



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 4, 2014

## Google's War on Guns

While its corporate motto is “Don’t be evil,” its critics might say “Don’t be Google.” And this is especially true now that Google is saying “Don’t buy guns.”

The search giant has announced that, starting in September, it will ban advertising of firearms, ammunition, and gun paraphernalia. As Google Support writes on its “[Dangerous Products or Services](#)” page, “Our policy: We want to help keep people safe both online and offline, so we don’t allow the promotion of some products or services that cause damage, harm, or injury.” Consequently, the ad ban will include, explains the company:



Functional devices that appear to discharge a projectile at high velocity, whether for sport, self-defense, or combat

(Note that we err on the side of caution and apply this policy to sporting or recreational guns that can cause serious harm if misused, or that appear to be real guns.)

*Examples:* Handguns, rifles, shotguns, hunting guns, functioning antique guns, airsoft guns, paintball guns, bb guns

Any part or component that’s necessary to the function of a gun or intended for attachment to a gun

*Examples:* Gun scopes, ammunition, ammunition clips or belts

But it isn’t just that, to Google, love is not a warm gun. It will also ban ads relating to other weapons, such as tactical, fighting, and military knives; throwing axes; throwing stars; brass knuckles; and crossbows. So we can now all rest assured that the next throwing-star massacre will be averted.

This move by Google is the latest example of an effort to advance gun control via non-legislative means, a movement born of the fact that anti-Second Amendment sentiment has not followed the U.S.’ overall leftward lurch, becoming noticeably [less prevalent](#) during the last 25 years. In fact, ever since former vice president Al Gore’s 2000 presidential election loss to George W. Bush — which many observers partially attributed to Gore’s anti-Second Amendment positions — Democrat politicians’ support for gun control has been muted. And when they do occasionally advocate it, the consequences can be severe. Last year, for instance, two Colorado legislators were [recalled](#) and one was forced to resign after helping to pass gun restrictions in their state.

So different tactics have been embraced. Former NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg and others attempted to damage firearms manufacturers through lawsuits, but this was [blunted](#) legislatively by the 2005 Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act. More recently we learned of the exercise of executive power, with the Department of Justice using “Operation Choke Point” to [compel banks](#) and third-party payment processors to stop doing business with companies dealing in guns and their accessories. And



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Google's move will have a similar effect, hobbling the firearms industry's capacity to engage in commerce.

How effective can this be? Consider that as with "Xeroxing," the genericized term "googling" says about the tech giant's dominance what statistics confirm. *Forbes* [estimated](#) last year that the corporation accounted for 40 percent of all Internet traffic, while eMarketer.com [wrote](#), "Google earned more than half of the \$8.8 billion advertisers worldwide spent on mobile internet ads last year, helping propel the company to take in nearly one-third of all digital ad dollars spent globally." The company also accounts for 65 percent of all worldwide searches. And note that if only the United States is considered, Google's dominance should be greater still.

In other words, if the three most important factors in business are location, location, and location, Google would be the Miracle Mile strip. And being banned from it is perhaps akin to being relegated to one-horse towns.

Thus is the power of Google. And while the company has a "Take Action" [page](#) on which it states "A free and open world depends on a free and open web," it has long practiced censorship. Google once banned conservative sites such as the *New Media Journal*, the Jawa Report, and MichNews.com from its news search for being critical of Islam. It has also nixed ads for conservative books and causes while accepting those for liberal ones; it has pandered to the Marxist Chinese regime in allowing the blocking of "'objectionable' search terms such as 'democracy'"; and it "came under fire for an editorial decision to rank news articles in search results by 'quality,' giving preferential placement to large and predominately liberal media outlets such as CNN and the BBC over conservative news sources, even if they are more recent or pertinent," [wrote](#) WND.com in 2006. And this behavior gives, remarked NewsBusters' Noel Sheppard at the time, "one relatively small technological corporation (when measured by the size of its workforce) a degree of political might that frankly dwarfs its current financial prowess."

That prowess and might have grown in the last eight years, but the tide may be turning a bit as it was [reported](#) in 2013 that Google's share of unique searches had finally dipped slightly. Yet the problem goes beyond Google. As John E. Dunn at PCWorld.com [observed](#) in 2010, while "Google has quietly and relentlessly turned itself into the first super-carrier of the Internet era," the fact is that "the Internet is being moulded by a small and decreasing number of super-carriers."

So what does this mean for legitimate Internet freedom? When Google speaks of a "free and open web," it refers to freedom from direct government intervention. But some may wonder how much of a difference this makes if large Internet companies are so few and so intertwined with big government, crony-capitalist style, that their policies and interests start to become virtually indistinguishable.

Internet users do have some recourse, however. First, spread the traffic wealth around. You can use other search engines, at least part of the time, such as Bing, Yahoo, Yandex, and Blekko. There is also [DuckDuckGo](#), which doesn't store IP addresses or log user information; and, in the same vein, [Ixquick](#), which bills itself as "the world's most private search engine" and was awarded the very first European Privacy Seal in 2008.

And if you must use Google, remember that 96 percent of its revenue comes from advertising. So a good way to hit the company in the anti-gun pocketbook is by not clicking on its ads; instead, scroll down a bit and click on the website you wish to visit in the regular search results. This enables you to use Google without Google using you. The power is in your consumer hands.



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But, hey, whatever you do, don't be evil. Google may ban you, too.



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