



The Google Story: For Google's 10th Birthday

By David A. Vise

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Moscow-born Sergey Brin and Midwest-born Larry Page dropped out of graduate school at Stanford University to, in their own words, "change the world" through a powerful search engine that would organize every bit of information on the Web for free. **The Google Story** takes you deep inside the company's wild ride from an idea that struggled for funding in 1998 to a firm that rakes in billions in profits, making Brin and Page the wealthiest young men in America. Based on scrupulous research and extraordinary access to Google, this fast-moving narrative reveals how an unorthodox management style and culture of innovation enabled a search engine to shake up Madison Avenue and Wall Street, scoop up YouTube, and battle Microsoft at every turn. Not afraid of controversy, Google is expanding in Communist China and quietly working on a searchable genetic database, initiatives that test the founders' guiding mantra: DON'T BE EVIL.

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The Google Story: For Google's 10th Birthday By David A. Vise Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #563520 in Books
- Brand: Vise, David A./ Malseed, Mark
- Published on: 2008-09-23
- Released on: 2008-09-23
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .75" w x 6.04" l, .77 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 360 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Social phenomena happen, and the historians follow. So it goes with Google, the latest star shooting through the universe of trend-setting businesses. This company has even entered our popular lexicon: as many note, "Google" has moved beyond noun to verb, becoming an action which most tech-savvy citizens at the turn of the twenty-first century recognize and in fact do, on a daily basis. It's this wide societal impact that fascinated authors David Vise and Mark Malseed, who came to the book with well-established reputations in investigative reporting. Vise authored the bestselling *The Bureau and the Mole*, and Malseed contributed significantly to two Bob Woodward books, *Bush at War* and *Plan of Attack*. The kind of voluminous research and behind-the-scenes insight in which both writers specialize, and on which their earlier books rested, comes through in *The Google Story*.

The strength of the book comes from its command of many small details, and its focus on the human side of the Google story, as opposed to the merely academic one. Some may prefer a dryer, more analytic approach to Google's impact on the Internet, like *The Search* or books that tilt more heavily towards bits and bytes on the spectrum between technology and business, like *The Singularity is Near*. Those wanting to understand the motivations and personal growth of founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin and CEO Eric Schmidt, however, will enjoy this book. Vise and Malseed interviewed over 150 people, including numerous Google employees, Wall Street analysts, Stanford professors, venture capitalists, even Larry Page's Cub Scout leader, and their comprehensiveness shows.

As the narrative unfolds, readers learn how Google grew out of the intellectually fertile and not particularly directed friendship between Page and Brin; how the founders attempted to peddle early versions of their search technology to different Silicon Valley firms for \$1 million; how Larry and Sergey celebrated their first investor's check with breakfast at Burger King; how the pair initially housed their company in a Palo Alto office, then eventually moved to a futuristic campus dubbed the "Googleplex"; how the company found its financial footing through keyword-targeted Web ads; how various products like Google News, Froogle, and others were cooked up by an inventive staff; how Brin and Page proved their mettle as tough businessmen through negotiations with AOL Europe and their controversial IPO process, among other instances; and how the company's vision for itself continues to grow, such as geographic expansion to China and cooperation with Craig Venter on the Human Genome Project.

Like the company it profiles, *The Google Story* is a bit of a wild ride, and fun, too. Its first appendix lists 23 "tips" which readers can use to get more utility out of Google. The second contains the intelligence test which Google Research offers to prospective job applicants, and shows the sometimes zany methods of this most unusual business. Through it all, Vise and Malseed synthesize a variety of fascinating anecdotes and speculation about Google, and readers seeking a first draft of the history of the company will enjoy an easy read. --Peter Han

From Publishers Weekly

If Google's splashy IPO and skyrocketing stock haven't revived the dotcom sector, they have certainly revived the dotcom hype industry, judging by this adulatory history of the Internet search engine. Billionaire founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, their countercultural rectitude imbibed straight from the Burning Man festival, are brilliant visionaries dedicated to putting all information at mankind's fingertips and "genuinely nice people" who "didn't care about getting rich." Their company motto, "Don't Be Evil," is not just PR boilerplate rendered in fantasy-gaming rhetoric, but a deeply-pondered organizing principle. Washington

Post reporter Vise, author of *The Bureau* and *the Mole*, and researcher Malseed give a serviceable rundown of the company's rise from grad-student project to web juggernaut, its innovative technology and targeted advertising system, its savvy deal-making and its inevitable battles with Microsoft. But while they raise the occasional quibble about controversial company policies, they generally allow Google's image of idealism to overshadow the reality of a corporate leviathan. Worse, the bloated text feels like the product of an overly broad web search: anything with keyword Google-executives' speeches, seminar talks, informal Q and A sessions with students, company press releases, legal documents, SEC filings, even the company chef's fried chicken recipe-comes up, excerpted at inordinate and rambling length, drowning insight in a flood of information.

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From [Booklist](#)

Vise, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for the *Washington Post*, and Malseed, contributor to the *Post* and the *Boston Herald*, look at a phenomenon that is transforming the culture of the planet. Google has become the de facto search engine on the Web, and computer users across the globe have discovered that the only real way to gain entrance to the Web is to "google." This inside look at this heretofore-secret enterprise reveals a company with a conscience, one that refuses to put ads on its home page or accept ads from gun and cigarette manufacturers, and whose employees eat for free in a dining room run by the former chef of the Grateful Dead. The company motto is, Don't Be Evil. Developed by two Stanford University PhD students in the mid-1990s, Google was a by-product of their attempt to download the entire Internet, but it became an instant hit with the world. The authors follow the story of Google from academic project to venture capital start-up to the explosive Wall Street IPO in 2004. *David Siegfried*

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Users Review

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Shawn Marsh:

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Nancy Rush:

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Harry Oliver:

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