

# Big Tech: Episode 3 of The Pyramid of Power Series by The Conscious Resistance

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[The Conscious Resistance Network presents: The Pyramid of Power Ep. 3 – Big Tech](#)

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May 22, 2021

The Conscious Resistance Network presents: The Pyramid of Power, a brand-new 16-part documentary series aimed at exposing the individuals and institutions which seek to manipulate our world.

More details: <https://theconsciousresistance.com/the-pop/>

By now, most viewers will be familiar with the well-publicized problems of social media. It's purposefully addictive, produces [jealousy](#), [insecurity](#), and [depression](#) (and [this](#)) in some people, and the big socials sell your data for a profit. Despite the growing [awareness of these problems](#), companies like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are still some of the most widely used platforms in the world. Billions of people download these apps and use them to stay informed about the world. (Or, so they believe.)

While these issues are absolutely worrisome, they are not the only issues we should be concerned about. To understand the role social media plays in the “Pyramid of Power” we need to understand the origins of social media. More specifically, we need to understand the origins of the so-called “Big Tech” giants behind social media.

The Big Tech companies are the largest and most dominant companies in the information technology industry of the United States, namely Amazon, Apple, Google, Facebook, and Microsoft. Alternatively, there are other labels, such as FAANG, which refers to the five prominent American tech companies: Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Google, or Alphabet, Inc, Google’s parent company. The point is that these companies dominate information technology in most of the world and shape the direction of the various markets they operate in.

Amazon dominates the e-commerce/online sales market, as well AI smart assistants and smart speakers. Apple and Google share a monopoly on cell phones. Google, of course, claims the title of leading online search engine for most of the world, as well top video sharing with YouTube, and top online mapping and navigation with Google Maps. Microsoft dominates the operating system markets, shares the cloud computing market with Amazon, and is highly influential in the video game industry via their Xbox system. Facebook is known for being one of the top 3 companies in digital advertising which they gained through their social networks. They also dominate image sharing with Instagram and messaging with WhatsApp and FB Messenger.

In fact, Big Tech’s growth in wealth and influence over the last decade has surpassed the wealth and influence of the Big Media companies we covered in chapter 2.

So where did these companies come from and are they influencing our world for ill or good?

The basic narrative, we are told, is that the Big Tech companies were started by brilliant men, mostly in California, in the area now commonly known as Silicon Valley. Through their hard work and determination, these companies were able to rise from garages and college dorms to become the giants we know them as today. There's just one problem: this version of events is cartoonish at best and an outright deception at worst.

It's important to understand that nearly every Big Tech tool you use today was funded, in part, by the U.S. intelligence community and supported in various ways by the U.S. government itself. The Rise of the Big Tech companies is not a fairy tale of free market success, but rather a dark and disturbing story of corporate welfare and deep ties to the intelligence community. In fact, most of the digital tools you use – including cell phones, GPS, and the internet itself started out as tools for the military. These tools were designed by the U.S. Department of Defense, under the direction of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency or DARPA.

## **The Big Tech-Intelligence Complex**

What we know as the internet, or the World Wide Web, was first developed by the military as the ARPANET. One of the best sources for the true origins of Big Tech is the book *Surveillance Valley* by researcher Yasha Levine. In his groundbreaking book, Levine outlines the role that the military and the intelligence apparatus played in advancing these tools from being used exclusively by the military, to being used by billions of people around the world.

([Clip](#) 9:17-10:04, "Back then...")

Yasha Levine's book [Surveillance Valley](#) cannot be overstated as an invaluable resource for understanding how the military and intelligence community helped fund various tools in the private sector in the hopes that doing so would provide them more data about the public at large.

In 2017, a former director of the the National Science Foundation shed more light when he [published an article](#) exploring the true founding of Google:

*“The research arms of the CIA and NSA hoped that the best computer-science minds in academia could identify what they called ‘birds of a feather:’[sic] Just as geese fly together in large V shapes, or flocks of sparrows make sudden movements together in harmony, they predicted that like-minded groups of humans would move together online.*

*“Their research aim was to track digital fingerprints inside the rapidly expanding global information network, which was then known as the World Wide Web. Could an entire world of digital information be organized so that the requests humans made inside such a network be tracked and sorted? Could their queries be linked and ranked in order of importance? Could ‘birds of a feather’ be identified inside this sea of information so that communities and groups could be tracked in an organized way?”*

Jeff Nesbit goes on to describe how Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the ostensible founders of Google, were originally funded “through an unclassified, highly compartmentalized program that was managed for the CIA and the NSA by large military and intelligence contractors. It was called the Massive Digital Data Systems (MDDS) project.”

Eventually, the research by Brin and Page under these grants became the heart of Google’s search engine. Nesbit writes, “The intelligence community, however, saw a slightly different benefit in their research: Could the network be organized so efficiently that individual users could be uniquely identified and tracked?”

In 2014, more details emerged regarding the relationship between Sergey Brin, former Google Executive Eric Schmidt and the National Security Agency. A Freedom of Information Act

request [revealed](#) that Brin and Schmidt were on a first name basis with then-NSA chief General Keith Alexander. Additionally, Google was part of a “secretive government initiative known as the Enduring Security Framework,” and this initiative involved Silicon Valley partnering with the Pentagon and the US intelligence community to share information “at network speed.”

The connections between Google and the intelligence firms that have spent decades spying on the public, infiltrating the public school system and establishment media, also involve the CIA’s venture capital firm, In-Q-Tel. For example, we know that the software that would become Google Earth was born out of technology originally developed by the company Keyhole, Inc., which itself had a close relationship with the U.S. intelligence community.

However, Google was not the only Big Tech firm who maintained a relationship with In-Q-Tel. Facebook executives also had close ties to CIA venture capital firm [In-Q-Tel](#). Journalist [James Corbett reports](#) ([from here](#) 14:49-15:50):

“Publicly, In-Q-Tel [markets itself](#) as an innovative way to leverage the power of the private sector by identifying key emerging technologies and providing companies with the funding to bring those technologies to market.

In reality, however, what In-Q-Tel represents is a dangerous blurring of the lines between the public and private sectors in a way that makes it difficult to tell where the American intelligence community ends and the IT sector begins.

Two of the names that come up most often in connection with In-Q-Tel, however, need no introduction: Google and Facebook.

The publicly available record on the Facebook/In-Q-Tel connection is tenuous. Facebook [received](#) \$12.7 million in venture capital from Accel, whose manager, [James Breyer](#), now sits on their board. He was formerly the chairman of the

National Venture Capital Association, whose board included [Gilman Louie](#), then the CEO of In-Q-Tel. The connection is indirect, but the suggestion of CIA involvement with Facebook, however tangential, is disturbing in the light of Facebook's [history of violating the privacy of its users.](#)"

Around the time Facebook was launched, [a similarly themed government project was coming to an end.](#) LifeLog was a project of the Information Processing Techniques Office of DARPA, designed, "to be able to trace the 'threads' of an individual's life in terms of events, states, and relationships", with the ability to "take in all of a subject's experience, from phone numbers dialed and e-mail messages viewed to every breath taken, step made and place gone".

[USA Today reported](#) that, "Cameras and microphones would capture what the user sees or hears; sensors would record what he or she feels. Global positioning satellites would log every movement. Biomedical sensors would monitor vital signs. E-mails, instant messages, Web-based transactions, telephone calls and voicemails would be stored. Mail and faxes would be scanned. Links to every radio and television broadcast heard and every newspaper, magazine, book, Web site or database seen would be recorded."

DARPA contractors stated that LifeLog's software "will be able to find meaningful patterns in the timetable, to infer the user's routines, habits and relationships with other people, organizations, places and objects." Ultimately, the program was abandoned because of surveillance fears.

On February 4, 2004, [Wired Magazine reported](#) that the Pentagon was abandoning the Lifelog Project. Ironically, this is the exact day that Mark Zuckerberg launched his first iteration of Facebook.

Lifelog's creator [Douglas Gage recently told Motherboard](#) he

feels that in many ways Facebook has accomplished the goals of LifeLog. "I think that Facebook is the real face of pseudo-LifeLog at this point. I generally avoid using Facebook, only occasionally logging in to see what everyone is up to, and have never 'liked' anything."

Another important note regarding social media and intelligence agencies, relates to the 2013 revelations by Edward Snowden. According to one of the documents leaked by Edward Snowden, the British government maintains software for "Online Persona Management". The British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) operates an elite unit known as the Joint Threat Research Intelligence Group (JTRIG).

The documents outline tactics employed by the agency, including ways to manipulate public opinion, understand human thinking and behavior, and encourage conformity. One of the reports from 2011 outlines JTRIG's tactics, including uploading YouTube videos containing "persuasive communications," starting Facebook groups and Twitter accounts, and creating fake online personalities and supporters "to discredit, promote distrust, dissuade, deter, delay or disrupt." The unit used social media campaigns to encourage and foster "obedience" and "conformity".

The British Intelligence and the US Intelligence community both desire to promote obedience and conformity within the public. They use social media to keep the public propagandized, distracted, misinformed, and fighting amongst themselves.

We could go on to detail the intelligence connections and partnerships between Facebook, Apple, Google, and Amazon, but the point is that the origins of the Big Tech firms which control information technology are much different from what is promoted in the mainstream. These companies have directly and indirectly benefited from the financial investments of the U.S. military and intelligence sectors. They have also shown a

willingness to share user data with law enforcement.

These Big Tech firms are also furthering the all pervasive surveillance state. Not only are Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Apple, and Amazon tracking your habits (on and offline), they are profiting from that knowledge. With the growth of AI smart assistants and speakers like Amazon Echo, Google Nest, Apple's Siri, and other devices, millions of people around the world are welcoming the surveillance state into their homes.

Amazon is well known for their online marketplace, but less people are aware that the Big Tech firm has been developing facial recognition software called Rekognition. Amazon has marketed the facial recognition tools to police departments in the United States, claiming that the software will allow real-time surveillance using body cameras.

In 2018, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the American Civil Liberties Union, Human Rights Watch, the Freedom of the Press Foundation and nearly 40 other organizations [filed a lawsuit](#) demanding that Amazon cease providing law enforcement access to surveillance technology.

The EFF [stated](#):

*"Amazon has been heavily marketing this tool-called "Rekognition"-to law enforcement, and it's already being used by agencies in Florida and Oregon. This system affords the government vast and dangerous surveillance powers, and it poses a threat to the privacy and freedom of communities across the country. That includes many of Amazon's own customers, who represent more than 75 percent of U.S. online consumers."*

In 2020, Amazon was reportedly [talking with a police department](#) from Jackson, Mississippi to connect their Ring doorbell cameras to a 24-hour surveillance center operated by the police. The Jackson police surveillance center would conduct a 45-day pilot program to live stream the security



cameras of participating residents, including a direct line to residents' Amazon Ring doorbell cameras. By June 2020, Amazon announced it was implementing a one-year moratorium on police use of Rekognition, in response to the George Floyd protests. However, in February 2021, documents revealed that the LAPD had already used the Ring doorbell cameras to [monitor activists](#).

## **The Big Tech-Military Industrial Complex**

In 2020, the public became aware of the true power wielded by the Big Tech companies that run the popular social media platforms. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok, Google, and Amazon all sought to down rank, shadow ban, delete and/or ban information that went against the accepted narratives for COVID19, the 2020 election, and basically any other topic deemed controversial. While many people chose to frame this attack on free expression as an attack on "conservatives" or the "Right wing", the reality is that prominent left wing pages and channels also suffered the same fate because they also committed the cardinal sin of social media: asking questions and making claims not accepted by the so-called authorities. In short, if you ask too many questions and do not parrot the mainstream Right or Left wing positions, it's highly likely you will find yourself demonetized or banned altogether.

Some folks incorrectly argue that Big Tech is made up of private companies which have the freedom to decide what goes on their platforms. This argument ignores the wealth of evidence indicating the close relationship between Big Tech and U.S. intelligence, as well the seed funding received by many of the companies. Essentially, these companies would not be as monolithic as they are without the support of the government. They are hardly a representation of free market economics.

Which brings us to the final point: these Big Tech firms often

serve the purpose of reinforcing a particular narrative that is beneficial to the U.S. government and intelligence community. It's no mistake that the pages and channels which have been removed have often been those which expose the U.S. war machine, [the violence of police](#), and overall, the lies of the U.S. government.

Although most of the public was unaware, the attacks on independent journalism and free voices began in earnest immediately after the election of Donald Trump in November 2016. The media began promoting story after story claiming that government insiders had evidence that the Russians interfered with the U.S. elections by propagating fake news stories that favored Trump and attacked Hillary Clinton. The Washington Post and other mouthpieces for the establishment ran with [a report from the organization PropOrNot](#) which claimed to identify websites that were spreading fake news and, possibly, working as Russian propagandists. The list contained many well-known American alternative media sites, including Activist Post, Mint Press News, The Free Thought Project, and The Anti Media.

Although Trump popularized the "Fake News" meme, it was very quickly used to demonize alternative and independent media who did not fall in line with the Russian narrative. The rise of the "Fake News" meme had immediate repercussions for the alternative media: many sites lost access to Google Ads for revenue generation, others were shadow banned on Facebook and Twitter, while still others were cut off from payment processors like Paypal and Patreon.

The relationship between the Military Industrial Complex and Facebook was made even more clear in May 2018, when Facebook [announced a new partnership with the Atlantic Council](#), a think tank which officially claims to provide a forum for international political, business, and intellectual leaders. The social media giant said the partnership was aimed at preventing Facebook from "being abused during

elections.” [The press release](#) promoted Facebook’s efforts to fight fake news by using artificial intelligence, as well as working with outside experts and governments.

The Atlantic Council of the United States was established in 1961 to bolster support for international relations. Although not officially connected to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Atlantic Council has spent decades promoting causes and issues which are beneficial to NATO member states. In addition, The Atlantic Council is a member of the Atlantic Treaty Association, an umbrella organization which “acts as a network facilitator in the Euro-Atlantic and beyond.” The ATA works similarly to the Atlantic Council, bringing together political leaders, academics, military officials, journalists and diplomats to promote values that are favorable to the NATO member states. Officially, ATA is independent of NATO, but the line between the two is razor thin.

Essentially, the Atlantic Council is a think tank which can offer companies or nation states access to military officials, politicians, journalists, and diplomats to help them develop a plan to implement their strategy or vision. These strategies often involve getting NATO governments or industry insiders to make decisions they might not have made without a visit from the Atlantic Council team. This allows individuals or nations to push forth their ideas under the cover of hiring what appears to be a public relations agency but is actually selling access to high-profile individuals with power to affect public policy. Indeed, everyone from George H.W. Bush to Bill Clinton have spoken at or attended council events.

Clearly, despite what Facebook says, this partnership will further align the goals of Facebook with the Western Military-Industrial Complex. This was made evident in October 2018, when Facebook announced they were unpublishing, or purging, over 500 pages and 200 accounts who were accused of spreading political spam. Several of these pages and writers were also removed from Twitter on the same day.

*“Today, we’re removing 559 Pages and 251 accounts that have consistently broken our rules against spam and coordinated inauthentic behavior,” [Facebook stated in a blog post](#). Facebook states that the people behind this alleged spam “create networks of Pages using fake accounts or multiple accounts with the same names” and “post the same clickbait posts in dozens of Facebook Groups”.*

This action by Facebook became known as “The Purge of 2018” and was only the first of many to come. With Facebook and other Big Tech firms developing a [revolving door relationship between the Military Industrial Complex](#), it’s highly likely that anti-establishment voices will continue to be stifled.

Now that we understand the Big Tech firms are cartels of information technology with deep ties to the U.S. intelligence community and military – who sell their users data and manipulate their emotions – it’s time to figure out what we are going to do about these problems.

## **Solutions: Better Tech**

The solutions for dealing with Big Tech are deceptively simple: Boycott them. It’s as simple and difficult as that. If we each consciously choose to deny Facebook, Google, Amazon, Apple, and Microsoft our data and our money, we can limit the ways they affect our lives. So what does boycotting Big Tech look like?

Let’s start with social media. Right now, in this moment, you can choose to leave Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Tik Tok, and Twitter. You can starve them of your data and instead choose to participate with and support companies that do not steal or sell your data, or collaborate with the U.S. military industrial complex. There are better alternatives, including Flote.app, Odysee, Minds, Junto, PeerTube, Element, Matrix, and many others.

Obviously, these platforms do not have all the content you

might be accustomed to seeing on the Big Tech sites but the sooner we encourage people to exit from these platforms and support better alternatives, the sooner we will see the content we know and love.

What about getting away from Big Tech email, storage, maps, and other digital services?

Again, there are alternatives to each of these which do not share your data with advertisers or governments. We are including some helpful links ([1](#), [2](#), & [3](#)) in the transcript to this documentary for anyone who seeks this information. The simple fact is that you have to make an effort to get away from Big Tech. It will inevitably involve changes to your lifestyle and habits.

When it comes to cell phones and computer operating systems it can be a bit more difficult and expensive to find alternatives, but they do exist. The Linux operating system has been offering consumers a non-Microsoft experience for decades, and recent years have seen the growth of cellphones which do not have Google or Apple built in. Again, we have included some tips for those seeking to move beyond the Big Tech paradigm.

Thankfully, there are also literally hundreds of thousands of developers working on decentralized technologies – including decentralized versions of the internet itself – which have the potential to free the people from the grips of Big Tech. With time, the people will have more options to choose from and the monopolistic control of our digital lives will come to an end.

For those interested in diving deeper into this topic, we recommend reading [Surveillance Valley](#) from Yasha Levine as well as the [2017 investigation by Jeff Nesbit](#). We also recommend watching the documentary, The Secrets of Silicon Valley, from The Corbett Report.

## Connect with The Conscious Resistance