

LLM Comparison: How was Google founded?

Google Gemini Output

The founding of Google is a classic Silicon Valley story that began with a groundbreaking research project at Stanford University.

The Founders and Initial Idea

Larry Page and Sergey Brin met in 1995 while they were Ph.D. students in computer science at Stanford University. Page was considering attending the school, and Brin was assigned to show him around.

They initially disagreed on almost everything but eventually formed a partnership focused on a shared research challenge: finding a more effective way to search the rapidly expanding World Wide Web.

The Breakthrough: PageRank

In 1996, they began collaborating on a search engine project initially named "BackRub."

The key to their innovation was the development of the PageRank algorithm (named after Larry Page). Existing search engines ranked results based on how many times the search term appeared on a page. PageRank, however, treated the web like academic citations, judging a page's importance by the number and quality of other highly relevant pages that linked back to it. This approach delivered significantly better results.

The first version of the search engine was launched on Stanford's website in August 1996.

The Name Change and Incorporation

In 1997, they renamed the project Google, a play on the mathematical term "googol," which is the number 1 followed by 100 zeros. This name was chosen to reflect their mission to organize the immense amount of information on the web and make it universally accessible.

In August 1998, they showed their work to Andy Bechtolsheim, a co-founder of Sun Microsystems. Impressed, he immediately wrote them a check for \$100,000 addressed to "Google Inc."

With this initial funding, Google was officially incorporated on September 4, 1998, and the team moved their operation from the dorm rooms to their first office: a garage in Menlo Park, California, owned by Susan Wojcicki (who would later become one of Google's first employees and CEO of YouTube).

From this humble start in a garage, Google quickly grew due to the superior quality of its search results, leading to its eventual status as a global technology giant.

Would you like to know about Google's first major product after the search engine?

Sources Provided (copied over by me):

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Perplexity AI Output

Google was founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, who were PhD students in computer science at Stanford University. It grew out of their earlier research project, a search engine called “BackRub,” which used a new ranking system based on how many other pages linked to a webpage (what became the PageRank algorithm).

Origins at Stanford

Page and Brin began collaborating in 1996 on BackRub, running it on Stanford servers and testing how link structures could measure a page’s importance. Their prototype search engine quickly showed it could produce more relevant results than existing search tools, attracting attention within the university.

Incorporation and first funding

In 1998, they registered the domain google.com and formally incorporated the company Google in a rented garage in Menlo Park, California, owned by Susan Wojcicki. An early turning point was a \$100,000 check from Sun Microsystems co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim, followed by roughly \$1 million from other investors, friends, and family to get the startup off the ground.

Early growth as a business

With this funding, Google hired its first employees, moved into small offices in Palo Alto in 1999, and began scaling its infrastructure to handle rapidly growing search traffic. Around this time, the founders added a business model based on unobtrusive text ads tied to search keywords, which allowed the company to generate significant revenue while keeping the interface simple.

From startup to major company

By 2003, Google had moved into a larger campus in Mountain View (later called the Googleplex) and was already one of the web’s dominant search engines. In 2004, it went public in an initial public offering that valued the company in the tens of billions of dollars, cementing its transition from a Stanford research project into a global technology company.

Sources Provided:

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Grok Output

How Google Was Founded: The Real Story (1995–1998)

Google started as a research project by two Stanford PhD students who almost didn't work together.

Year	Event	What Actually Happened
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| **1995** | Larry Page (23) and Sergey Brin (22) meet | Page arrives at Stanford for a campus tour; Brin is assigned as his student guide. They argue about everything and initially annoy each other. |

| **1996** | BackRub is born | Larry Page starts a project to rank web pages by counting and analyzing back-links (instead of just text matching). He calls it “BackRub” because it checks back links. Sergey Brin joins and helps turn it into a real search engine. They run it on Stanford’s servers using cheap PCs scavenged from loading docks. |

| **1997** | Google.com domain registered | On September 15, 1997, they register the domain google.com (a playful spelling of “googol” – the number 1 followed by 100 zeros – to reflect their mission to organize the world’s information). The name “Google” officially replaces “BackRub” in 1997. |

| **August 1998** | First office & first check | They max out Stanford’s bandwidth and get kicked off the university servers. On August 1998, Sun Microsystems co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim writes them a \$100,000 check made out to “Google Inc.” (the company doesn’t legally exist yet, so they have to incorporate first). |

| **September 7, 1998** | Google Inc. is officially founded | Larry and Sergey incorporate Google Inc. in Susan Wojcicki’s garage in Menlo Park, California (the famous garage that later became a tech legend). They hire their first employee, Craig Silverstein (their fellow Stanford CS classmate), a few weeks later. |

| **1998–1999** | Early growth | Google answers 10,000 searches per day by the end of 1998, then 500,000 by mid-1999 – all on a shoestring budget with no real marketing. |

Key Numbers at Founding

- Initial investment: \$100,000 (Bechtolsheim) + smaller checks from friends/family → total ~\$1.1 million seed round.
- Staff: 3 people (Larry, Sergey, Craig).
- Office: A garage with second-hand furniture and a \$99 carpet from Home Depot.

Bottom Line

Google was founded on September 4–7, 1998 (official incorporation date varies by source, but September 7 is the most commonly cited) by Larry Page and Sergey Brin in a rented garage, starting as a better way to rank web pages using backlinks. From a dorm-room research project in 1996, it became the most valuable company in the world.

Claude Output

Google was founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin in 1998 while they were Ph.D. students at Stanford University.

The story began in 1995 when Page and Brin met at Stanford. Page was considering the university for graduate school, and Brin, already a student there, was assigned to show him around. They initially disagreed on most topics but soon began collaborating on a research project.

Their breakthrough came from rethinking how search engines worked. While other search engines at the time ranked results mainly by counting how many times search terms appeared on a page, Page and Brin developed an algorithm called PageRank. This innovative approach ranked web pages based on the number and quality of links pointing to them - essentially treating links as "votes" for a page's importance and relevance.

They initially called their search engine "BackRub" because it analyzed backlinks to websites. In 1997, they renamed it "Google," a play on the mathematical term "googol" (the number 1 followed by 100 zeros), reflecting their mission to organize the vast amount of information on the web.

Google was officially incorporated on September 4, 1998, in a friend's garage in Menlo Park, California. Their first funding came from Andy Bechtolsheim, co-founder of Sun Microsystems, who wrote them a check for \$100,000 before Google was even officially a company.

The search engine quickly gained popularity due to its superior results and clean, simple interface. This eventually grew into the tech giant we know today, though its core search business still relies on those original insights about ranking web pages by their interconnections.

ChatGPT output

Google was founded in **1998** by **Larry Page** and **Sergey Brin** while they were PhD students at **Stanford University**. Here's the short, accurate story:

1. It began as a research project (1995–1996)

- Larry Page came to Stanford for grad school; Sergey Brin was assigned to show him around.
- They began collaborating on a research idea: using links between web pages as a way to measure a page's importance.
- The project was initially called "**Backrub**" because it analyzed *backlinks* on the internet.

2. They built the PageRank algorithm

- Their key innovation was **PageRank**, an algorithm that ranked websites based on how many other important sites linked to them.
- This produced far more relevant search results than existing search engines of the time.

3. They needed more computing power

- They assembled a makeshift data center in their dorm with cheap hardware (including LEGO-encased servers).
- Backrub became popular within Stanford, consuming so much bandwidth that administrators took notice.

4. "Google" is named after a math term

- They renamed the project **Google**, a play on the word "**googol**" (10^{100}), reflecting their goal of organizing vast amounts of information.

5. Google becomes a company (1998)

- On **September 4, 1998**, they incorporated **Google, Inc.**
- They operated out of a garage in Menlo Park, California—rented from Susan Wojcicki (later YouTube's CEO).
- Early investors included Andy Bechtolsheim (co-founder of Sun Microsystems), who famously wrote a \$100,000 check to "Google Inc." before the company even formally existed.

6. Early success

- With clean design, fast results, and superior relevancy, Google quickly outperformed other search engines like AltaVista, Yahoo Search, and Lycos.
- By the early 2000s, it became the dominant search engine worldwide.

If you'd like, I can also explain:

- How Google's business model (AdWords) was created
- How the company grew from search into Android, YouTube, Maps, etc.
- The story behind the founders leaving day-to-day roles

Just let me know!