



## If Trump Loses in November, Blame Google and Facebook?

Professor Robert Epstein [warned in the \*Epoch Times\*](#) on Monday that Google and Facebook have perfected algorithms that could limit the Trump presidency to a single term come November.

Epstein, a senior research psychologist at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology, knows whereof he speaks and writes. He is the former editor of *Psychology Today* and has authored over a dozen books and more than 300 articles on the influence of the Internet on peoples' thinking. He wrote, "Google-and-the-Gang are now controlling a wide variety of subliminal methods of persuasion that can, in minutes, shift the voting preferences of 20 percent or more of undecided voters without anyone having the slightest idea they've been manipulated."

One can have millions of dollars to fund political campaigns and still lose the election, wrote Epstein: "All that matters now is who has the power to decide what content people will see — or not see (censorship) — and what order that content is presented in." He added, "That power is almost entirely in the hands of the arrogant executives at two U.S. companies. Their algorithms decide which content gets suppressed, the order in which content is shown, and which content goes viral."

And that power is astonishing in its breadth and depth, says Epstein:

Google dominates the Internet not only in online search but also in mobile device software (Android), browsers (Chrome), language translation (Translate), e-mail (Gmail), online videos (YouTube), physical tracking (Maps), DNS routing, online storage, and dozens of other important domains, which means, among other things, that Google controls five out of the world's six billion-user online platforms: browsers, video, mobile, search, and maps.

It has twice tried to dethrone Facebook from its dominance in the sixth billion-user platform — social media — but has so far failed to do so.

In the critical world of online analytics, Google is unmatched: about 98% of the top 15 million websites in the world use Google Analytics to track the traffic to those sites, which means Google is also tracking that traffic.

Meanwhile, social media platforms — Facebook in particular — are rapidly becoming the main sources through which people get their news.

In July 2019, Epstein presented his findings to the Senate Judiciary Committee. He claimed that Google had the power through its algorithms to manipulate "upwards of 15 million votes" in November's presidential election. When pressed by Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Epstein said that Google might





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have swung at least 2.6 million votes in Hillary Clinton's direction in 2016.

In August, President Trump tweeted Epstein's findings: "Wow, Report Just Out! Google manipulated from 2.6 to 16 million votes for Hillary Clinton in 2016! This was put out by a Clinton supporter, not a Trump supporter! Google should be sued. My victory was even bigger than thought!"

The left-leaning Poynter Institute, though its Politifact.com website, said Trump's claim was false, giving further credence to Epstein's research.

Epstein's original research was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) in 2017, in which he and co-author Ronald Robertson of Northeastern University "showed that search results favoring one political candidate can shift the voting preferences of undecided voters substantially — up to 80% in some demographic groups — and that this effect can easily be masked so that few or no people are aware they are viewing biased search results."

Epstein admitted at the time that he didn't know how Google was able to manipulate the search results: "We don't know what caused these patterns of bias, but no matter what the cause or causes, given the power of search rankings to shift votes and opinions without people's awareness, they are a matter for concern."

The undercover investigative group Project Veritas confirmed the bias of Google in 2019. It obtained lengthy testimony from one of the company's executives, Jen Gennai, in which she declared that her company wouldn't allow Trump to be reelected: "We all got screwed over in 2016. Again, it wasn't just us. It was the people got screwed over, the new media got screwed over ... everybody got screwed over. So we're rapidly [trying to find out] what happened there and how do we prevent it from happening again."

Another Google executive explained that Google is "coming in and ... putting their thumb down, and they're deciding which content the users are allowed to see. They're playing narrative control."

Epstein prefers to call it "search engine manipulation." And in 2018, he explained just how it works:

When you type a search term into the query box on Google.com, Google's software mainly does four things: it parses, then selects, then orders, then displays.

Parsing means that it analyzes what you typed, breaking down your words into terms it can use for search purposes....

If you are like the vast majority of people in the world who allow Google to track everything they do, Google then adds what it knows about you to the parsed search term: where you live, what kind of dog you have, how much you spend ... what websites and news sources you trust, and so on.

Next, the software uses this information to select a relevant group of web pages from its index....

Next — and this step is especially critical for manipulation purposes — it orders those results from best to worst using criteria that Google keeps secret.

Finally, it displays those results in numbered groups, 10 results per page, with the top 10 on the first page you see, the next 10 on the second page, and so on.

If an Internet user types "Is Donald Trump a liar?" into the Google search field, what is he or she likely to get in return? How does Google do the selecting from the thousands of websites that are out there attempting to answer that question? How does it order them? And whose interests are being served in the process?



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All good questions.

Epstein warned:

The author's concern, driven by years of controlled scientific studies, along with the election-related search data he and his associates preserved in 2016 (Epstein and Robertson 2017), is that our online environment is not only dominated by a very small number of players but also that these players have at their disposal new means of manipulation and control that are unprecedented in human history.

Awareness is the first step. Selecting search engines that don't have a political bias, such as DuckDuckGo and StartPage, is the second step. But the millions being manipulated without their knowledge could relegate the Trump presidency to a single term come November.

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