

# [***Who Is @BasedBeffJezos, The Leader Of The Tech Elite s E/Acc Movement?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69SF-4MD1-JBCM-F17P-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** A former Google engineer and the founder of stealth AI startup Extropic, is behind the Twitter account leading the effective accelerationism movement sweeping Silicon Valley.

**Body**

**Forbes has learned that Guillaume Verdon, the founder of stealth AI startup Extropic and a former Google engineer, is behind the provocative Twitter account leading the effective accelerationism movement sweeping Silicon Valley.**

**By Emily Baker-White, Forbes Staff**

Andreessen Horowitz cofounder Marc Andreessensays@BasedBeffJezos is a patron saint of techno-optimism. Garry Tan, who cofounded the venture firm Initialized Capital before becoming CEO of Y Combinator,calls him brother. Sam Altman, who founded OpenAI the company that finally mainstreamed artificial intelligence has jokinglysparredwith him on Twitter. Elon Musksayshis memes are .

Andreessen, Tan, and several dozen other Silicon Valley luminaries have also begun aligning with a movement that Jezos claims to have founded: effective accelerationism, or e/acc. At its core, e/acc argues that technology companies should innovate faster, with less opposition from decels or decelerationists folks like AI safety advocates and regulators who want to slow the growth of technology.

At first blush, e/acc sounds a lot like Facebook s old motto: move fast and break things. But Jezos also embraces more extreme ideas, borrowing concepts from accelerationism, which argues we should hasten the growth of technology and capitalism at the expense of nearly anything else. On X, the platform formally known as Twitter where he has 50,000 followers, Jezos has claimed that institutions have decayed beyond the point of salvagingand that the media isa vector for cybernetic control of culture.

So just who is the anonymous Twitter personality whose message of unfettered, technology-crazed capitalism at all costs has captivated many of Silicon Valley s most powerful?

**Forbes**has learned that the Jezos persona is run by a former Google quantum computing engineer named Guillaume Verdon who founded a stealth AI hardware startup Extropic in 2022.**Forbes** first identified Verdon as Jezos by matching details that Jezos revealed about himself to publicly available facts about Verdon. A voice analysis conducted by Catalin Grigoras, Director of the National Center for Media Forensics, compared audio recordings of Jezos and talks given by Verdon and found that it was 2,954,870 times more likely that the speaker in one recording of Jezos was Verdon than that it was any other person.**Forbes**is revealing his identity because we believe it to be in the public interest as Jezos s influence grows.

In a wide-ranging interview with**Forbes**, Verdon confirmed that he is behind the account, and extolled the e/acc philosophy. Our goal is really to increase the scope and scale of civilization as measured in terms of its energy production and consumption, he said. Of the Jezos persona, he said: If you're going to create an ideology in the time of social media, you ve got to engineer it to be viral.

At various points, on Twitter, Jezos has defined effective accelerationism as a memetic optimism virus, a meta-religion, a hypercognitive biohack, a form of spirituality, and not a cult. But in an interview, Verdon put it differently: We're kind of just optimistic people that want to build a better future. It's pretty straightforward.

He noted that Jezos doesn t reflect his IRL personality. The memetics and the sort-of bombastic personality, it's what gets algorithmically amplified, he said, but in real life, I m just a gentle Canadian.

We re trying to solve culture by engineering. <footer>Guillaume Verdon</footer>

When he s not tweeting about e/acc, Verdon runs Extropic, which he started in 2022. Some of his startup capital came from a side NFT business, which he started while still working at Google s moonshot lab X. The project began as an April Fools joke, but when it started making real money, he kept going: It's like it was meta-ironic and then became post-ironic. He used the money he made to buy GPUs, sold his car and moved back in with his parents.

In August, The Informationreportedthat Extropic, which was previously called Qyber, was designing a microchip specifically to run LLMs, or large language models. It has raised money from venture capital firms HOF Capital, Julian Capital, Buckley Ventures, and other minor investors. Verdon says he has raised $14.1 million.

On Twitter, Jezos described the company as an AI Manhattan Project and once quipped, If you knew what I was building, you d try to ban it. Verdon declined to disclose more details about Extropic, but he described the project as creating a different type of physics-based computer that is not quantum. He said his Jezos persona has been very instrumental to get all sorts of deal flow, whether it's talent, investors, or partnerships.

Extropic investors HOF Capital and Julian Capital did not respond to a comment request. Tan, Altman and Musk did not respond to comment requests. Andreessen declined to comment through a spokesperson.

At its core, effective accelerationism embraces the idea that social problems can be solved purely with advances in technology, rather than by messy human deliberation. We re trying to solve culture by engineering, Verdon said. When you're an entrepreneur, you engineer ways to incentivize certain behaviors via gradients and reward, and you can program a civilizational system."

He expects computers to eventually solve legal problems too: "At the end of the day, law is just natural language code for how to operate the system, and there's no reason why technology can't have impact there in terms of social problems.

Not everyone agrees that engineering is the answer to societal problems. The world is just not like that. It just isn t, said Fred Turner, a professor of communications at Stanford University who has studied accelerationism. But if you can convince people that it is, then you get a lot of the power that normally accrues to governments.

E/acc is also a reaction to another Silicon Valley movement: effective altruism (or EA). While it was originally focused on optimizing each person s ability to help others (and is known for some of its most famous adherents willingness to engage in fraud), EA has also become a hotbed for people concerned about whether AI might become sentient and murder humans so-called doomers that Jezossays are instrumental to forces of evil and civilizational decline.

We ve got to make sure AI doesn't end up in the hands of a single company. <footer>Guillaume Verdon</footer>

If we only focus on the end of the world, bio weapons, [artificial general intelligence] ending us all, then we might engender our own doom by obsessing over it and it demoralizes people and it doesn't make them want to build, Verdon said.

He referenced multiple large AI startups ties to the EA movement, including OpenAI, which just underwent a major board struggle where CEO Sam Altman wasoustedand then quicklyreinstated, ostensibly overAI safety related issues. Verdon is part of a loud chorus in the AI community who believe that this technology should not be developed in secret at companies like OpenAI, but instead be open-sourced. We think this whole AI safety industry is just a pretense for securing more control, he said.

If you're interested in safety, decentralization and freedom is kind of the way to go, he told**Forbes**. We ve got to make sure AI doesn't end up in the hands of a single company.

In its reaction against both EA and AI safety advocates, e/acc also explicitly pays tribute to another longtime Silicon Valley idea. This is very traditional libertarian right-wing hostility to regulation," said Benjamin Noys, a professor of critical theory at the University of Chichester and scholar of accelerationism. Jezos calls it the libertarian e/acc path.

As a Twitter personality, Jezos has been something of a troll making outlandish pronouncements behind a veil of in-crowd anonymity. But not all e/acc adherents have been fans of the persona.

You create an idea, you don t actually have anything to show anyone, and the idea somehow becomes real and so does the money. <footer>Benjamin Noys, a professor of critical theory at the University of Chichester</footer>

One person in an e/acc-dedicated Discord server, using the name of a venture capitalist, said, It s silly that he bigs himself up with an anon account with a cartoon pic it is unserious.

Yeah, the anon stuff is not helping, said another member of the chat, who added that he was not impressed with Jezos techno-babble.

Dude needs to dox himself, and start speaking math and engineering, said another person.

(Revealing the name behind an anonymous account of public note is not doxxing, which is an often-gendered form of online harassment that reveals private information like an address or phone number about a person without consent and with malicious intent.)

Verdon said he has decided to take a different approach. I guess that now that my identities are going to be correlated, that's going to allow me to put my actual name behind my words. And the reason I agreed to do this interview is because I think that it's kind of time for me to do that, he said.

On a recent evening at San Francisco s 1015 Folsom nightclub, a masked Jezos waded through a crowd of AI founders, investors and developers dancing to music DJ ed by Grimes. He doffed his mask to take selfies that would later appear in a public Facebook post made under Verdon s name. There, he would also tout his role in producing a Keep AI Open rave festooned with NRA-style Come And Take It posters that swapped guns for neural networks and GPUs. Starting the SF cyberpunk AI counter-culture scene, Verdon captioned the Facebook post. The vibes were impeccable, he told**Forbes**.

The party, which Jezos cast as a great victory from his Twitter account, was sponsored in part by Extropic. Guests were given e/acc-branded shirts and hats, versions of which are now for sale on anofficial e/acc merch store. (Other e/acc-branded items are alsofor sale on Amazon, but they appear to have been designed by a different vendor.) There's a whole aesthetic kind of forming and hopefully we could keep that going, Verdon said.

The truth is, they have no social vision. <footer>Fred Turner, a professor of communication at Stanford</footer>

Noys, the Chichester professor, told**Forbes**that branding is critical to the accelerationist project. He compared e/acc to other familiar Silicon Valley and Wall Street hype cycles like cryptocurrency: With enough people talking about a concept, he said, some accelerationists believe you can build something from nothing. You create an idea, you don t actually have anything to show anyone, and the idea somehow becomes real and so does the money.

That idea of building something from nothing called hyperstition was popularized by Nick Land, a philosopher, blogger and activist who has been both credited as a father of modern accelerationism and discredited for his embrace of racism and the alt-right. Land, whom Andreessen also deemed a patron saint of techno-optimism, hasexplicitly endorsedJezos s vision of e/acc, and Jezos hasexplicitly embraced Land. In recent years, Land has devoted his efforts tomaking the case against democracyalongside the alt-right provocateur Curtis Yarvin, who favors rebooting our government with a start-up guy to act as a dictator-monarch.

Verdon said he came across Land s writings as he began working on a Substack post with a friend known anonymously online as @bayeslord about what they would later deem e/acc. Someone told us that this theory, what we were writing, was very similar to his works, he said. But Verdon noted that he s never talked to Land or Yarvin.

For all their talk of accelerating, it is not clear what future Verdon and other e/acc adherents want to accelerate into. Turner, the Stanford professor, said he wasn t sure that they themselves know: The truth is, they have no social vision. And they can t have a social vision, because the solutions that they re proposing to social change and social ***politics*** so radically simplify the complexities of social life.

But Verdon has a social vision of his own: If we can make it so that more people are optimistic about the future, are inclined to build, take risks and go forth and have the greatest impact it can on the world, that's a net positive. So if we have to be not so polite on the timeline, then so be it.

**Alex Konrad contributed reporting.**

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