

The New Evil Empire: Google displaces Microsoft

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In today's digital world of networking and information access, corporate interests that are able to control and manage the flow of information place themselves in immensely powerful positions – far more powerful than any State, government or traditional Corporation. Since its introduction – only two decades ago – the Internet has become an indispensable feature of our lives. In fact, if the plug was pulled on the net the world as we know it would come to a standstill, such is the importance of the flow of information today.



Into this massive potential power sphere/space, enter a smart Russian kid and friends who developed a general Search Engine and offered it free to users (in order to capture a very sleepy market). The open source community was initially pleased as the spirit of Google seemed at the time to embrace the ethics of free and open access, BUT NOT FOR LONG!

Today, Google has proven itself to be a self-interested extremely dangerous totalitarian presence in the world yet its practices remain largely unscrutinised! Its 'new ethic' of pandering to the wishes of any State allow it to spread its tentacles into areas that affect all our lives. The reader will note that Google has no social conscience or moral standard whatsoever, Google happily acquiesced to the 'special requirements' of the Chinese dictatorship and other governments known for their abysmal human rights and civil liberties record.

Google now supplies the search records of individual users to government agencies and other bureaus, it is clear this unsavoury practice does not advantage the individual user, in some cases citizens risk incarceration or even execution if this information is made available to certain governments – Google already has blood on its hands!

The myth of a level playing field in relation to search rankings/exposure has been blasted by Google's now known interventionist practices; site rankings are manually manipulated according to positive financial or negative political considerations. A recent case in Australia exposed the myth of fair practice in Google searches -- specific site searches were re-directed to a paying customer rather than to the literal/exact site. Google is easily able to advantage or disadvantage any site if it wishes or if authorities request it.

Google's ambition to digitise every major text on the planet has been temporarily curtailed – but for how long? As Google continues to grow fat on its ever-increasing revenues, its power increases as a result – soon smaller independent companies may not be able to withstand the huge financial pressure from the information juggernaut. Nothing less than total control of all information is Google's ambition and company ideal!

The sleepy market that allowed Google to grow disproportionately and at speed is also extremely slow to wake to the fact that Google's practices remain beyond accountability, most of its sordid practices are shrouded in secrecy or hidden behind existing corporate privacy laws, which are entirely inappropriate when dealing with public information management companies such as Google!

More court actions and greater accountability are required to allow for a freer and fairer market place and eliminate sordid or unfair practices. Companies should not be allowed to threaten or manipulate the free flow of information or to tamper with PUBLIC knowledge for their own personal gain.

IT professionals and geeks alike are acutely aware of the power that Google is able to wield; its ever increasing wealth endow it with the ability to buy whatever it desires and to remain largely unaccountable to outside regulators.

A legal requirement to justify any obvious manipulation of search results, would be a good start.

The geek community, hackers, IT professionals, user groups and every citizen who believes that (unhindered) public information access is a right not a privilege are united in their call for accountability.

In the immortal words of Uncle Ho, now directed at Google, "you will never succeed!"

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-701.html>