

Fact-checking site Snopes pleads for help to stay alive

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Snopes, touted as the internet's oldest fact-checking website, said Monday it is in danger of shutting down due to a legal dispute with a digital services company hosting the site.

The site founded in 1994 to debunk [urban legends](#) and [fake news](#) said in a statement the dispute has cut off advertising revenues for its operations, and asked readers for donations of \$10 or more.

Snopes, which has been locked in a legal battle with services firm Proper Media, said its contractual relationship ended earlier this year, "but the vendor will not acknowledge the change in contractual status and continues to essentially hold the Snopes.com web site hostage."

The statement said Snopes maintains editorial control for now but that "the vendor will not relinquish the site's hosting to our control, so we cannot modify the site, develop it, or - most crucially - place advertising on it."

It said Proper Media "continues to insert their own ads and has been withholding the [advertising revenue](#) from us."

Snopes said it needs donations from its readers to keep operating.

"As misinformation has increasingly threatened democracies around the world (including our own), Snopes.com has stood in the forefront of fighting for truth and dispelling misinformation online," it said. "It is

vital that these efforts continue, so we are asking the Snopes.com community to donate what they can."

Proper Media claimed in its complaint against Snopes that founder David Mikkelson "has engaged in a lengthy scheme of concealment and subterfuge to gain control of the company and to drain its profits" and noted that Mikkelson's ex-wife sold her 50 percent share in the [site](#) to the digital services firm.

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