



Google Manipulates Searches, Clinton Campaign Benefits

It is now nearly certain that Hillary Clinton will be announced as the Democratic nominee at the convention in July. But how has she managed to gain the nomination with a campaign and a career steeped in scandal? The short answer appears to be that Hillary has friends in high-tech places.



One of those friends is billionaire Eric Schmidt, who is the chairman of Alphabet, the parent company of Google. Last year, Schmidt launched a start-up company known as The Groundwork, which has the goal of ensuring “that Clinton has the engineering talent needed to win the election,” according to Democratic campaign operatives. QZ.com reported in October:

[The Groundwork](#), according to Democratic campaign operatives and technologists, is part of efforts by Schmidt — the executive chairman of Google parent-company Alphabet — to ensure that Clinton has the engineering talent needed to win the election. And it is one of a series of quiet investments by Schmidt that recognize how modern political campaigns are run, with data analytics and digital outreach as vital ingredients that allow candidates to find, court, and turn out critical voter blocs.

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If all The Groundwork did was help the Clinton campaign “with data analytics and digital outreach,” there would be little of interest to report on this issue. Instead though, it appears that The Groundwork — via its close ties to Google — has been manipulating that “digital outreach” in order to skew the “data analytics.”

While the biblical adage that “there is nothing new under the sun” is quite true, people always find new ways to do the same old things. In the digital age, it is fairly easy to manipulate the way people perceive events and facts. All that is needed is to control the flow of information most readily available to the people one wishes to manipulate. This is where Google comes in.

As the largest and most popular search engine in the United States and Europe, Google is synonymous with search. In fact, the phrase “Google it” simply means to search online for something. People assume (wrongly) that when they search for a particular topic, the returns they see are the most relevant or most popular sites related to that search. While that may be true for many search engines and may even be true of Google in many cases, it is not true when one searches Google for information on a variety of topics related to Hillary Clinton.

For instance, SourceFed posted a [video](#) on YouTube (which is ironically owned by Google) showing many of the ways Google has manipulated its autocomplete feature to both avoid negative searches and accentuate positive searches related to Clinton. The examples run from the imaginative to the ridiculous and demonstrate a pattern that borders on deceit:



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- When a user types “Hillary Clinton cri” into the Google search bar, the autocomplete fills in suggestions for “Hillary Clinton crime reform,” “Hillary Clinton crisis,” and “Hillary Clinton crime bill 1994.” There are no suggestions for “Hillary Clinton criminal charges” or “Hillary Clinton crimes,” which are the top searches on Yahoo! and Bing.
- When a user types “Hillary Clinton ind” into Google, the autocomplete offers “Hillary Clinton Indiana,” “Hillary Clinton India,” “Hillary Clinton independent voters,” and “Hillary Clinton Indiana campaign.” Again, both Yahoo! and Bing give the user the most sought returns (and — considering recent events — what the user was most likely searching for) in a list of terms related to Clinton’s possible indictment for sending and receiving classified information over her unsecured, private e-mail server.
- By way of comparison, when negative terms were searched for other candidates, Google’s recommendations matched those offered by Yahoo! and Bing. “Bernie Sanders soc” was filled in by all three search engines by offering searches related to socialism. Likewise, “Donald Trump rac” was filled in by all three with searches related to racism.

Matt Lieberman, who narrates the video for SourceFed, described the discrepancies by saying, “There’s clearly something wrong here, right? It’s like if you put three people into a room that’s on fire, and two out of the three people yell, ‘Fire!’ and the third person yells, ‘I’m in a room!’”

Is it possible that Google’s users simply searched for different things than those who use Yahoo! and Bing? No. When SourceFed used Google Trends to search for “Hillary Clinton crime reform” — Google’s top recommendation for “Hillary Clinton cri” — there were not even enough searches of that term for the site to build a graph. By comparison, “Hillary Clinton crimes” returned a graph that was spiked recently, showing it is a trending search term. And yet, Google’s autocomplete lists “crime reform” as the top search and does not even offer “crimes” in the returns. When SourceFed checked out Google Trends for “Hillary Clinton India” and “Hillary Clinton indictment,” the pattern continued. Though “Hillary Clinton India” was the second term offered by Google for “Hillary Clinton ind” and “Hillary Clinton indictment” was not offered at all, it turns out that eight times as many people were looking for information on her possible indictment. This writer doesn’t need to do a Google search for “biased results” to see what is going on here.

The *Washington Free Beacon* [reported](#) on even more examples of Google manipulating search results via autocomplete. Those examples include:

- “Hillary Clinton anti” shows “Hillary Clinton anti Obama ad” and “Hillary Clinton anti China” on Google. Bing’s top search was “Hillary Clinton antichrist.”
- “Hillary Clinton hum” shows a top result of “Hillary Clinton humor” on Google’s autocomplete, followed by results about human rights, humanitarianism, and e-mails with Huma Abedin. Bing’s results include searches about the rumors of Hillary Clinton and Huma Abedin being lovers.
- “Hillary Clinto ga” has a top search return of “Hillary Clinton gameboy” on Google. With Bing, the same search shows Clinton’s gaffes and her views on “gay marriage.”

Google responded immediately to SourceFed’s video. In a statement denying the obvious, the search giant said:

Google Autocomplete does not favor any candidate or cause. Claims to the contrary simply misunderstand how Autocomplete works. Our Autocomplete algorithm will not show a predicted



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query that is offensive or disparaging when displayed in conjunction with a person's name. More generally, our autocomplete predictions are produced based on a number of factors including the popularity of search terms.

But remember, "Bernie Sanders soc" autocompletes with "Berine Sanders socialist." And while it is possible that the folks over at Google don't consider that "offensive or disparaging," "Donald Trump rac" is filled in as "Donald Trump racist." Sorry Google. There's really no way to spin that. Returning results about whether Donald Trump is a racist because that's what users are searching for while suppressing results when users search for information about Hillary Clinton's crimes, supposed fulfillment of biblical prophecy, or rumored lesbianism is blatant manipulation. Whether or not Trump is a racist or Clinton is a criminal, lesbian, anti-Christ is beside the point. Those are the things people searched for and Google's autocomplete showed the one while hiding the other.

Google's protestations duly noted, the fact remains that other search engines return results based on the popularity of search terms regardless of the subject of the search, Google bases results on whether the results would help or hurt Hillary Clinton's campaign. There is a direct line between the Clinton campaign and Google's Eric Schmidt and his mysterious company, The Groundwork. As chairman of Google's parent company and a major Clinton supporter, Schmidt seems to have found a way to use his influence over the one to help the other while working in the shadows.

As QZ.com reports:

The Groundwork is one of the Clinton campaign's biggest vendors, billing it for more than \$177,000 in the second quarter of 2015, according to federal filings. Yet many political operatives know little about it. Its website consists entirely of a grey-on-black triangle logo that suggests "the digital roots of change" while also looking vaguely like the Illuminati symbol.

"We're not trying to obfuscate anything, we're just trying to keep our heads down and do stuff," says Michael Slaby, who runs the Groundwork. He was the chief technology officer for president Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, a top digital executive for Obama 2012, and the former chief technology strategist for TomorrowVentures, Schmidt's angel investment fund.

He explained that the Groundwork and its parent company, Chicago-based Timshel — which according to its website is named for a Hebrew word meaning "you may" and is devoted to "helping humanity solve our most difficult social, civic, and humanitarian challenges" — are "all one project, with the same backers," whom he declined to name.

So, the company behind the Clinton campaign's ability to "to ensure that Clinton has the engineering talent needed to win the election" by using (and apparently manipulating) "data analytics and digital outreach" has a website consisting entirely of an occultic-looking symbol and a parent company named for a Hebrew word that hints at permission. And the whole thing is shrouded in secrecy.

No, that's not creepy at all. Just don't bother to Google it.



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