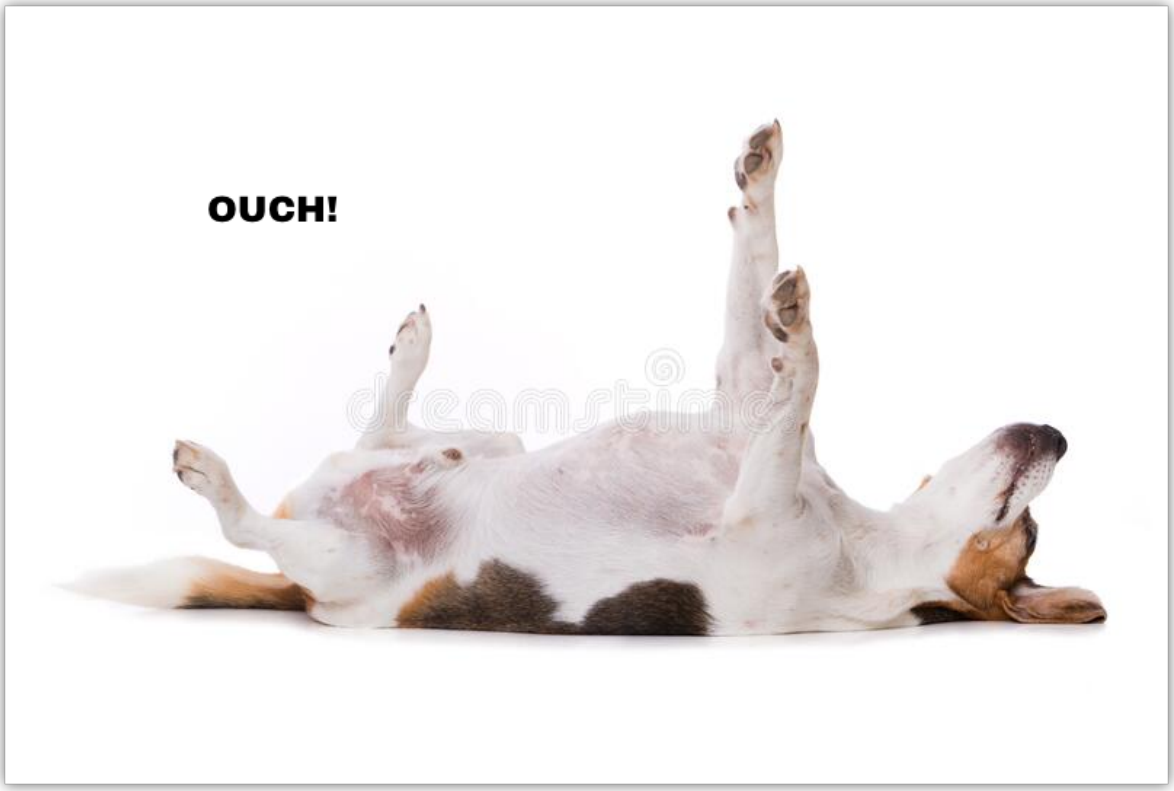
We get knocked down…but we get up again

Description



The Facebook media ban kicked The Terrier right in the guts and exposed the vulnerable belly of small, independent media.

Carol Altmann – The Terrier

Mark Zuckerberg is a pretty lousy shot.

As we know, the owner of Facebook last week took aim at the big players in the Australian media, and ended up wounding all of the little ones.

This little Terrier was hit right in the bum by the shrapnel.

Bang! Wiped off Facebook overnight.

Now I am temporarily running a “florist”, but I am not pushing up the daisies just yet.

I am, however, mulling over what is a sustainable and realistic way to get through this.

Because what Mr Zuckerberg has exposed by releasing the Facebook trapdoor is the vulnerable, soft underbelly of small, super local media voices like The Terrier.

We are the little tackers trying to keep independent, public interest journalism alive in little corners of Australia like Warrnambool and Daylesford and Cygnet and Manning River and Ararat and Naracoorte….

None of what Facebook, Google and the Federal Government are fighting about right now will make this battle any easier.

They are fighting over money that most of the little terriers will never see.

Under a planned new media code, Facebook and Google will pay millions to the major media players – the big guns – as compensation for losing advertising revenue.

But to be part of this deal and negotiate with Facebook and co, a media organisation must make at least $150,000 a year.

In the past two years, I have made nowhere near that, but The Terrier has shown that readers still want investigative journalism that is not afraid to ask the hard questions, and is not scared off by the pushback (#justablogger).

But will alone is not enough.

I had hoped, as part of its media rules overhaul, the Federal Government might use funds from the likes of Facebook and Google to set up a public interest journalism fund that *all* media outlets could apply for, no matter how big or small, provided that outlet could prove it had journalistic runs on the board.

The Terrier has some significant runs on the board.

But it is not enough.

There is still no fund. The cavalry is yet to crest the horizon.

But we keep hanging in there, because this fight is much bigger than Facebook and much broader than Google.

As it sits, the big media companies stand to get stronger – yet with no guarantees their newsrooms will get bigger – and the smaller, independent voices stand to be crushed.

This includes The Terrier and whoever might come along next, especially if I have to start building an audience, on a new platform, all over again.

So last week was a whack that I didn't see coming and it hurt, but terriers are tough little buggers.

We open florist shops, we take a little time to smell the roses, and we keep working with those who want us to survive.

Thanks a bunch for hanging in here.

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