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I Was Google’s Head of International Relations. Here’s Why I Left. | Medium

By Ross LaJeunesse
January 3, 2020

> When I walked out the door on my last day as Google’s Head of International Relations, I couldn’t help but think of my first day at the company. I had exchanged a wood-paneled office, a suit and tie, and the job of wrestling California’s bureaucracy as Governor Schwarzenegger’s deputy chief of staff for a laptop, jeans, and a promise that I’d be making the world better and more equal, under the simple but powerful guidance “Don’t be evil.”
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> I joined Google in 2008, when those words still mattered. I saw them used to guide product designs that put the company’s success above a user’s privacy, such as during the development of Google’s ill-fated social network, Buzz. I used those words myself in 2010 as Head of Public Policy for Asia Pacific, when I executed the company’s landmark decision to stop censoring Search results in China, putting human rights ahead of the bottom line.
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> Google had first entered the Chinese market in 2006. At the time, founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin said that Google would only stay if the company’s presence was doing more good than harm — that users were getting more information than before, even if there was censorship of some topics. But over the years, the list of items that the Chinese government demanded we censor grew significantly, and after the Chinese government attempted to hack into the Gmail accounts of human rights advocates in 2009, Larry and Sergey decided it was time to re-assess the 2006 decision. After a series of intense discussions with other executives, they decided that the only way to continue providing Search in China while adhering to the “Don’t be evil” mantra was to cease cooperation with the government’s censorship requirements.
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