

Is Disney a Monopoly?

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Recent news has come out that Sony may take Spider-man back from Disney, cutting the Tom Holland universe off abruptly. This happened because *Spider-Man: Far From Home* succeeded far better than intended, and Disney wasn't making the money they wanted from it. Sony owns the rights to Spider-man and his villains, which means they've been leasing the character and villains to Disney, for a cut of the profits. A large cut in fact. Disney wanted a 50/50 split while Sony was fine with their arrangement. Which led to a stalemate and the announcement that Spider-man might leave the MCU. With this news in the air, there's been some joking talk about Disney buying out Sony as they did with Fox and Marvel. But wouldn't that make Disney a monopoly? Buying out all the competition? But aren't they already?



Disney started as an animation studio with the brothers Walt and Roy Disney, but as it's grown, it's become a monster in the industry. With theme parks, merchandise, their own toy lines, their own streaming service, along with their animation studio that now encompasses Pixar Studios and their live-action studio which has Fox, Lucasfilm, and Marvel Studios. Should the U.S government label them a monopoly?

According to the Sherman Act, a monopoly is "where nearly all of one product type or service is owned by one person or group of people"- Disney owns nearly all of one product, specifically the animation industry. Disney owns Pixar, Disney animation studios, and Marvel Studios. But they still have competition with Dreamworks. However, Dreamworks isn't as big as Disney. They don't have their own toy lines, like the Disney princesses or toy story. They don't have major film franchise like *Star Wars* or the MCU. Dreamworks has *Shrek*, *Madagascar*, and *How to Train Your Dragon*. Dreamworks isn't much competition for Disney in reality.

Speaking of the MCU, Disney owns Marvel, but not all of their properties. Sony owns Spider-man. Disney is using Spider-man in the MCU which means they have to pay Sony for the rights. In the deal they currently have, Sony pays for the movie, produces the movie, while Marvel has the creative lead. Because of this, Sony gets 90% of the profits from the movies while Disney gets 10% from the movies and 100% from the merchandise, meaning Disney gets 110% of the profits. At the end of *Far From Home*, Sony's deal with Disney was over and they were discussing renewing it, however, Disney wanted a 50/50 split from the movies with Sony still paying for the movies. Meaning, Sony would only get 50% while Disney is getting 150% including merchandise. Does that seem fair? Or does it seem like a monopoly who thinks they can do whatever they want?

This doesn't mean that Spider-man is fully leaving the MCU, he could still play in them as long as Disney pulls off. But Spider-man is getting new movies from Sony, with the sequel of *Into the Spider-verse*. But it still makes you think...has Disney been around too long? Is Disney a monopoly?