



Black Leadership Forum, Inc.

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Community Leaders to Department of Justice: Say NO to Internet Monopolies

Sixteen organizations, representing millions of rural and minority Americans, call on government to scrutinize Google-Yahoo! deal

Washington, DC – A broad, bipartisan collection of rural organizations, civil rights leaders, technologists, business advocates and concerned citizens today wrote the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) urging it to investigate the proposed Google-Yahoo! alliance that threatens to concentrate power on the Internet.

The civic groups, who rely on on-line grassroots organizing and fundraising, express concern that Google – with control of 70% of the search-advertising market – has already exhibited a pattern of violating privacy, engaging in anticompetitive conduct, and using its monopoly power in the search market to drive Internet users to its affiliated services and its viewpoints on policy matters. They argue that any joint combination with Yahoo! – the next most dominant firm in the space with 20% market share – could dramatically worsen these problems. “[W]e face a possible future in which no content can be found without Google’s permission,” the groups argue in the letter.

The signatories to Thursday’s letter include some of the foremost consumer and minority advocates in the nation, including the Black Leadership Forum, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, League of Rural Voters, to name but a few.

"The effect of mega corporate mergers on the Black community--particularly on consumers and contractors--is rarely ever positive. The proposed Google/Yahoo! merger is no different. Condensing competition would increase prices and limit new business opportunity on the Internet for African Americans," commented Gary Flowers, Executive Director & CEO of the Black Leadership Forum, Inc.

Dr. Gabriela Lemus, Executive Director, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, stated, “Privacy is a basic tenant of American law and culture. Google’s Gmail invasions of consumer privacy are the kind of worrisome behavior that you expect when there is no competition in the Internet’s gateway.”

League of Rural Voters’ Executive Director Niel Ritchie noted that “the ‘do no evil’ mantra may no longer apply in today’s marketplace in which Google’s reach is apparently without bound, touching more and more aspects of our everyday lives. We believe the government should give this agreement very careful scrutiny.”

In April, Google and Yahoo! announced an agreement that would outsource Yahoo!'s search advertising to Google, thereby combining the nation's two largest search and advertising companies and permitting Google to control an estimated 90 percent of the search market.

Signatories to the letter include:

A. Philip Randolph Institute
American Agriculture Movement
American Corn Growers Association
Black Leadership Forum, Inc.
Dominican American Business Network
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Latinos in Information Sciences and Technology Association (LISTA)
League of Rural Voters
Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Educational Fund
National Black Chamber of Commerce
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Coalition of Latino Clergy & Christian Leaders (CONLAMIC)
National Congress of Black Women
National Hispanic Environmental Council
New York State Federation of Hispanic Chambers of Commerce
William C. Velasquez Institute (WCWI)

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