

# Townhall

## Purge: Amid Leftist Fury, Google Fires Engineer Who Wrote Memo Criticizing Politically-Correct Groupthink

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Before we proceed any further on this subject, if you haven't done so already, please stop what you're doing and **actually read the leaked internal memo** that got a Google employee fired. [Here it is](#). It's only ten pages long, and its points are fairly digestible -- even if the prose reads like it was written by, well, an analytically-minded engineer. It is essential that you consider its contents for yourself prior to consuming the deluge of terribly misleading headlines, reporting, and social media takes that have erupted from this controversy. Those who don't bother to grapple with the original source material are liable to accept, at face value, that the memo's author uncorked an "[anti-diversity screed](#)" that "embarrassed his employer" and created a "hostile work environment" by arguing that women "[aren't suited for](#)" tech jobs. None of that is fair or accurate. In truth, the now-unemployed writer makes several core points:

(1) Google has a viewpoint diversity and political correctness problem that stifles dissenting views, especially those held by traditionally-minded and politically conservative employees. The company's ideologically-monolithic culture makes open discussion very difficult, if not impossible.


(2) Diversity is a valuable and worthy goal ("I strongly believe in gender and racial diversity"), but forcibly implementing it through anti-merit discriminatory practices can be a harmful business practice. People should be treated as individuals, not as members of a preordained groups.

(3) Perhaps the dearth of women in certain tech jobs is not the result of rampant bias and discrimination, but rather is the product of choices, preferences and inherent abilities that arise from hard-wired differences between the sexes.

He includes an explanation of the spirit of his critique, writing, "open and honest discussion with those who disagree can highlight our blind spots and help us grow." [How naive](#), sighs Rich Lowry, who adds, "it's one thing to disagree with the memo; it's another to believe the views therein should be forbidden." For his good-faith and reasoned attempt at raising a serious internal concern (replete with numerous concessions and olive branches), James Damore lost his

job -- laboratory pure confirmation of his diagnoses of institutional rigidity, intolerance, and blind spots. And thus, the *End of Discussion* mob claimed its latest scalp, just a few years after Silicon Valley's ruthlessly-enforced groupthink hounded Brendan Eich from Mozilla for his thought crimes on same-sex marriage. Google did not respond to Damore's challenges by encouraging its workforce to engage with his ideas via identifying worthwhile arguments and thoughtfully pushing back against others; they declared the very existence of his ideas "not okay" and showed him the door. In doing so, they blatantly ignored both the substance and tone of his commentary, with many in our lazy, biased media following suit. In a note to employees defending management's decision to purge the heretic, Google's CEO penned as astonishingly self-unaware and ironic sentence:

"Our job is to build great products for users that make a difference in their lives. To suggest a group of our colleagues have traits that make them less biologically suited to that work is offensive and not OK." -Sundar Pichai



Our job is to build great products for users that make a difference in their lives. To suggest a group of our colleagues have traits that make them less biologically suited to that work is offensive and not OK...Our co-workers shouldn't have to worry that each time they open their mouths to speak in a meeting, they have to prove that they are not like the memo states, being "agreeable" rather than "assertive," showing a "lower stress tolerance," or being "neurotic."

Sundar Pichai  
Excerpt from note to employees



"Our co-workers shouldn't have to worry...each time they open their mouths to speak in a meeting," he wrote, having *literally just fired* a co-worker for effectively opening his mouth and speaking. He simultaneously sent a crystal clear, dissent-chilling signal to any other wrong-thinkers who may be lurking among Google's lockstep bien pensants: Conservative traditionalists aren't welcome in this rarefied community, so undercover interlopers had best keep their mouths shut. One of Google's stated founding values is "freedom of expression." What frauds, several times over. Meanwhile, those cheering on the firing are advancing a number of arguments, many of them weak. For instance: *Aren't conservatives supposedly in favor of private companies making hiring and firing decisions?* Yes, we are. Google executives had the *right* to do what

they've done. But that does not exempt them from intense criticism for doing *the wrong thing*, especially as leaders of a corporate behemoth whose products and services are intertwined with the lives of tens of millions of Americans. As Charles C.W. Cooke observes, this lame "gotcha" is akin to complaining about the ACLU defending the KKK's right to speak while also criticizing their speech. One can hold both of these thoughts in one's head at the same time.

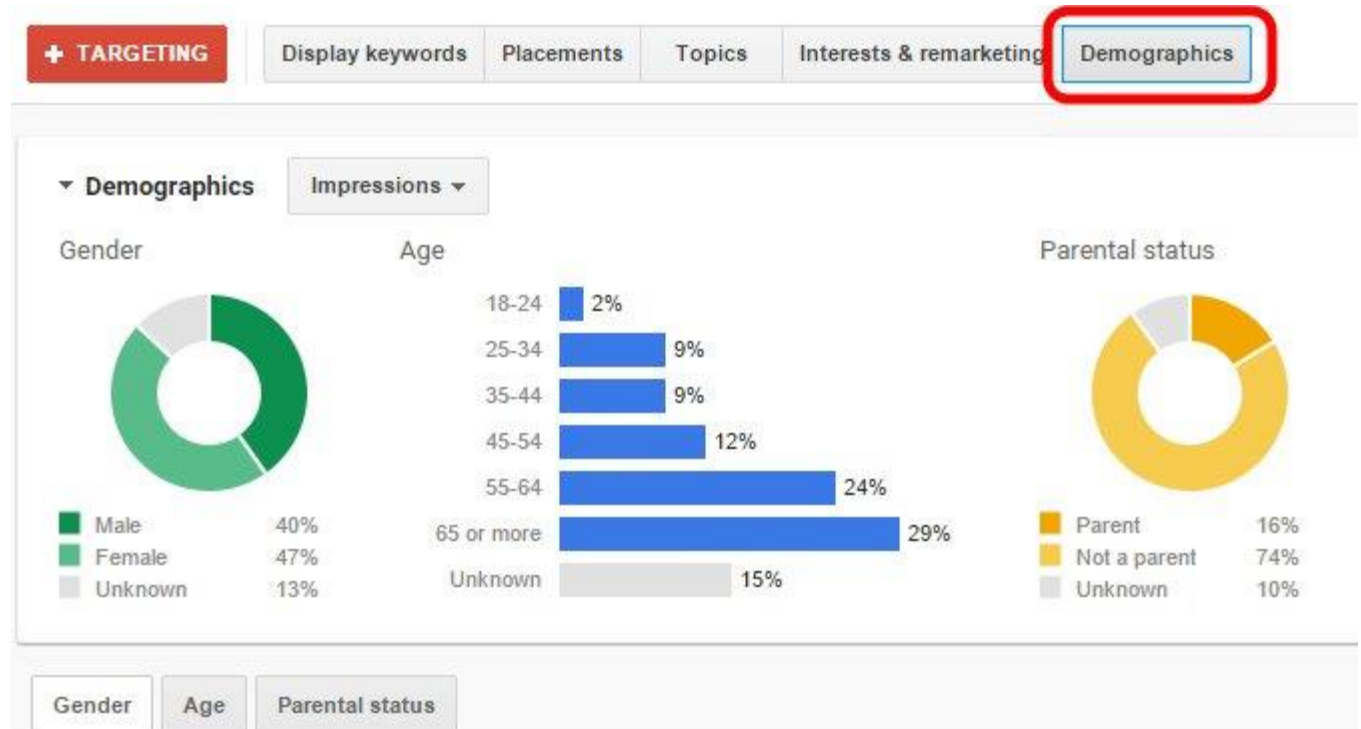
Then there's the claim that a massive private corporation aggressively rooting out the expression of "problematic" views does not constitute a free speech threat because there's no direct *governmental* action involved. This is narrowly correct, but broadly obtuse. If a sprawling and expanding swath of corporate America decides to shun anyone who holds, or even outwardly entertains, certain mainstream viewpoints, the far-reaching cultural implications are serious. To wit, are "out" conservatives or traditionalists becoming unemployable in growing sectors of the US workforce? If so, our worsening societal polarization and festering resentments will grow more entrenched. Furthermore, as legal expert Walter Olson wrote in an extended tweet storm today, it's naive to pretend that the government doesn't play a relevant role in all of this. A few of his points:

Read the whole thing for a more complete review of how federal bureaucrats put their 'thumb on the scale' by encouraging corporate policing of speech restrictions that the government itself is constrained from enforcing. I'd also recommend this piece by Robert VerBruggen, who skewers an essay that quickly circulated as a 'definitive takedown' of the original memo, noting that its author didn't even attempt to refute Damore's case regarding intrinsic differences (on average) between the sexes. Speaking of which, Damore obviously treads on provocative ground when he contends that on the whole, women and men sometimes excel at different things, and are naturally drawn to certain types of jobs and careers. He does so quite politely and reasonably, but thought crimes are thought crimes, no matter how carefully packaged. But why is the underlying premise of his simple observations so obviously wrong, sexist, outrageous, etc?

Might there be a reason why the NBA is hugely, disproportionately dominated by black men (74 percent of the league vs. roughly 6.5 percent of the US population) that has nothing to do with malicious discrimination against people of other races? Why were 55 percent of undergraduates entering four-year American universities in 2016 women? And why is that emerging gender gap even more pronounced at journalism schools? Is this evidence of yet more bigotry and discriminatory injustice, crying out for pro-male remedies? Or could it be that certain demographic groups are more inclined toward certain work, talents and interests than others? That doesn't mean that any one group is morally superior than any other, or that some cohorts deserve extra or fewer legal protections. Of course they aren't, and don't.

Nor does it mean (as Damore makes explicit) that significant numbers of impressive and talented individuals from "out" groups aren't able to thrive while cutting against cultural or genetic norms. Exploring these questions as they pertain to hiring practices, and examining appropriate 'solutions' to apparent disparities (Damore offers a series of suggestions that reach beyond blunt-object identity bean-counting), might be a useful exercise -- even if people reach disparate conclusions. But what Google announced the to the world yesterday is that the mere act of

exploring such questions is strictly verboten. Some things are simply not to be discussed, and the list of those things is growing. Hold on, though. If using generalizations rooted in demographic data and trends in order to optimize a business is an unpardonable sin, doesn't Google have some explaining to do? *Problematic:*



Some additional hysterical reactions to Damore's memo further expose the tactics of left-wing outrage warriors who weaponize political correctness as a means of pulverizing their opponents - - which is the entire thesis of *End of Discussion* (a new edition of which was released a week ago). Some justified Damore's firing as an appropriate measure against workplace "violence," perpetuating the idiotic and speech-squelching conflation that "offensive" speech is tantamount to physical force. It's not. Adults should be expected to work alongside people with whom they disagree; cowering in a corner and fretting about "safety" should not be indulged. Others weren't satisfied by Google's decision to sack Damore, demanding to know what would be done about his colleagues who reportedly expressed timid, private agreement with his ideas. Being cowed into silence isn't sufficient, you see. There must be consequences for harboring malevolent sentiments in one's heart. *Search the g-chat records and unmask these monsters.* And then there's this important point, which helps illustrate why conservatives have spent so much time and energy worrying about the march of intolerance, authoritarianism and mob rule within academia:

Students earn degrees, matriculate into the workplace, and begin to dominate various professional subcultures -- and eventually culture itself. If freedom from offense and allergy to intellectual pluralism and critical thinking are prevailing mores inside our institutions of higher learning, those ripples cannot and will not be contained to college campuses. They will spill

over into other important corners of American life, corroding our ability to respect differences in opinion and values, while fetishizing differences in skin color and gender. Those are not signs of a healthy republic. I'll leave you with this thought, via *Townhall* columnist Kurt Schlichter:

I'm no conspiracy crackpot, and I don't think we're there yet. But in light of Google's truly immense reach and power as a purveyor of information (and the sheer volume of personal data they control), this is a concern worth flagging. The leap from in-house ideological coercion to insidious, *outward* ideological censorship is frighteningly plausible. It must be guarded against aggressively through reliable internal controls. Based on what we now know about how Google's leadership regards roughly half the country -- with their hostility against apostates on full display -- why *shouldn't* non-liberals feel anxious about the possibility that the company might allow its biases to tilt the vast digital playing field? It's plainer than ever that Google has a serious viewpoint diversity and political correctness problem. If you work there and agree, your marching orders are simple: Shut up, or get out. End of discussion.