

Google's Investor's Ordered Federal Agencies To Sabotage Their Competitors!

FCC, Dept. of Energy, EPA, DOT cooperated with running hit-jobs, black-lists, stone-walling, slow-walking and application rejections against the competitors of Google's VC's and investors in almost every case. XP Vehicles and Bright Automotive were cut-off on orders from Google and Google investors.

Visitor logs show Google's unrivaled White House access

By [Johnny Kampis](#) /



Creative Commons/Tom Lohdan

OUR DOOR IS OPEN: Google officials have visited the White House more than once a week on average since President Barack Obama took office.

A project examining [White House visitor logs](#) shows the Obama administration has extended an open door to Google.

[Johanna Shelton](#), Google's director of public policy — in effect, the company's top lobbyist — has visited White House officials 128 times since President Barack Obama took office in 2009.

To put that in perspective, senior lobbyists for other companies in the telecommunications and cable industry — including Comcast, Facebook, Amazon, Oracle and Verizon — have visited the White House a combined 124 times in the same span. (That data goes through October 2015.)

The Google Transparency Project, the work of Campaign for Accountability, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to expose corporate influence on government, identified policy pushers for the 50 biggest lobbying spenders and [counted how many times they appeared in the White House visitor logs](#).

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Alphabet Inc., the parent company of Google, [spent \\$16.6 million on lobbying in 2015](#). That was the twelfth most of any company, and the [most by a technology firm](#), just above AT&T's \$16.4 million and Comcast's \$15.7 million.

Anne Weismann, executive director of the Campaign for Accountability, told Watchdog.org those logs don't reveal the discussion of the meetings, just who attended them.

"You don't know what the meetings are about, but the fact that someone has that level of access at the White House is revealing," she said. "It certainly suggests a level of influence."

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Shelton far outpaced her peers. The second most frequent White House visitor, with 75 visits, was [Alissa Fox](#), senior vice president of the Office of Policy and Representation for Blue Cross/Blue Shield (again, essentially a mouthful of a title for head lobbyist.)

Oil companies in the top 50 visited 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue a combined 101 times, and defense contractors in the top 50 came 89 times since 2009. Shelton visited the White House more than 18 of the top 50 lobbying spenders combined.



AP file photo

SHHHH: President Barack Obama and his top advisers meet frequently with representatives of tech industry giant Google.

Shelton didn't return a call from Watchdog.org seeking comment about the White House visits. Google media relations didn't respond to an email seeking comment.

"It suggests, given the intrusion of the Obama administration into the internet and health care, the idea these companies are independent of the government is quaint," said Tom Fitton, president of [Judicial Watch](#), a conservative foundation promoting transparency and accountability in government.

Fitton said the Obama administration wants to regulate the internet like a public utility, so he can't blame Google for beating a trail to the White House.

"The government wants to turn these companies into socialized entities," he said. "I'm surprised Google isn't there twice as much."

"With Obama's destruction of the health care industry, evidently Blue Cross didn't go there enough," Fitton joked.

He pointed out, however, that because the White House isn't subject to the Freedom of Information Act, the public can't be sure the logs reflect all the visits that are made.

Google's open door

In all, employees of Google and related companies [visited the White House 427 times](#), or more than once a week over a period of nearly seven years. Those trips included 363 meetings in total, attended by 169 Google employees — from executives to software engineers — and 182 officials from the White House.

Weismann said the transparency project hasn't crunched the numbers for total visits by other companies among the top 50 lobbying spenders.

The Google Transparency Project examination includes large events such as parties, state dinners and industry conferences. The majority of these meetings were likely between small groups of company officials and key White House officials, "meetings at which public policies are likely to have been discussed," the Campaign for Accountability wrote.



LinkedIn photo

SHELTON: Google's top liaison to the Obama administration has visited the White House more than 18 of the top 50 lobbying spenders combined.

At least 21 of those meetings included Obama, and a similar number included such high-ranking political and economic advisers as current White House chief of staff Denis McDonough, former chiefs of staff Jack Lew (now Treasury secretary), Bill Daley, Pete Rouse and Rahm Emanuel, senior adviser Valerie Jarrett and economic adviser Jeffrey Zients.

Of Shelton's 128 visits, 94 included meetings with White House officials (she has also, for example, ferried Google Science Fair winners there), and four of those meetings involved Obama.

"That's a lot of meetings for one individual to have," Weismann said.

White House logs are not available for previous administrations; Obama was the first president to make that information available for public inspection.

A document showed that the George W. Bush administration's Energy Task Force met with energy industry officials at least 40 times in 2001 in preparation for creating a new national energy policy, [reported the Washington Post in 2007.](#)

The administration went to court to try to keep the task force records private.

A little help from their friends?

Before working at Google, Shelton was senior counsel for telecommunications and internet issues for the House Energy and Commerce Committee and served as counsel on similar issues for Rep. Rick Boucher, D-Virginia. She also held multiple senior positions at the Federal Communications Commission.

A host of other former Google executives [have ended up working in the administration](#), including U.S. Chief Technology Officer [Megan Smith](#).

[Shelton has most commonly met](#) with David Edelman, senior adviser for technology and economic policy, (13 meetings) and Victoria Espinel, intellectual property enforcement coordinator (12 meetings.) Shelton has met with 48 White House officials in all.

Of particular note for government watchdogs are the flurry of meetings by Shelton and other important Google representatives around the time the Federal Trade Commission was considering an antitrust case against the company in 2011. The FTC looked into whether Google's business practices in searches and advertising was shutting out competitors and harming consumers. Namely, regulators investigated to see if Google favored its own companies in search results.

[Google Transparency Project lists a number of meetings](#) that took place in 2011 and 2012 during that investigation. Of particular note is this one: Shelton, Google director of product management Hunter Walk and Raben Group lobbyist Courtney Snowden met with White House domestic policy counsel Steve Robinson on April 17, 2012. Raben Group was one of the lobbying firms Google retained to help with the FTC antitrust case.

In January 2013, Google reached a settlement with the FTC, agreeing to allow competitor access to patents "on critical standardized technologies needed to make popular devices such as smart phones, laptop and tablet computers, and gaming consoles," [the FTC said in a press release](#).

The FTC did not, however, find that Google gamed the search-engine system.

"The evidence the FTC uncovered through this intensive investigation prompted us to require significant changes in Google's business practices. However, regarding the specific allegations that the company biased its search results to hurt competition, the evidence collected to date did not justify legal action by the Commission," said Beth Wilkinson, outside counsel to the FTC. "Undoubtedly, Google took aggressive actions to gain advantage over rival search providers. However, the FTC's mission is to protect competition, and not individual competitors. The evidence did not demonstrate that Google's actions in this area stifled competition in violation of U.S. law."

Google could face record antitrust fine in Europe after skating by in U.S.

By [Johnny Kampis](#) / May 18, 2016 / News / [No Comments](#)



Part 2 of 3 in the series [The Google Administration](#)

Google could be slapped with a record 3 billion euro fine (about \$3.4 billion) from the [European Commission](#) in an antitrust case that has dragged on since 2010.

The company is accused of promoting its shopping service over rival services in internet searches on its website .

Google faced a similar case in the United States, when the Federal Trade Commission began looking into the company's search-engine practices in 2011. The company reached a settlement with the FTC in 2013 that allowed competitors access to patents on critical standardized technologies needed for a variety of devices such as phones and laptops, but the FTC didn't find that Google gamed the search-engine system.



Creative Commons/Jon Russell

GOOGLE: The tech giant could face a record fine from the European Commission for allegedly gaming search-engine results.

Watchdog.org reported Monday that the Obama administration has extended an open door to Google, with company officials visiting the White House at least 427 times since Obama took office in January 2009. The data comes from [Google Transparency Project](#), the work of Campaign for Accountability.

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As part of its regular visits to the White House, Google held several meetings that could have been related to the FTC case.

For example, on April 17, 2012, Google's top lobbyist Johanna Shelton, product management director Hunter Walk and Raben Group lobbyist Courtney Snowden met with White House domestic policy counsel Steve Robinson. Google retained Raben Group in July 2011 to assist with the FTC case.

On Oct. 31 and Nov. 13, 2012, Shelton and Google competition counsel Matthew Bye met with Office of Science and Technology Policy senior internet adviser David Edelman. Prior to joining Google, Bye advised on antitrust matters at the FTC general counsel's office.

Google evidently has less pull with the European Union watchdog. [Reuters reports](#) that Google has tried and failed several times to reach a compromise with the European Commission in the past six years and now has no plans to try again to settle.

The commission can fine companies up to 10 percent of their annual sales, equating to Google having to cough up as much as 6.6 billion euros, but [the Sunday Telegraph reported](#) the fine would likely be half that and be imposed in June.

Still, that would be nearly three times the amount of the previous largest antitrust fine, the 1.1 billion euros slapped on chip-maker Intel by the commission in 2009.

Google's Android operating system has also drawn regulatory scrutiny by the commission for the way its own apps come pre-installed on devices.

Berin Szoka, president of [TechFreedom](#), said the possible fine smacks of a European money grab.

"This is just, frankly, tax revenue," he said. "It's a way of taking money out of an American company's pockets and putting it into the pockets of the great bureaucratic behemoth in Brussels. And by the way, the formula that the Commission uses to calculate revenues is inherently protectionist, because it's not based on European revenues, it's based on a total. The fine can be up to 10 percent of global revenue. And they always look at global revenue basically to say 'the bigger you are around the planet, the more money we're going to take out of your pocket.'"

Google employees have enjoyed revolving door during Obama administration

By [Johnny Kampis](#) /



Part 3 of 3 in the series [The Google Administration](#)



Photo illustration from LinkedIn photos

ALL IN THE FAMILY: These are among the more than 250 people who have transitioned from Google to government or vice versa during the Obama administration. At least two dozen among the group have taken jobs in key posts in government or Google in that span. (Pictured, from top left to bottom right, Mikey Dickerson, Robert Manhini, Nicole Wong, Jannine Versi, Michele Weslander, Sameer Bhalotra, Julie Brill, Will Hudson, Michelle Lee, Matthew Bye, Joshua Wright and Renata Hesse.)

More than 250 people have moved from Google and related firms to the federal government or vice versa since President Barack Obama took office.

The Google Transparency Project, the work of Campaign for Accountability, poured over reams of data to find [258 instances of “revolving door activity”](#) between Google or its associated companies and the federal government, national political campaigns and Congress since 2009.

Much of that revolving door activity took place at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, where 22 former White House officials went to work for Google and 31 executives from Google and related firms went to work at the White House or were appointed to federal advisory boards by Obama. Those boards include the President's Council on Science and Technology and the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

Regulation watchdogs may be just as keen about the moves between Google and the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission. Those government bodies regulate many of the programs that are at the heart of Google's business, and there have been at least 15 moves between Google and its lobbying firms and those commissions.

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The research also shows that 25 officials in national security, intelligence or the Department of Defense joined Google, and three Google executives went to work for the DOD.

Eighteen former State Department officials became Google employees, and five Google staffers became employed at the State Department.

[The complete list can be downloaded via Excel file here.](#)

Friends in high places

Former Google employees occupy several key slots in the federal government. These include:

- [Megan Smith](#), vice president new business development at Google 2003-12, vice president of Google 2012-14, chief technology officer at the [Office of Science and Technology Policy](#) 2014-present.
- [Alexander Macgillivray](#), deputy general counsel at Google 2003-09, general counsel at Twitter 2009-13, deputy chief technology officer at OSTP 2014-present.
- [Nicole Wong](#), vice president and deputy general counsel at Google from 2004-11 and deputy chief technology officer at OSTP 2013-14.
- [Jannine Versi](#), product marketing manager in Middle East and North Africa for Google 2010-2012, White House National Economic Council 2013-14, chief of staff International Trade Administration at U.S. Department of Commerce 2014-present.
- [Michelle Lee](#), deputy general counsel at Google 2003-12, under secretary of commerce for intellectual property and director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office 2012-present.

- [Mikey Dickerson](#), site reliability manager at Google 2006-13, administrator U.S. Digital Service 2014-present. Dickerson also assisted with election day monitoring and modeling with Obama’s 2012 re-election campaign and helped repair the broken HealthCare.gov website.

At least 18 former Google employees work or have worked for the [U.S. Digital Service](#) and its General Services Administration sidekick, 18F. USDS operates under the Executive Office of the President, consulting on big federal information technology projects.

The door revolves

Scott Amey, general counsel for the [Project on Government Oversight](#), a nonpartisan group that exposes abuses of power in government, said it’s hard to know for sure how more than 250 people moving between Google and the federal government since 2009 compares to other corporations, but “it sounds like it’s a very significant number.”

“It’s very hard to get information about the quantity of people who go in and out of government service,” Amey told Watchdog.org.

Google didn’t return an email seeking comment for this story.

Analysts at Google Transparency Project compiled the revolving-door data by using public information that includes lobby disclosure records, news stories, LinkedIn profiles and reports from Open Secrets.

[Campaign for Accountability notes the analysis](#) is “an evolving representation of the scale of the revolving-door relationship between Google and government” rather than a comprehensive tally.

In other words, the total could be higher.



SCHMIDT: The Google chief executiv

SCHMIDT: The Google executive chairman's company Civis Analytics was a key ally of Obama during his re-election campaign.

The project's analysis included affiliates of Google, such as YouTube, as well as key law firms and lobbyists.

It also includes [Civis Analytics](#), whose sole investor is Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google parent company Alphabet Inc.

At least 27 people who worked on Obama's 2012 presidential re-election campaign went to work for Civis Analytics after the election. [Google Transparency Project said](#) "those employees are then deployed by the White House to work on President Obama's top policy priorities."

Those policies include federal technology acquisition reform, national security matters and health care reform – Civis Analytics employees worked with Google engineers to [fix the broken HealthCare.gov website](#) in 2013, Campaign for Accountability reports.

White House visitor logs showed that Civis Analytics executives met with White House officials at least 51 times since Obama took office.

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The company received more than \$3.5 million in payments from Democratic campaigns in the last two presidential election cycles, Campaign for Accountability found.

Going from government to Google

The door has swung open the other way, as well, with prominent federal employees taking high-ranking positions at Google. These include:

- [Caroline Atkinson](#), head of global public policy for Google beginning this year, previously White House economic affairs adviser.
- [Sameer Bhalotra](#), cybersecurity at Google in 2014, senior director for cybersecurity at White House, 2010-2012.
- [Will Hudson](#), senior advisor for international policy at Google 2015-present, director for international cyber policy at National Economic Council, 2014-15. Hudson previously served as a counsel advising government clients on cyber law.
- [Regina Duncan](#), head of Google's advanced technology and products division 2012-present, director of Defense Advance Research Projects Agency, 2009-12.
- [Michele Weslander Quaid](#), chief technology office for public sector at Google 2011-15, chief technology officer at National Reconnaissance Office, 2009-11.

Then there is the curious case of the FTC. [Joshua Wright](#), senior counsel at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati (Google's most trusted antitrust law firm) since January, served as FTC commissioner from 2013-15 after being appointed by Obama.

But Wright had to recuse himself from deciding on issues related to Google while on the FTC because he had co-authored papers urging the commission to not file suit against the company. Those papers were indirectly funded by Google.



Twitter photo

WRIGHT: Appointed to the FTC by President Obama, he had to recuse himself from matters involving Google because he'd written company-friendly papers to the FTC in the past. Wright now works for a favored Google law firm.

The FTC previously investigated allegations that Google manipulated search results to benefit its own companies, but the FTC ruled in 2013 that wasn't the case. [This, despite FTC staff saying Google's practices cause "real harm to consumers and to innovation."](#)

Meanwhile, the European Commission is expected to slap a record fine on Google for the same allegations the FTC dismissed.

[RELATED: Google could face record fine in Europe after skating by in U.S.](#)

"Google loses its friend at the FTC," [Fortune wrote](#) when Wright decided to take a job as professor of law at George Mason University, a position he still holds.

Wright is just one of several former high-ranking FTC officials who have since been employed at Google or its law firms. Others include former commissioner [Julie Brill](#), who went to work for Hogan Lovells as partner and co-director of privacy and cybersecurity in March. That law firm has represented Google on a variety of issues.

[Matthew Bye](#), who advised the FTC on antitrust issues, went to work for Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati before moving to Google. He has been the company's director of legal competition since November 2015.

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In late 2012, months before the FTC settled with Google in its antitrust investigation, FTC Office of General Counsel attorney [Robert Mahini](#) took a job as Google's senior policy counsel.

Some key FCC officials have moved from the commission to Google or its associate law firms, or vice versa. [Johanna Shelton](#), who has visited the White House 128 times since Obama took office, was an FCC attorney from 1998 to 2001.

[Renata Hesse](#), a member at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosata from 2006-11, became senior counsel to the chairman for transactions at the FCC later in 2011. She is now a deputy assistant attorney general in the Department of Justice's antitrust division.

[Austin Schlick](#) has been Google's director of communications law since 2012. Before that, he was general counsel at the FCC from 2009-12.

The 18 people involved in the revolving door listed in this story are just the tip of the 251-plus name iceberg, though in some cases people among that 251 are low-level employees.

Amey said he's not as concerned about programmers moving over – and quite a few data engineers who worked on Obama's re-election campaign have ended up in White House jobs – but top level executives changing jobs can raise “red flags.”

“If they have access to information on competitors and they go to Google ... then you have to wonder if Google is getting an unfair advantage over others in their market,” he said.

Campaign for Transparency notes Google hiring former bureaucrats “gives it valuable insights into the inner workings of government and politics,” while having its former employees ensconced in federal offices “gives it a formidable conduit to influence policy making on a variety of issues affecting its interests.”