

Chicago Cubs Co-Owner Unveils Innovative Challenge to Google to Bolster Free Speech

Many conservative and Christian groups have, in recent years, vocally expressed concerns and doubts about big tech, with claims and examples of viewpoint discrimination raging on search engines and social media properties alike.

Todd Ricketts, co-owner of the Chicago Cubs, is on a mission to bolster free speech, and he's tackling these concerns by creating a new search engine he believes could revolutionize Google's dominance and reinvigorate competition in the tech space.

The Impetus for Change

Ricketts recently announced the creation of FREESPOKE, a search engine devoted to the free flow of information—without the presence of ideological lenses or viewpoint restraints.

“For years, I felt like the results I was getting from Google and other search engines were coming with a little bit of a bias, like a left-leaning bias,” he said. “And I wasn't getting results that I expected.”

Ricketts' concern over the suppression of information led him on a quest to create a tool that “doesn't try to hide anything” as it serves up search results for its users.

“Our country was built on free speech ... this idea, ‘I don't have to agree with what you say, but I'll die defending your right to say it,’” he said. “Well, big tech has decided you don't have a right to say that anymore.”

Diving Deeper Into the Problem

While some critics might dismiss claims of anti-conservative bias or charge these allegations against big tech are overstated, Ricketts said companies like Google do little to hide their suppression on topics like climate change.

His cultural argument at the core of FREESPOKE—and American ideals more generally—is that all views deserve to be heard. Rather than hiding opponents' perspectives, he encouraged sunlight.

"If someone questions your idea, you should chase it down and try to figure out who's right and who's wrong," he said.

Ricketts also detailed other recent examples of constraints that make a tool like FREESPOKE deeply valuable, including big tech's well-documented crackdown on COVID-related content.

"During COVID, doctors who questioned our COVID protocols ... had their videos taken off YouTube," he said. "Anybody who questions the status quo gets canceled, and that's not what America is about; we're about free speech."

Ricketts also reacted to some of the purported big tech restrictions on pro-life groups. Live Action, a pro-life activist group, was reportedly banned this week from advertising on TikTok, a video-sharing platform. Simultaneously, Life Issues Institute, a pro-life education group, accused Google of "blatant censorship" over its abortion-themed videos.

One of FREESPOKE's most unique features is a labeling system that delineates news stories as "right," "left," or "center." Some stories even carry a "pro-China" tag, among others the company is testing.

Each designation helps readers better see the lens through which stories are told. Ricketts said these tags aren't a collective "panacea" that will solve all informational concerns but will, at the least, help readers understand what

they're consuming.

"When you're searching for information, [it helps you] know ... who wrote that, where they're coming from, and their point of view, and what they might have written before," Ricketts said. "It's just trying to help people sort through all the information that's out there, and, again, it's all about coming to your own conclusions, finding the information, [and] educating yourself."

Ricketts hopes to see his company exponentially grow in the next few years.

"I would like to see ourselves ... listed as one of the search engines that everybody has on their iPhone," he said.

Ultimately, FREESPOKE offers a solution for those sounding the alarm on big tech's dominance in the informational space. Beyond that, Ricketts' effort poses a convicting question—and warning—about our willingness to tolerate divergent perspectives.

"Even if you disagree with someone, you shouldn't be wanting to suppress their ideas because, if you're willing to suppress someone else's ideas, I can guarantee you that, someday, someone's going to want to suppress yours," Ricketts said.

Find out more about FREESPOKE [here](#).

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