

We are Google employees. Google must drop Dragonfly

We are Google employees and we join Amnesty International in calling on Google to cancel project Dragonfly, Google's effort to create a censored search engine for the Chinese market that enables state surveillance.

We are among thousands of employees who have raised our voices for months. International human rights organizations and investigative reporters have also sounded the alarm, emphasizing serious human rights concerns and repeatedly calling on Google to cancel the project. So far, our leadership's response has been unsatisfactory.

Our opposition to Dragonfly is not about China: we object to technologies that aid the powerful in oppressing the vulnerable, wherever they may be. The Chinese government certainly isn't alone in its readiness to stifle freedom of expression, and to use surveillance to repress dissent. Dragonfly in China would establish a dangerous precedent at a volatile political moment, one that would make it harder for Google to deny other countries similar concessions.

Our company's decision comes as the Chinese government is openly expanding its surveillance powers and tools of population control. Many of these rely on advanced technologies, and combine online activity, personal records, and mass monitoring to track and profile citizens. Reports are already showing who bears the cost, including Uyghurs, women's rights advocates, and students. Providing the Chinese government with ready access to user data, as required by Chinese law, would make Google complicit in oppression and human rights abuses.

Dragonfly would also enable censorship and government-directed disinformation, and destabilize the ground truth on which popular deliberation and dissent rely. Given the Chinese government's reported suppression of dissident voices, such controls would likely be used to silence marginalized people, and favor information that promotes government interests.

Many of us accepted employment at Google with the company's values in mind, including its previous position on Chinese censorship and surveillance, and an understanding that Google was a company willing to place its values above its profits. After a year of disappointments including Project Maven, Dragonfly, and Google's support for abusers, we no longer believe this is the case. This is why we're taking a stand.

We join with Amnesty International in demanding that Google cancel Dragonfly. We also demand that leadership commit to transparency, clear communication, and real accountability. Google is too powerful not to be held accountable. We deserve to know what we're building and we deserve a say in these significant decisions.

Signed,

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