

# Is the DOJ being ordered not to file anti-trust actions on the Silicon Valley "BIG 6" because they are the biggest campaign donors?

Sun, 13 Jul 2014 17:00:00, newstips66, [post\_tag: amazon, post\_tag: books, post\_tag: business-news, post\_tag: editors-picks, category: elon-musk, category: energy-dept-slush-fund, post\_tag: eric-schmidt, post\_tag: facebook, post\_tag: google, category: google-alphabet, category: idea-theft, post\_tag: innovation-news, post\_tag: jeff-bezos, post\_tag: netflix, category: netflix, post\_tag: privacy, category: senator-insider-trading, category: silicon\_valley\_death, post\_tag: technology-news, category: worldnews]

**Is the DOJ being ordered not to file anti-trust actions on the Silicon Valley "BIG 6" because they are the biggest campaign donors? SOLON ASKS, OUTLOUD, the THING WE ARE ALL THINKING...**

The public is demanding anti-trust actions but they are nowhere to be seen.

Eric Holder was put in office by the Lawfirm of Covington & Burling, paid for by Silicon Valley VC's! Is there any reason we can think of that he would not want to prosecute them? hmmm?

**Let's nationalize Amazon and Google: Publicly funded technology built Big Tech**

**They're huge and ruthless and define our lives. They're close to monopolies. Let's make them public utilities**

[Richard \(RJ\) Eskow FOR SALON.COM](#)

Topics: [amazon](#), [Jeff Bezos](#), [Books](#), [Editor's Picks](#), [Google](#), [Netflix](#), [eric schmidt](#), [Facebook](#), [Privacy](#), [Innovation News](#), [Technology News](#), [Business News](#)



Jeff Bezos (Credit: AP/Reed Saxon/[Pakhnyushcha](#) via [Shutterstock/Salon](#))

They're huge, they're ruthless, and they touch every aspect of our daily lives. Corporations like Amazon and Google keep expanding their reach and their power. Despite a history of abuses, so far the Justice Department has declined to take antitrust actions against them. But there's another solution.

Is it time to manage and regulate these companies as public utilities?

That argument's already been made about broadband access. In her book "Captive Justice," law professor [Susan Crawford](#) argues that "high-speed wired Internet access is as basic to innovation, economic growth, social communication, and the country's competitiveness as electricity was a century ago."

Broadband as a public utility? If not for corporate corruption of our political process, that would seem like an obvious solution. Instead, our nation's wireless access is the [slowest and costliest in the world](#).

But why stop there? Policymakers have traditionally considered three elements when evaluating the need for a public utility: production, transmission, and distribution. Broadband is transmission. What about production and distribution?

The Big Tech mega-corporations have developed what Al Gore calls the "Stalker Economy," manipulating and monitoring as they go. But consider: They were created with publicly funded technologies, and prospered as the result of indulgent policies and lax oversight. They've achieved monopoly or near-monopoly status, are spying on us to an extent that's unprecedented in human history, and have the potential to alter each and every one of our economic, political, social and cultural transactions.

In fact, they're already doing it.

Public utilities? It's a thought experiment worth conducting.

**Big Tech was created with publicly developed technology.**

No matter how they spin it, these corporations were not created in garages or by inventive entrepreneurs. The core technology behind them is the Internet, a publicly funded platform for which they pay no users' fee. In fact, they do everything they can to [avoid paying their taxes](#).

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Big Tech's use of public technology means that it operates in a technological "commons," which they are using solely for its own gain, without regard for the public interest. Meanwhile the United States government devotes considerable taxpayer resource to protecting them – from patent infringement, cyberterrorism and other external threats.

**Big Tech's services have become a necessity in modern society.**

Businesses would be unable to participate in modern society without access to the services companies like Amazon, Google and Facebook provide. These services have become public marketplaces.

For individuals, these entities have become the public square where social interactions take place, as well as the marketplace where they purchase goods.

### **They're at or near monopoly status – and moving fast.**

Google has 80 percent of the search market in the United States, and an even larger share of key overseas markets. [Google's browsers have now surpassed Microsoft's](#) in usage across all devices. It has monopoly-like influence over online news, as [William Baker](#) noted in the Nation. Its YouTube subsidiary dominates the U.S. online-video market, with nearly double the views of its closest competitor. (Roughly [83 percent](#) of the Americans who watched a video online in April went to YouTube.)

Even Microsoft's [Steve Ballmer](#) argued that Google is a "monopoly" whose activities were "worthy of discussion with competition authority." He should know.

As a social platform, Facebook has no real competitors. Amazon's [book business](#) dominates the market. E-books are now 30 percent of the total book market, and its Kindle e-books account for 65 percent of e-book sales. Nearly one book in five is an Amazon product – and that's not counting Amazon's sales of physical books. It has become such a behemoth that it is able to command discounts of more than 50 percent from major publishers like Random House.

### **They abuse their power.**

The bluntness with which Big Tech firms abuse their monopoly power is striking. Google has said that it will soon begin [blocking YouTube videos](#) from popular artists like Radiohead and Adele unless independent record labels sign deals with its upcoming music streaming service (at what are presumably disadvantageous rates). Amazon's war on publishers like Hachette is another sign of Big Tech arrogance.

But what is equally striking about these moves is the corporations' disregard for basic customer service. Because YouTube's dominance of the video market is so large, Google is confident that even frustrated music fans have nowhere to go. Amazon is so confident of its dominance that it retaliated against Hachette by removing order buttons when a Hachette book came up (which users must find maddening) and lied about the availability of Hachette books when a customer attempts to order one. It also altered its search process for recommendations to freeze out Hachette books and direct users to non-Hachette authors.

Amazon even suggested its customers use other vendors if they're unhappy, a move that my Salon colleague [Andrew Leonard](#) described as "nothing short of amazing – and troubling."

David Stratfield of the New York Times asked, "[When does discouragement become misrepresentation?](#)" One logical answer: When you tell customers a product isn't available, even though it is, or rig your sales mechanism to prevent customers from choosing the item they want.

And now Amazon's using [some of the same tactics](#) against Warner Home Video.

### **They got there with our help.**

As we've already noted, Internet companies are using taxpayer-funded technology to make billions of dollars from the taxpayers – without paying a licensing fee. As we [reported](#) earlier, Amazon was the beneficiary of tax exemptions that allowed it to reach its current monopolistic size.

Google and the other technology companies have also benefited from tax policies and other forms of government indulgence. Contrary to popular misconception, Big Tech corporations aren't solely the products of ingenuity and grit. Each has received, and continues to receive, a lot of government largess.

### **The real "commodity" is us.**

Most of Big Tech's revenues come from the use of our personal information in its advertising business. Social media entries, Web-surfing patterns, purchases, even our private and personal communications add value to these corporations. They don't make money by selling us a product. *We* are the product, and we are sold to third parties for profit.

Public utilities are often created when the resource being consumed isn't a "commodity" in the traditional sense. "We" aren't an ordinary resource. Like air and water, the value of our information is something that should be publicly shared – or, at a minimum, publicly managed.

### **Our privacy is dying ... or already dead.**

"We know where you are," says Google CEO [Eric Schmidt](#). "We know where you've been. We can more or less know what you're thinking about."

Facebook [tracks your visits](#) to the website of any corporate Facebook "partner," stores that information, and uses it to track and manipulate the ads you see. Its mobile app also has a new, "[creepy](#)" feature that turns on your phone's microphone, analyzes what you're listening to or watching, and is capable of posting updates to your status like "Listening to Albert King" or "Watching 'Orphan Black.'"

Google tracks your search activity, an activity with a number of disturbing implications. (A competing browser that does not track searches called DuckDuckGo offers an [illustrated guide](#) to its competitors' practices.) If you use its Chrome browser, Google tracks your website visits too (unless you're in "private" mode.)

Yasha Levine, who is tracking corporate data spying in his "[Surveillance Valley](#)" series, [notes](#) that "True end-to-end encryption would make our data inaccessible to Google, and grind its intel extraction apparatus to a screeching halt." As the ACLU's Christopher Soghoian points out: "It's very, very difficult to deploy privacy protective policies with the current business model of ad supported services."

As Levine [notes](#), the widely publicized revelation that Big Data companies track rape victims was just the tip of the iceberg. They also track "anorexia, substance abuse, AIDS and HIV ... Bedwetting (Enuresis), Binge Eating Disorder, Depression, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Genital Herpes, Genital Warts, Gonorrhea, Homelessness, Infertility, Syphilis ... the list goes on and on and on and on."

Given its recent hardball tactics, here's a little-known development that should concern more people: Amazon also hosts 37 percent of the nation's [cloud computing services](#), which means it has access to the inner workings of the software that runs all sorts of businesses – including ones that handle your personal data.

For all its protestations, Microsoft is no different when it comes to privacy. The camera and microphone on its [Xbox One](#) devices were initially designed to be left on at all times, and it refused to change that policy until purchasers protested.

Privacy, like water or energy, is a public resource. As the Snowden revelations have taught us, all such resources are at constant risk of government abuse. The Supreme Court just [banned warrantless searches of smartphones](#) – by law enforcement. Will we be granted similar protections from Big Tech corporations?

### **Freedom of information is at risk.**

Google tracks your activity and customizes search results, a process that can filter or distort your perception of the world around you. What's more, this "personalized search results" feature leads you back to information sources you've used before, which potentially narrows our ability to discover new perspectives or resources. Over time this creates an increasingly narrow view of the world.

What's more, Google's shopping tools have begun using "paid inclusion," a pay-for-play search feature it once condemned as "evil." Its response is to say it prefers not to call this practice "paid inclusion," even though its practices [appear to meet](#) the Federal Trade Commission's definition of the term.

As for Amazon, it has even manipulated its recommendation searches in order to retaliate against other businesses, as we'll see in the next section.

### **The free market could become even less free.**

Could Big Tech and its data be used to set user-specific pricing, based on what is known about an individual's willingness to pay more for the same product? Benjamin Schiller of Brandeis University wrote a [working paper](#) last year that showed how Netflix could do exactly that. [Grocery stores](#) and other retailers are already implementing technology that offers different pricing to different shoppers based on their data profile.

For its part, Amazon is introducing a phone that will also tag the items around you, as well as the music and programs you hear, for you to purchase – from Amazon, of course. Who will be purchasing the data those phones collect about *you*?

## **They could hijack the future.**

The power and knowledge they have accumulated is frightening. But the Big Tech corporations are just getting started. Google has photographically mapped the entire world. It intends to put the world's books into a privately owned online library. It's launching balloons around the globe that will bring Internet access to remote areas – on its terms. It's attempting to create artificial intelligence and extend the human lifespan.

Amazon hopes to deliver its products by drone within the next few years, an idea that would seem preposterous if not for its undeniable lobbying clout. Each of these Big Tech corporations has the ability to filter – and alter – our very perceptions of the world around us. And each of them has already shown a willingness to abuse it for their own ends.

These aren't just the portraits of futuristic corporations that have become drunk on unchecked power. It's a sign that things are likely to get worse – perhaps a lot worse – unless something is done. The solution may lie with an old concept. It may be time to declare Big Tech a public utility.

Richard (RJ) Eskow is a writer and policy analyst. He is a Senior Fellow with the Campaign for America's Future and is host and managing editor of The Zero Hour on We Act Radio.

[More Richard \(RJ\) Eskow.](#)

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### [\*\*Google Settles Its European Antitrust Case; Critics Remain ...\*\*](#)

Feb 5, 2014 ... [Google Settles Its European Antitrust Case; Critics Remain ...](#) on the United States Federal Trade Commission's antitrust case against Google, ...

[www.nytimes.com/ 2014/ 02/ 06/ technology/ google-reaches-tentative-antitrust-settlement-with-european-union.htm](#) | - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

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### [\*\*Google faces antitrust lawsuit on U.S. mobile internet search | Reuters\*\*](#)

May 2, 2014 ... (Reuters) - Consumer rights law firm Hagens Berman said it filed a nationwide antitrust class-action lawsuit against Google Inc alleging the ...

[www.reuters.com/ article/ 2014/ 05/ 02/ us-google-lawsuit-idUSBREA4102Z20140502](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

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### [\*\*In Major Victory, Google Dodges Federal Antitrust Lawsuit with FTC ...\*\*](#)

Jan 2, 2013 ... In a blog post Wednesday, Microsoft lashed out against Google for what it called " antitrust offenses" committed by the search giant.

[business.time.com/ 2013/ 01/ 02/ google-set-to-dodge-federal-antitrust-lawsuit-with-ftc-deal-report/](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

1.

### [\*\*Is Google a Monopoly? Wrong Question - Bloomberg View\*\*](#)

Jul 8, 2012 ... Google responded last week to European antitrust regulators investigating a long list of claims against the world's largest search engine.

[www.bloombergsview.com/ articles/ 2012-07-08/ is-google-a-monopoly-wrong-question](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

1.

### [\*\*Could Facebook Or Google Manipulate An Election? | Radio Boston\*\*](#)

Jun 6, 2014 ... A Harvard Law School professor says "digital gerrymandering" can happen -- but ... A man raises his hand during at Google offices in New York.

[radioboston.wbur.org/2014/06/06/zittrain-google-election](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

2.

### [\*\*Guns, Gun Control, and Elections: The Politics and ... - Google Books\*\*](#)

Gun-related violence remains an intractable problem despite a decline in the past decade. Some believe the solution lies in stricter gun control laws while others ...

[books.google.com/ books/ about/ Guns\\_Gun\\_Control\\_and\\_Elections.html?id=o6gBg1kF-AYC](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

3.

#### [BBC News - Could Google manipulate elections? - BBC.com](#)

Jun 10, 2014 ... Even if **Google** never intentionally tries to influence elections, he adds, ... reach and beyond the scrutiny or **control** of both regulators and candidates. ... The US trade embargo on the island nation **does** more to isolate the US ...

[www.bbc.com/news/blogs-echochambers-27785535](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

4.

#### [Can Google Predict the Impact of Racism on a Presidential Election ...](#)

Jun 11, 2012 ... Can **Google** Predict the Impact of Racism on a Presidential Election? Garance .... In particular, I **control** for searches including other terms for ...

[www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/06/can-google-predict-the-impact-of-racism-on-a-presidential-election/258322/](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

5.

#### [The Illuminati-Staged US Presidential Election - Rense](#)

To get the details of who the Illuminati are, put Illuminati in [www.google.com](#); It is ... They do not want the masses to know that their small secret organization even ... By suppressing any competing candidates outside of the Illuminati controlled ...

[www.rense.com/general58/suspre.htm](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

6.

#### [Could Google tilt a close election? - The Washington Post](#)

Mar 29, 2013 ... I don't think **Google** has an incentive to do this, but a future **Google** could," said ... "The question of free speech in America is controlled by a few ...

[www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/could-google-tilt-a-close-election/2013/03/29/c8d7f4e6-9587-11e2-b6f0-a5150a247b6a\\_story.html](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

7.

#### [Could Google fix an election? Researchers find search ranking can ...](#)

May 12, 2014 ... Researchers warn search ranking can have major influence on undecided voters .... "That means **Google** has the power to manipulate elections without ..... In years past you would have had a remote-control racing car ...

[www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2626515/Could-Google-fix-election-Researchers-search-ranking-influence-undecided-voters.html](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

8.

#### [Losing Control: Presidential Elections and the ... - Google Books](#)

Exploring the downward spiral of our electoral democracy, **Losing Control** ... new technologies through revitalized political parties can bring a vibrant electoral ...

[books.google.com/books/about/Losing\\_Control.html?id=9uATT4rd9VMC](#) - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

9.

#### [How The Jews Control Elections - YouTube](#)

Nov 5, 2012 ... How The Jews **Control Elections** ... You can find it on the internet, just **google**. Very telling .... I guess the Jews really do **control** everything.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZk400xCu-A> - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

10.

## [Can Google Influence Elections? - Slashdot](#)

May 13, 2014 ... **Google/Bing** could get away with manipulating elections, but as soon ... If you **control** the information, you can exert significant influence in the ...

politics-beta.slashdot.org/ story/ 14/ 05/ 13/ 0257258/ can-**google**-influence-**elections** - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

2.

## [Round Two: Is Google A Monopoly? - NYTimes.com](#)

Dec 21, 2010 ... Should **Google** be allowed to keep making acquisitions? Two lawyers duke it out.

dealbook.nytimes.com/2010/12/21/round-two-is-**google**-a-monopoly/ - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

3.

## [Google Isn't A Monopoly If Consumers Choose Speed Over Options ...](#)

Jan 3, 2013 ... While the Federal Trade Commission absolved **Google** of monopoly accusations earlier today for prioritizing its own products in search results, ...

www.techcrunch.com/ 2013/ 01/ 03/ **google**-isnt-a-monopoly-if-consumers-choose-speed-over-options/ - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

4.

## [Is Google a Monopoly and Does It Matter? | SiteProNews](#)

Nov 25, 2012 ... Break out your history books, folks. It's time to take a look at monopolies and how the definition may apply to **Google's** dominance of the Web in ...

www.sitepronews.com/ 2012/ 11/ 25/ **is-google**-a-monopoly-and-does-it-matter/ - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

5.

## [Opinion: Is Google a Monopoly? - WSJ Video - Wall Street Journal](#)

Nextag CEO Jeffrey Katz on why he thinks **Google's** business strategies undermine competition. Photo: Getty Images.

live.wsj.com/ video/ opinion-is-**google**-a-monopoly/ 67C337B9-783F-4F1F-A0CA-411CB7F0A35F.html - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

6.

## [Will Google Apps Break The Last Tech Monopoly: Microsoft Office ...](#)

Dec 26, 2012 ... Recently I've been writing about monopolies. When they're important and when they're not. The really crucial point is whether that monopoly is ...

www.forbes.com/ sites/ timworstall/ 2012/ 12/ 26/ will-**google**-apps-break-the-last-tech-monopoly-microsoft-office/ - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

7.

## [Is Google a Monopoly? // Update: May 10, 2011 Re: Microsoft ...](#)

Jul 10, 2006 ... monopoly, has filed a monopoly complaint against **Google**. Say what?! One giant corporation fighting another giant corporation? What can ...

evolvingtrends.wordpress.com/2006/07/10/**google**-is-a-monopoly/ - [View by Ixquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

8.

## [MONOPOLY Slots - Android Apps on Google Play](#)

MONOPOLY Slots is not a real money gambling application. This app offers in- app purchases. You may disable in-app purchasing using your device settings.

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.com.ea.game.monopolyslots\\_row&hl=en](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.com.ea.game.monopolyslots_row&hl=en) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

9.

### [MONOPOLY Millionaire - Android Apps on Google Play](#)

THIS IS NOT YOUR MOM'S MONOPOLY: Are you ready to do whatever it takes to bank a million bucks first and become a MONOPOLY Millionaire? "GO" for it!

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ea.monopolymillionaire\\_na](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ea.monopolymillionaire_na) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

10.

### [Questions for the Google books monopoly - Open Content Alliance](#)

Jul 30, 2009 ... This week, the Google Book Search team and its partners are embarking on a nationwide propaganda tour. Events in New York, Washington, ...

[www.opencontentalliance.org/2009/07/30/questions-for-the-google-books-monopoly/](http://www.opencontentalliance.org/2009/07/30/questions-for-the-google-books-monopoly/) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

11.

### [Illuminati & Presidential Elections](#)

The whole voting system is rigged by the Illuminati to keep their control of the ... the Illuminati are, you can just put Illuminati in [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and take the ...

[www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sociopolitica/newage\\_illuminati/pres\\_elec.htm](http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sociopolitica/newage_illuminati/pres_elec.htm) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

12.

### [Cheat Sheet and Voters' Guide! VOTE NOW—THE DEADLINE IS ...](#)

Oct 30, 2013 ... by Stranger Election Control Board ..... once endorsed "a greasy, half-empty tub of Crisco" over Tom Albro—seriously, you can **google** that shit.

[www.thestranger.com/seattle/the-stranger-election-control-board-voters-guide/Content?oid=17961723](http://www.thestranger.com/seattle/the-stranger-election-control-board-voters-guide/Content?oid=17961723) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

13.

### [Video: Congress Fears Out of Control Obama Could Suspend ...](#)

Dec 6, 2013 ... Ultimately, we did force Obama to back off amid complete and utter disapproval, ... and suspend election laws in order to maintain **control** of the presidency. ... **Google** Plus Profile Anthony Gucciardi is the creator of Storyleak, ...

[www.storyleak.com/video-congress-fears-control-obama-suspend-election-laws/](http://www.storyleak.com/video-congress-fears-control-obama-suspend-election-laws/) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

14.

### [The Rachel Maddow Show on msnbc - MSNBC.com](#)

2 days ago ... msn facebook twitter **google** plus rss tumblr instagram. Explore ... Election 2012; Election 2014; Election 2016; Money in Politics; Voting Rights.

[www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show](http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

15.

### [Google search results have the power to sway election 2014 votes ...](#)

May 13, 2014 ... As the 2014 midterm election approaches, those who are well read on their respective candidates will have little problems getting swayed by the ... that **Google** possesses to potentially control world wide election outcomes.

[www.examiner.com/article/google-search-results-have-the-power-to-sway-election-2014-votes-for-undecided](http://www.examiner.com/article/google-search-results-have-the-power-to-sway-election-2014-votes-for-undecided) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

16.

### [Build Your Organization – Google Politics & Elections | Ads Toolkit](#)

Learn how Google's advertising solutions can help create a multi-platform ... You control your budget and are only charged when someone clicks on your ad; ...

[www.google.com/ads/elections/build-your-organization.html](http://www.google.com/ads/elections/build-your-organization.html) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)

17.

### [Noncoercive Mobilization in State-Controlled Elections](#)

Institution: Google Indexer ... Noncoercive Mobilization in State-Controlled Elections ... Thousands of student voters were randomly assigned to control and ...

[cps.sagepub.com/content/39/10/1175.abstract](http://cps.sagepub.com/content/39/10/1175.abstract) - [View by kquick Proxy](#) - [Highlight](#)