

## **Introduction**

To say that the internet has impacted our everyday lives would be the understatement of this new digital millennium. The internet has acted as a catalyst for the spread of free market globalization and has also helped business run more efficiently than was ever thought possible [Cagliano]. But the internet has had an impact beyond the financial sector. The internet has enabled an exchange of information that surpasses what any library could possibly hold. This paper, for example, has over twenty citations for various published works, from full length books on economics, to articles in peer-reviewed journals. And with the use of the internet, I never had to set one foot in my local library. I simply accessed online databases and searched for what information I was looking for. It probably took me about 45 minutes to find all the resources I wanted. It's hard to believe that just fifteen years ago, writing a paper of this scope, and not stepping one foot into a library would have meant instant doom. But with this availability of information comes those who want to censor it, in order to preserve their own self interests. The Communist Party of China will be examined as the main culprit in this paper. However, the Communist Party is not acting alone in this situation. American companies, like Google, have helped facilitate the Chinese with a means to filter the internet. This paper will attempt to determine the ethical correctness of Google's actions in censoring the Chinese internet. It will then attempt to show that while Google's actions may be questionable, they are ethically justifiable. However, the same cannot be said for their competitors.

## **Facts**

The development and rapid deployment of the internet world wide has made it easy to connect with people from all parts of the world in a way that has never been possible. This global connection has allowed all of those with access to the internet the ability to tap an unlimited source of information on any topic. However, some governmental regimes have gone to great lengths to filter this connection with the world and censor ideas that threaten their absolute power [Thompson]. China is one of these countries. China serves as a lucrative market for businesses, as it holds over 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the world's population and has been experiencing unsurpassed economic growth since the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [Pingyao]. As trade has increased between China and the rest of the free world, personal liberties, along with awareness of human rights in China have also increased [Friedman]. However, in the late 1980's, Chinese students began to protest against the repressive Communist regime, urging for more civil liberties, only to be part of a massacre that some estimate claimed thousands of lives [Risse]. Though the events at Tiananmen Square were dramatic and inhumane, individual economic prosperity has maintained its growth. A nation formerly founded on bicycles has evolved to become a major consumer of fossil fuels [Pingyao], an indicator of economic prosperity.

However, since the United States ended the embargo against China in 1972 [United], there has been an ongoing debate as to the humanitarian standards that Chinese workers are being held to. Western nations levied pressure on the Chinese government to fix these problems in order continue the mutually beneficial trade relationship. Though

there is admittedly still room for growth, the Chinese government has become better at maintaining basic human rights [Friedman].

Though Chinese censorship and human rights violations conflict with the American ideals of liberty and freedom of speech, American internet companies are beginning to follow the trend set thirty years ago by American manufacturing companies, even if it means censoring their product to meet Chinese standards. Google, whose company mantra of “don’t be evil” has made them a darling of the technology industry, is one of these companies [Google].

## **Issue**

Is it ethical for Google to trade with tyrannical countries whose standards on human rights and liberties do not match our own?

## **Arguments**

### **Yes, it is ethical. Google should do the best they can to reach China**

Proponents of unrestricted free trade with all nations believe in a strict capitalistic perspective of globalization. One that allows any country to trade with any other country in a way that is economically beneficial for both [Smith]. As a product of the Great Enlightenment, the United States has consistently maintained a *laissez-faire* economic policy. Adhering to the philosophy of Adam Smith and his theory of a free market economy, proponents would say that history has shown that free market capitalism has been the best economic system, not only in terms of the economic rewards that it brings, but also in the democratic reform that comes with it [Friedman]. This party argues that

the pervasive nature of globalization and free trade brings with it progressive, democratic ideals that will be instilled in the participating nations [Friedman]. This group could reference China as a sample case. A formerly staunch Communist adversary has not only become an intimate trading partner with the United States, but has steadily improved itself through social reform due to pressure from its trading partners [Chan]. Supporters would also note the recent decline in child labor in Latin American countries is a bi-product of the impact of globalization [CNNFew]. Believers in globalization would argue that while it may seem intuitive that trading with “backward” countries like China would lower societal standards of the West, the opposite actually happens [Friedman]. This party would cite the developing world as an example, showing that the weakest link in the chain becomes stronger, not the other way around. India, once considered a floundering country due to its severe overpopulation problem, is now emerging as a serious economic power [Friedman].

Another argument used to support this group’s claims is the noted ineffectiveness of the trade embargo. Cuba stands out in this scenario because of the almost half-century old embargo imposed by the United States against the island nation [Europa]. Proponents of trading with countries like Cuba state that while we have seen China and some former republics of the Soviet Empire become more prosperous and more democratic, Cuba has been locked in a time warp [Europa]. Supporters believe that should the United States really want to promote democratic movements, they should take every possible step that they can to help introduce new freedoms, a la Richard Nixon with communist China in the early 1970’s [Chan].

Supporters of Google's relationship with China would state the internet is a tremendous opportunity to open the gates of information in China and would lead to great economic and social developments for all [Thompson].

**No, it is not ethical. American companies must export American values with American products.**

The opposing argument on this issue is that it is unethical for the United States as the progressive, democratic, "leader of the Free World" to condone formal trade relations with countries that openly suppress basic civil and social liberties. Proponents of this argument would note the woman's rights violations in Saudi Arabia [Vander] and the massacre of students at Tiananmen Square in China [Vander]. This group would argue that trading with these countries has multiple effects, including prolonging the tenure of the tyrannical ruler, giving a potential future enemy American dollars, and inciting radical anti-American sentiment in the country.

Supporters of taking the moral high ground when it comes to trade relations can show the case of Iraq as a prime example of how merely openly supporting a despot, while beneficial in the short-term, can cause numerous problems down the road. During the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980's, American policy openly supported Iraq in its conflict with Iran. This support not only caused the United States to overlook Iraq's future ambitions for the Persian Gulf region, but also increase American hostility among citizens in Iran [Risse]. It can be argued that this action helped establish the situation America faces today with Iran [Skocpol].

Another claim put forth by this party is that should the United States trade with an unpopular tyrannical dictator, this will help foster anti-American sentiment in the oppressed country, and possibly lead to a radical revolution. Iran can be referenced as a prime example of this scenario [Rubin]. Once a firm trading partner and fully American supported nation, the brutality of the Shah of Iran led to a fundamentalist revolution, overthrowing the Shah [Rubin]. Over 20 years later, because of American support of the Shah and its subsequent actions with Iraq, anti-American sentiment is still strong, and the Iranians and Americans are currently at a diplomatic crossroads as Iran tries to become a nuclear power [Skocpol].

This group would also note the long history of China's human rights violations. While some may concede that globalization and free trade is truly beneficial to all parties, if the lower prices of products are brought to consumers by means of sub-subsistence wages, then it is unfair to the laborers who produce the product [CNNAnnan]. Proponents would also argue that trading with nations with such violations is flagrant hypocrisy to the United States stance on human rights and basic human freedoms.

Proponents from this camp would also point to the primary case of this discussion, Google. Google's claim to fame, fortune, and successful public relations, has been that they can be a profitable corporation while not being "evil" [Google]. This mantra, and their subsequent deal to censor search results in China, has now thrown Google between a rock, a hard place, and Jack Bauer. Proponents would say that Google is hypocritical and no better than their "evil" competitors, i.e. Microsoft and Yahoo!

There are also some members of this party that would in fact concede that yes, history does show us that if a country can be opened to the world at all, then it should be

at whatever short term moral cost. History shows, as in China, that democratic ideals will be successful in the end. However, these same people argue that the internet is the last step for an oppressed nation to be connected to the rest of the world, and if that too gets censored, then the ruling party could maintain control indefinitely [Bove].

## **Analysis**

Though this debate incorporates relatively new concepts of trade in the digital age, the core of this discussion is a new spin on an old issue: is it ethical to trade with tyrannical countries whose standards on human rights and liberties do not match our own?

One such case of the exploitation of human labor are the coffee bean farmers of Central America. Globalization, and the movement to make one global marketplace, has led American companies to force international competition for products, like coffee. In the case of the coffee industry, globalization has turned what was once a profitable industry into one that exploits the yeoman farmer and favors large, corporate plantations [Vander].

While globalization has caused its share of problems in the under-developed nations of the world, it has also caused controversy here in America. The culmination of fiber optics in the Digital Age along with the era of globalization has led to the outsourcing of white-collar jobs, a first in economic history [Friedman]. Up until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, outsourcing to developing countries typically occurred in the blue-

collar industrial and manufacturing sector. Evidence of this outsourcing, and its subsequent impact, can be seen in Middle America's "rust belt," which holds remnants of what was once the world's largest producer of steel [Kahn].

But while globalization does have its temporary drawbacks, the consensus of most economists is that globalization over the long term holds tremendous benefit, both socially and economically, for all who participate in it [Friedman].

While there are valid arguments against the fairness of globalization, the crux of this debate is whether the United States should sell its morals for globalization. In doing a formal analysis of this topic, it must be asked how does one objectively analyze and make a recommendation for this problem? In this paper, I will use the utilitarianist philosophy, which allows for an objective analysis on the ethicality of trading with totalitarian regimes, and can help determine which argument would yield the most happiness [Johnson]. I believe an analysis based on deontological philosophy would fail to meet the goals of this analysis. Deontology is more concerned with the true intent of an action and its subsequent effects, whereas utilitarianist philosophy looks just at the effects of an action without regards to the true intentions behind the action [Johnson]. And since the success of capitalism is based on the greed and selfishness of everyone, an analysis utilizing deontology would be ineffective [Wilson].

This analysis will then be evaluated and finally incorporated with the new ethical implications of the internet and Google's involvement in setting an example on a world stage.



## **Utilitarian Analysis**

For this discussion, utilitarian philosophy will be defined as the way “everyone ought to act so as to bring about the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people [Johnson].” The analysis of this paper will be concerned with the net happiness yielded by each argument, supporting trade with all countries regardless of their government, or selectively excluding those which progressive nations deem “backwards.”

### *Perpetual Happiness in Globalization*

One of the more predominant arguments for supporting American trade with totalitarian regimes like the People’s Republic of China (PRC) is the great economic benefit it could bring to the American companies that establish a presence there, and their international consumers. American companies that establish a successful trade center in China can cause an economic ripple effect that covers the global marketplace. Job opportunities in China, albeit one’s that pay a pittance of a salary, are created and provide a steady source of income for what could otherwise be a struggling worker and their family. The cheap labor that is provided by these workers can then be divided into two categories: 1) savings for the end consumer and 2) an increased profit margin for the owning company and its stockholders. The savings on the consumer’s side can then be turned into increased spending, which translates to more demand, in turn creating more jobs to produce more products. The company’s increased profit margin can (theoretically) be re-invested into the infrastructure of the company, and used to expand

to new marketplaces, create more jobs, create more profits, and create more revenue for stock holders. This scenario is one of the key arguments (if not *the* key argument) in “trickle down” economic theory [Clarke]. In theory, “top down economics” perpetually creates more jobs, more income, and therefore more happiness [Clarke]. In practice however, there is debate as to the true effectiveness of top down economic theory, but that debate lies outside the analysis of this paper. Whereas supply side economic theory tries to define the government’s role in the economy, this analysis is concerned with a private company’s impact on the global economy [Mandel].

### *Foreign Influence on Happiness*

Aside from the tangible economic benefit of trading with totalitarian regimes, there is evidence to show that permeation by a foreign company into a totalitarian nation can increase freedoms within that country [Friedman]. What one must do now is quantify this happiness, while also taking into account the blessedness of ignorance.

While many would argue that a free and just society is a happier society, the artificial world created by the PRC has proven to be surprisingly content. Many Chinese are very aware that the information they hear and read is censored and edited by government agencies. In fact, the PRC rewards internet service providers for censoring and reporting illicit material to the Chinese authorities [Thompson]. It is, as Clive Thompson states, a “cultural difference [Thompson].” While many Americans would be outraged over this sort of flagrant censorship, Chinese citizens as a whole seem content that it is a small price to pay for stability and security [Thompson]. This fact now presents an interesting conundrum: if trade with a totalitarian government maintains the

status quo of authoritarianism, is that such a bad thing? And, if as history dictates and economists believe, should a changing of the guard occur because of global trade, would there be an increase in net happiness over an already content status quo? The argument can be made that with free trade social progress over the long-term will tend towards a more democratic and free country. But what amount of unhappiness is created during this process? For example, in the Tiananmen Square massacre, an influx of outside ideas sparked thoughts of liberty and a democratic movement, but that demonstration in Beijing was merely the beginning of a great massacre [Vander]. It can be argued now that the lives lost in Tiananmen were lost in vain and that this suffering erased years of happiness created by government stability in China. After all, the Communist Party of China is still the ruling power, and social freedoms are still limited in China [Kahn]. One must now ask whether the cost of a revolution is worth a democratic government. Even if the new democratic government proves to be successful and stable, will people be significantly happier in this new society than they were, albeit artificially, under a totalitarian government?

I believe the true answer to this question lies not in the citizens who are being directly affected, but more to the citizens around the world. If it were to be conceded that a revolution to create a democratic nation would negate any positive effects of the revolution, then it would be argued that an open, democratic government replacing a totalitarian regime would ease the fears of citizens in other countries, and therefore increase total happiness. Take, for example, the current situation in Iran. If a bloody revolution between secular democrats and Islamic fundamentalists occurs, one of the

biggest beneficiaries of happiness will be those who will no longer have to fear Iran's goals for nuclear proliferation [CNNAnnan].

#### *Free Trade and the Freedom To Do Evil*

One must also consider what happens when the intentions of free trade are contorted to do evil. Once again citing Iran, if a country takes its profits from trade and uses them for evil purposes, this would defeat the positive utilitarian effect of free trade. In the case of Iran, the Iranians have had an established trading relationship with Russia, but it is now being seen that this relationship may have been used to push the fundamentalist Iranian government closer to the development of nuclear weapons [CNNAnnan].

#### *Effectiveness of Embargos*

On the other side of this argument, one can see what happens to a country when they are isolated from the global marketplace. While embargos are meant to act as a form of punishment and as a means to encourage the citizens of the embargoed country to rise-up against the ruling power, typically the ruling despot *increases* their power [Katz]. As can be seen with Cuba, this also enables the ruler to use the embargo itself as a means of propaganda within the country, and further entrench themselves in power [Katz]. And since there are no foreign entities of any sort to challenge this misinformation, the propaganda becomes truth for the embargoed citizens [Katz]. Additionally, the embargo against Cuba has proven to not only be ineffective at causing a regime change, but it has also deprived Cubans of basic necessities [Katz]. While the embargo does help increase

happiness in the countries enacting the embargo, this happiness is minimal in comparison to the unhappiness suffered by the citizens of the embargoed nation. From these issues, it can be seen that an embargo decreases the amount of overall happiness.

Now that the arguments have been discussed, they must now be assessed and compared to determine which option yields the most happiness.

### *Utilitarian Conclusion*

The economic impact of potential trade with tyrannical nations is tremendous, and generally has a positive effect on overall happiness. The main catch to this argument is that the profiting nations must not use their wealth towards evil deeds that would diminish the overall positive effect on world happiness. While this is a legitimate fear, there is also the possibility that any such nation be overthrown before it can perform evil. Another point discussed was the happiness created or lost during a revolution. As discussed above, if one were to assume the drawbacks of a revolution against the potential gain of a democracy as negligible, there is a significant impact on easing the fears of the rest of the world should a revolution occur.

After this analysis, the question of the ethicality of trading with a dictatorial government like China shouldn't be, "is it right to trade with them?" but more, "is it right *not* to trade with them?"

Now that the ethicality of globalization has been established, the discussion can now be refined to this paper's primary focus: the internet's impact on globalization and the "free" exchange of information.

## **Ethics of Internet Trade**

The internet has quickly become a staple in American households and as such, internet commerce has also become a major player in the globalization of the world's economies [Cagliano]. The internet has increased the marketplace of every business that uses it from a local geographical region, to the entire world. This increased access and communication with people all over the world has connected people with new technologies and ideas in a way that has never been done before. But is there room in this new digital age for totalitarian countries like China to reap the profits?

As has been discussed, continual opening of countries have led to more personal liberties, both societal and economic. But with the proliferation of the internet, and its ability to not only spur economic growth, but also to help spread abstract ideas, governments around the world are taking steps to filter this wealth of information. The argument opposing internet trade with these countries is that the censoring of information from the world defeats the purpose of trading with a country as a means to improve a totalitarian society [Becker]. The idea is that the internet is the catalyst that will drive an insurrection or a reformation in a closed society's domestic policy [Becker]. Whereas globalization via the manufacturing sector has dealt with an infusion of foreign money into a society, the internet has the capability of acting not only as a means for economic development, but also the ability to convey ideas and exchange information.

## **Google and Its Place: A Deontological Analysis**

After discussing the impact of the internet on totalitarian regimes, Google can now be incorporated into this discussion. From an economic standpoint, Google saw China as a large, untapped foreign market from which it could profit. However, in order to gain full access to the Chinese network, Google had to agree to self-censor its searches or face the risk of being shut down by Chinese authorities. This paper will now discuss the intentions of Google's move into China and the ethicality of doing so. For the purpose of this analysis, I will use a deontological philosophy in order to determine whether Google's true intentions were for profit or, as their co-founder Sergey Brin says, for a greater societal good [Thompson]. Because this paper is trying to determine the true intent of Google's actions, and not merely the side effects of its actions, a deontological analysis would be effective in determining if Google acted in an ethically sound way.

### *Google's Motto*

It's interesting to note that in the sense of a corporate philosophy to not "be evil," Google is the aberration, not the norm [Google]. But is Google really following this ambitious philosophy? Though industry experts think Google's decision to censor search results was strictly a business decision [ZiffGoogle], Google founder Sergey Brin insists that going into China "wasn't as much a business decision as a decision about getting people information. And we [Google] decided in the end that we should make this compromise [Thompson]." As this shows, Brin publicly believes that what Google did was ethical. He believes that Google made some trade-offs in order to optimize profit, but was still offering a public service.

But what evidence is there to support the claim that Google is doing this as a means to spread information? If Google is censoring information at the same time, how can they say that what they are doing is providing information to the public? In order to better understand this discussion, one must know how Chinese censorship is carried out.

### *Behind the Scenes of Chinese Censorship*

While the actual censorship and blocking of web sites is done by the Chinese authorities, Chinese law gives an ambiguous definition of what is censorable, and what is not [Thompson]. This is done in order to let the companies themselves define what would constitute as inflammatory remarks against the Chinese government [Thompson]. This means of self enforced censorship, as opposed to handing out a list of blacklisted words, has proven to be tremendously effective at censoring the internet [Thompson]. But while Google censors its search results, maybe even more thoroughly than the Chinese government would, Google places a banner on each censored search informing the user that their search results are being censored [Thompson]. This act personifies Google's claim that they made a business decision to enter China, while at the same time trying to improve the quality of life for Chinese citizens.

There is also a question as to whether Google's proposed censorship can even be done. In early 2006, a group of "hackers" were able to search around google.cn's censor by simply using capital letters. As Google has become more financially prominent, hackers have begun to set their sights to the new king of the computer world [ZiffHack]. Going to google.cn and searching also proves to be a valuable exercise. It's interesting to note that when searching for "June 4<sup>th</sup>," (the date of the Tiananmen Square uprising) on google.cn yields every result one would expect to see. Images, history, and accounts of



the Tianamen Square massacre are easily accessible. However, searching for “June 4<sup>th</sup>” in *Chinese* yields dramatically different search results [Wang]. One can see that the websites that were seen as hits in the English version are not even visible from a search done in Chinese [Wang]. In the Chinese search, there is also the banner from Google warning that the search results have been censored [Wang].

This demonstration brings two questions to mind: 1) will the censoring of searches ever be fool-proof and 2) is Google making a full-hearted effort to censor searches? Or is this just a means to bypass Chinese authorities and still allow Chinese citizens access to unfiltered information?

### *Analysis of China's Censorship*

The former question is a technical one, but it does rely on the latter. Maybe complete censoring of Google's search results is feasible if given enough time and man power, but if Google does not give a high priority to this censorship project, then it will always be one step behind those trying to find ways around it. This could be an intentional move on Brin's part if he truly believes in the proliferation of information in China. However, even with the less controversial censoring of Nazi websites in Europe, successfully blocking searches has proven to be anything but a trivial matter [Schwartz].

After considering this evidence, it appears possible that Google may actually be doing the deontologically correct action in the way that they censor the internet. But what kind of ethical track record does Google? Is Google's past consistent with their handling of China?

### *Google's Ethical Track Record*

One such situation involves our very own American government. When other search providers handed over the search records of their users to the Bush administration as a means to fight terrorism, Google stood by its privacy promise and refused to cave [Dvorak]. Additionally, unlike its competitors in China, Google refused to offer a means of communication, such as chat rooms, instant messaging, or GMail [Thompson]. Google did this because in 2004, Yahoo! handed over an e-mail user's personal information for releasing internal Chinese government communication about shutting down a New York based Chinese pro-democracy web site. The user was sentenced to ten years in prison by Chinese courts.

### *Is Google Deontologically Ethical?*

As can be seen from these situations, Google put their ethical concern of their user's privacy over their own economic interests. However, it could be argued that Google's actions were still a business decision. In the incident involving China and Yahoo!, Google was able to see how much of a hit Yahoo! took in usage when it became public that Yahoo! sold out one of its own users to the Chinese government. This helped ensure continued dominance of the Chinese search engine market by native Chinese search engine baidu.com. This argument brings into question the usefulness of deontology and resurrects the debate on whether *any* act is ever truly deontologically ethical.

So if a deontological analysis is ultimately inadequate in addressing this situation, what can be used as an objective means to analyze the situation? To settle this issue, one can refer to the Software Engineering Code of Ethics (SECOE) as a means of

determining the ethicality of Google and its actions. Since Google is a software engineering firm, the SECOE can be used as an objective means to determine the ethicality of Google's actions.

### **The Software Engineering Code of Ethics and Google**

Google is ethically obligated to uphold all tenets of the SECOE. In this analysis, I will focus on four tenets that ethically justify Google's actions.

#### *Moderation of the Public Good*

As can be seen in Google's dealings with China, Google made the business decision to enter into China, yet stopped short of completely caving in to the Chinese censors and the potential pitfalls. This is indicative of section 1.02 of the SECOE which states the software engineers shall "moderate the interests of the software engineer, the employer, the client and the users with the public good." Google also avoided implementing any system that allowed for the tracking of user searches in order to avoid future complications with the Chinese government should the PRC be looking for information on citizens in its own country. In accordance with 1.02 of the SECOE, Google was able to maintain a means for citizens of China to access the wealth of information on the internet, while at the same time notifying them of any censorship.

Also in line with the SECOE, Google was able to deliver a product that, though limited compared to its Western affiliates, does not diminish quality of life, but in fact

improves it. This can be deemed as an ethically sound decision by section of 1.03 of the SECOE which states the following:

“A software engineer shall, as appropriate, approve software only if they [software engineers] have a well-founded belief that it is safe, meets specifications, passes appropriate tests, and does not diminish quality of life, diminish privacy or harm the environment. The ultimate effect of the work should be to the public good...”

While it can be conceded that the censoring of the internet is limiting the amount of good that Google can provide, a Chinese citizen being able to access the information provided by Google is an immeasurable good compared to the alternative of not being able to easily access information on the internet.

#### *Loyalty to the Customer*

While Google was able to provide a usable product that served the public good, they also did something their American competitors did not: maintain the interests of both the Chinese government and the citizens that will use Google, in accordance with section 2.09 which states:

“A software engineer shall, as appropriate, promote no interest adverse to their employer or client, unless a higher ethical concern is being compromised; in that case, inform the employer or another appropriate authority of the ethical concern...”

Section 2.09 addresses the situation where the software engineer should not promote any adverse interest adverse to its employer (i.e., China) unless a higher concern is being compromised. In this case, Google was still able to deploy a product with the approval of the PRC, but Google stood by its ethical commitments to not mislead Chinese citizens about the information they use on Google.

### *Respect of Individual Privacy*

In developing a suitable search engine for China, Google also took into consideration the privacy of its new users. As stated in section 3.12 of the SECOE, software engineers are to “work to develop software and related documents that respect the privacy of those who will be affected by that software.” This tenet harks to the ethical decision Google made when it did not deploy any of its communication service in China. Though it could have potentially captured the communications market, Google learned from the aforementioned Yahoo! and MSN cases that maintaining user privacy amidst a Communist dictatorship was crucial to both the economic development of Google in China, and the social development of Chinese society.

### **Conclusion**

While Google did make a business decision to establish a Chinese-based search engine, this analysis has shown that Google has been ethically sound in every sense, utilitarian, deontological, and under the Software Engineering Code of Ethics. It is interesting to note that Google’s corporate motto of “don’t be evil” actually holds up [Google]. In fact, it has been theorized that Sergey Brin formed this motto in order to define itself as the antithesis to Microsoft and its “evil empire” [Dvorak]. Where Google has maintained its course for that of the ethically sound, Microsoft has done the opposite. When Google refused to hand over search records to the United States, Microsoft happily obliged. When China asked Google to censor their search results, Google censored them, but not without some creative thinking and the decision to not offer communications software in China. Microsoft, on the other hand, helped to shut down an inflammatory

anti-PRC website [Dvorak]. What Google has done is capitalize on the situation of the present, but at the same time lay groundwork that will allow for not only future profits, but future social progress. By doing ethically defensible acts, Google has not only ensured their current financial future, but also increased the possibility of a more democratic China.

It will be interesting to see how the rivalry between Microsoft and Google evolves in the upcoming years. On one end is the young, inventive, and ethically sound Google, while on the other end is Bill Gates and his “evil empire,” which has ruled the computing world over the last twenty years. But Google is now showing that it can do what Gates has achieved financially, yet still maintain a strong sense of morals and ethics.

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