

The Top 10 Most Dangerous Tech Companies

1. Amazon

This company's "last mile" shipping operation has led to burnout, injuries, and deaths, all connected to a warehouse operation that, while paying a decent minimum wage, is so efficient in part because it treats its human workers like robots who sometimes get bathroom breaks. Add to that a massive carbon footprint, a negative tax bill, the debasing HQ2 reality show search for a new headquarters, and the huge web reliance on Amazon Web Services.

2. Facebook

Its refusal to meaningfully alter the political advertising system that both President Donald Trump and Russian trolls used to their advantage in 2016 suggests that once again one of the main arenas of an ugly election will be Facebook. Despite a constant flow of data breaches and upsetting privacy scandals, it has resisted regulation and protected its irresponsible leaders. Most frighteningly of all, the corporation is controlled by a single unelected man who is determined to dodge any kind of ideological stance in the name of higher revenues"

3. Alphabet

Google has vast influence over the information economy, the media, advertising, and the mobile phone market, where its Android operating system makes it far more dominant than Apple. It knows more about us than Facebook, and it is moving into more and more areas we depend on, like public health and urban planning, areas where it will always be incentivized to bring its chief business model to bear: selling our habits to advertisers.

Its workers derailed plans for a Pentagon drone A.I. program and a censored Chinese search engine—the kind of mercenary lines of business that might have seemed incompatible with Google's do-gooder image a decade ago

4. Palantir Technologies

Co-founded by Peter Thiel, the Gawker-killing, Trump-boosting cyber-libertarian boogeyman, and named for a corrupted spying device from Lord of the Rings, Palantir collects and analyzes data for government agencies, hedge funds, and pharma giants—data, you may not be surprised to learn, that is not always used for good. Palantir deserves infamy primarily because of the company's unapologetic technical support of menacing deportation practices by the Trump administration.

5. Uber

A "mobility" company that has peddled 1) a highly influential labor model that treats non-employee workers like customers; 2) a highly influential growth model that uses sharp elbows to conquer local markets; 3) a highly influential—and toxic—internal tech-bro culture; 4) an indelible Silicon Valley villain in ousted CEO Travis Kalanick; 5) and app-based taxi-hailing, which is very convenient. It's hard to think of a company that has shown more disdain for governmental authority, or for the safety and welfare of its drivers, riders, and employees."

6. Apple

The maker of beloved yet overpriced and overhyped hardware products. "Apple's adherents still consider themselves an oppressed ethnic minority, and the company's public stance against commercial surveillance gets them more credit than they're due: Apple won't spy on you for ads, but they'll help the Chinese government spy on its citizens to keep its supply chain intact." Yes, it transparently sided with China in removing an app Hong Kong democracy protests were relying on to avoid police brutality. Its supply chain still has major issues, not the least of which is the continued exploitation of assembly workers at manufacturing plants.

7. Microsoft

The software startup that Bill Gates and Paul Allen founded in an Albuquerque strip mall has grown—after its antitrust spanking two decades ago—into a sprawling multinational technology corporation that has its hands in everything from cloud computing to video game consoles. Microsoft's research branch in China had worked on three A.I. research papers with the country's National University of Defense Technology, which is controlled by the military. The research topics included facial recognition, which critics in the U.S. said could help the Chinese government monitor and oppress its citizens, particularly the Uighurs in Xinjiang. This is not just a hypothetical

concern. In 2016, the company created a public database of 10 million images of 100,000 writers, activists, policymakers, and other prominent figures without their consent. The reality is that with its investment in cloud services and its acquisitions of LinkedIn, Skype, GitHub, Minecraft, and other data-rich services, Microsoft is merely following Google’s playbook in building a business on surveillance and control.”

8. Twitter

The microblogging service shares many of the same problems that plague the larger social platforms like Facebook and YouTube—harassment, misinformation, fake accounts

Twitter is being used by the president of the United States to threaten war crimes. But long before that, it (and Facebook and YouTube) contributed to the degradation of public discourse by rewarding people’s worst instincts: impulsivity, cruelty, insincerity, instant gratification, performativity.

9. ByteDance

A Beijing-based social media startup. In China, ByteDance operates an A.I.-curated news-reading app that has led to predictable censorship concerns. But the company has come under scrutiny in the U.S. because of its app TikTok, American teens’ favorite app for lip-synching, short-form nonsense, and becoming a brand.

Most major social media platforms have steered clear of deepfakes, since the technology can be abused to produce revenge porn and disinformation. But not ByteDance: In early January, a market-research startup discovered as-yet-released code inside TikTok and sister app Douyin that would allow users to make their own deepfakes.

10. Exxon Mobil

The world’s largest oil refiner, which has spent millions of dollars to cast doubt on climate science—oh, and which actually pitches itself as a technology company. Not only do the emissions of its fossil fuels contribute mightily to climate warming, but also it has long sponsored organized and institutionalized efforts to spread denial about the root of the problem.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Exxon hired scientists to conduct internal studies on climate change well before it became a mainstream issue. Upon discovering that carbon emissions were affecting global temperatures, the company did not change course but rather worked to spread misinformation on climate science and lobbied to prevent the U.S. from joining international environmental treaties, like the 1998 Kyoto Protocol.

See the other 20 evil doers on the list at:

<https://slate.com/technology/2020/01/evil-list-tech-companies-dangerous-amazon-facebook-google-palantir.html>