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## Odd allies: Hollywood, Google cozy up to conservatives amid dispute

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By Evan Halper

The days of Hollywood and Silicon Valley aligning their charitable giving with mostly liberal causes are long gone. Doing so may be too politically costly as each is trying to get leverage over the other on a divided Capitol Hill.

The big movie studios, whose executives rank among the Democratic Party's most effective fundraisers, have lately been stepping up their contributions to think tanks more commonly associated with the Republican-supporting Koch brothers. Google, the tech giant and cash cow for Democrats, has been doing the same. Both the studios and Google also now count among their lobbyists some of the most connected GOP insiders in Washington.

The donations totaling many hundreds of thousands of dollars to conservative groups, including Americans for Tax Reform, the American Action Network and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, come as the industries are trying to line up surrogates in their dispute with each other over copyright laws.

Hollywood wants to preserve strong restrictions over how and where creative works get used, as well as see tougher antipiracy rules put in place. The tech sector argues that current copyright law, most of which was drafted before computers were widely used, is outdated and stifles innovation. It has warned that some of the restrictions proposed by Hollywood, including the failed Stop Online Piracy Act, would criminalize the way millions of Americans use the Internet.

The flow of funds to conservative think tanks amid the fight highlights the influence those organizations have over the GOP-controlled House. Several of them are actively involved in the copyright dispute through lobbying and other advocacy.

Critics of the think tanks have been keeping track of the flow of money from the tech and movie industries amid the copyright battle. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, known as CREW, points to 2012 tax forms showing the Motion Picture Assn. of America gave at least \$345,000 to the conservative organizations.

In November, the Center for Media and Democracy took aim at Google with its report "The Googlization of the Far Right." Google reveals far less about its giving than the MPAA, which as a nonprofit organization is subject to strict disclosure requirements. But the center noted that voluntary disclosures show that since late 2012 Google has given "substantial" grants to the

American Conservative Union, Americans for Tax Reform, the CATO Institute, Heritage Action and others.