

Congress Gets Silicon Valley Cartel To Admit That They Rig Elections

By Jay Warner

Google, Twitter, Facebook and Congress had it out in Washington today. What the world heard is that these companies have built hundreds of tools that actually do affect billions of people.

We learned that Russian lobbyists only spent a few hundred thousand dollars buying ads but that the DNC and Hillary Clinton spent hundreds of millions of dollars buying ads and “media impressions” from them in order to manipulate public perceptions.

The Silicon Valley companies were cagey and evasive.

Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) took aim at Facebook.

“How did Facebook, which prides itself on being able to process billions of data points and instantly transform them into personal connections for its user[s] somehow not make the connection that electoral ads — paid for in rubles — were coming from Russia?” he said. “Those are two data points: American political ads and Russian money, rubles. How could you not connect those two dots?”

Franken, in his inquiry, exposed the fact that the Silicon Valley companies know exactly what all of of their data is doing but they hide the facts for the sake of profiteering.

The question that Google, Twitter, Facebook and Silicon Valley must now answer is:

“How much did Hillary Clinton, Elon Musk, Debbie Wasserman Schultz’s DNC and Barack Obama pay you each to rig election news and public perceptions?”

Facebook also wasn’t willing to offer much in the form of a definitive answer when Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) asked the company if it felt like content on its platform had an effect on the election. *“In an election where a total of about 115,000 votes would have changed the outcome, can you say that the false and misleading propaganda people saw on your Facebook didn’t have an impact on the election?”* Hirono asked. Stretch dodged in response. *“We’re not well-positioned to judge why any one person or an entire electorate voted as it did,”* he said, purposefully avoiding answering the question.

Facebook won’t say no to accepting election-related foreign money said Facebook’s executive. Facebook admitted that it can be bought by anybody, anywhere.

Not a single one of the three tech giants would commit to supporting Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Mark Warner (D-Va.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.)’s Honest Ads Act, which would require disclosures about political advertising on their platforms

By [Brian Fung](#) at the same time, exposed that Google opens, reads and studies every single document you post on Google Docs, no matter how personal or confidential it is.

Imagine you're working on a Google Doc when, seemingly out of nowhere, your ability to edit the online file gets revoked. What you see instead is an error message indicating that you've violated Google's terms of service.

For anyone who stores work in the cloud, suddenly being unable to access your data — especially due to a terms of service violation — may sound scary. And it's really happening to some people, according to reports on Twitter. Rachael Bale, a wildlife crime reporter for National Geographic, said Tuesday that a draft of her story was "frozen" by Google.

Has anyone had [@googledocs](#) lock you out of a doc before? My draft of a story about wildlife crime was just frozen for violating their TOS.

— Rachael Bale (@Rachael_Bale) [October 31, 2017](#)

Others have reported similar errors.

Tfw your finalizing a piece on E. Europe post-socialist parties in Google Drive and Google removes it because it's in violation of its ToS??

— Bhaskar Sunkara (@sunraysunray) [October 31, 2017](#)

In response to some of these reports, a Google employee [tweeted](#) that the team handling Google Docs was looking into the matter. Later Tuesday, Google said in a statement that it had "made a code push that incorrectly flagged a small percentage of Google Docs as abusive, which caused those documents to be automatically blocked. A fix is in place and all users should have full access to their docs."

Although the error appeared to be a technical glitch, the fact that Google is capable of identifying "bad" Google Docs at all is a reminder: Much of what you upload, receive or type to Google is monitored. While many people may be aware that [Gmail scans your emails](#) — for instance, so that its smart-reply feature can figure out what responses to suggest — this policy extends to other Google products, too.

"Our automated systems analyze your content to provide you personally relevant product features, such as customized search results, and spam and malware detection," reads the terms of service for Google Drive, the suite of productivity tools of which Google Docs is a part. "Google's [Privacy Policy](#) explains how we treat your personal data and protect your privacy when you use Google Drive."

If you visit Google's privacy policy, you'll find that Google is up front there, too, about the data it collects.

"We collect information about the services that you use and how you use them, like when you watch a video on YouTube, visit a website that uses our advertising services, or view and interact with our ads and content," it says.

What does it mean when Google says "collect information"? [This page](#) says more:

"This includes information like your usage data and preferences, Gmail messages, G+ profile, photos, videos, browsing history, map searches, docs, or other Google-hosted content. Our automated systems analyze this information as it is sent and received and when it is stored."

Google explicitly refers to docs — albeit in a lower-case fashion — as an example of the type of content from which Google extracts information. I've asked Google for clarification on whether they actually read the contents of a person's Google Docs and will update if I get a response.

"This kind of monitoring is creepy," Bale [tweeted](#). Google, clearly, loves to spy on the voters.

Could Google, Facebook and Twitter be any bigger liars?