



The big squeeze

It's hard, even impossible, to resist the siren call of the algorithm. The lure of big tech and its promise to improve apartment operations only intensifies.

In turn, big tech is in the business of big data. There are few industries churning out data as rich as does multifamily. Apartment businesses house over half the nation's

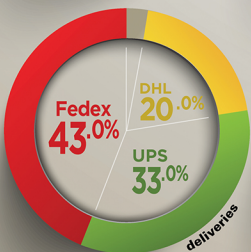
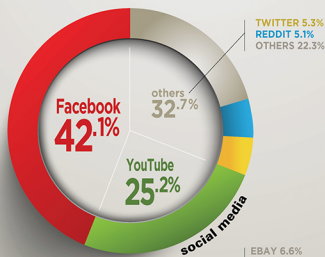
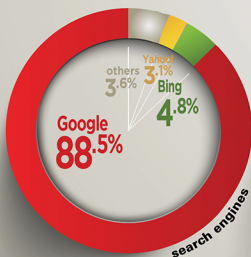
residents. The extent and potential of this market is extremely attractive, and may even be the next big horizon for tech firms. What are the risks to the apartment business and its residents as public opinion, legislation and the effect of technology on our brains and society shift?

In a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, "The Apps are Watching,"

80 apps were tested by the authors, and all but one used third-party trackers for marketing, ads or analytics. On average, each app had four trackers.

"Some apps send personal data without ever informing users in their privacy policies," while others send info to Facebook, Google and mobile marketers.

Market un-share



At what point does a company become a monopoly? What is the threshold for recategorizing a self-declared communications platform as a national utility? When do we decide that those controlling a sizable percentage of the country's social communications are not able to self-regulate? What do we risk by not acting?

Never in history have so few controlled so much, from information to using principles of behavioral science to influence mass behavior.

Imagine the outcry had the phone company unilaterally disconnected service to certain customers based on secret policies. And then framed it as

moral superiority.

After four decades of watching the digital world explode, the courts and legislature may, at once, feel the need to apply constitutional and standing law to mega-tech operations. One thing is certain. Our tech titans will not go quietly into the night. Power is too hard to come by.