

# GOOGLE BOSS LARRY PAGE AND HIS SEX CULT TO BE HAILED INTO COURT

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## Virgin Islands issued subpoena to Google co-founder Larry Page in SEX lawsuit against JPMorgan Chase over Jeffrey Epstein

READ THE REPORT:

[LARRY PAGE AND GOOGLE BASE THEIR BUSINESS MODEL ON STEALING YOUR TECHNOLOGY](#)

### GOOGLE PUSHES TRANNIES BECAUSE LARRY PAGE AND MOST GOOGLE EXECS LOVE TRANNIES

Google is selectively targeting people to turn them INTO trannies. The search pages, the ads, the entertainment are all warped to push certain ideas into certain people's heads. Google selected him to be a tranny. What did their AI select you to be? I would imagine the thing targets everybody with tailor made degeneracy. It attacks your brain like a rubics cube trying to turn you into their creation.

[GOOGLE engineer jumps from 14th floor of company's NYC HQ as Google Larry Rubin, Larry Page, David Drummond sex investigations heat up...](#)

If you would like to isolate the effect, you might try connecting through a VPN, and using something like Firejail, with Firefox operating in "double" private mode. This will prevent any memory from writing directly to your disk and from Google's scripts from being able to see your files directly. You will have to login each time and it won't store your information. But at least then you can get an idea of what your searches would be like if you weren't you.

OF course we all know google is really using the control processor on your computers microchip to tag all your network connections, so the CIA or NSA always knows its you . You're only really blind to the advertising and commercial sides of the organization. Also they can identify some network traffic regardless of encryption.

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### KEYPOINTS

- The government of the U.S. Virgin Islands has tried without success so far to subpoena Google co-founder Larry Page for documents for its civil lawsuit against JPMorgan Chase.
- The USVI is suing that bank for alleged complicity in sex trafficking by JP Morgan's longtime customer Jeffrey Epstein.
- The Virgin Islands previously issued subpoenas to Page's fellow Google co-founder Sergey Brin, as well as former Disney executive Michael Ovitz, Hyatt Hotels executive chairman Thomas Pritzker and Mort Zuckerman, the billionaire real estate investor.
- JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon is due to be deposed in the case in late May.

In this article

- [JPM-1.95 \(-1.43%\)](#)

- [GOOGL-0.64 \(-0.61%\)](#)

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Google co-founder Larry Page.

David Paul Morris | Bloomberg | Getty Images

The government of the [U.S. Virgin Islands](#) has tried without success so far to serve a subpoena on [Google](#) co-founder [Larry Page](#) for documents for its civil lawsuit against [JPMorgan Chase](#) related to [sex trafficking](#) by the bank's longtime customer [Jeffrey Epstein](#), a [court filing](#) revealed Thursday.

The USVI formally asked Manhattan federal court Judge Jed Rakoff to authorize the government to serve Page with that subpoena through so-called alternative means since its efforts to have a process server physically give it to him have failed to date.

Alternative service can include mailing the legal papers, publishing them on a public news site or emailing them.

"Larry Page—the co-founder and co-owner of Alphabet Inc. (Google LLC's parent company)—is a high-net-worth individual who Epstein may have referred or attempted to refer to JPMorgan" as a customer, lawyers for the USVI said in their court filing.

The subpoena to Page demands "all [documents](#)" from 2002 onward related to communication between Page and JPMorgan regarding Epstein, and all documents between Page and Epstein related to the bank.

The USVI also demands from Page "all documents reflecting or regarding Epstein's involvement in human trafficking and/or his procurement of girls or women for commercial sex."

CNBC has reached out to Page for comment.

The U.S. territory previously issued subpoenas to Page's fellow Google co-founder [Sergey Brin](#), as well as former [Disney](#) executive Michael Ovitz, [Hyatt Hotels](#) executive chairman Thomas Pritzker and Mort Zuckerman, the billionaire real estate investor. The subpoenas likewise sought documents and other information about Epstein and JPMorgan.

- [Blinken And Wife's Contacts With Hunter Biden Related To Burisma...](#)
- [Did FBI's Censorship Liaison Hide Colleagues' Connection To The Hunter Biden Scandal?...](#)
- [Whistleblower Alleges FBI, DOJ Have Document Revealing Criminal Scheme Involving Biden, Foreign National...](#)
- [Why The Bombshell Joe Biden Bribery Allegation Matters...](#)

## CNBC Politics

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The Virgin Islands said elsewhere in Thursday's filing that its investigation revealed that JPMorgan "financially profited" from deposits made by Epstein and entities he controlled, and "from the business opportunities referred to JPMorgan by Epstein and his co-conspirators in exchange for its known facilitation of and implicit participation in Epstein's sex trafficking venture."

The filing said that the USVI issued the subpoena on Page on April 11, and that it "made good-faith attempts to obtain an address for Larry Page, including hiring an investigative firm to search public records databases for possible addresses."

"Our process server attempted service at the addresses identified by our investigative firm, but discovered the addresses were not valid for Mr. Page," the filing said.

Page was [CEO](#) of Google's parent Alphabet from 2015 through 2019, after previously serving as Google's chief executive officer. He remains a director of Alphabet.



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VIDEO00:58

NBC archive footage shows Trump partying with Jeffrey Epstein in 1992

The U.S. Virgin Islands and a woman who says she was sexually abused by Epstein are separately suing JPMorgan, claiming the bank was complicit in his sex trafficking of multiple women.

Epstein for years had millions of dollars on deposit at JPMorgan, and used money from those accounts to facilitate the travel of women to his residence on a private island in the U.S. territory and elsewhere.

JPMorgan, whose CEO Jamie Dimon is due to be deposed in the case in late May, denies wrongdoing.

Epstein killed himself in a Manhattan jail cell in August 2019, a month after he was arrested on federal child sex trafficking charges. He previously pleaded guilty in 2008 to soliciting sex from an underage girl in Florida.

JPMorgan didn't sever ties with Epstein until 2013.

Epstein over the years had been a friend to many rich and famous people, among them former Presidents [Donald Trump](#) and [Bill Clinton](#).

# How Elon Musk, Larry Page and Mark Zuckerberg Use Scam Nonprofits to Hide Dark Money

Politicians are increasingly using nonprofits capable of accepting unlimited dark money funds to advance their agendas and oligarchs use those non-profits to bribe those politicians.



- Since Watergate, it's been illegal for anyone to secretly donate millions to a federal candidate's election campaign. Congress decided at the time that capping contributions was a price worth paying to deter corruption. For the same reason, campaign finance law requires candidates to publicly disclose donations above a certain amount. Sunlight, as the Supreme Court likes to say, is the best disinfectant.

But such rules — designed to prevent would-be officeholders from being “bought” by wealthy donors — don't apply to a burgeoning new mode of self-promotion that politicians are embracing once they actually take office.

Like so-called “buddy PACs” — unlimited spending groups that support a single candidate *during* campaign season — the new must-have accessory for successful politicians is the officeholder-controlled nonprofit. These entities, launched *after* the campaigning is over, can raise unlimited amounts in secret donations to spend on promoting officeholders and their agendas. And they are gaining popularity among elected officials at every level of government.

The time has come to enact common-sense regulations to stop these nonprofits from corrupting our politics.

Among the most prominent examples: America First Policies, a 501(c)(4) social welfare nonprofit that President Trump's top advisors founded a week after his inauguration. Earlier this year, CNBC reported the group has [conducted polling](#) worth as much as seven figures — work that typically fuels political ad campaigns. Among other promotions of Trump administration positions, the nonprofit produced a [TV ad](#) last fall that featured flattering footage of the president and called on viewers to “stand with President Trump to cut taxes, now.” The donors to America First Policies remain secret.

In a recent [report](#), we at the Brennan Center for Justice found that at least two presidents, seven governors, and several prominent mayors — from both major parties — have established nonprofits that allow them to raise unlimited, anonymous funds for political spending after election day.

Since 2010, these elected officials — including Republicans like embattled Missouri [Governor Eric Greitens](#) and progressives like campaign finance warrior [Bernie Sanders](#) — have altogether raised as much as \$150 million for nonprofits that they are able to control and use to promote their respective agendas.

Allowing elected officials to take unlimited cash from usually secret donors through these nonprofits opens the door to conflicted loyalties and corruption. Occasional [exposés](#) reveal some of these donors have specific business interests before the elected officials whose nonprofits they support — and likely see their donation as a means to win government decisions that will benefit them.

In New York State, for example, gambling companies donated \$2 million to a nonprofit affiliated with Governor Andrew Cuomo just before he [declared his support](#) for increasing gambling in his 2012 State of the State address. And in Los Angeles, a pipe manufacturing executive made it clear that his million-dollar pledge to the mayor's nonprofit was meant to gain influence in a city that forbids campaign contributions by companies seeking government business. He [told the Los Angeles Times](#), “We want to influence the government leaders to make the right decisions so that we can be more competitive.”

Some of these nonprofits have taken steps at self-regulation. President Obama's Organizing for Action wrote the playbook on turning these types of nonprofits into publicity juggernauts. In the spirit of being “open and transparent,” OFA decided early on to [voluntarily disclose](#) its donors. But hoping that officeholder-controlled nonprofits will voluntarily disclose funders is hardly a plan to ensure ethical governance.

Americans deserve to have confidence that decisions about who builds bridges or treats drinking water are based on the most qualified, competitive bid — not who gives the most to an elected official's nonprofit. For this reason, we recommend a straightforward set of laws to bring transparency to these nonprofits and limit the influence of those with specific business interests before government, and we're urging legislators across the country to adopt it.

First, we should identify those nonprofits that pose a major risk of corruption — determining whether an elected official or close associates control the group and, if so, whether the group spends substantial amounts on promoting the official. Then, for the small set of entities this test would identify, we propose two key safeguards that are well-established components of anti-corruption law. One is public disclosure of who is giving money, and how much, to an officeholder-controlled nonprofit. The second is contribution limits for donors who have concrete business interests that the politician has the power to affect.

Some jurisdictions have already started following this model. In New York City, similar legislation kicked in this year following a federal investigation into Mayor Bill de Blasio's [nonprofit](#) and allegations of ethical transgressions. And in early 2017, the Missouri legislature considered a [measure](#) to require certain nonprofit groups to report donations, though the effort fell short.

To be sure, nonprofits associated with elected officials may do work that serves the public. They may use the officeholder's high profile to attract private funding for education, economic development, antipoverty work, and more. The beauty of a legal solution that focuses on control by the elected official and spending to promote that official is that these public benefits can go on, uninterrupted.

But with officeholders' increasing reliance on private donors even outside of campaign season, requiring transparency and limiting donations by those seeking government business are crucial starting points for protecting government integrity. To ignore this growing problem of money in our politics, where a [handful of ultrarich donors](#) already wield grossly outsized influence, would ignore an unacceptable threat to representative democracy.

## A few politicians go after political ‘dark money’ with anti-corruption measure but is

## it just an act?

HR1 is designed to combat the secret political funding illustrated in the John Doe Files, leaked to the Guardian in 2016

[Ed Pilkington](#) in New York and [Sabrina Siddiqui](#) in Washington



The Guardian's John Doe files revealed then Wisconsin governor Scott Walker's links to corporate cash. Photograph: Carolyn Kaster/AP

The influence of "dark money" in American politics that allows billionaires to fund political campaigns through third-party groups without disclosing their involvement was put under the spotlight at a congressional hearing on Thursday, as [Democrats](#) use their newfound majority to crank up a sweeping new anti-corruption measure.

In the first hearing on the bill, known as HR1, the House administration committee examined how undisclosed donations from some of the country's richest individuals is distorting the way politicians are elected.

"The mechanics of our democracy - access to voting, running for office, holding government accountable - have undergone radical changes in recent years," Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, the committee's chairwoman, said while commencing the hearing.

She added: "These changes have tended to restrict the rights of eligible voters. It has made the voices of the wealthy and powerful so loud that they can drown out the voices of ordinary people."

The committee heard from a range of election experts, as well as from civil rights activists, who illuminated the impact of such "dark money" on the lives of ordinary people.

A key example of the corrosive influence of secret political funding presented before the committee was the John Doe Files, the vast tranche of documents leaked to the Guardian in 2016 and posted in their entirety on the Guardian website. [The 1,500 pages of material](#) exposed how big corporations and some of the wealthiest rightwing donors in the US used their fortunes to prop up prominent politicians, in some cases going on to extract political favors in return.



**Midterm big spenders: the top 20 political donors this election**

Peter Earle, one of the panelists, was poised to appear before the committee later in the hearing to detail the revelations of [the John Doe Files](#). A civil rights trial lawyer in Milwaukee, Earle has been suing the historic manufacturers of lead paint in a long-standing case designed to secure compensation for poisoned children as well as to generate funds needed to remove still existing toxic paint from hundreds of thousands of homes across the US.

"It is indeed a sad day for our democracy when a rich and powerful corporate CEO can deprive innocent victims of lead poisoning their day in court just because he could afford to secretly donate huge amounts of money to greedy and ruthless politicians," Earle will say, according to a copy of his written testimony.

"The only reason that this story is publicly known is because years after the secret six-figure donation and subsequent sweetheart legislation, a trove of previously secret documents was leaked to the Guardian newspaper by a valiant whistleblower."

The Guardian's documents revealed that the late owner of one of the largest historic makers of lead paint, NL Industries, had donated \$750,000 to a third-party group in Wisconsin that was heavily involved in helping the state's then governor Scott Walker fight a recall election. As the money was passed through a group, the identity of the donor, NL Industries' owner Harold Simmons, remained secret until the Guardian exposed it.

That meant that nobody was able to join the dots when, soon after Walker won the election, the Republican-controlled legislature in Wisconsin changed state law. Under the rule change, it became much more difficult for victims of lead paint poisoning, most of them children, to sue NL Industries and other former lead paint manufacturers for the damage inflicted on them.

Concern about the pervasive influence of undisclosed political donations by corporations and the super-rich has become a red hot issue, particularly among the new intake of young Democratic Congress members swept in by November's mid-term elections. The "corruption game" played by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez before the House Oversight committee in which she denounced campaign finance controls – or the lack of them – this week became the [most viewed video](#) of a politician's speech ever posted on Twitter.

In it she said: "We have a system that is fundamentally broken."

The Democratic party has chosen to mark its renewed dominance in the House of Representatives following the November elections by putting reform of America's stricken democracy at the top of its agenda. HR1, known as the [For The People Act](#), includes strong provisions designed to combat corruption by forcing all organizations involved in political activity, including so-called "social welfare" groups, to disclose large donors.

The bill is likely to be put to a House vote next month and is assured of passage through overwhelming Democratic support. It is almost certain to flounder, however, in the Republican-controlled Senate, given the [virulent opposition](#) from the party.

Mary Bottari, a researcher with the watchdog on money and politics, the Center for Media and Democracy, said Wisconsin should be seen as a cautionary tale for the nation. "Billionaires give huge amounts to aid politicians but because they gave it to a third-party group the public would never know."

Many senior figures in the current Republican party and Trump administration appear in the John Doe Files. Trump himself has a walk-on part: the leaked documents disclosed that he [made a donation of \\$15,000](#) following a personal visit from Scott Walker to Trump Tower in New York.

Another who [makes an appearance](#) in the documents is Nick Ayers, who has just stepped down as chief of staff to the vice president, Mike Pence. He has reportedly left the White House for a senior role in a super Pac that will be channeling money from big donors to Trump's 2020 re-election campaign.

Also prominent at Thursday's hearing was the issue of voting rights and efforts to restrict access to the polls that are predominantly aimed at people of color and students.

"The promise of this country is that every person has a voice and every person out to be counted," Chiraag Bains, the director of legal strategies at the public policy organization Demos, told the panel. "Our history has been one of struggle to make that promise a reality."

### **Larry Page And The Butt-Hole Banditos Of Google Are Such Very, Very, Angry People**

By Laura Winston

The HR people at Google, YouTube and the rest of the Google cartel, specifically seek out and hire Furies (people who dress up in dog and cat costumes in order to have sex), Fatties (obese women with tattoos, Betty Page haircuts and 50's outfits), Spikies (people with spiked hair and too much eye-liner), Nosies (People with a single nose ring), and other angry, social outcasts that love the anus but hate normal society. These kinds of people feel compelled to look weird, color their hair weird, be offended by everything and buy into the Google cult that Page carefully cultivates. Google is considered to be the most homosexual company in America. Google also has the highest STD rate of any company in America, has executives who hire the most sex workers of any company in America and has the most sex related lawsuits of any company.

People that work at Google are hired for their rage and their ability to aim it at whoever Larry Page hates that week.

## **[Google employees walk-out in protest of sexual misconduct ...](#)**

<https://www.cncb.com/2018/11/01/google-employees-walk-out-in-protest-of-sexual-misconduct-handling.html>

Nov 01, 2018 · Hundreds of **Google employees** will walk out of more than 20 offices around the world to protest the company's handling of sexual misconduct in the wake of a bombshell New York Times report.

## **[Google Walkout: Employees Stage Protest Over Handling of ...](#)**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/01/technology/google-walkout-sexual-harassment.html>

Nov 01, 2018 · Similar scenes played out in other cities around the world — from Singapore and Hyderabad, India, to Berlin, Zurich, London, Chicago and Seattle — as **Google employees** held a wave of walkouts ...

## [Google Employees Walk Out To Protest Company's Treatment Of ...](#)

<https://www.npr.org/2018/11/01/662851489/google-employees-plan-global-walkout-to-protest-companys-treatment-of-women>

Nov 01, 2018 · **Google employees** worldwide are walking off the job to protest the company's treatment of women and its handling of sexual assault cases. They walked out of **Google** offices at 11:10 a.m. local time ...

## [Google employees enjoy free gourmet food and naps at work ...](#)

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4665838/World-s-wackiest-workplace-look-inside-Google-offices.html>

**Google**, which was last week fined a record £2.1 billion by the EU for abusing its search engine monopoly, is known for its eccentric office spaces, with several of its global HQs featuring slides ...

## [Reporting Abuse Incidents - Google Support](#)

<https://support.google.com/a/answer/134413?hl=en>

Reporting **Abuse** Incidents. As a provider of content creation tools and hosting services, **Google** is not in a position to mediate or adjudicate disputes between third parties. For matters involving trademarks or impersonation, we recommend that you raise your concerns directly with the creator of the content in question.

## [Types of Abuse in the Workplace | Chron.com](#)

<https://work.chron.com/types-abuse-workplace-11426.html>

Workplace **abuse** is behavior that causes workers emotional or physical harm. Harassment, discrimination, bullying and violence are forms of workplace **abuse**. These behaviors aren't always distinguishable from one another because they frequently overlap.

## [The Legal Implications Of Data Abuse By Google Employees](#)

<https://thenextweb.com/us/2010/09/16/the-legal-implications-of-data-abuse-by-google-employees/>

A corporate slogan or motto is often a harmless doctrine designed to spice up a mission statement. Usually only new hires or those voyaging through the corporate website will stumble across this little bit of public relations. Unless that company is **Google** who starts off their official Code of Conduct with three simple words: Don't be evil.

## [48 Ways Managers Abuse Their Power and Destroy Employee ...](#)

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/48-ways-managers-abuse-power-destroy-employee-hanna>

48 Ways Managers **Abuse** Their Power and Destroy **Employee** Engagement Published on July 22, 2015 July 22, 2015 • 238 Likes • 50 Comments Hanna Hasl-Kelchner, M.B.A., J.D. Follow

## **Elon Musk, Larry Page, Vinod Khosla Are**

## **"Psychopaths" say SXSW Experts**

# Crazy at the wheel: psychopathic CEOs are rife in Silicon Valley, experts say

Attributes of a psychopath can be good for running a business, says SXSW panel, but weak HR departments and investors can enable bad behavior

Studies show a high prevalence of psychopaths among high-level executives in a corporate environment, compared to the general population. Photograph: Allstar/LIONS GATE/Sportsphoto Ltd./Allstar

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[Olivia Solon](#)

There is a high proportion of psychopathic CEOs in Silicon Valley, enabled by protective investors and weak human resources departments, according to a panel of experts [at SXSW](#) festival.

Although the term "psychopath" typically has negative connotations, some of the attributes associated with the disorder can be advantageous in a business setting.

"A true psychopath is someone that has a blend of emotional, interpersonal, lifestyle and behavioral deficits but an uncanny ability to mask them. They come across as very charming, very gregarious. But underneath there's a profound lack of remorse, callousness and a lack of empathy," said forensic and clinical psychologist Michael Woodworth, who has worked with psychopathic murderers in high security prisons, on Tuesday.

## Uber's 'hustle-oriented' culture becomes a black mark on employees' résumés

[Read more](#)

"They have certain characteristics like fearless dominance, boldness and a lack of emotion. Many successful presidents have scored highly [on the psychopathy scale]," said Woodworth.

According to recent studies there's a high prevalence of psychopathy among high-level executives in a corporate environment: 4-8% compared with [1% in the general population](#).

This makes sense, according to [Silicon Valley](#) venture capitalist Bryan Stolle because "it's an irrational act to start a company".

"You have to have a tremendous amount of ego [and] self-deception to embark on that journey," he said. "You have to make sacrifices and give up things, including sometimes a marriage, family and friends. And you have to convince other people. So they are mostly very charismatic, charming and make you suspend the disbelief that something can't be done."

However, the positive attributes are accompanied by manipulation.

"One of the main things that makes them extremely difficult to organisations is their willingness to manipulate through deception," said Jeff Hancock, a Stanford social scientist who studies psychopathy.

"Psychopaths will handpick people they can use as lackeys or supporters, such as someone in HR they can have in their wheelhouse," said Woodworth.

Because they are the founders and leaders they tend to get protected by HR. This reinforces the behaviour

*Jeff Hancock, Stanford social scientist*

However, when a psychopath isn't getting his or her way, they lose their veneer of charm. "When things aren't happening the way they thought they were going to happen, they tend to completely flip and resort to bullying," said Stolle.

At that point, according to Hancock, their "mask of sanity falls off".

"Because they are the founders and leaders they tend to get protected by HR," added Stolle. "This reinforces the behaviour."

He cited Uber and the [allegations of sexual harassment made by former employee Susan Fowler](#) as an example of a company with an HR department that's "gone in the wrong direction".



It's not just HR departments that enable psychopaths, but investors.

"When you've made an investment in an entrepreneur, you protect them. Everything is riding on that person. You are tied to them and now you have to keep ignoring the behaviour unless it gets so terrible you can't," said Stolle.

Having a psychopath within a company can lead to poor employee retention, said Hancock, referencing [FBI research](#) that found that departments managed by psychopaths decreases productivity and morale in the team.

"Eight to 14 people could be lost because of one psychopath. That's the real cost of having something like that in your organization, especially if there's an HR coverup," he added.

## Startup workers see sexual harassment on 'breathtaking' scale in Silicon Valley

Hancock has developed software to analyse the social media posts of public figures to see how they rate on the psychopathy scale thanks to identifiers in written language. "There tends to be an emotion deficit, they tend to use few words related to anxiety but a lot of hostile language," he said, adding that they write in a way that's disfluent and difficult to understand.

Psychopaths also find it difficult to modulate their language for different settings for example a private message versus a public post. Because they are more interested in themselves than others, they tend to refer to other people a lot less than non psychopaths.

This means that text-based communication is a much better way to communicate with someone you suspect is a psychopath, since it strips away their non-verbal distractors, such as charm and confidence.

"Text based communications improve your chances of not being manipulated as they are verbally not very skilled," said Hancock. "You can smoke them out in an online context."

## Beware: Eric Schmidt, Larry Page, David Drummond and the other Silicon Valley's cultists want to turn you into a disruptive deviant

[Evgeny Morozov](#)

High-tech giants are becoming more like the radical right as they launch populist crusade to block government regulation – and they have the technology to recruit believers

Back in August 2014, Mike Bulajewski, a Seattle-based designer with a penchant for psychoanalysis, published a fascinating essay. In [The Cult of Sharing](#), he argued that the best way to understand why so many users feel emotionally attached to such companies as [Uber](#) and [Airbnb](#) – even earning them the feel-good moniker "the sharing economy" – is by treating such communities as cults.

Like all good cults, such firms tap into our inner quest for solidarity and belonging, promising to fill our lives with meaning. By presenting their foes as enemies of innovation who want to destroy the new and deviant class of entrepreneurs, technology companies play on the perennial theme of persecution. And they stoke fears of conspiracy – involving governments, trade unions and big corporations – out to suppress all disruptive ideas.

That corporations strive to manipulate our aspirations is, of course, not news. Big brands have been dabbling in practices such as "greenwashing", convincing customers that buying their green products is the way to fight global warming.

But the sharing economy craze, argued Bulajewski, is far more pernicious: while greenwashing simply gives us the erroneous impression that we are saving the world through shopping, "sharewashing" turns us into everyday lobbyists for our favourite startup-cum-church.

Bulajewski's essay is useful in making sense of some recent efforts by technology companies to mobilise customers to fight government regulation. In fact, we might be witnessing the birth of a new, powerful and highly decentralised approach to lobbying, where citizens merge with the algorithms to neutralise any threat to their cult. By taking advantage of their superb technical knowhow and their unmatched ability to reach and mobilise millions of people in a matter of seconds, technology companies enjoy a definite advantage over the hapless regulators.

Consider last summer's high-profile public relations battle between [Uber and Bill de Blasio](#), mayor of New York, when the latter tried to limit the number of cars that Uber could operate in the city. Uber deployed all the conventional arguments, stating – not without some merit – that the mayor acted on behalf of the taxi industry and that Uber was good for minorities.

But [Uber](#) also added a De Blasio feature to its app – an unmissable "NO CARS – SEE WHY" sign placed on New York's map. On clicking it, users were told Uber would look like this if De Blasio won. Users were encouraged to email the mayor and the city council with a handy "EMAIL NOW" link. Eventually, De Blasio capitulated.

Facebook has recently deployed a similar tactic. Having run into trouble with the rollout of its [Free Basics initiative in India](#) – Free Basics is part of its controversial Internet.org efforts to connect the whole world on its own terms – Facebook called on its users to "save Free Basics". Presumably it was to be saved from its numerous critics, who argue that Free Basics violates net neutrality.

And [Facebook](#) was quick to offer its users a platform for saving it: its users in India saw a message that already contained a complaint – along with their name – that, at the click of a button, would be sent to the Indian government.

Of course, companies have been trying to mobilise their customer base – with the help of think-tanks, journalists and PR firms – for decades. Today, however, Uber and Facebook have the technology to generate immense popular support that would overwhelm any government. Facebook could do much more: by manipulating what news you see in your newsfeed, it can also "curate" your mood and make it more likely that you'll agree with a particular petition.

With such power to mobilise the masses, it's no wonder that these firms like to portray themselves as spiritual movements. Their religion is innovation and anyone who stands in its way must be either a heretic or have sold out to special, yet undisrupted, interests: mayors are said to be in bed with the taxi and hospitality industries; government regulators with the telecoms industry; European courts with the media industry.

In Silicon Valley's conception of the universe, everything is already rotten and corrupt and the only source of purity is to be found in Californian basements, where the hardworking and hoodie-wearing saints are toiling to accelerate progress.

Ideologically, Silicon Valley is rapidly coming to occupy the space traditionally reserved for the radical populists of the right. In a sense, Silicon Valley is like the cosmopolitan and tech-savvy equivalent of the Tea Party: the startup contingent wants us to believe that, while capitalism works in theory, today's practice is, in fact, very different.

Thus, public institutions have been co-opted by big (or, rather, bigger and older) business and it's now the citizens who have to pay the price – quite literally – through higher transportation and housing fares, restrictions on what they can do with their property and time, and so on. Worse, all those public institutions are a drag on entrepreneurs – the only class worth defending.

Hence Silicon Valley's policy proposals: once we deregulate most industries and let the disrupters in, this will lower the prices, unleash entrepreneurs, and awaken the masses from their sloth and slumber – the products of useless government interventions that took responsibility away from individuals. And the tech firms will push for that policy agenda with the extremely effective toolkit spanning every single innovation from online petitions to apps.

That such petitions might not matter in the long run is irrelevant: what matters is that they are being signed by the people, giving a populist feel to the overall effort. Old-school lobbyists, generously funded by venture capitalists, will do the rest.

Intriguingly, Silicon Valley's despair about the health of our public institutions is shared by the insurgent populists of the left, at least across Europe. The new political parties that sprang up in the past few years are a best testament to that.

From [Podemos](#) in Spain to Italy's Five Star Movement, they, too, have developed a robust communications machine that lets them mobilise their supporters.

These new parties do not share the deregulatory, highly individualistic agenda of Silicon Valley's right. Nor do they agree with its vision of the state as a mere bystander to the eternal disruption wreaked by technology companies.

Traditional parties, on the other hand, seem to be trapped in a host of prior commitments and missteps; the recent Spanish election is a case in point.

Unable to deviate from the standard neoliberal line of more labour market reforms and more privatisation, they can't offer a counter-programme to that of Silicon Valley, which simply pushes the logic of both privatisation and employment flexibility to their ultimate conclusions. Nor do they have the necessary infrastructure to mobilise their base.

The global fight to watch, then, is between two high-tech populisms – those of the left (represented by the new political parties) and those of the right (represented by Silicon Valley entrepreneurs).

Either way, it's clear that whoever controls the technology for mobilising our attention will eventually set the terms of the political debate – yet another argument for not surrendering it completely to Silicon Valley.

Everything has a history, including Silicon Valley. According to a [new media theorist](#), an influential Valley philosophy might underlie the current [attitudes, values, and beliefs](#):

There is a Silicon Valley religion, and it's one that doesn't particularly care for people — at least not in our present form. Technologists may pretend to be led by a utilitarian, computational logic devoid of superstition, but make no mistake: There is a prophetic belief system embedded in the technologies and business plans coming out of Google, Uber, Facebook, and Amazon, among others.

#### **DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF, "THE ANTI-HUMAN RELIGION OF SILICON VALLEY" AT MEDIUM**

In an excerpt from his new book, *Team Human* (2019), Rushkoff traces the history to a post-Cold War collaboration centered on Silicon Valley, aimed at first at preventing nuclear war, but branching gradually into a pursuit of immortality through digitization and AI:

Self-actualization through technology meant leaving the body behind — but this was okay since, in keeping with the gnostic tradition, the body was the source of human sin and corruption.

The cosmists talked about reassembling human beings, atom by atom, after death, moving one's consciousness into a robot and colonizing space. The cosmists pulled it all together for the fledgling American transhumanists: They believed human beings could not only transcend the limits of our mortal shell but also manifest physically through new machines. With a compellingly optimistic have-your-cake-and-eat-it-too gusto, the cosmists told America's LSD-taking spiritualists that technology could give them a way to beat death...

The idea that lit up the turned-on technoculture was that technology would be our evolutionary partner and successor — that humans are essentially computational, and computers could do computation better. Any ideas that could be construed to support this contention were embraced. **Douglas Rushkoff**, "[The Anti-Human Religion of Silicon Valley](#)" at *Medium*

Such a cult might help explain something: It's amazing how often the big tech companies get caught snooping and manipulating, as discussed in regular news media: [All Ears: Always-On Listening Devices Could Soon Be Everywhere](#) (*Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2019); [US regulators have met to discuss imposing a record-setting fine against Facebook for some of its privacy violations](#) (*Washington Post*, January 18, 2019); [If You Care About Privacy, Throw Your Amazon Alexa Devices Into the Sea](#) (*Gizmodo*, April 24, 2019); [Amazon Alexa: Illegally recording kids, privacy advocates allege](#) (*Futurism*, May 9, 2019); [Snapchat Employees Abused Data Access to Spy on Users](#) (*Vice*, May 23, 2019); [My Favorite Facebook Conspiracy Might be True](#) (*Medium*, May 19, 2019).

Or else they are ridiculously careless with data ([Google has stored some passwords in plaintext since 2005](#), *Wired*, May 21, 2019) —if carelessness is really what lay behind that. In an age where we are [constantly tracked](#) and our data is [being sold](#) (yes, even our [medical data](#)), that's like accidentally leaving cash lying around.

We surely don't need a cult-like atmosphere to explain why people are tempted by money, status, and power. The puzzling part is their seeming lack of ordinary insight into why others would find their behavior unacceptable. But if they believe the rest of us are doomed and anyway expendable, they would be oblivious to public opinion. They seem so out of touch it is almost funny. Well, it would be, if it weren't so serious.

In this TED talk, Rushkoff recounts a memorable meeting where top tech billionaires share their apocalyptic fears and fantasies:

See also: The idol [with feet of silicon](#): Religions based on artificial intelligence (AI) cannot transcend the limits of computers ([Robert J. Marks](#))

Tales of an [invented god](#) The most important characteristic of an AI cult is that its gods (Godbots?) will be created by the AI developers and not the other way around

AI as an [emergent religion](#) Science philosopher Mike Keas's new book discusses how AI and ET are merging, to create a religion of futuristmagic

and

Can we cheat death by uploading ourselves as [virtual AI entities?](#)

Two pictures appear in the *New York Sun*. The first is of Alix Tichelman, a thirty year old "hooker," and below that of her victim, 51 year old Timothy Hayes. We see Tichelman posing for a selfie in front of a mirror. She is holding a phone decorated with a Warhol print of Marilyn Monroe. She is wearing a tight corset and her upper body is all cleavage and undecipherable tattoos. One seems to be a frothing dog's snout and the other a toothy flower.

Hayes, on the other hand, is shown in windswept sunkissed glory on his yacht, "Escape," the picture of glowing if aging health. Behind him there's a sweeping glimpse of the bay and the shadowy shoulder of a man. Hayes is relaxed and semi-smiling, grasping a bottle of Corona or some other low key beer. He is paunchy in his classic dad sweater. Known as a wealthy Silicon Valley executive, he could be any man. He could be any bourgeois man. Despite dying of a heroin overdose with a prostitute, he will be eulogized as "A husband, father of five, and Google employee," while Alix is eternalized as "the call-girl killer" or "the harbor hooker."

Alix's morphology goes under the sign of the "suicide girl": dyed black hair, tattoos, dramatic makeup. A calculated hybrid of slut, goth, punk, manic pixie dream girl — she is a pie chart of late capitalist repressive desublimation. She is professionally uncivilized. And while she is rewarded for her gestural performance of "wildness," she can never escape sanction or find sanctuary. Another picture has her in a tawdry red room, in mismatched bikini and tattoo sleeves, leaning against a wall to accentuate the snake-like curve of her form. Insofar as the public knows, her scandalous case ends with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deporting her back to Canada, spatializing her stint as "other" of the month, reestablishing the borders. The story will be "Prostitute injected Google executive with heroin, finished her wine and left him to die." What the public doesn't know is much weirder and worse.

In Alix Tichelman's lair, the preparations are underway. She has starved herself for three days, enjoying the slow build of hunger. If she were a wolf, her coat would be dry at the roots and spit slick at the tips, her ribs would protrude and hollow, her eyes would be dim, rheumy, and grey, her head would bow to the ground and her once lush and alert tail would sag. She is not yet a wolf though. She is hairless and skinny, a haunt of a person. Amy Winehouse towards the end. Haggard and scratchily full-throated. She has plucked every follicle to make the transformation more spectacular. Her tattoos are fairly bristling with anticipation.

The rec room where the Werewolf Cult of Silicon Valley meet is almost complete. It has a ping pong table and a life-sized Spock pez dispenser. They've recently acquired a Robot Coupe J80 Ultra Automatic Juicer With Pulp Ejection (for \$5000, more or less — who needs spare change in the singularity?). On the wall there is a poster where the evolution of man is charted. First, a hunched ape. Then, a lumpy neanderthal. Man straightens out. He obtains a tool, a spear. He becomes the tool, sleek and strong, perfectly upright. And then his form blurs with a

stream of numbers. The tool's intelligence has surpassed man and encompassed him. He is the singularity. But how to broach this next step? For all the Google glasses and iPhone upgrades, the Werewolf Cult of Silicon Valley still feel the distance. They are sullen and lonely in their discrete, analog bodies — ravenous for transformation. There's something missing, a missing link.

It stands to reason, if animal can become human, then human can become pure information. And that analogy of evolution is where Alix comes in. On a dark web fetish site, they found her, "werewolf girl," spent months fantasizing, feeding on her animal ferocity and grace. Finally, came the epiphany — this was the final ingredient, the missing link. Animal/human amalgam as gateway to human/machine transcendence. They tinkered night and day to find the formula. A small army of azure screens irradiated in the dawn's mechanical light.

There is really nothing easier for the Werewolf Cult of Silicon Valley to do than rig a surveillance camera, make it appear that Alix watched Timothy slowly die of the heroin she injected into his arm, step over his body, enjoy her glass of wine, and escape out into the night. The blood ceremony was more complex. First, they had to hide from her sharp sense of smell, which could easily detect the hidden pack of men steaming with anticipation in the hull of the ship. Then, they needed to ensnare her at the precise moment when she entered the helpless throws of transformation from woman to wolf. Then there was the blood to obtain, the Rube-Goldberg-like twists and turns of its processing, and the ascension ritual to perform, all before she came to, starving, bloodthirsty and bewildered by the absence of her prey. The arrangements had been elaborate, time consuming, sending them to nerd heaven. And then the moment was here. She was really on "Escape." They were all wired up and ready, almost as excited to see her transformation as for their own ascendance.

It begins as a postural change. She catches a glimpse of the full moon and hunches as if in pain at the bright glare of it. She ducks her head. Spiny fur rips through the back of her shirt. Her nose elongates, morphing into a snout. Her jaw drops and a low moan emits from her throat. The claws tear at her fingers and toes and at that moment she cannot bear the pain of it, tucks her head between gristly muscled arms as if cowering before a master. She crouches and cries before giving way to her own deadly strength, arching her back, bathing gloriously and unashamed in the moonlight. It is right then, a hair's breadth before her full emergence, that they take her. A syringe sucks a tiny droplet of hot blood. Then the light speed distillation and transubstantiation. Water becomes wine. Blood becomes electricity. Men become gods. Alix's blood contains multitudes. They inject her, take her in. And then, the Werewolf Cult of Silicon Valley cease to exist as men. They distribute their particles, grid-like. It's as Tron as they hoped it would be with all the fun campy eighties vibe sucked out. They etherialize. In the annals it will be recorded as a case of male autochthony. But it was Alix's essence that galvanized it all. The mistress was mastered. The artist became muse — a gruelingly familiar story.

When she came to, her fangs screaming for Google Exec flesh, she found herself alone. There was a faint shimmering above and then nothing. The Werewolf Cult of Silicon Valley had left meat space for the great digital beyond. Who knows where they are hacking and haunting now? It was not the time or place to think about that. Starving, blood mad Alix had lost her prey. Not unlike the Alix in the fake footage, she lapped up some wine and leapt off "Escape." There could be no distinction now between innocent and non-innocent blood. There was only iron and heat. She sprinted from the harbor to the highway, smelling an injured animal. Soon her fur was blood drenched and she had the back half of a deer carcass in her teeth, nothing of its outsiders still in tact but two slender legs ending in poignantly cloven hooves. And it wasn't enough, it was never enough. The world was infrared with heat.

Later, restored to humanity, she will see flashes of carnage. Was it an unlucky transient? Was it a clueless tech bro? Or something else? One thing she did not second guess was her guilt. She owned it in the courtroom. One picture shows her looking past a patiently explaining lawyer, straight into the camera. Her black rimmed eyes shine with demonic glee. Her hair hangs with redolent carnality before her hunched form. She doesn't know who, exactly, it is she ate. But there is no doubt she is a predator.

It is possible that she sprinted from the Santa Cruz yacht harbor, up the 17 highway to San Jose. The pickings are easy. She would encounter a homeless encampment with a jaunty sign, "welcome to Googleville." The distraught forms would huddle against a fence, so lifeless they don't even bother to look up or defend themselves. In a night it would be possible to consume an entire illegal RV encampment packed with delectable janitors, baristas, adjunct instructors, waitresses, low level tech workers, preschool teachers, their skinny children, their scraggly dogs.

Or, alternately, she might have burst through and shattered the glass of the Googleplex, rampaging the office's open-floor plan, leaving only a trail of rectangular glasses and Pellegrino behind.

She suspects she took the easier route and dined on the surplus populations of Silicon Valley...

*...where the well-heeled can dine on gold-flecked steaks, \$500 tasting menus and \$29 loaves of bread... a new study suggests that 26.8% of the population — almost 720,000 people — qualify as "food insecure" based on risk factors such as missing meals, relying on food banks or food stamps, borrowing money for food, or neglecting bills and rent in order to buy groceries. Nearly a quarter are families with children... a survey of more than 4,000 students found about half have skipped meals due to the cost... a family of four earning \$84,750 or less in Santa Clara County is considered low-income... the median price of a family home has reached a new high of \$1,125m, while the supply of homes continues to shrink... These realities mean food insecurity cuts across lines of race, age and employment status... Martina Rivera, a 52-year-old mental health nurse, explained that her troubles began when her entire building was evicted last year... Mass evictions have swept the area as landlords seek higher-paying tenants... "Because I breastfed my daughter, I feel like I'm passing that stress and depression on to her," she said during an interview in Spanish... The firm, in announcing the purchase of the 48-unit Buckingham Apartments, said that its goal was to "rebrand" and "revitalize" the property, raise the rents, and attract "young working professionals" employed at "Google, Facebook, and other Fortune 100 tech companies"... Prior to Trion's \$15m purchase of the property, rents were 40% below market value, the company said in a press release, noting that it "presented an opportunity... to maximize rent growth"... "While rents will be increasing at this property, we would, of course, be delighted to have the original residents come back to this building as residents in the renovated units if they would like to"... Numerous studies have shown that, although the region depends on low-wage service workers who support the tech economy, only the ultra-wealthy can afford to live near their jobs. In Silicon Valley, roughly 70,000 low-income workers now commute more than 50 miles to work... "You're always thinking and worrying. It's something that is always with me"... "We are being forced to move. This is our home"... Between 2000 and 2013, the number of low-income households in the Bay Area increased by 10%, but the region lost 50% units defined affordable for this population... "It's a form of gaslighting to have these companies doing so many harmful things telling you how great they are and how much they are helping you. It's another form of abuse"... Veiled by the yellow willows and brush along a forgotten creek bed in San Jose, hundreds of people jerry-built a treehouse and constructed underground bunkers and ramshackle lean-tos to form one of the nation's largest homeless encampments... In 2013, San Jose and the surrounding Santa Clara County estimated almost 7,600 homeless people, more than in San Francisco. And 75% of them were sleeping outside, on sidewalks, in parks and under freeway embankments — a percentage greater than in any other major U.S. metropolitan area... "You need to work five minimum-wage jobs to afford to live here"... Three-quarters of the area's 7,567 homeless residents are from Santa Clara County. Most of them live in one of San Jose's 247 tent cities, just miles from the sprawling headquarters of Google and Apple... They've submitted rental applications for more than 20 apartments, he said, but the waiting lists are up to two years long... They ended up here after trying to move from a two-story apartment to a one-floor place to accommodate his wife, who is disabled. But the landlord of the apartment they found turned them away at the last second, and by then, their old apartment had already been rented out... "I'd sleep at the college, they'd bus me here... Anywhere I went, [police] would harass me," he said. "Once I came here, they stopped harassing me."*

The Werewolf Cult of Silicon Valley had no need to literalize their ascendance into the singularity. They had already absented themselves from this human suffering, cordoning themselves off in their privatized buses and social spaces. They were already gone.

Alix's brand of werewolf is borrowed from the great 1981 film *Wolfen*, directed by Michael Wadleigh, whose only other films are avant garde counter-culture documentaries. That film can be read as a treatise on the failed political dreams of the sixties and the rise of deindustrialized wastelands along-side gentrified class war fortresses that was to follow. In *Cartographies of the Absolute*, Roberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle read this film as a model of cognitive mapping, unveiling "the collapse of radical politics and the emergence of a feral neoliberalism against a backdrop of urban dereliction and redevelopment." The werewolves are at first compared to anti-colonial Native Americans and radical student leftists. They even go so far as to kill billionaire developers and destroy a model for an upscale apartment complex to be built on the wolves' rewilded south Bronx hunting grounds. However, these brutal, majestic creatures are denied heroic status. They fight redevelopment because they want to continue preying on the surplus populations that haunt the deindustrialized South Bronx. Finally Toscano and Kinkle compare the wolves to gentrifying artists who form symbiotic relationships with the downtrodden, not as allies, but as predator and prey. No, there was no heroism at the end of the tunnel for Alix, just the insurance of ever-replenishing blood.

I would have preferred to model Alix's werewolf after the lush feminist werewolf film, *The Company of Wolves*, based on a short story by Angela Carter. In this retelling of the Little Red Riding Hood fairy tale, the sexual implications of Riding Hood's red cape are allowed to unfurl. In a misty fairy land, a young girl learns to trust her sexual power, turns the tables on an aggressive huntsman who stalks her, refuses to either be the passive object of his desire or to deny her own agency. Instead, her transformation into a werewolf is a phantasmal symbol of a woman coming into her own sexuality and voice, emerging from passivity and revelling in her untamed power.

I wish this kind of heroine was available to me, that I could delink my depiction of feminist avenger from the din of suffering that pervades the Silicon Valley and its surrounds. I want to escape the homeless wastelands for a misty, mythic forest. There, Alix could become a true singularity, overriding the typologies that rise and fall with the bubbles and bursts of the tech economy, including that of the high class prostitute toying with her emotionally damaged tech worker prey. I would like to rewind Alix, make her violence libidinal and pure, to have her run with the wolves, unleash her pure carnality, harness the fantasy of a thousand second-wave feminists howling at the atavistic, elemental, matriarchal, transformational power of the moon. But Alix is pure modernity — predator and prey; both of whom are locked into the Tron-like grid of capitalism's singularity. In the courtroom we see Alix is neither wild nor free. As in the bleak post-war chiaroscuro of film noir, the shadow of bars falls across her face, darkening her defiant glare.

In a moment when crisis and stasis lurk around every corner, it is hard to tell any story, but especially this one. The myth of the werewolf typically references sexual maturation. Her newly awoken hirsute desires are easily translatable to puberty, when carnality stirs and freaks-out a previously innocent child. From there, werewolf myths can go a few different ways. They can be allegories for the primal sin of irrational, destructive, immoral, uncivilized, irresponsible sex. With this interpretation comes a world view that insists on repressing instinct, and thereby nature. Or, the werewolf may be an emblem of spontaneous, liberated, gloriously carnal and embodied sexual empowerment. This is the romantic view of the werewolf, connecting her to nature, obliterating boundaries between human and animal, signifying a desire to return to premodern forms of living.

But here, at the end of the world, where the Werewolf cults of Silicon Valley rampage and party in an etherialized, Walpurgisnacht death dance, sponsored by elite vitamin waters, are either of these narratives available to Alix? She who has been forced to commodify and rationalize her sex? She who must eat or be eaten? She for whom there is no outside, wilderness,

or past that offers escape?

The chiaroscuro prison bars fall across the Silicon Valley as predator and prey howl in auto-tuned harmony, while rewired marshes, densely populated with the unhoused, reflect in the mirrored glass of tomorrow's sleek neo-feudal death-yachts whose seasteading captains sacrifice the undocumented to a bitcoin sea-monster-god, the rival of she whose name shall never be spoken until the last hacked moonscape turns blood orange and evaporates into the singularity's cruel libertarian nightmare, from which our feral hearts must by force be awakened.

- [WSJ: Former Israeli PM And Head Of Israeli Military Intelligence Ehud Barak Visited Jeffrey Epstein's Apartment Monthly](#)

By

Douglas MacMillan

## GOOGLE'S FILTHY SECRET ABOUT HOW LARRY PAGE RAPES YOUR PRIVACY

Google said a year ago it would [stop its computers from scanning the inboxes of Gmail users](#) for information to personalize advertisements, saying it wanted users to "remain confident that Google will keep privacy and security paramount."

But the internet giant continues to let hundreds of outside software developers scan the inboxes of millions of Gmail users who signed up for email-based services offering shopping price comparisons, automated travel-itinerary planners or other tools. Google does little to police those developers, who train their computers—and, in some cases, employees—to read their users' emails, a Wall Street Journal examination has found.

One of those companies is Return Path Inc., which collects data for marketers by scanning the inboxes of more than two million people who have signed up for one of the free apps in Return Path's partner network using a Gmail, [Microsoft Corp.](#) or Yahoo email address. Computers normally do the scanning, analyzing about 100 million emails a day. At one point about two years ago, Return Path employees read about 8,000 unredacted emails to help train the company's software, people familiar with the episode say.

In another case, employees of Edison Software, another Gmail developer that makes a mobile app for reading and organizing email, personally reviewed the emails of hundreds of users to build a new feature, says Mikael Berner, the company's CEO.

Letting employees read user emails has become "common practice" for companies that collect this type of data, says Thede Loder, the former chief technology officer at eDataSource Inc., a rival to Return Path. He says engineers at eDataSource occasionally reviewed emails when building and improving software algorithms.



Google CEO Sundar Pichai spoke about Gmail features at a Google conference in May. PHOTO: JEFF CHIU/ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Some people might consider that to be a dirty secret," says Mr. Loder. "It's kind of reality."

Neither Return Path nor Edison asked users specifically whether it could read their emails. Both companies say the practice is covered by their user agreements, and that they used strict protocols for the employees who read emails. eDataSource says it previously allowed employees to read some email data but recently ended that practice to better protect user privacy.

Google, a unit of [Alphabet Inc.](#), [GOOGL -0.64%](#) says it provides data only to outside developers it has vetted and to whom users have explicitly granted permission to access email. Google's own employees read emails only "in very specific cases where you ask us to and give consent, or where we need to for security purposes, such as investigating a bug or abuse," the company said in a written statement.

This examination of email data privacy is based on interviews with more than two dozen current and former employees of email app makers and data companies. The latitude outside developers have in handling user data shows how even as Google and other tech giants have touted efforts to tighten privacy, they have left the door open to others with different oversight practices.

[Facebook Inc.](#) for years let outside developers gain access to its users' data. That practice, which Facebook has said it stopped by 2015, spawned a scandal when the social-media giant this year said it suspected one developer of [selling data on tens of millions of users to a research firm with ties to President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign](#). The episode led to [renewed scrutiny from lawmakers and regulators](#) in the U.S. and Europe over how internet companies protect user information.

## How Data Miners See Your Email

**Email data collectors use software to scan millions of messages a day, looking for clues about consumers that they can sell to marketers, hedge funds and other businesses. Here are a few things they look for:**

There is no indication that Return Path, Edison or other developers of Gmail add-ons have misused data in that fashion. Nevertheless, privacy advocates and many tech industry executives say opening access to email data risks similar leaks.

For companies that want data for marketing and other purposes, tapping into email is attractive because it contains shopping histories, travel itineraries, financial records and personal communications. Data-mining companies commonly use free apps and services to hook users into giving up access to their inboxes without clearly stating what data they collect and what they are doing with it, according to current and former employees of these companies.

Gmail is especially valuable as the world's dominant email service, with 1.4 billion users. Nearly two-thirds of all active email users globally have a Gmail account, according to [comScore](#), and Gmail has more users than the next 25 largest email providers combined. The data miners generally have access to other email services besides Gmail, including those from Microsoft and [Verizon Communications Inc.](#)'s Oath unit, formed after the company acquired email pioneer Yahoo. Those are the next two largest email providers, according to comScore.

Oath says access to email data is considered "on a case-by-case basis" and requires "express consent" from users. A Microsoft spokeswoman says it is committed to protecting customers' privacy and that its terms of use for developers prohibit accessing customer data without consent, and provide guidelines for how data can and can't be used. Neither company's privacy or developer policies mention allowing people to see user data.

## Google Got Mail

**Gmail, which debuted in 2004, has a far larger market share than its top two rivals.**

Note: Numbers add to more than 100% because users can have more than one account; data from 2012 include desktop users only; data from 2018 include mobile and desktop

Source: comScore


Google's developer agreement prohibits exposing a user's private data to anyone else "without explicit opt-in consent from that user." Its rules also bar app developers from making permanent copies of user data and storing them in a database.

Developers say Google does little to enforce those policies. "I have not seen any evidence of human review" by Google employees, says Zvi Band, the co-founder of Contactually, an email app for real-estate agents. He says Contactually has never had employees review emails with their own eyes.

Google said it manually reviews every developer and application requesting access to Gmail. The company checks the domain name of the sender to look for anyone who has a history of abusing Google policies, and reads the privacy policies to make sure they are clear. "If we ever run into areas where disclosures and practices are unclear, Google takes quick action with the developer," a spokesman said.

Google says it lets any user revoke access to apps at any point. Business users of Gmail can also restrict access to certain email apps to the employees in their organization, the company said, "ensuring that only apps that have been vetted and are trusted by their organization are used."

Google has contended with privacy concerns since it launched Gmail in 2004. The company's software scanned email messages and sold ads across the top of inboxes related to their content. That year, 31 privacy and consumer groups [sent a letter](#) to Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin saying the practice "violates the implicit trust of an email service provider." Google responded that other email providers were already using computers to scan email to protect against spam and hackers, and that showing ads helped offset the cost of its free service.



Google co-founders Larry Page, left, and Sergey Brin PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS; AFP/GETTY IMAGES

While some users complained the ads were creepy, people signed up for Gmail in droves.

Between 2010 and 2016, Google faced at least three lawsuits, brought by student users of Google apps as well as a broader set of email users, who accused it of violating federal wiretapping laws. Google, in its legal defense, emphasized that its privacy policy for Gmail said that "no human reads your email to target ads or related information to you without your consent." Google settled one of the lawsuits; the other two were dismissed.

In 2014, Google said it would [stop scanning Gmail inboxes of student](#), business and government users. In June of last year, it said it was halting all Gmail scanning for ads.

Meanwhile, Google in 2014 started promoting Gmail as [a platform for developers](#) to leverage the contents of users' email to develop apps for such productivity tasks as scheduling meetings. A new Gmail version launched this spring adds a link next to inboxes to a curated menu of 34 add-ons, including one that offers to track users' outgoing emails to report whether recipients open them.

Google says apps make Gmail more useful. Turning Gmail into a platform emulates Microsoft's Windows and [Apple](#) Inc.'s iPhone, which attracted outside developers to make their software more useful to corporate users.



Attendees worked on their laptops during the annual Google I/O Developers Conference in May. PHOTO: DAVID PAUL MORRIS/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Google doesn't disclose how many apps have access to Gmail. The total number of email apps in the top two mobile app stores, for Apple's iOS and Android, jumped to 379 last year, from 142 five years earlier, according to researcher App Annie. Most can link to Gmail and other major providers.

Almost anyone can build an app that connects to Gmail accounts using Google's software called an application programming interface, or API. When Gmail users open one of these apps, they are shown a button asking permission to access their inbox. If they click it, Google grants the developer a key to access the entire contents of their inbox, including the ability to read the contents of messages and send and delete individual messages on their behalf. Microsoft also offers API tools for email.

With Gmail, the developers who get this access range from one-person startups to large corporations, and their processes for protecting data privacy vary.

Return Path, based in New York, gains access to inboxes when users sign up for one of its apps or one of the 163 apps offered by Return Path's partners. Return Path gives the app makers software tools for managing email data in return for letting it peer into their users' inboxes.

Return Path's system is designed to check if commercial emails are read by their intended recipients. It provides customers including [Overstock.com](#) Inc. a dashboard where they can see which of their marketing messages reached the most customers. Overstock didn't respond to a request for comment.

## FROM GOOGLE'S PRIVACY POLICY

The company's privacy policy stipulates when it shares personal information:

*We do not share your personal information with companies, organizations, or individuals outside of Google except in the following cases:*

*With your consent*

*We'll share personal information outside of Google when we have your consent. For example, if you use Google Home to request a ride from a ride-sharing service, we'll get your permission before sharing your address with that service. We'll ask for your explicit consent to share any sensitive personal information.*

[Google's Complete Privacy Policy](#)

Marketers can view screenshots of some actual emails—with names and addresses stripped out—to see what their competitors are sending. Return Path says it doesn't let marketers target emails specifically to users.

Navideh Forghani, 34 years old, of Phoenix, signed up this year for Earmy Inc., a tool that compares receipts in inboxes to prices across the web. When Earmy finds a better price for items its users purchase, it automatically contacts the sellers and obtains refunds for the difference, which it shares with the users.

Earmy had a partnership with Return Path, which connected its computer scanners to Ms. Forghani's email and began collecting and processing all of the new messages that arrived in her inbox. Ms. Forghani says she didn't read Earmy's privacy policy closely and has never heard of Return Path. "It is definitely concerning," she says of the information collection.

Matt Blumberg, Return Path's chief executive, says users are given clear notice that their email will be monitored. All of Return Path's partner apps mention the email monitoring on their websites, he says, and Earmy's privacy policy states that Return Path would "have access to your information and will be permitted to use that information according to their own privacy policy."

Oded Vakrat, Earmy's CEO, says his company doesn't sell or share data with any outside companies. Earmy users can opt out of Return Path's email monitoring, he says. "We are actively looking for ways to improve and go above and beyond with how we communicate our privacy policy," he says.



Matt Blumberg, chief executive of Return Path, which collects data for marketers, says users of its email apps are given clear notice that their email will be monitored. PHOTO:JENNI LILLIE

Return Path says its computers are supposed to strip out personal emails from what it sends into its system by examining senders' domain names and searching for specific words, such as "grandma." The computers are supposed to delete such emails.

In 2016, Return Path discovered its algorithm was mislabeling many personal emails as commercial, according to a person familiar with the matter. That meant millions of personal messages that should have been deleted were passing through to Return Path's servers, the person says.

To correct the problem, Return Path assigned two data analysts to spend several days reading 8,000 emails and manually labeling each one, the person says. The data helped train the company's computers to better distinguish between personal and commercial emails.

Return Path declined to comment on details of the incident, but said it sometimes lets employees see emails when fixing problems with its algorithms. The company uses "extreme caution" to safeguard privacy by limiting access to a few engineers and data scientists and deleting all data after the work is completed, says Mr. Blumberg.

Jules Polonetsky, CEO of the nonprofit Future of Privacy Forum, says he thinks users want to know specifically whether humans are reviewing their data, and that apps should explain that clearly.



How Earmy asks Gmail users for permission to scan their email. Redaction by The Wall Street Journal.

At Edison Software, based in San Jose, Calif., executives and engineers developing a new feature to suggest "smart replies" based on emails' content initially used their own emails for the process, but there wasn't enough data to train the algorithm, says Mr. Berner, the CEO.

Two of its artificial-intelligence engineers signed agreements not to share anything they read, Mr. Berner says. Then, working on machines that prevented them from downloading information to other devices, they read the personal email messages of hundreds of users—with user information already redacted—along with the system's suggested replies, manually indicating whether each made sense.

Neither Return Path nor Edison mentions the possibility of humans viewing users' emails in their privacy policies.

Mr. Berner says he believes Edison's privacy policy covers this practice by telling users the company collects and stores personal messages to improve its artificial-intelligence algorithms. Edison users can opt out of data collection, he says. The practice, he says, is similar to a telephone company technician listening to a phone line to make sure it is working.