

OPINION

PAYING THEIR SHARE

GOOGLE AND FACEBOOK MAKE MONEY FROM LOCAL NEWS, BUT PAY NOTHING FOR IT, WRITES GORDON CAMERON



GORDON CAMERON
Column

It's about trust. Our relationship with our readers is built on transparency, honesty and integrity. As such, we have launched a trust initiative to tell you who we are and how and why we do what we do. This article is part of that project.

Every day, journalists are out in our communities looking to tell the stories of the places we call home.

Of course, that commitment to local journalism costs money, and to earn that money we work with local businesses to help them to grow and succeed. It's a community-first model that worked well for a long time.

Unfortunately, those days are gone.

These days, many advertisers have shifted their business to online sites such as Google and Facebook. Google and Facebook are multi-billion dollar companies, in spite of the fact that their core services are free, thanks to combination of online ad sales and selling access to data gleaned from their users.

However, neither of them actually produce any original content. That means the newspapers who write the local news that is searched for on Google and

DEFANGING BIG TECH

shared on Facebook do all the work and incur all the costs, while the duopoly makes the money.

It doesn't seem quite fair, does it?

That's why Canada's newspaper publishers have banded together to press for the federal government to adopt the so-called Australian model. This model would allow news organizations to collectively bargain with Google and Facebook to create an equitable revenue distribution model that would ensure the ability of newspapers to continue to report the news.

Everybody wins.

The consumers get the same free services that they currently enjoy, the big tech companies get to continue to earn large profits, and newspaper companies get to continue to producing the news we all rely on.

The sobering truth is that without some sort of agreement between news publishers and Google and Facebook, papers will go out of business. And when that happens, you can be sure that neither Google nor Facebook will be swooping in to provide you with the local news that you once received from your local newspaper.

Gordon Cameron is the group managing editor for Hamilton Community News and a member of Metroland's trust committee. gocameron@hamiltonnews.com. We welcome your questions and value your comments. Email our trust committee at trust@metroland.com.

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SNAPSHOT



Laurel Barnett photo

A blue jay is bathed in a purple backdrop near the Hungry Hollow ravine. Do you have a great local photo you'd like to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com, along with a brief description.

U.S. ELECTION DROVE ME NUTS

BUT EXTENDED PROCESS OFFERED A LESSON IN CRITICAL THINKING, WRITES PETER WATSON



PETER WATSON
Column

The prolonged U.S. presidential election highlighted the need for all of us to become critical thinkers, so we can decipher between fact and fiction.

The election was an extended period of miss information and fake news allegations.

It seemed to be the one

news topic everyone said they did not want to talk about, but for many it ended up being their go-to conversation with family and friends.

On the upside, it was a useful lesson for us all in the area of critical thinking.

Critical thinking is a skill that helps us come to more logical conclusions for important issues.

Understand how to separate good information from bad information. In more simple language: Think for yourself.

Most of the people I spoke with had a fairly firm opinion on which presidential candidate they respected, or the one in which they had serious distrust.

I, like many others, would interpret a political news item of the day and form my own opinion, then wonder why all Americans would not come to the same

conclusion.

If only Americans were better critical thinkers, I wondered. Often when you have strong opinions on how other people can improve that strong opinion can be directed at yourself.

Focusing on all of our lives and the important role financial planning plays.

How can we manage our finances better?

Critical thinking.

Question how you manage your personal finances. Question the assumptions you have made.

Anticipate the two or three areas where you are at most risk.

This does not mean you are self-doubting. Just being a critical thinker.

Peter Watson, of Watson Investments MBA, CFP®, R.F.P., CIM®, FCSI offers a weekly financial planning column, Dollars & Sense. He can be contacted through www.watsoninvestments.com

ABOUT US

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