

Big Tech

a compilation of important notes

Definitions

- **Big Tech / FAGMA:** Word/Acronym used to describe the five largest tech companies in the world, namely Facebook, Amazon, Google, Microsoft and Apple
 - Sometimes includes Tesla and Nvidia (FAANG)
 - Apple was the first of these to achieve a two trillion dollar valuation in August 2020
 - The combined net worth of these five, in addition to five other top tech companies, rounds up to a whopping nine trillion dollars.
- **BATX:** Acronym used to describe China's four largest tech companies, that being Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent and Xiaomi.
 - ByteDance is often counted into this list, despite it's name being missing from the actual acronym
 - Beijing has, over the past two years, started to crack down on these companies, especially Alibaba.
- **Scandals and Problems**
 - **The NSA Scandal:** It was revealed in 2013 that America's NSA and their British counterpart had been stealing information secretly from users of Google, Yahoo and many other tech products, with the creators of the products being completely oblivious to this happening. This led to widespread fear regarding government surveillance and stigmatized views against Big Tech.
 - **The Cambridge Analytica Scandal:** In 2016, after Trump's victory at the Election, it was revealed that the company it was working with, Cambridge Analytica, had been surreptitiously stealing data from Facebook users and in an effort to manipulate and brainwash them, by showing people against Trump's campaign more positive articles about his work to influence their decision to work. This massive scandal led to widespread stigma against Big Tech and especially Facebook, which had yet to come into the line of fire. However, Facebook was the most severely hit, with the years that followed being some of its worst.
 - **The Rohingya Genocide and Facebook's Involvement:** The Rohingya Genocide happened as a result of the overly stigmatized views of people against the Rohingya Muslims, a set of muslims often considered some of the, if not the most discriminated people in the world. During the genocide, many of the military officers went on Facebook posing as popular individuals and purposely incited hate speech, which was one of the main catalysts for the truly inhumane acts that followed.
 - **The Christchurch Shootings:** In March 2019, a man openly streamed his video on Facebook Live as he went and shot nearly 51 people in 2 mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in an effort to spread hate speech towards the Muslim population in New Zealand. The videos surfaced on Facebook, with many audience members surprisingly cheering on for the act to continue, leaving a bleak shot of the white nationalism ever present in Oceania today.

- **The Facebook Whistleblower, Frances Haughen:** An ex-employee of Facebook, Frances Haughen had been secretly copying and storing hundreds of internal files in Facebook with regards to research it had done on the impacts of its algorithms to better serve their purpose as a tech company, and shared it with the Wall Street Journal (WSJ), leading to the creation of the "Facebook Files" series at the WSJ. Research done by Facebook itself found that
 - **angrier posts often got higher engagements**, hence in 2018, Facebook's algorithms were reconfigured to give priority to these posts in user feeds. An implication of this would entail that more individuals would be angrier while reading the post and it is definitely possible that it may have led to incitement of more hate speech. This is incredibly problematic, but Facebook's insistence to focus on the profit made by more user retention due to this algorithm led to this being left to the wayside by the developers.
- **The Capitol Riots and Trump's Ban:** After the absolutely horrific events of January 6th 2021

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