

# The author of Musk’s biography suggests his IQ is low, with no evidence of exceptional intelligence

Attorney, journalist, and Elon Musk biographer Seth Abramson took to X Thursday evening and Friday to dismantle Musk’s intellectual reputation, targeting both the billionaire himself and his supporters who often use Musk’s purported IQ as [evidence of his brilliance](#). “You are in a cult,” he said in one of his posts, before adding that Musk “has zero *personal* intellectual achievements.”

“As an Elon Musk biographer, I would estimate his IQ to be between 100 and 110,” Abramson tweeted Thursday afternoon. “There’s zero evidence in his biography of anything higher. And I want to repeat that now, lest you think it’s a typo. There’s no evidence, from his life history, of Musk having anything above a 110 IQ.”

After stepping away from the platform (“on the basis of this not being a platform worth spending time on”), Abramson returned Friday morning to find his original message had gone viral among online MAGA communities. [He then commented further](#), “because Nate Silver thinks Carlyle’s 1800s theory of history, the Great Man Theory, is still relevant to historians in 2025,” continuing his critique of Musk’s supposed genius.

What followed was a series of messages aimed at debunking the idea of Musk as a visionary. Musk “was sued for stealing the idea for Zip2—which fired him as soon as investors got involved” and “was about to ruin PayPal after merging with it—again, he was fired.” He then “invested in Tesla when it was struggling and quickly began driving it into the ground.”

He was sued for stealing the idea for Zip2—which fired him as soon as investors got involved. He was about to ruin PayPal after his company merged with it—again, he was fired. He invested in Tesla when it was struggling and quickly began driving it into the ground.

– Seth Abramson (@SethAbramson) February 21, 2025

Musk co-founded Zip2 with his brother, which was described as “a kind of digital Yellow Pages” by Belmont Hill School’s *The Panel Online*. The site reported that in an effort to impress investors, Musk “created a large, fake casing around the Zip2 computer to make it appear as an advanced supercomputer”—a tactic that worked. However, the investors only agreed to contribute \$3 million after Musk agreed to step down so that “someone more experienced” could take over. The code, which Musk had taught himself, was later found to be so poorly written that most of it had to be rewritten by more skilled programmers.

Musk returned to Zip2 as CEO and made a financial gain when the company was sold to COMPAQ in 1999, using his \$22 million share to fund “an internet bank” at X.com. This company later merged with PayPal, and Musk was appointed CEO after the merger in April 2000, though he was removed from that role six months later.

I consider Elon Musk's idea for SpaceX to be more or less the only genuinely good idea he has ever publicly had, though it required significant help from a powerful Black man for it to succeed, which may explain Musk's resentment toward the former president now.

– Seth Abramson (@SethAbramson) February 21, 2025

As Abramson continued, SpaceX was “Musk’s only truly successful and innovative company,” but much of its success can be attributed to President Obama, who Musk “lobbied successfully” after “Russians laughed Musk out of Moscow.”

“The Boring Company is a failure,” Abramson added, “its only notable product being an illegal flamethrower, which has caused legal trouble and cannot be shipped legally.” Meanwhile, Musk’s Neuralink is “plagued by ethical investigations,” with Musk contributing none of its science.

“Everything Musk has said about Twitter/X was a lie,” Abramson added, “and business schools will teach how he ruined this platform for the next two centuries.”

“Feel free to Google all the things Musk did to scam people into thinking he’d made a successful foray into robotics,” Abramson continued. “It does not take intelligence to throw money around and buy a company or buy a politician. Anyone would/could.”

“It does not take intelligence to, having thrown money at a politician, use the clout you accrued from that to advantage your own businesses—businesses you know you have no real part in the success of, which is why you manipulate their patents to conceal that fact.”

“If you assign intelligence to just spending money, you’re in a cult,” he concluded. “If you attach intelligence to simply owning a successful company whose day-to-day work you have nothing to do with and who you’re actually more of a hindrance to than a help, you’re in a cult.”

It’s also a particularly American problem to confuse wealth with intelligence and corporations with their owners. In most of the world, this conversation would seem utterly absurd, as once again, there’s no evidence of Musk having *intellectual* achievements.

– Seth Abramson (@SethAbramson) February 21, 2025

At the end of his series of posts, Abramson observed, “It’s also a particularly American problem to confuse wealth with intelligence and corporations with their owners. In much of the world, this conversation would seem ridiculous, as once again, there’s no evidence of Musk having *intellectual* achievements.”

“I don’t find IQ to be a useful measure,” he added. “I introduced the term here because it’s used by *Musk’s fans* as supposed proof of his intelligence—though none of them have any proof that he’s ever taken an IQ test.”