

GOOGLE ABUSES STAFF SO BAD THAT THEIR MINDS SNAP

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Ex-Google executive says working for firm gave him 'PTSD' as company is accused of 'holding publishers hostage' with ad tech

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By [Nick Allen](#) in [Alexandria, Virginia](#).

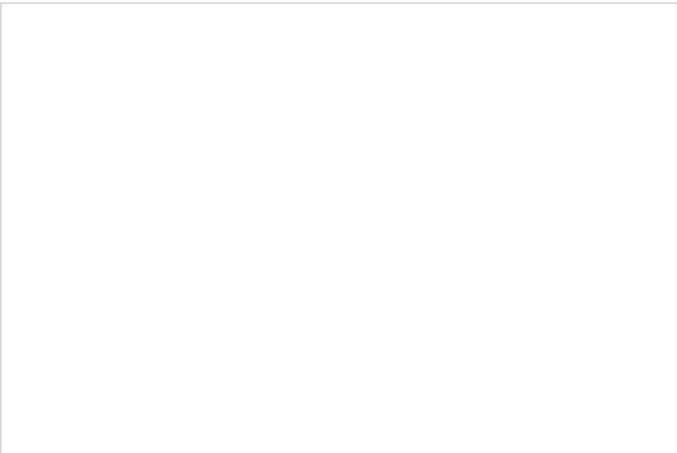
A former [Google](#) executive claimed working for the technology giant gave him PTSD as he was questioned about its digital advertising practices.

It came as a top publishing executive also accused Google of holding media companies 'hostage' because there was no viable alternative to their system for selling ads.

The latest dramatic allegations emerged on the second day of an antitrust trial brought against Google by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and a coalition of 17 states.

According to the DOJ, Google 'controls' the technology used by both advertisers and publishers to place adverts on websites, including those of news organizations.

Google also runs the largest automated exchange where billions of those adverts are instantaneously bought and sold every day.



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It has also used monopolistic practices to quash would-be competitors in the so-called 'ad tech' industry, the U.S. government claims.

Google denies the allegations.

The trial is being held in a federal court in Alexandria, Virginia in front of Judge Leonie Brinkema, without a jury.

On the second day a video deposition by Eisar Lipkowitz, recorded last year, was played to the court.

Lipkowitz was Google's Vice President for engineering for display advertising from 2014 to 2018, the court was told.

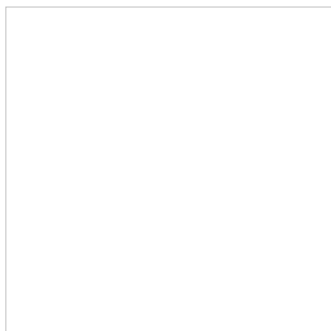
He said: 'I have still PTSD from there (Google). There are people there unwilling to have a Socratic discussion...it just irritates me.'

Later, he added that there were people at Google who 'want to lie, I'm sorry but it's PTSD for me this whole situation.'

He went on to accuse former colleagues of 'intellectual dishonesty in my opinion,' and said there were 'some individuals that I wish not to work with anymore.'

Lipkowitz was asked about DFP, which is the Google tool used by most publishers when selling adverts on their websites.

He said: 'The DFP team was lazy and slow, I don't know how else to say it.'



Eisar Lipkowitz said he has 'PTSD' from working for Google

He described how DFP had a three-quarter share of the market, and said the commission taken by Google's advertising exchange - called AdX - was 20 percent.

At a meeting about AdX he had been in favor of lowering that to 10 to 15 percent, and was trying to 'do the right thing'.

But he said: 'I didn't have authority to take decisions, nobody at Google does, very strange company honestly. Somehow, you can't get stuff done and I don't know why.'

Lipkowitz added that he was 'frustrated and bitter' about his experience at Google.

He was shown an internal document in which a Google employee had asked whether there was a 'deeper issue' with the company being involved in all sides of digital advertising.

The employee had said: 'The analogy would be if Goldman or Citibank owned the NYSE (New York Stock Exchange).'

Lipkowitz said that sentiment 'crossed my mind for sure.'

Earlier, the court heard from Stephanie Layser, a senior advertising technology executive who worked at News Corp, publisher of the Wall Street Journal, from 2017 to 2022.

Layser worked for The Daily Mail from 2013 to 2014, and is now at Amazon, the court heard.

She said of Google's advertising technology tools: 'I felt like they were holding us hostage.'

DFP was 'dominant' in the industry but it was an 'old piece of technology' which was 'slow and clunky,' she said.

'There are legions of people in advertising who have never used a different system, including me.'

She said requests to Google for innovation and changes fell on 'deaf ears' and 'nothing ever changed'.

Layser said she had 'begged Google' for access to data but to no avail.

She said media publishers could not switch from Google's DFP to a different provider because they would lose access to advertisers.

Consequently, they would 'lose money' and 'lose journalists'.

She said at News Corp an analysis of switching had shown the process would take a year and it could have an 'eight figure impact' on revenue.

When she started at News Corp 53 percent of its automated advertising revenue came through Google's AdX exchange, and that had risen to '70 or 80 percent' when she left.

She said 'every product they (Google) shoved down our throats' during the time I was using DFP' was 'unfair'.