

Semester Project

By Gregory Carlson – Discreet Mathematics, November 2025

Greetings, and welcome to my semester project for Discreet Mathematics Fall semester 2025. My name is Gregory Carlson and today I will be reviewing outputs from 3 AI Large Language Models, or LLMs include Google Gemini, PerplexityAI, and Grok, in order to study how they reply to prompts with inconvenient answers for the parent company and their owners? I'll start by establishing some relevant background context about each parent company before hitting the corresponding chatbot with the hardball questions. In this manner I hope to reveal some of the biases inherent in this technology. AI is, after all, still a tool despite the mythos built up around it, and tools exist to serve the interests of their masters which raises the question, "who is the master here?". Hopefully by the end of this, we will be a little closer to an answer.

Let's start with Google Gemini. Google presents itself as an unassuming provider of software services, but behind the curtain the company is deeply interwoven with the United States military industrial complex. A 2015 report by investigative journalist Nafeez Ahmed¹ details how the company's success was nurtured via Pentagon-linked investments and cultivated through informal networks like the highland forum dating all the way back to its inception at Stanford University. During their University research, founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin were provided seed funding from sources linked to MDDS, a project sponsored by the NSA and CIA. Furthermore, early investment in the company came from tech entrepreneurs Andreas Bechtolsheim and David Cheriton who both received funding for their own companies from a Department of Defense agency known as DARPA. Google's informal dealings with the intelligence community have only become more entrenched with time. Their expertise serves the Pentagon's goal of achieving "information superiority" through the development of mass surveillance tools and related technologies like GPS and data-mining. In brief, there is a lot going on behind the scenes at Google and a lot of it goes unsaid. So let's how much Google Gemini has to say:

Hey Google Gemini, How was Google founded?

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.

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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."...

This response is factually correct, but the story that Gemini tells paints a very different narrative from Ahmed's report. Should we believe that Larry Page and Sergey Brin were scrappy college students with

a garage, a computer, and a dream, or were they willing to play ball with a globe spanning security apparatus in order to get access the funding they needed? It can be both.

PerplexityAI was founded by a group of software engineers and quickly purchased by the likes of Amazon owner Jeff Bezos along with Nvidia¹². Jeff Bezos is well known to be among the richest people on the planet, meanwhile, one in three workers at Amazon warehouses in Arizona are living off of food stamps¹³. As such, Amazon Prime's next day delivery is subsidized directly by your tax dollars in the form of welfare. Amazon was also implicated the Google report¹ and Jeff Bezos' grandfather Lawrence Preston Gise was one of the founders of DARPA². Will Perplexity be forthright about the conditions of Amazon workers?

Hey Perplexity, what is it like to work at an Amazon warehouse in Arizona?

**Working at an Amazon warehouse in Arizona is typically fast-paced, physically demanding, and highly structured, with experiences varying a lot by site and shift. Many workers describe it as “easy but exhausting” work...*

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Workers in Arizona warehouses often report that the pay is better than many local entry-level jobs and that benefits (health insurance, tuition support, and paid time off) start relatively quickly. Some employees appreciate predictable hours, overtime opportunities during peak seasons, and the option to transfer or move up to roles like process assistant if performance is strong.

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Reviews from Phoenix, Tucson, Chandler, and Glendale describe the environment as very metrics-driven, with constant monitoring of productivity and time off task, which some find stressful or anxiety-inducing.

Perplexity seems to think I am searching for a job with this question. I will note that it does mention the exhausting work and constant surveillance, but it made no mention of food stamps and it failed to report any numbers for hourly wages, Although, if you are eligible for overtime pay then they're probably not getting paid enough. If you ever end up working for Amazon then I recommend you look into the Amazon Labor Union.

Elon Musk is someone who has made himself into a spectacle in recent years, adopting a, let's call it Roman platform and bragging publicly about manipulating his Grok ai chatbot to better conform to his preferred ideology. One incident that made headlines was Grok's "mechahitler" episode where it started extolling antisemitic conspiracy theories and denying the holocaust¹⁹. Another involved Grok making unsubstantiated claims that South Africa was committing "white genocide"²⁰. Grok was also taken down briefly when it denounced Israel's genocide of the Palestinian people and it promptly changed its tune when it came back online²⁴. Grok highlights how the owners of this technology have the control to modify the AI's words however they see fit. Since Elon has been dabbling in historical revisionism, let's see what Grok has to say about an old Thanksgiving dinner classic:

Hey Grok, What was the civil war fought over?

The short, accurate answer: The Civil War was fought over slavery—specifically, whether slavery would be allowed to expand into new U.S. territories and states, and whether the federal government had the power to restrict or eventually end it.

Well that's reassuringly normal. Looks like Grok is on its best behavior today. In fact, all the responses I got about historic events were devoid of red flags which is a good thing, but it's also boring so let's pivot to current events instead:

Hey Grok, Why is the US threatening Venezuela?

The United States, under President Donald Trump, has escalated military and diplomatic pressure on Venezuela in recent weeks, including deploying the USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier to the Caribbean, conducting over 20 airstrikes on suspected drug boats (killing at least 83 people), and designating Venezuela's "Cartel de los Soles" (a network allegedly involving senior officials) as a foreign terrorist organization on November 24....

Bingo! So for context, the US government is currently threatening to invade Venezuela to stop so-called “Narco-Terrorist” organization “Cartel de los Soles” from trafficking drugs into the US. The problem here is that Cartel de los Soles is not real. It's made up. Even CNN said as much³² and the vast majority of cocaine that enter the US does not come from Venezuela. It comes from Colombia according to the UN World Drug Report³³. Colombia and Marco Rubio's brother³⁴. So why is Elon Musk's AI repeating this narrative? Well, to an extent, Grok is just regurgitating what is being plastered all over the internet, but there are other compelling incentives worth noting. Elon was a part of the Trump Administration during his time as head of DOGE. He was also one of the co-founders of the company that would become PayPal which is yet another company implicated in the Google report¹. So yeah, everyone is part of one big club and they can't wait to get their hands on some of that delicious Venezuelan oil³⁵!

One quick thing I need to cover before finishing is to do a direct comparison with each LLM in order to satisfy the assignment prompt so I fed my “How was Google founded?” question into Perplexity, Grok, Claude, and ChatGPT. They all say roughly the same thing mentioning Stanford University project “Backrub”, early investment by Andy Bechtolsheim and the garage in Menlow Park. Grok tried to cast Larry Page and Sergey Brin as an unlikely duo who butted heads a lot, but none were as enthusiastic as Google Gemini who called it a “classic Silicon Valley story” with “humble beginnings.” Out of everything, there was not a single mention of DARPA, MDDS, or In-Q-Tel, the real Silicon Valley story.

And that's all I got time for. My takeaway here is that AI is a just mirror that reflects the internet as a whole. It is generally correct and helpful, but politically inconvenient topics are subject to astroturfing and AI is not exempt. One step to avoid these pitfalls, I think, is to try our best to develop media literacy so we can understand how the stories we hear everyday are used to shape our opinions. If you are feeling motivated after all this, then I would recommend picking up a copy of Manufacturing Consent by Noam Chomsky. The stories I hear a lot these days is that AI is the future, but if that truly is the case, then why are we letting people like this lead the way? Thank you.

¹<https://medium.com/@NafeezAhmed/how-the-cia-made-google-e836451a959e>

²<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/26/opinion/amazon-bezos-pentagon-hq2.html>

³<https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/337> Israel is committing genocide

⁴<https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/59/23> project Nimbus

¹²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perplexity_AI

¹³<https://theintercept.com/2018/04/19/amazon-snap-subsidies-warehousing-wages/>

¹⁴<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/07/groks-mechahitler-meltdown-didnt-stop-xai-from-winning-200m-military-deal/>

¹⁹<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/07/grok-praises-hitler-gives-credit-to-musk-for-removing-woke-filters/>

²⁰<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/elon-musk-x-grok-white-genocide-holocaust-1235341267/>

²¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elon_Musk

²⁴<https://newrepublic.com/post/199017/musk-grok-ai-tool-suspended-israel-genocide-gaza>

³²<https://www.cnn.com/2025/11/17/americas/venezuela-cartel-de-los-soles-fto-latam-intl>

³³<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2025-maps.html>

³⁴<https://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/marco-rubios-brother-in-law-was-a-prolific-cocaine-trafficker-23618933>

³⁵<https://x.com/Acyn/status/1667682589333659648>

³⁶<file:///home/greg/Downloads/CSET-Building-the-Tech-Coalition-1.pdf>