

Big tech is painting itself as journalism's saviour. We should tread carefully

We've long been warned about the looming demise of traditional journalism in the face of digital disruption. But some tech giants, once the very disruptors themselves, have been positioning themselves as journalism's saviours.

Programs such as the **Google News Initiative** promise not only to keep journalism alive, but by enabling innovation, to also help it adapt and thrive into the future.

We set out to explore how big tech's "philanthrocapitalism" could be reshaping the news industry, focusing on countries in the Global South, where such funding can play an outsized role.

A double-edged sword

Big tech is now deeply enmeshed with modern journalism. Platforms such as Google and Facebook are at the heart of the way news is distributed, and new players like OpenAI are revolutionising the way we create content.

These companies admittedly provide vital digital infrastructure that has enabled much of the innovation we've seen in journalism over the past decade. But they're also the entities that disrupted the traditional news business model in the first place.

Some success stories

That isn't to say there weren't any success stories. Google even encouraged some organisations to plan for long term sustainability early on, including Stears, a legacy media company in Nigeria.

Stears acknowledged the benefits of Google's advice to plan for the long term.

If sustainability wasn't a major consideration from the beginning, things could have been different ... because the Google team encouraged us to prioritize sustainability from the outset, it will be a matter of returning to our normal day-to-day operations and aligning our expenses accordingly.

[Back to Homepage](#)