



# The EyeOpener- Exposing 'In-Q-Tel': The CIA's Own Venture Capital Firm

## Google, Facebook, the IT Sector and the CIA



[In-Q-Tel](#) was formed by the CIA in 1999 as a private, not-for-profit venture capital firm with the specific task of delivering technology to America's intelligence community. Publicly, In-Q-Tel markets itself as an innovative way to leverage the power of the private sector by identifying key emerging technologies and providing companies with the funding to bring those technologies to market. In reality, however, what In-Q-Tel represents is a dangerous blurring of the lines between the public and private sectors in a way that makes it difficult to tell where the American intelligence community ends and the IT sector begins.

In-Q-Tel has generated a number of stories since its inception based on what can only be described as the "creepiness" factor of its investments in overtly Orwellian technologies.

This is our EyeOpener Report by James Corbett presenting documented facts and cases on the CIA's privately owned venture capital firm In-Q-Tel, in which well-connected board members drawn from the private sector profit from the investments made with CIA funds that come from the taxpayer.

\*The Transcript for this video is now available at Corbett Report: [Click Here](#)

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# Meet In-Q-Tel, the CIA's Venture Capital Firm (Preview)

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TRANSCRIPT AND SOURCES:

[Gainspan Corporation](#) manufactures low power Wi-Fi semiconductors that form the heart of modern remote sensing, monitoring and control technologies.

[Recorded Future Inc.](#) is a Massachusetts web startup that monitors the web in real time and claims its media analytics search engine can be used to predict the future.

[Keyhole Corp.](#) created the 3D earth visualization technology that [became the core](#) of Google Earth.

The common denominator? All of these companies, and hundreds more cutting edge technology and software startups, have received seed money and investment funding from In-Q-Tel, the CIA's own venture capital firm.

Welcome, this is James Corbett of The Corbett Report with your Eyeopener Report for [BoilingFrogsPost.com](http://BoilingFrogsPost.com)

For decades, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, has been the American governmental body tasked with conducting high-risk, high-payoff research into cutting edge science and technology. Responsible most famously for developing the world's first operational packet switching network that eventually became [the core of the Internet](#), DARPA tends to [garner headlines](#) these days for some of its more [outlandish](#) research proposals and is generally looked upon as a [blue-sky research](#) agency whose endeavours only occasionally bear fruit.

In the post-9/11 consolidation of the American intelligence community, IARPA, or the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Agency, was created to serve as the spymaster's equivalent of DARPA's defense research.

In contrast to this, [In-Q-Tel](#) was formed by the CIA in 1999 as a private, not-for-profit venture capital firm with the specific task of delivering technology to America's intelligence community.

Publicly, In-Q-Tel [markets itself](#) as an innovative way to leverage the power of the private sector by identifying key emerging technologies and providing companies with the funding to bring those technologies to market.

In reality, however, what In-Q-Tel represents is a dangerous blurring of the lines between the public and private sectors in a way that makes it difficult to tell where the American intelligence community ends and the IT sector begins.

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In 2004, KMWorld published [an interview](#) with Greg Pepus, then In-Q-Tel's senior director of federal and intelligence community strategy, about some of their investments. Pepus was especially proud of the CIA's investment in [Inxight](#), a company that offered software for data mining unstructured data sources like blogs and websites with analytical processing.

In 2006 [it was revealed](#) that AT&T had provided NSA eavesdroppers full access to its customer's internet traffic, and that the American intelligence community was illegally scooping up reams of internet data wholesale. The [data mining equipment](#) installed in the NSA back door, a Narus STA 6400, was developed by a company whose partners were [funded by In-Q-Tel](#).

Also in 2006, News21 [reported](#) on an In-Q-Tel [investment in CallMiner](#), a company developing technology for turning recorded telephone conversations into searchable databases. In late 2005 [it was revealed](#) that the NSA had been engaged in an illegal warrantless wiretapping program since at least the time of the 9/11 attacks, monitoring the private domestic phone calls of American citizens in breach of their fourth amendment rights.

In 2009, the Telegraph [reported](#) on In-Q-Tel's [investment in Visible Technologies](#), a [company](#) specializing in software that monitors what people are saying on social media websites like YouTube, Twitter, Flickr and Amazon. The software is capable of real-time communications tracking, trend monitoring, and even sentiment analysis that categorizes blog posts and comments as positive, negative or neutral. Just last month, the Federal Reserve tendered a [Request For Proposal](#) for just this type of software so the privately owned central bank could monitor what people are saying about it online.

Two of the names that come up most often in connection with In-Q-Tel, however, need no introduction: Google and Facebook.

The publicly available record on the Facebook/In-Q-Tel connection is tenuous. Facebook [received](#) \$12.7 million in venture capital from Accel, whose manager, [James Breyer](#), now sits on their board. He was formerly the chairman of the National Venture Capital Association, whose board included [Gilman Louie](#), then the CEO of In-Q-Tel. The connection is indirect, but the suggestion of CIA involvement with Facebook, however tangential, is disturbing in the light of Facebook's [history](#) of [violating the privacy](#) of [its users](#).

Google's connection to In-Q-Tel is more straightforward, if officially denied. In 2006, ex-CIA officer Robert David Steele [told Homeland Security Today](#) that Google "has been taking money and direction for elements of the US Intelligence Community, including the Office of Research and Development at the Central Intelligence Agency, In-Q-Tel, and in all probability, both the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Army's Intelligence and Security Command." Later that year, a blogger [claimed](#) that an official Google spokesman had denied the claims, but no official press statement was released.

Steele's accusation is not the only suggestion of American intelligence involvement with Google, however.

In 2005, In-Q-Tel [sold over 5,000 shares](#) of Google stock. The shares are widely presumed to have come from In-Q-Tel's investment in Keyhole Inc., which was subsequently bought out by Google, but this is uncertain.

In 2010, it was [announced](#) that Google was working directly with the National Security Agency to secure its electronic assets.

Also in 2010, Wired [reported](#) that In-Q-Tel and Google had jointly provided venture capital funding to Recorded Future Inc., a temporal analytics search engine company that analyzes tens of thousands of web sources to predict trends and events.

But as potentially alarming as In-Q-Tel's connections to internet giants like Facebook and Google are, and as disturbing as its interest in data mining

technologies may be, the CIA's venture capital arm is interested in more than just web traffic monitoring.

The In-Q-Tel website currently lists two “practice areas,” “[Information and Communication Technologies](#)” and “[Physical and Biological Technologies](#).” The latter field consists of “capabilities of interest” such as “The on-site determination of individual human traits for IC purposes” and “Tracking and/or authentication of both individuals and objects.” In-Q-Tel also lists two areas that are “on its radar” when it comes to biotech: [Nano-bio Convergence](#) and [Physiological Intelligence](#). Detailed breakdowns of each area explain that the intelligence community is interested in, amongst other things, self-assembling batteries, single molecule detectors, targeted drug delivery platforms, and sensors that can tell where a person has been and what substances he has been handling from “biomarkers” like trace compounds in the breath or samples of skin.

In the years since its formation, many have been led to speculate about In-Q-Tel and its investments, but what requires no speculation is an understanding that a privately owned venture capital firm, created by and for the CIA, in which well-connected board members drawn from the private sector can then [profit from the investments](#) made with CIA funds that itself come from the taxpayer represent an erosion of the barrier between the public and private spheres that should give even the most credulous pause for thought.

What does it mean that emerging technology companies are becoming wedded to the CIA as soon as their technology shows promise?

What can be the public benefit in fostering and encouraging technologies which can be deployed for spying on all internet users, including American citizens, in direct contravention of the CIA's own prohibitions against operating domestically?

If new software and technology is being brought to market by companies with In-Q-Tel advisors on their boards, what faith can anyone purchasing American technologies have that their software and hardware is not



designed with CIA backdoors to help the American intelligence community achieve its vision of “Total Information Awareness”?

Rather than scrutinizing each individual investment that In-Q-Tel makes, perhaps an institutional approach is required.

At this point, the American people have to ask themselves whether they want the CIA, an agency that has [participated in the overthrow](#) of foreign, democratically-elected governments, an agency that has [implanted fake stories](#) in the news media to justify American war interests, an agency that at this very moment is [engaged in offensive drone strikes](#), killing suspected “insurgents” and civilians alike in numerous theaters around the world, should be entrusted with developing such close relationships with the IT sector, or whether In-Q-Tel should be scrapped for good.



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## **List of In-Q-Tel Investments**

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