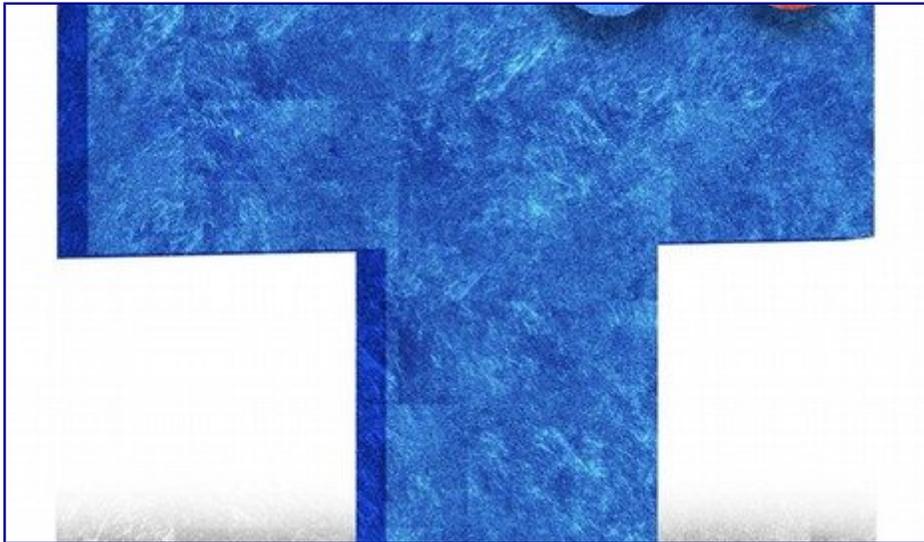


Google cozies to Trump but calls for his impeachment

It publicly cozies up to Trump while privately calling for his impeachment



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By [Kelly Riddell](#) - The Washington Times - Thursday, February 2, 2017

ANALYSIS/OPINION:

[Google](#), or rather its parent company Alphabet, got used to dominating [Washington](#) under President [Barack Obama](#)'s rule. Perhaps, that's why they'd like to see President Donald Trump impeached.

"Some of us may need to adopt Pence 2017 bumper stickers," [Google](#)'s cofounder Sergey Brin joked at a company sponsored anti-Trump protest — the biggest demonstration from a Silicon Valley corporation this week — in response to Mr. Trump's controversial immigration executive order.

More than 2,000 [Google](#) employees attended the protest on Monday, with it becoming a trending topic on Twitter with the hashtag #GooglersUnite. The rally came 24 hours after [Google](#) donated \$2 million to the ACLU and Immigrant Legal Resource Center, to help fight Mr. Trump's executive order, which was matched by \$2 million in donations from [Google](#) employees.

The week prior, [Google](#) lawyers flooded the California office of Sen. Dianne Feinstein, demanding she oppose Sen. Jeff Sessions' confirmation as attorney general.

After investing millions ingraining itself within the Obama White House, [Google](#) is suddenly on the outside looking in with the Trump administration — and it clearly has [Google](#) rattled — protesting Mr. Trump in private, and then publicly trying to cozy up with him the next.

Eric Schmidt, [Google](#)'s former CEO and chair of Alphabet, has traveled to Trump Tower at least twice to meet with the president and his team, but hasn't made any real progress.

Maybe that's because last week — before Mr. Trump signed his immigration order — Mr. Schmidt told [Google](#) employees that the Trump administration is “going to do these evil things as they've done in the immigration area and perhaps some others.”

[Google](#)'s corporate mantra is “don't be evil.”

And yet, like any firm, [Google](#) needs to make money, and it's benefited from peddling soft influence in the nation's capital. Now that a new sheriff is in town, [Google](#) needs to at least pretend to play nice — or all be lost.

Alphabet cut ties with the Podesta Group, the Democratic-leaning lobbying arm run by John Podesta, the brother of Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, Bloomberg News reported. It's also sponsored GOP outreach parties in [Washington](#), working with the conservative The Independent Journal Review to connect with conservative lawmakers, The New York Times detailed.

In a lengthy Forbes profile on Mr. Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, Mr. Schmidt lavished on the praise, saying Mr. Kushner was “the biggest surprise of the 2016 election,” and that “best I can tell, he actually ran the campaign and did it with essentially no resources.”

But, coming from a man who Mrs. Clinton has described as her “longtime friend,” who helped design her campaign's voter targeting software, and from a company that was accused of rigging its search results to favor Mrs. Clinton throughout the 2016 contest, all of that may be too much for the Trump team.

[Google](#) has denied it ever manipulated its “autocomplete” function to steer users toward a search for “Hillary Clinton crime reform” when searching “Hillary Clinton crimes,” and “Hillary Clinton India” instead of “Hillary Clinton indictment.”

Still, there's no doubt, [Google](#)'s culture — and profits — were deeply rooted within the Obama administration, and would continue under Mrs. Clinton.

When [Mr. Obama](#) looked to open Cuba, [Google](#) was there offering to expand internet access. It also jumped into save the blundering healthcare.gov website, and capitalized on providing its fiber into low-income urban neighborhoods. When [Google](#) was the target of a Federal Trade Commission investigation for anti-competitive practices, the government closed the case without any charges — although similar ones have been made overseas and are ongoing.

Megan Smith, a former [Google](#) vice president, was Mr. Obama's chief technology officer, with the Campaign for Accountability, a nonprofit watchdog organization, identifying 258 more instances of so-called revolving door activity between [Google](#) and the [Washington](#) establishment. Johanna Shelton, [Google](#)'s director of public policy, visited [Obama](#)'s White House more than any other corporate lobbyist, the watchdog found.

Before Mr. Obama took office, [Google](#) spent almost no money trying to peddle political influence, now it's a behemoth. It spent more than \$15 million in lobbying in 2016, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, compared with \$2.8 million in 2008. During Mr. Obama's 2012 reelection campaign, [Google](#) employees were the second-largest source of donations by any single U.S. company, with Microsoft being number one.

At the Federal Communications Commission, [Google](#) seemed to have free reign. It's currently looking to get into the cable set-top box business, as well as get spectrum — that was reserved for broadcast companies — to offer Wi-Fi services.

“It seems that whatever [Google](#) wants, [Google](#) gets from [the FCC],” a broadcast industry lobbyist told TV Newscheck last year. Another one added: “What's frustrating is this gut reaction among regulators that if [Google](#) says something, it's good, but if a traditional media company says something, it's questionable.”

Well, all of that may be ending.