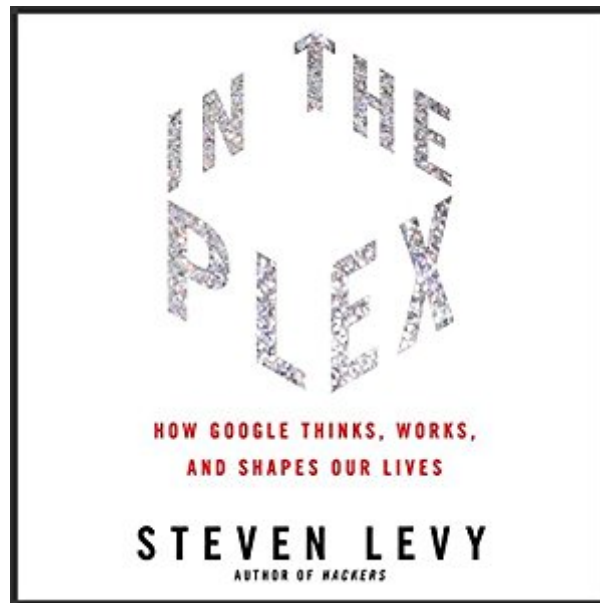




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# In The Plex: How Google Thinks, Works, And Shapes Our Lives



## Synopsis

Few companies in history have ever been as successful and as admired as Google, the company that has transformed the Internet and become an indispensable part of our lives. How has Google done it? Veteran technology reporter Steven Levy was granted unprecedented access to the company, and in this revelatory book he takes listeners inside Google headquarters - the Googleplex - to explain how Google works. While they were still students at Stanford, Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin revolutionized Internet search. They followed this brilliant innovation with another, as two of Google's earliest employees found a way to do what no one else had: make billions of dollars from Internet advertising. With this cash cow (until Google's IPO, nobody other than Google management had any idea how lucrative the company's ad business was), Google was able to expand dramatically and take on other transformative projects: more efficient data centers, open-source cell phones, free Internet video (YouTube), cloud computing, digitizing books, and much more. The key to Google's success in all these businesses, Levy reveals, is its engineering mind-set and adoption of such Internet values as speed, openness, experimentation, and risk taking. After its unapologetically elitist approach to hiring, Google pampers its engineers with free food and dry cleaning, on-site doctors and masseuses, and gives them all the resources they need to succeed. Even today, with a workforce of more than 23,000, Larry Page signs off on every hire. But has Google lost its innovative edge? It stumbled badly in China. And now, with its newest initiative, social networking, Google is chasing a successful competitor for the first time. Some employees are leaving the company for smaller, nimbler start-ups. Can the company that famously decided not to be "evil" still compete? No other book has turned Google inside out as Levy does with *In the Plex*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Subtitled How Google Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives this is basically the biography of a company. Right from Google's creation and through to the failure of Buzz with all the highs and lows in between. Since Google is a company of the internet age there were areas where I skimmed, thinking that I knew all about this. More interesting to me was the behind the scenes information. It was interesting to see how the viewpoints of senior Googlers differed from the common interpretation of their actions. The section on China was particularly revealing with lots of description of the friction and disagreements within Google itself about whether to engage with China and when to pull out. Another bit of particular interest to me was comparing the struggle that Google had once it became an established tech giant and the struggles the Obama administration had. In both cases idealism and a certain naivety came into hard conflict with entrenched interests. And both groups discovered that while the facts are indeed the facts. The facts won't stop people from misinterpreting everything you do and seeing the worst in you. I've always had a soft spot for Google and tend to think that a lot of the criticisms levied against them are rather ignorant or fail to recognize the realities of the world. This book reinforced that belief. It is a bit of a dry read. Perhaps because the people are secondary to the company in the story of Google. It took me a while to read because I found it easier to dip in and out than to read whole chapters at a time. But it is fact with insight.

I really like books that give you a history of a business. I especially like books that give you a history of technology businesses because they are usually so current. This is exactly the case with this book. Many have heard about what makes Google tick but this book takes you behind the scenes from day one and reveals what makes the place tick. It demonstrates how Google is really an extension of the personalities of Sergey and Larry. Reading the book helps you to better understand why Google does the things that it does and its whole approach to business. This is extremely beneficial given that fact that most people use a Google product every day. The book is well written, easy to read and very entertaining as it takes you through the history of Google, dwelling on the major moments and products that have made it the colossus that it is today. It is very interesting to see how major products like Gmail grew from extreme small, almost hobby like projects into the features of mass culture they are today. Most importantly of all it gives you fantastic insight into the

way Google thinks, how it make decisions and most importantly what it sees its mission in the world. As they say, knowing is understanding and with this book you'll certainly be more knowledgeable about what makes Google tick.

This book breaks my reading plan totally. I was on *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* and *Country Driving: A Chinese Road Trip* (P.S.) (Printed Chinese version purchased on China. Yes we do have copyrighted books in China:). And there are a lot of ebooks in Kindle as my reading list. I love Google. I love their products, like Search, Gmail, Maps, Reader, and YouTube. In this book I got a lot of info (or gossips, depending how you define this small things) about the company. The Chapter Six is unsurprisingly interesting to Chinese Google users. Not long after release of this book, tons of blog posts, illegal translations are flooding my RSS reader. This is phenomenal. And it haven't happened for a long time. The big heads - Tech Crunch, Business Insider and Mashable - also have at least one post on the book. They also reminded me to purchase a copy to fill my little monster of curiosity. So this is it. I paid \$12.99 to get a copy. Thanks to 's kindle reader. I can get hands on the book in less than five minutes. If I place an order to a printed copy, I have to wait, like two weeks. In my opinion, all the interesting gossips in this book have been leaked by the bloggers. Nothing more. Google has a hiding strategy. They have a lot stories hidden, which should be publicly known. That's why we have to buy a history book on Google. As Steven Levy wrote on Quora, this book has approved by Larry Page, Sergey Brin and Eric Schmidt. Google even gave Steven a unprecedented access. But some engineers think Google is no longer cool. A few left the company from Mountain View to Palo Alto. The most shocking big one is Sheryl Sandberg, who was a key person for Google ad division. She left Google for Facebook in March of 2008. It is hard to say Facebook is the future of internet, or social network will kill search engine. Yet, you know what I mean :) In any aspect, Google is a great company. Without help from Google, I couldn't have learned Python script in a short time (higher productivity on daily basis), or enjoy the fantastic map service, read free ebook in public domain, maybe still using a offline RSS reader, and \$300 revenue from AdSense... Yet Google made strange decision facing evil and dark power. In my understanding of two co-founders, they should haven't make such a decision (to enter China market and quit). I don't have an answer even carefully read the Chapter Six. Maybe it's a result to satisfy everyone(?). Eric Schmidt said they had 5000 years patience. Yet they quitted in five years. So let it be. Google should haven't been here. However, this is the best book on Google by now. If you are interested in small stories on Google, buy one now.

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