

Google Says “Women Ruin Silicon Valley”

Google Employee's Anti-Diversity Manifesto Goes 'Internally Viral'



- **LOUISE MATSAKIS**



Image: Getty

"It's not worth thinking about this as an isolated incident and instead a manifestation of what ails all of Silicon Valley."

At least eight Google employees tweeted Friday about a document that was circulated within the company calling for replacing Google's diversity initiatives with policies that encourage "ideological diversity" instead. The document, which is the personal opinion of one senior software engineer, was shared on a company mailing list but has since gone "internally viral," according to a Google employee who spoke with Motherboard.

Motherboard has not viewed the full document, but a screenshot we reviewed shows it's titled "Google's Ideological Echo Chamber." Descriptions of its contents were tweeted publicly by Google employees, and it was described in detail to me by a Google employee, who requested anonymity because of the company's notoriously strict confidentiality agreement. (A lawsuit against the company was filed in a San Francisco court last year over the company's "spying program" to prevent leaks.)

The person who wrote the document argued that the representation gap between men and women in software engineering persists because of biological differences between the two sexes, according to public tweets from Google employees. It also said Google should not offer programs for underrepresented racial or gender minorities, according to one of the employees I spoke to.

The 10-page Google Doc document was met with derision from a large majority of employees who saw and denounced its contents, according to the employee. But Jaana Dogan, a software engineer at Google, tweeted that some people at the company at least partially agreed with the author; one of our sources said the same. While the document itself contains the thoughts of just one Google employee, the context in which they were shared—Google is currently being investigated by the Department of Labor for its gender pay gap and Silicon Valley has been repeatedly exposed as a place that discriminates against women and people of color—as well as the private and public response from its workforce are important.

"The broader context of this is that this person is perhaps bolder than most of the people at Google who share his viewpoint—of thinking women are less qualified than men—to the point he was willing to publicly argue for it. But there are sadly more people like him," the employee who described the document's contents to me said.

At Google, "I feel like there's a lot of pushback from white dudes who genuinely feel like diversity is lowering the bar," a former engineering employee who wished to remain anonymous because they had signed a non-disclosure agreement told Motherboard.

Motherboard has independently confirmed with multiple Google employees that the document is being widely shared among many of the company's software engineering teams: "If I had to guess, almost every single woman in engineering has seen it," the current employee told Motherboard; a separate current employee told me it was being actively read by many employees. At several points on Friday night, the document was inaccessible because too many people were attempting to view it concurrently. Google did not respond to two requests for comment.

The document's author also wrote that employees with conservative political beliefs are discriminated against at Google and lamented about how "leftist" ideology is harmful. They argue that the company should have a more "open" culture where their viewpoint would be welcomed. The document said that improving racial and gender diversity is less important than making sure conservatives feel comfortable expressing themselves at work.

While the vast majority of Google employees did not support the document's arguments, some did. According to Dogan, who works on the company's Go programming language, the document's author was emboldened by some of the positive responses he got. "The author is now in contact with me explaining why he received *supportive* response," she tweeted. "If HR does nothing in this case, I will consider leaving this company for real for the first time in five years," she wrote in a threaded tweet.

"It's not worth thinking about this as an isolated incident and instead a manifestation of what ails all of Silicon Valley," the employee I spoke to who detailed the document's contents told me.

Google is currently wrapped up in a dispute with the Department of Labor over what an agency official testified are "systemic compensation disparities against women pretty much across the entire workforce." Another official told *The Guardian* in April that it had discovered "compelling evidence of very significant discrimination against women in the most common positions at Google headquarters."

Motherboard has a SecureDrop.

Jason Koebler contributed reporting to this piece.