

Handful of 'left leaning sources' dominate Google's propaganda-like 'Top Stories,' study finds



A cursor moves over Google's search engine page on Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018, in Portland, Ore. Political leanings don't factor into Google's search algorithm. But the authoritativeness of page links the algorithm spits out and the perception of thousands of ... [more >](#)

By [Gabriella Muñoz](#) - The Washington Times - Sunday, May 12, 2019

[Print](#)

A new study from the Computational Journalism Lab at Northwestern found that many of [Google's](#) top hits for news searches came from just a handful of left-leaning sources.

Researchers Daniel Trielli and [Nicholas Diakopoulos](#) conducted their study by looking at the results of more than 200 news-related questions every day in November 2017. They found 6,303 individual links to articles in the Top Stories Box and counted an "article impression each time one of those links appears."

Their data showed that 86% of [Google's](#) Top Stories came from only 20 news sources. Just three dominated the coverage, with 23% of all impressions counted — CNN with 10.9%, The New York Times with 6.5% and The Washington Post with 5.6%.

Fox News, which was ranked fourth, only had 3%.

“As much as our results help better describe [Google](#)’s curation of news, what our study decidedly cannot say is why some sources dominate on [Google](#),” [Mr. Diakopoulos](#) wrote. “We just don’t know unless [Google](#) is more transparent with the editorial design and goals of news curation in the Top Stories box. What we do know is that [Google](#)’s algorithmic curation of news in search converts to real and substantial amounts of user attention and traffic.”

Additionally, the research duo compared the list of sources to another study that measured the ideological affiliation of a news outlet by analyzing the political stances of those sharing content on Facebook.

From that, they found that 62% of the impressions were from sources considered left-leaning and only 11% from right-leaning outlets.

“A higher proportion of left-leaning sources appear in Top Stories,” [Mr. Diakopoulos](#) wrote, while noting that it appears left-leaning sources also produce more content.