The four companies — Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple — spent \$55 million on lobbying in 2018, which is just under double what they spent in 2016. Google could potentially also garner some protection or aid from the U.S. National Security Agency

(NSA). According to an Aljazeera report³⁹ published in 2014, emails reveal a cozy relationship between Google and the NSA, with coordination occurring at the highest levels.

Two years later, in March 2016, Wired reported⁴⁰ the executive chairman of Google's parent company Alphabet and former Google CEO, Eric Schmidt, had been chosen by the Pentagon to chair its new Defense Innovation Advisory Board.⁴¹

Google holds enormous power over what people read, see and therefore likely believe. Any dissenting view can be effectively stripped from the search results, so content is no longer crowdsourced by social signals, but instead is controlled by an alphabet soup of corporations bent on ensuring society follows their lead.

DuckDuckGo used to have a tenuous hold over unbiased results but has publicly announced their decision to relinquish it and cross over to join Google in the unrelenting effort to control your thoughts, behaviors and pocketbook. Without access to independent journalism through search, it's more important than ever to stay connected and share information across your network of friends and family.

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