



Trump, Tech Bigwigs to Meet Wednesday

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Some of high-tech's heaviest hitters will be in New York City Wednesday to meet with President-elect Donald J. Trump.

On the list of all-stars expected to attend the meeting are Alphabet CEO Larry Page, Apple CEO Tim Cook, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, Cisco CEO Chuck Robbins, IBM CEO Ginni Rometty, Intel CEO Brian Krzanich and Oracle CEO Safra Catz, according to a Recode report.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos is likely to attend as well. Bezos also owns *The Washington Post*, whose reporters the president-elect at one point barred from his campaign events.

A number of high-profile tech players reportedly have not been invited or can't make the meeting. They include Uber CEO Travis Kalanick, Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky, Netflix CEO Reed Hastings, Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff, Slack CEO Stewart Butterfield, Dropbox CEO Drew Houston and Hewlett-Packard CEO Meg Whitman.

Jack Dorsey, CEO and inventor of the president-elect's favorite social medium, Twitter, apparently was uncertain if he'd been invited, according to Recode.

What's in It for Tech?

How might tech execs benefit from the meeting with the president-elect? For one thing, it might calm some frazzled nerves.

"Ideally, the meeting will help quell concerns about Trump's anti-tech industry campaign trail blustering," observed Charles King, principal analyst at Pund-IT.

"Trump's comments about technology during the election campaign demonstrated a notable lack of understanding or open hostility about key industry issues and concerns," he told the E-Commerce Times, "including Net neutrality, H-1B visas, relations with China -- where many vendors have manufacturing partners -- and diversity."

What the president-elect hopes the session will accomplish for his administration is anyone's guess.

"A similar meeting with heads of various media organizations devolved into Trump delivering a scolding," King noted. "I doubt many in the group of CEOs invited to this sitdown will willingly endure a tongue-lashing by someone who appears to understand very little about their industry."

Primate Dominance

The president-elect's meeting with the high tech execs could very well resemble the one with the media brass, said Julian Sanchez, a senior fellow at the [Cato Institute](#).

"Trump's previous meeting with media executives seems to have been primarily an exercise in primate dominance display rather than achieving any particular concrete goal," he told the E-Commerce Times. "The point may not be to move toward any particular policy goal so much as for Trump to satisfy himself that he can gather captains of industry in a single room."

The president-elect's campaign rhetoric on immigration and trade has created uncertainties that are making the technology industry nervous, Sanchez added.

A restrictive immigration policy will hinder the industry's ability to gather the best minds from around the world -- an ability that has been an enormous engine of Silicon Valley's growth and productivity, he explained.

The industry also is concerned that either through policy or use of the bully pulpit, the president-elect may disrupt the global supply chain that has made mass-market tech possible, said Sanchez.

Data Collection on Agenda

The technology industry could be valuable for accomplishing many of the goals the president-elect outlined during the campaign.

"Many of Trump's policy proposals are heavily reliant upon personally identifiable data, such as religion, ethnicity, documentation status and sexual orientation," explained Reem Suleiman, a campaigner for [SumOfUs](#).

"Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that many of his tech goals are centered around data collection and the surveillance of vulnerable communities of color," she told the E-Commerce Times.

Data collection could be a point of contention at the meeting with the president-elect.

"The CEOs may seek some sort of acknowledgment that their businesses are harmed by the current intelligence-gathering apparatus that the government operates, particularly abroad," noted Ross Schulman, senior policy counsel for New America's [Open Technology Institute](#).

Surveillance Problem

The tech companies to be represented at the meeting are global companies, Shulman pointed out.

"For them to do business around the world, their non-U.S. customers want some sort of understanding that the U.S. government isn't pawing through their data at a whim," he said. "Fixing that instead of going backwards would be appreciated by a lot of them."

However, indications are that won't be the case.

"Nominations like Mike Pompeo for CIA director and Jeff Sessions for the DoJ are causing a lot of heartache for that reason," Shulman said.

"They're gung-ho about collecting all the data that they can," he added. "That's got to be troubling for people in Silicon Valley."