

Google Must Be Destroyed

14th January 2018, 06:04 pm

"Carthage must be destroyed." *Ceterum censeo Carthaginem delendam esse* often abbreviated to simply *Carthago delenda est*. So ended every speech by the Roman senator Cato the Elder in the years between the 2nd and 3rd Punic wars, the latter the final war that finally accomplished what Cato and others demanded. In the years of the Republic from about 400BC to 100BC Carthage was the only power to ever seriously threaten Rome's existence. In 216BC four years into the 2nd Punic War, the Carthaginian general Hannibal came within a hair's breadth of destroying Rome by wiping out Rome's legions at the Battle of Cannae. The Romans hung on and Hannibal lost his chance, but the Romans never forgot the desperation after that battle and statesmen like Cato saw Rome as never being able to rest easy as long as Carthage existed. Cato eventually got his way and during the 3rd Punic War the Romans razed the city of Carthage and sold the Carthaginians into slavery.

Fast forward 2,000 years into the future and we are faced with a different type of enemy, one that does not field armies or own navies yet poses an existential threat regardless. Companies like Google, Facebook and Amazon are amassing hundreds of billions of dollars in profit by brokering information and distorting reality. These modern companies are just as threatening to our freedom as Hannibal's elephants were to the Romans'. Unless we recognize the existential threat we face and act soon our freedom will be lost forever.

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Chances our you've done a search for an item you need, say a new pair of boots. Within minutes every website you visit presents ads for boots or related winter gear. By using a "free" search engine like Google you have handed Google another few data points about you. Google knows where you are (unless you are accessing through a VPN - something most people in the USA don't do), your likely age and sex (by the choice of boots), and your socio-economic bracket (the price range of the boots you searched for, where you searched for them e.g. Walmart.com vs Nordstrom.com). The data points from that one search are collected by Google and added to those from other searches you've done. After a few searches Google has a very good idea who you are, what your likes are, what you hate, and more. That *more* is starting to get noticed.

In a 2015 The Atlantic article "[People's Deepest Darkest Google Searches Are Being Used Against Them](#)," Adrienne LaFrance points out how using a simple Google search as "need fast cash" can open up the user to potential fraud and financial misery. She writes, "Not only are lenders taking advantage of people in vulnerable financial situations, not only are lead generators sometimes skirting Google's ad policies and even violating state laws, but companies are sharing individual data in a way that puts consumers directly at risk. All this comes down to the widespread availability and longevity of personal data online." Google later banned these ads but not before investing heavily in a payday loan startup "LendUp." A test Google search finds ads still present although interspersed with articles from government regulators and consumer agencies warning about their dangers.

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was pilloried at the time for the [following quote](#): "There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know." Those who work in the IT field recognize the genius of this quote. The first things you can fix. The second things you can prepare for. It's the "unknown unknowns" that keep sysadmins and designers awake at night.

In short we don't know what we don't know, and by manipulating and censoring search results Google is in fact manipulating reality. In "[The New Censorship](#)" Robert Epstein examines the methods Google employs to censor voices it disagrees with such as manipulating the auto-complete results, altering images displayed in Google Maps, and

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demonetizing YouTube videos its employees find offensive. Epstein writes, "If a librarian were caught trashing all the liberal newspapers before people could read them, he or she might get in a heap o' trouble. What happens when most of the librarians in the world have been replaced by a single company? Google is now the largest news aggregator in the world, tracking tens of thousands of news sources in [more than thirty languages](#) and recently adding thousands of small, [local news sources](#) to its inventory. It also selectively bans news sources as it pleases."

But his biggest complaint is Google's usage of a site blacklist which even competing search engines use. Epstein writes, "When Google's search engine shows you a search result for a site it has quarantined, you see warnings such as, "The site ahead contains malware" or "This site may harm your computer" on the search result. That's useful information if that website actually contains malware, either because the website was set up by bad guys or because a legitimate site was infected with malware by hackers. But [Google's crawlers often make mistakes](#), blacklisting websites that have merely been "hijacked," which means the website itself isn't dangerous but merely that accessing it through the search engine will forward you to a malicious site. My own website, <http://drrobertepstein.com>, was hijacked in this way in early 2012. Accessing the website directly wasn't dangerous, but trying to access it through the Google search engine forwarded users to a malicious website in Nigeria. When this happens, Google not only warns you about the infected website on its search engine (which makes sense), it also blocks you from accessing the website directly through multiple browsers – even non-Google browsers." Epstein found his hijacked website was blocked by other browsers because these browsers were using Google's blacklist to censor their own results.

Not only was Google manipulating the Internet through its browser, but it was also manipulating the Internet through competing browsers as well through the shared information. Epstein writes, "You may disagree, but in my view Google's blacklisting practices put the company into the role of thuggish internet cop – a role that was never authorized by any government, nonprofit organization or industry association. It is as if the biggest bully in town suddenly put on a badge and started patrolling, shuttering businesses as it pleased, while also secretly peeping into windows, taking photos and selling them to the highest bidder."

Earlier this week Google was sued by two former employees for being fired for their conservative views. On [January 9, 2018 Bookworm Room](#) posted internal messages of Google management discussing the internal memo by James Damore questioning Google's Diversity Hiring program. She writes, "The complaint explains that Buckley holds a high-ranking "SRE" (Site Reliability Engineering) position. If you think he doesn't have a say in content, I'm sure he and those who work with him will differ. By the way, proving as did Altman that it's not just American academia that's insane, Colm is an Irish Social Justice Warrior, hailing from Trinity College, Dublin." Here's one of Buckley's messages:



Colm Buckley ▸ google.com

Aug 5, 3:59 PM

You know, there are certain "alternative views, including different political views" which I **do not want** people to feel safe to share here. My tolerance ends at my friends' terror.

You can believe that women or minorities are unqualified all you like - I can't stop you - but if you say it out loud, then you deserve what's coming to you.

Yes, this is "silencing". I **intend** to silence these views; they are **violently offensive**.

Take your false equivalence and your fake symmetry, and shove them hard up where the sun doesn't shine.



Restricted to google.com • [View activity](#)

James Damore's and David Gudeman's lawsuit isn't the only one Google is facing. In October [conservative radio talk show host Dennis Prager filed suit against Google](#) for the demonetizing of his YouTube videos collectively known as "Prager University."

The New Surveillance Age

Since 2016 Google has released a series of appliances that allow hands-free querying of the Internet. Collectively known as Google Home these devices incorporate microphones to listen for the command "Hey Google," followed by a question. The device then searches the internet and provides a spoken response. Apple was the first to come up with the spoken search/response application "Siri" on its iPhone in 2011, moving to stand-alone products known as "HomePod" in December 2017. In 2014 Amazon released the stand-alone speaker "Echo" using its Alexa search service. Although these devices are keen to emphasize their utility by using the term "speaker" or "smart speaker" to suggest the information is delivered to the user, they do not highlight these devices are always listening. The microphones in these devices are always on, although the software will only interact with the user when a key phrase such as "Alexa", "Hey Siri" or "Hey Google" is used. In effect people are allowing their conversations to be monitored 24/7 within their own homes.

Would you allow a CCTV camera to be installed within your own home and pointed at you and your family at all times of the day? Would you allow it if Google or Amazon promised to allow you to order an item with a wave of a hand? In effect we have traded our freedom for convenience without appreciating the consequences. A friend related before Christmas how her 11 year old daughter used one of these appliances in a clever way. "Hey Alexa," the girl said, "Tell me all the orders you've received over the past month." The device dutifully listed all Amazon purchases, telling her all the presents her parents had purchased for her from the shopping site. If an 11 year old can game the appliance for her own benefit, imagine the ease a hacker of government intelligence service will have when these devices are ubiquitous.

While Google and the other makers of these appliances have promised to protect privacy, they have shown themselves to be lousy stewards of it so far. It's true that we've had similar devices in our pockets for years. After all Siri's been around on

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iPhones since 2011 followed in 2012 by Google's "Google Now" assistant on Android handsets. Just because we aren't aware of a danger doesn't make it non-existent. There is nothing stopping a determine hacker or government intelligence agency from activating a microphone on a phone or appliance and transmitting a conversation. How long will it be before a Federal indictment against a mob boss using such a tool? I don't worry about the usage of this tool against terrorists or mafia members. I'm worried about the usage of the tool by Google or Amazon to add to their data points for directed advertising.

Imagine a situation where you are in your kitchen with your significant other and you suggest replacing your old counter top. Then you log in to your computer to start your search only to find Amazon advertisements and Google searches pushing counter tops already there. How did it know you were interested in counter tops before you started searching? Now imagine talking about Glocks, pressure cookers or abortion and the possibilities become much more sinister. How would you prove this was happening?

Of course the companies [claim they have safeguards in place](#) to protect your privacy. But laws have not caught up to this technology and without laws and punishments in place there is nothing to stop a company like Google changing its policy. History has shown that whenever the means are available a company will exploit them for profit unless the fear of discovery and punishment outweighs the potential for profit. [Ask Wells-Fargo](#).

Google's parent holding company Alphabet is now one of the largest companies on the planet. Google controls a staggering 90% of all searches and as shown by Dr. Epstein's discovery has a hand in controlling the remainder. If Google sold cars or electricity it would have long ago been broken up or regulated as a utility. So far it has avoided all attempts at federal control no doubt due to its [status as top lobbyist on Capitol Hill](#). While other companies like Amazon, Facebook and Twitter should also face anti-trust scrutiny – and Amazon is finally seeing some after its purchase of Whole Foods – Google stands out for the danger it presents to average Americans who rely upon it for its search engine, email and mapping applications. As a conservative I've tried to boycott Google for its treatment of Damore and blacklisting of conservative websites. It's not easy, and based on what Epstein found it may be pointless anyhow. **The only solution is lawfare.**

After the 3rd Punic War Rome was unchallenged in the Mediterranean for the next 500 years, and its golden age had begun. The threat by Google to our freedom is just as real as Carthage was to Cato's Republic. It is time to end the dominance of Google for our own privacy and the future of a free Internet.

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