



How Much Did CIA And NSA Have To Do With The Founding Of Google?

Technocrats at DARPA, the NSA and the CIA were early funders of various social media companies, on the basis of creating a total awareness society. This article is a must-read to understand the modern state of total surveillance and mass data collection. □ TN Editor

Two decades ago, the US intelligence community worked closely with Silicon Valley in an effort to track citizens in cyberspace. And Google is at the heart of that origin story. Some of the research that led to Google's ambitious creation was funded and coordinated by a research group established by the intelligence community to find ways to track individuals and groups online.

The intelligence community hoped that the nation's leading computer scientists could take non-classified information and user data, combine it with what would become known as the internet, and begin to create for-

profit, commercial enterprises to suit the needs of both the intelligence community and the public. They hoped to direct the supercomputing revolution from the start in order to make sense of what millions of human beings did inside this digital information network. That collaboration has made a comprehensive public-private mass surveillance state possible today.

The story of the deliberate creation of the modern mass-surveillance state includes elements of Google's surprising, and largely unknown, origin. It is a somewhat different creation story than the one the public has heard, and explains what Google cofounders Sergey Brin and Larry Page set out to build, and why.

But this isn't just the origin story of Google: It's the origin story of the mass-surveillance state, and the government money that funded it.

Backstory: The intelligence community and Silicon Valley

In the mid 1990s, the intelligence community in America began to realize that they had an opportunity. The supercomputing community was just beginning to migrate from university settings into the private sector, led by investments from a place that would come to be known as Silicon Valley.

A digital revolution was underway: one that would transform the world of data gathering and how we make sense of massive amounts of information. The intelligence community wanted to shape Silicon Valley's supercomputing efforts at their inception so they would be useful for both military and homeland security purposes. Could this supercomputing network, which would become capable of storing terabytes of information, make intelligent sense of the digital trail that human beings leave behind?

Answering this question was of great interest to the intelligence community.

Intelligence-gathering may have been *their* world, but the Central

Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA) had come to realize that their future was likely to be profoundly shaped outside the government. It was at a time when military and intelligence budgets within the Clinton administration were in jeopardy, and the private sector had vast resources at their disposal. If the intelligence community wanted to conduct mass surveillance for national security purposes, it would require cooperation between the government and the emerging supercomputing companies.

To do this, they began reaching out to the scientists at American universities who were creating this supercomputing revolution. These scientists were developing ways to do what no single group of human beings sitting at work stations in the NSA and the CIA could ever hope to do: gather huge amounts of data and make intelligent sense of it.

A rich history of the government's science funding

There was already a long history of collaboration between America's best scientists and the intelligence community, from the creation of the atomic bomb and satellite technology to efforts to put a man on the moon.

In fact, the internet itself was created because of an intelligence effort: In the 1970s, the agency responsible for developing emerging technologies for military, intelligence, and national security purposes—the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)—linked four supercomputers to handle massive data transfers. It handed the operations off to the National Science Foundation (NSF) a decade or so later, which proliferated the network across thousands of universities and, eventually, the public, thus creating the architecture and scaffolding of the World Wide Web.

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