

Leah Elliott

CONTRA CHROME

How Google's Browser became a threat to privacy and democracy



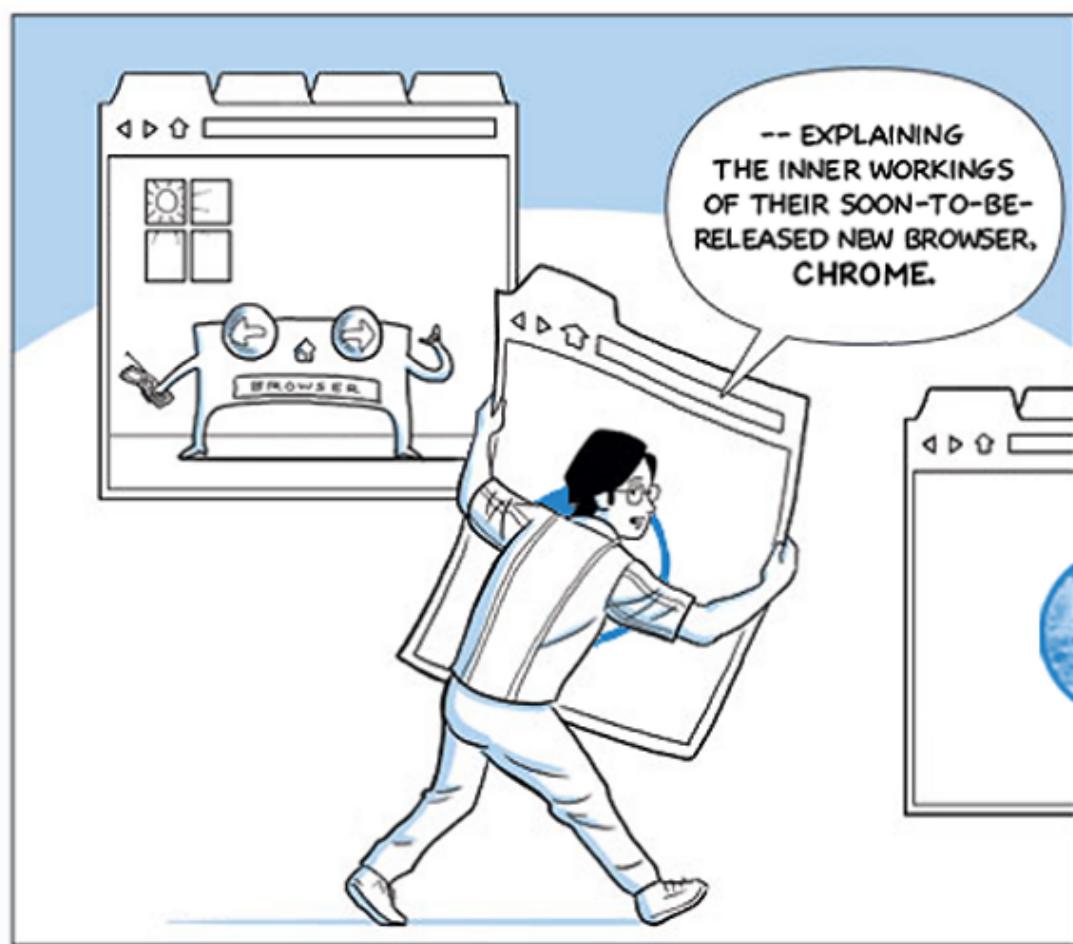
Google Chrome



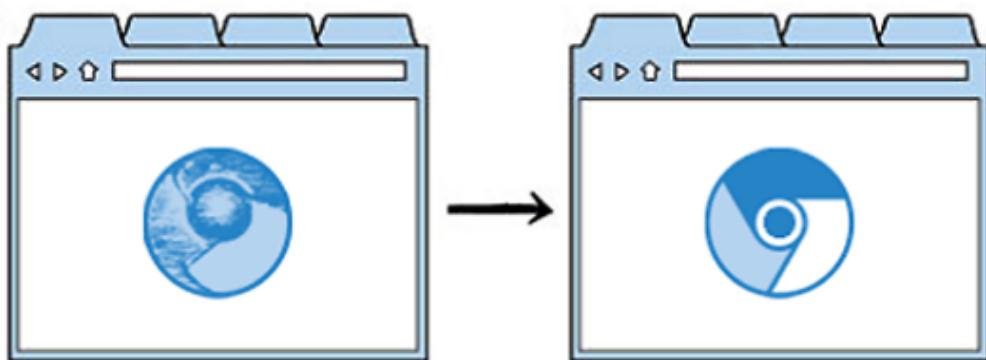
Introduction



HI, MY NAME IS
SCOTT McCLOUD!
I'M A CARTOONIST AND
COMICS SCHOLAR.
BACK IN 2008, I CREATED
A COMIC BOOK FOR
GOOGLE --



THE COMIC
WAS A WEB
PHENOMENON
WHEN FOR
TWO DAYS
IT WAS THE
ONLY SOURCE
OF INFOR-
MATION ON
THIS MAJOR
SOFTWARE
RELEASE.



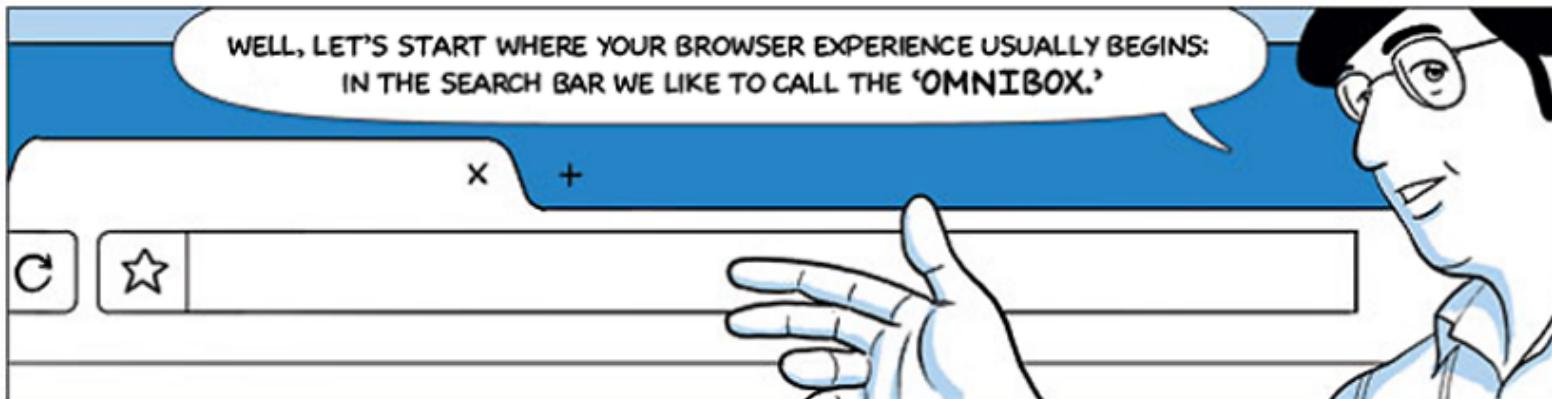
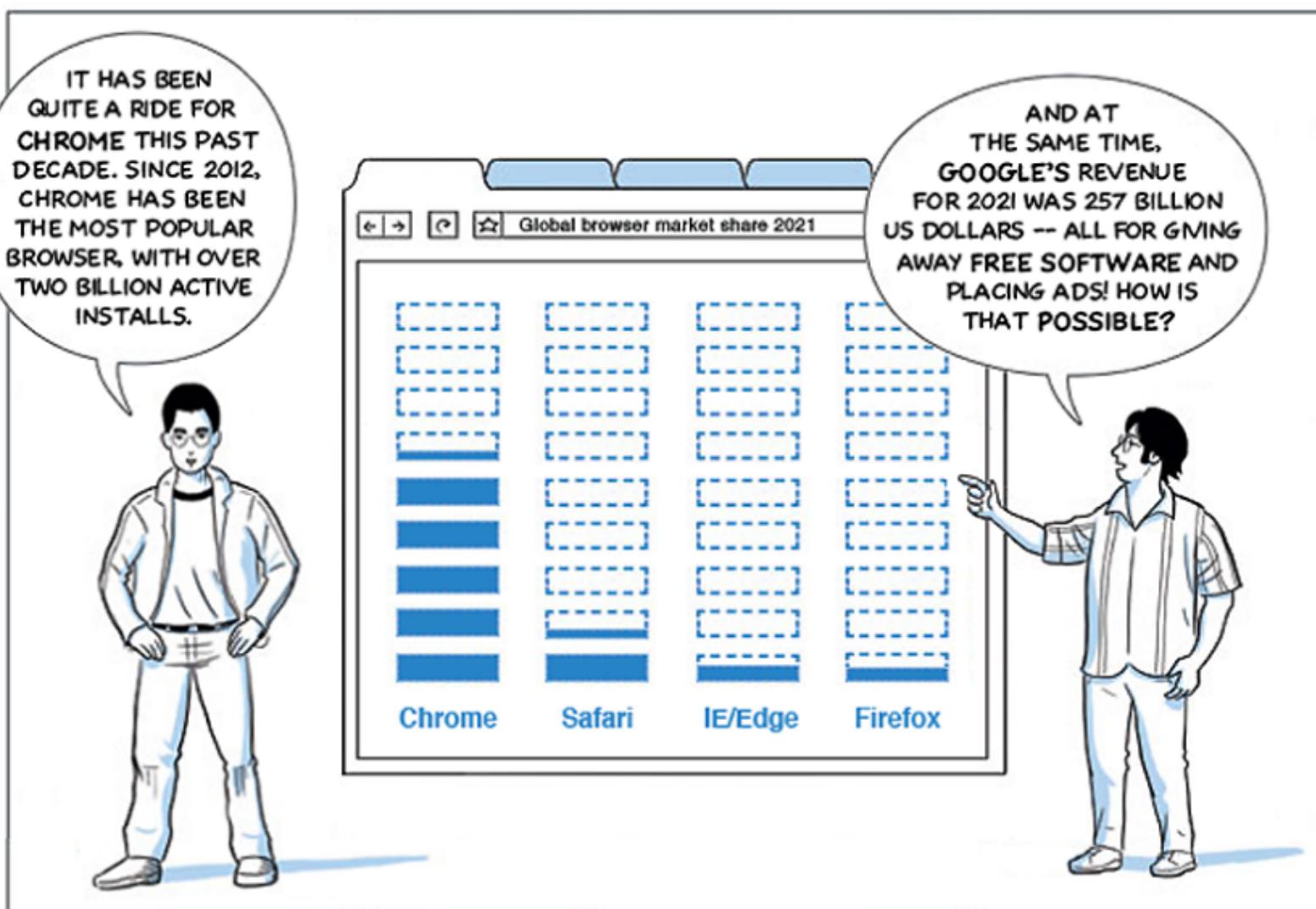
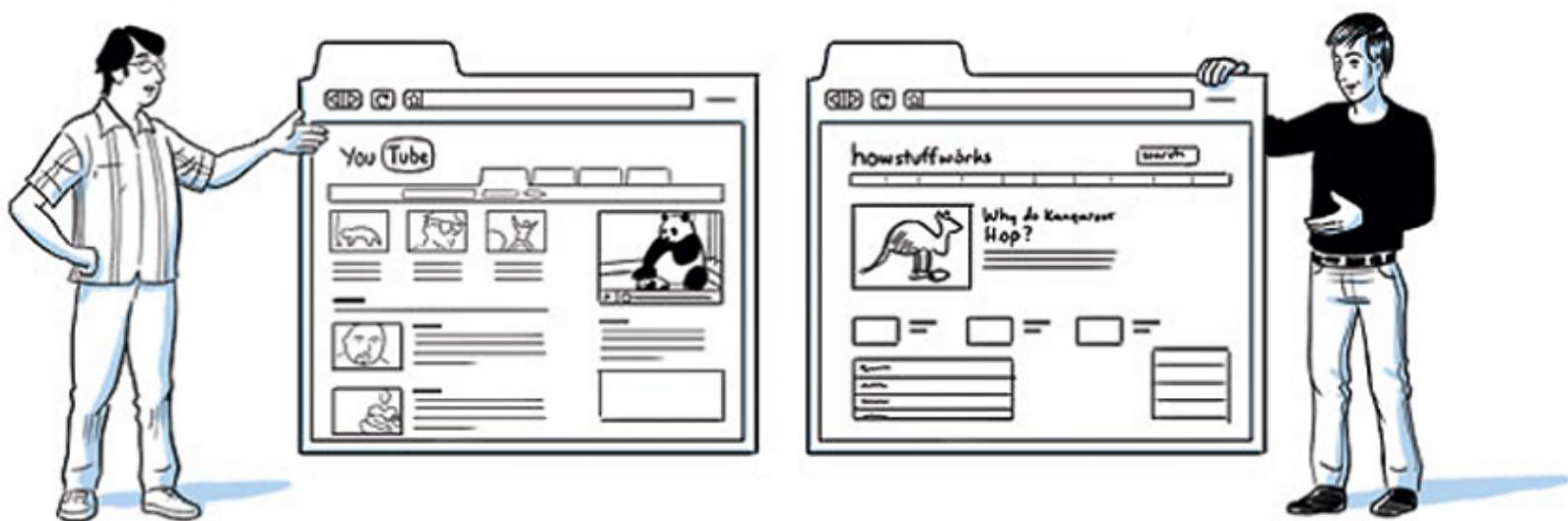
BUT NOW
THAT WE'RE
ENTERING
THE 2020S,
ME AND THE
GOOD FOLKS
AT GOOGLE
HAD THE SAME
FEELING:



CHROME
HAS CHANGED
SO MUCH
THAT WE OWE
YOU GUYS AN
UPDATE.

ENTER THE GOOGLE CHROME TEAM, WHO WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH VARIOUS NEW FEATURES AND DEVELOPMENTS.

HEY THERE,
SCOTT!



Part One



Dial O for Omnibox



A CASE IN POINT: THE OMNIBOX.

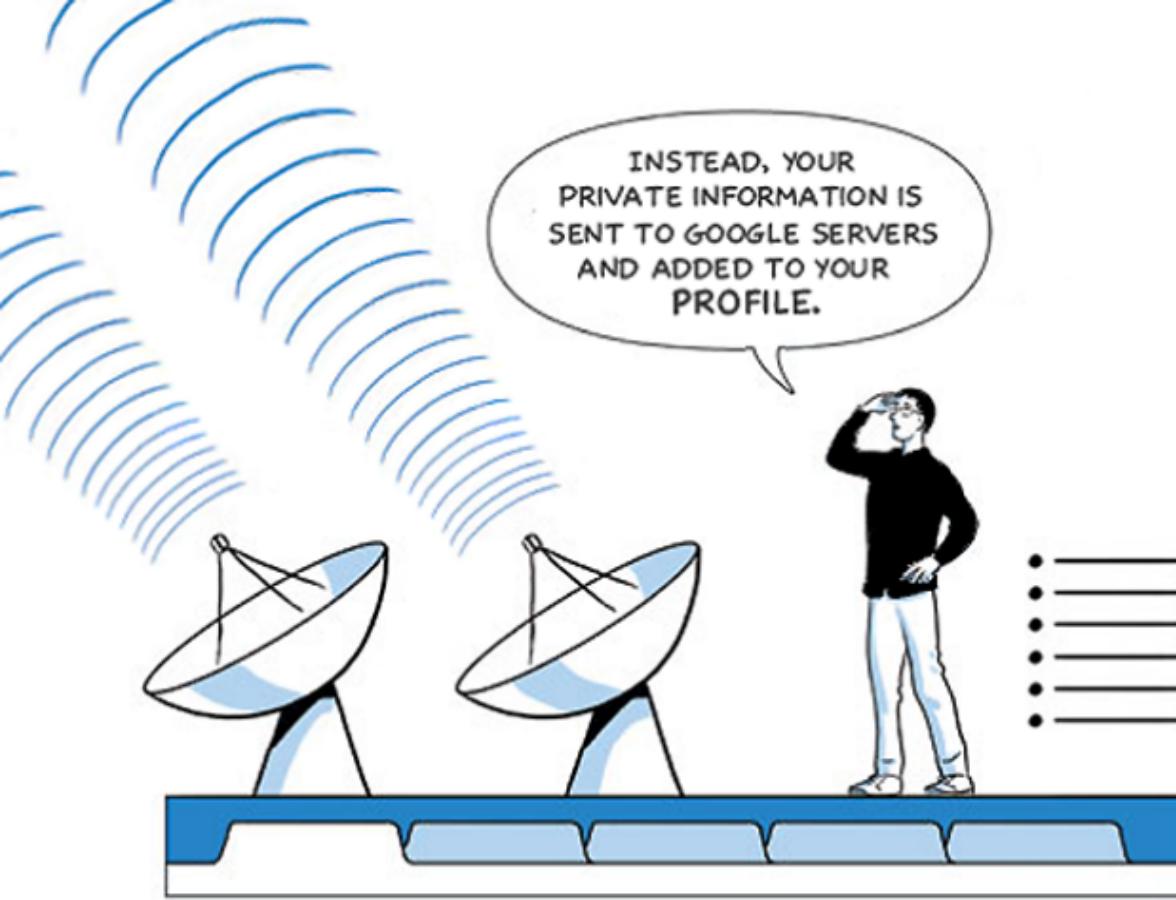
When you enter something in Chrome's search bar, it immediately offers you a detailed record of your past searches, your interests, your politics!

pattinson
pegging
pewdipie
prostate cancer
www.pornhub.com/gay/video
prozac
pay-off-your-debt-by-losing-weight
See 8 recent pages in history

THE NAME "OMNIBOX" IS DERIVED FROM THE LATIN WORD "OMNIS," MEANING "EVERYTHING." ONCE YOU HIT RETURN, EVERYTHING YOU HAVE TYPED HERE IS PROTOCOLLED AND RETAINED.

AND NOT JUST LOCALLY ON YOUR COMPUTER.

C is robert pattin
is robert pattinson married
is robert pattinson gay
is robert pattinson single
is robert pattinson dating
is robert pattinson batman



INSTEAD, YOUR PRIVATE INFORMATION IS SENT TO GOOGLE SERVERS AND ADDED TO YOUR PROFILE.

IN FACT, YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO PUSH RETURN AT ALL. FROM THE MOMENT YOU BEGIN TO TYPE, EVERYTHING IS INSTANTLY SIPHONED OFF.



(WE JOKINGLY CALL THIS CHROME'S 'NO RETURN POLICY.')



LET'S TAKE A MOMENT HERE TO LET THAT SINK IN: ALL THOSE WORDS YOU MIGHT DEEM TOO SENSITIVE TO EVEN TYPE -- YOUR EX'S NAME, AN ABORTION CLINIC, THAT GROUP THERAPY IDEA --



-- BEFORE YOU HAVE EVEN DECIDED WHETHER TO SEND THEM, GOOGLE HAS ALREADY EXTRACTED THEM -- YOUR DOUBTS, YOUR HESITATIONS.

OMNI.

BOX.

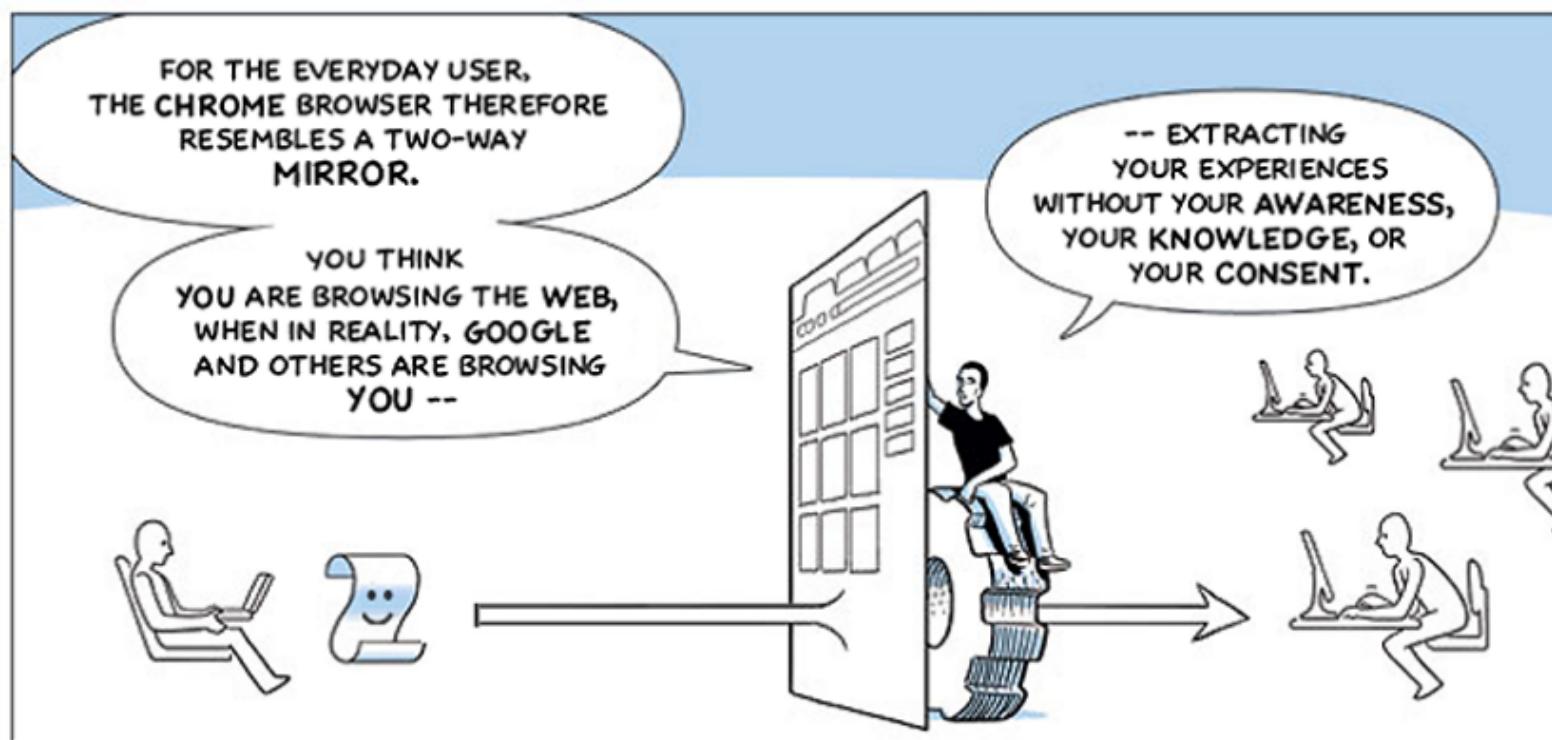
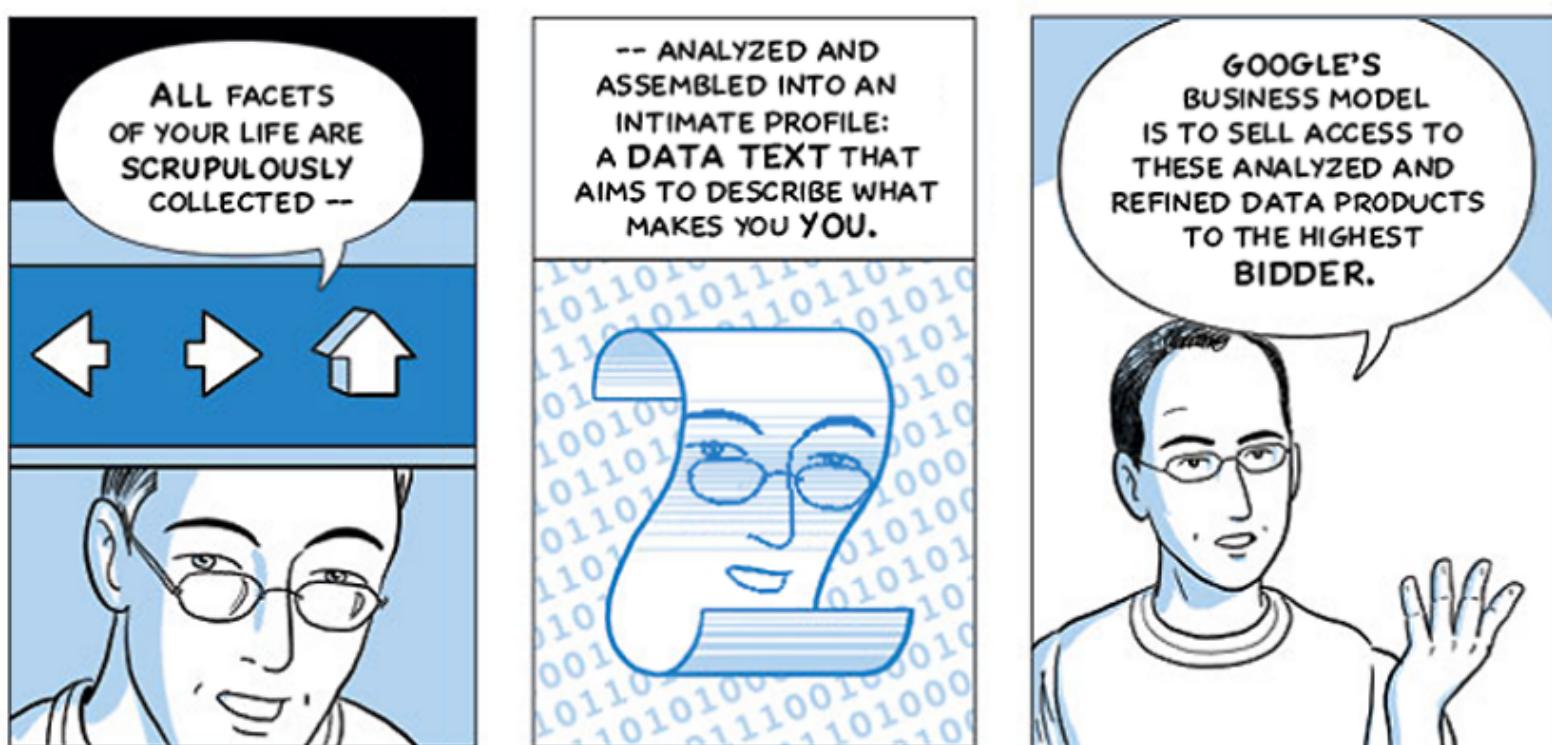
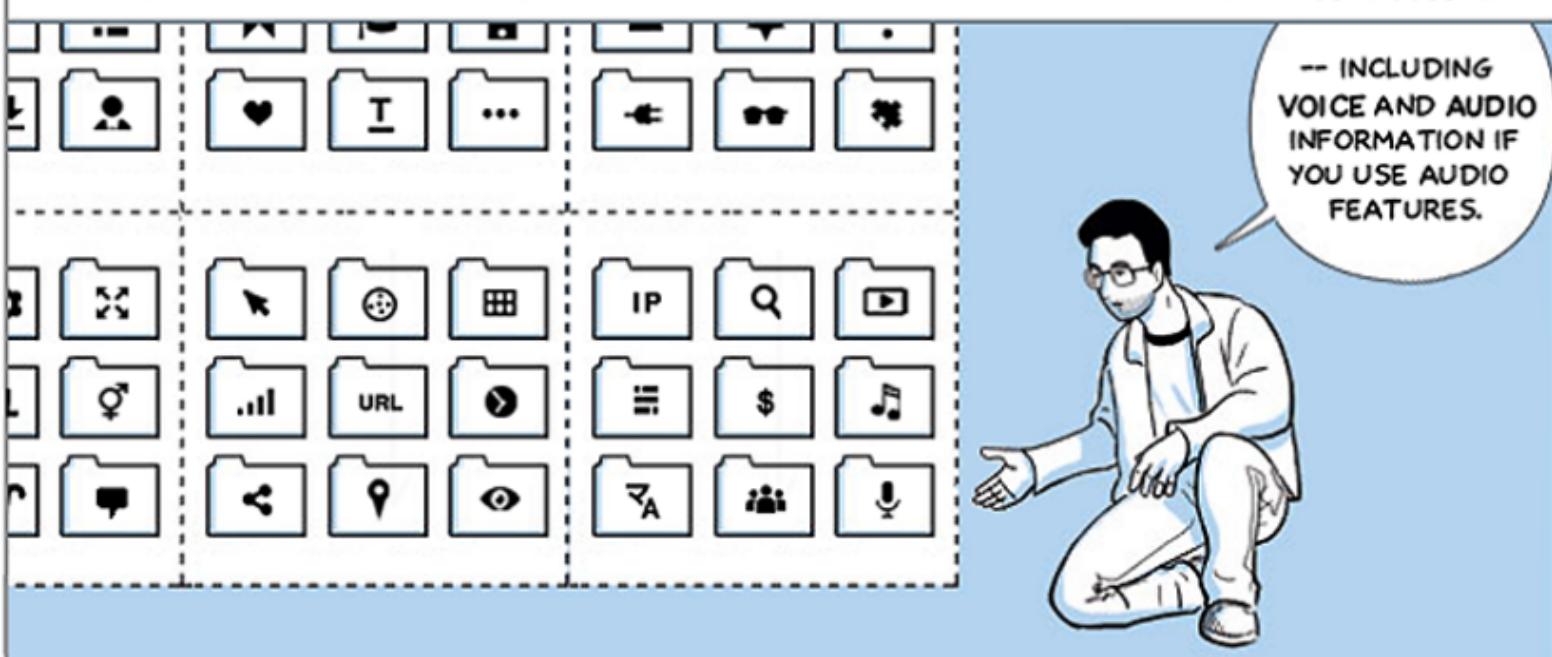


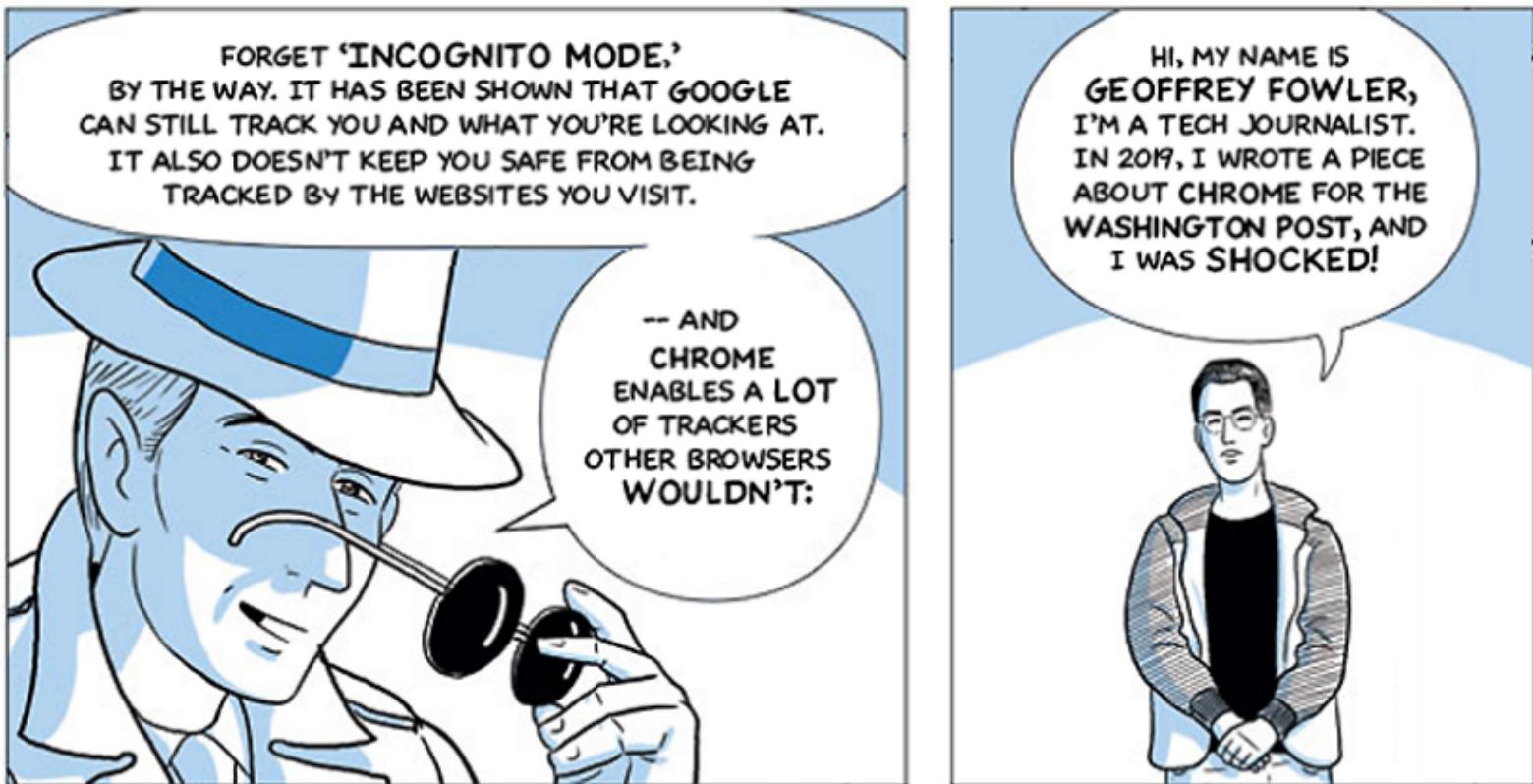
SINCE 2008, GOOGLE HAS SPENT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ADDING ADDITIONAL TRACKING FEATURES TO BOTH CHROME AND ANDROID.*

2008

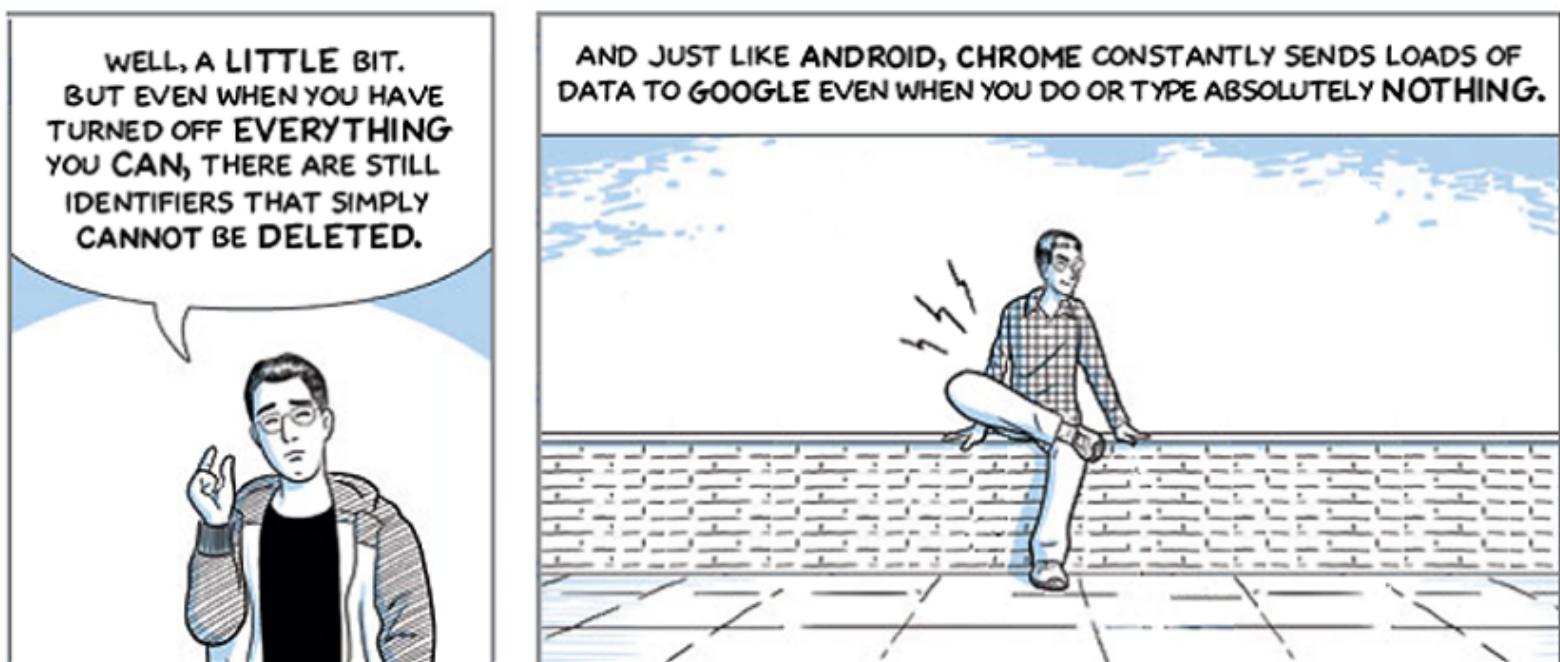
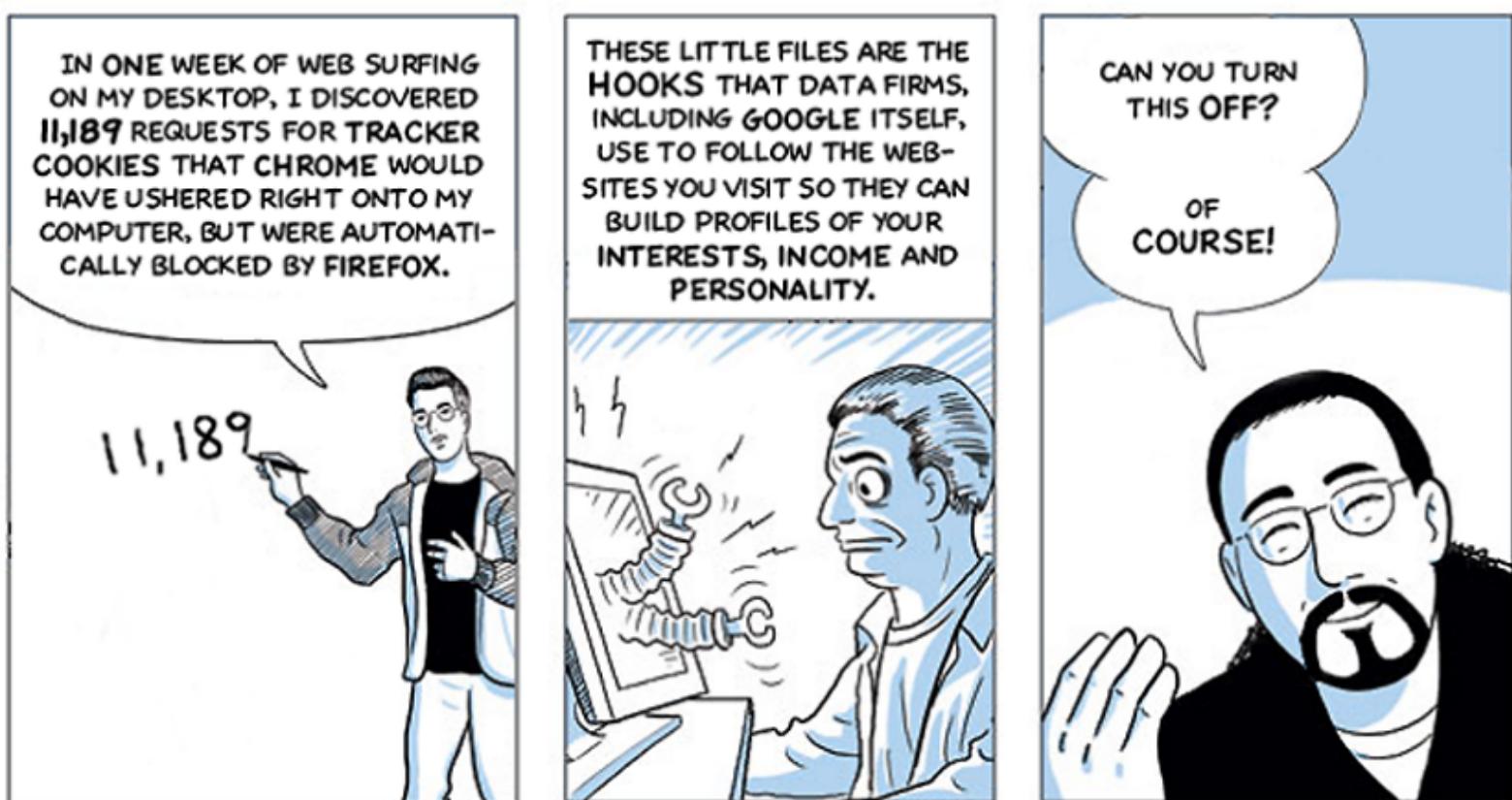
2022

WHEN YOU READ THE CURRENT PRIVACY POLICY, YOU WILL FIND THAT CHROME COLLECTS YOUR IP ADDRESS, THE WORDS YOU SEARCH FOR, THE VIDEOS YOU WATCH, THE PAGES YOU VISIT, THE ADS YOU CLICK, YOUR PURCHASE ACTIVITY, THE NETWORK OF PEOPLE YOU'RE IN TOUCH WITH, AND MUCH MORE.





HI, MY NAME IS
GEOFFREY FOWLER,
I'M A TECH JOURNALIST.
IN 2019, I WROTE A PIECE
ABOUT CHROME FOR THE
WASHINGTON POST, AND
I WAS SHOCKED!



STILL WANT TO TURN OFF STUFF, DESPITE THE FUTILITY?
→ PLEASE REFER TO OUR PRIVACY POLICY!



0100111010101
1101010001010010
11010101110010001
00101001011011010
11100100010101101
011010001110111

AD

MAZE RUNNER
Now on Streaming!

Take a
Screenshot!

[Processing]

Was this helpful?
YES NO
AD
The Age of SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM
Now on Kindle!



Are you sure?
YES NO

Manage this from your Google Account!

YES NO

YES NO

Sign in to your Google Account

Send Feedback?

NO YES

Is this a pipe?



Was this helpful?
YES NO

Change Language? ▾

[Dark Patterns]

YES NO

Are you sure?
NO YES



AD
LABRINTH:
New Album Out Now!

Was this helpful?
YES NO

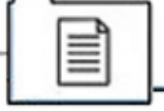
Feedback?
YES NO

YES NO

Sign in?
YES NO

Take a Screenshot!

Please refer to our Terms of Service:
YES NO



Part Two



Platform Puzzles



CHROME
HAS COME A LONG WAY
FROM THE UNASSUMING
FAST AND MINIMAL BROWSER
IT USED TO BE
IN 2008.



OVER THE YEARS, LIKE THE LEAVES OF
A CAMERA SHUTTER --

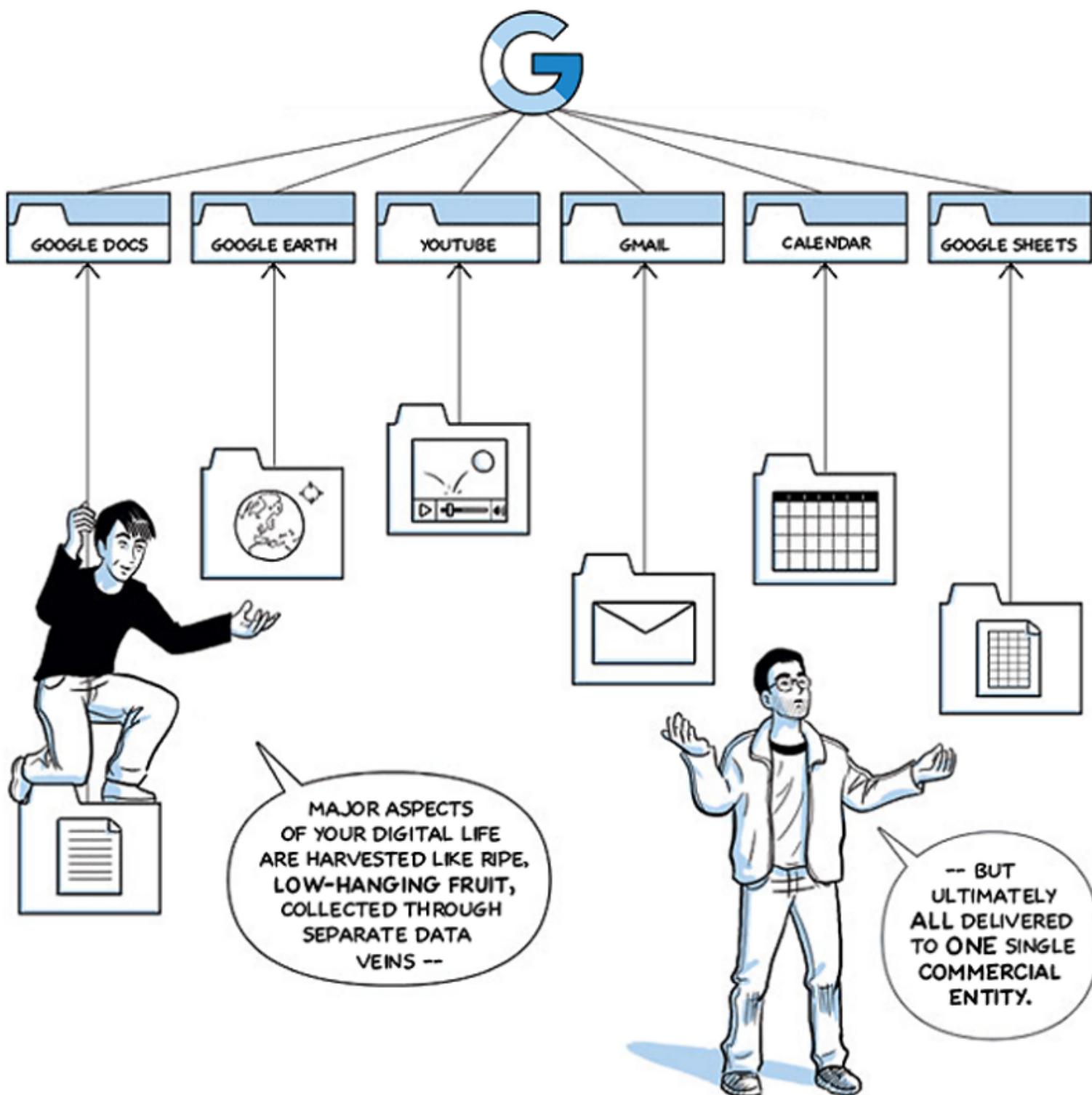
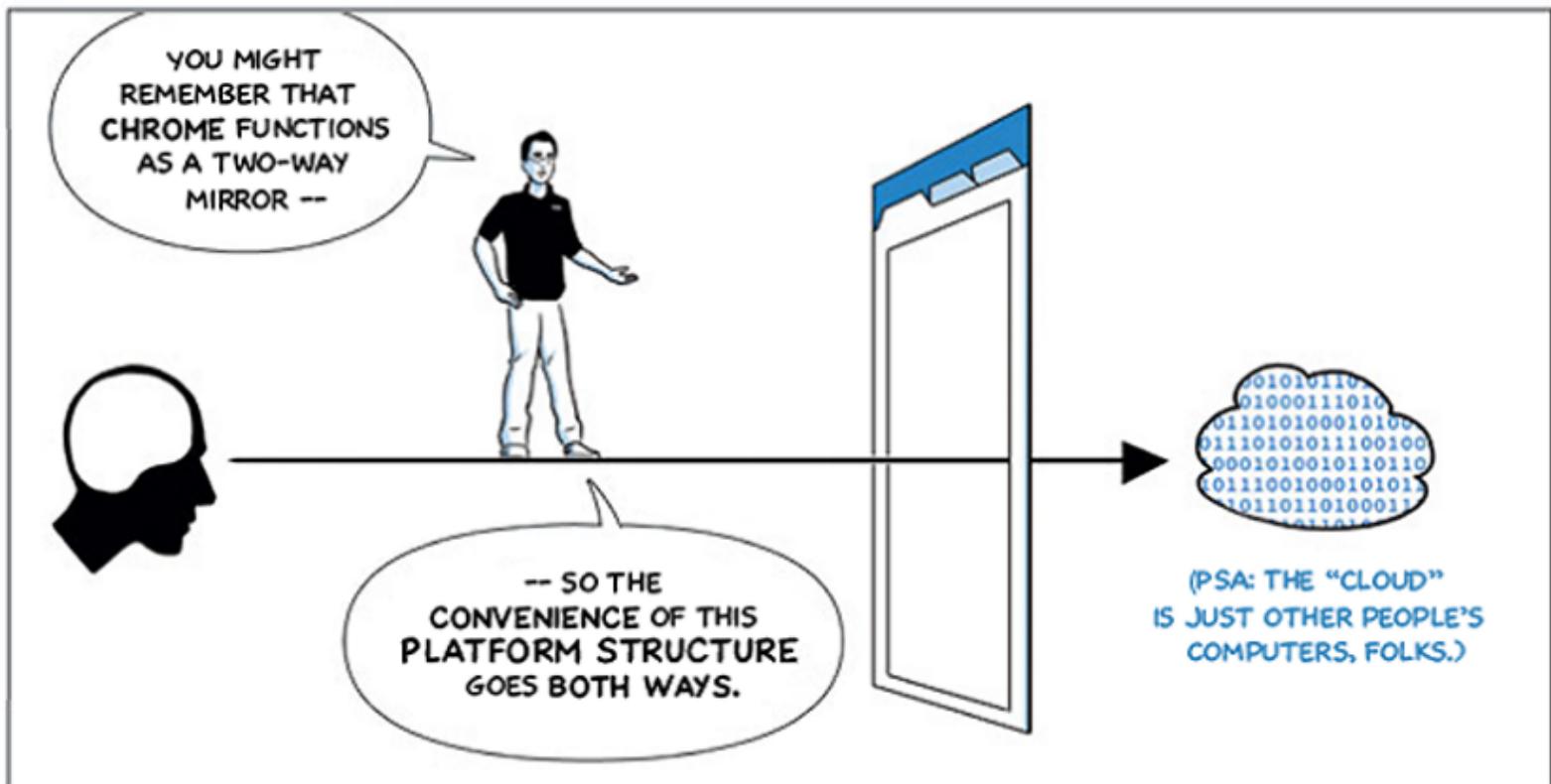


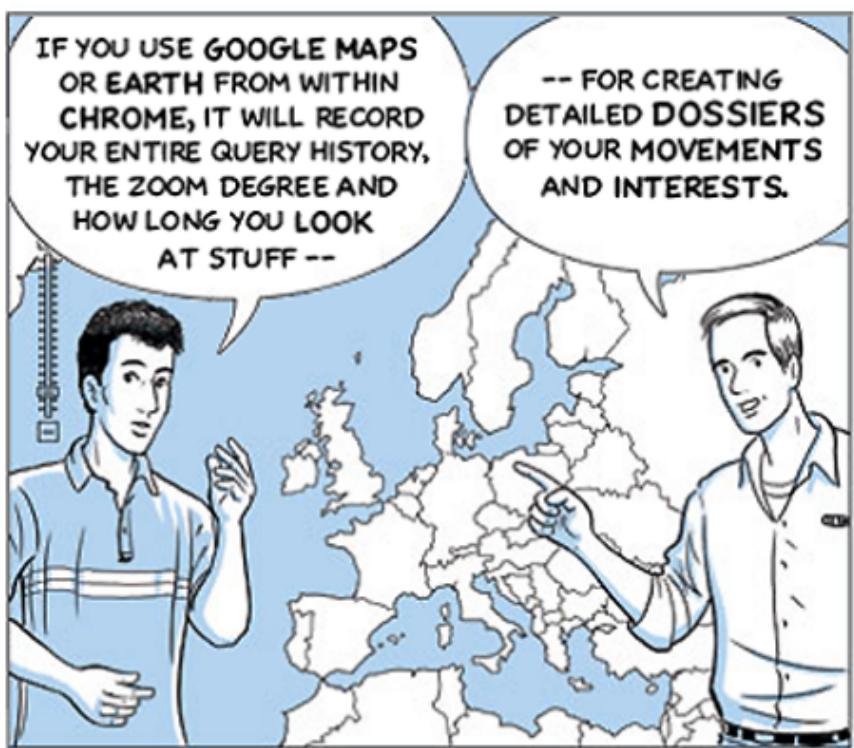
-- GOOGLE HAS ARRANGED AN EXTENSIVE
ECOSYSTEM AROUND ITS BROWSER --



-- TURNING CHROME INTO A CENTRAL HUB THAT'S ONLY ONE CLICK AWAY FROM WRITING A GMAIL,
LISTENING TO YOUTUBE MUSIC, PRINTING OUT A DOCUMENT OR UPDATING YOUR GOOGLE CALENDAR.









-- ROAM FREELY THROUGH A CLOSE-MESHED FIBER OPTIC WEB, A GARGANTUAN ONE-WAY ANT TRAIL MARCHING TOWARDS GOOGLE'S DATA CENTERS:

VAST INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES, HEAVILY GUARDED BY BARBED WIRE FENCES, VEHICLE BARRIERS, BIOMETRIC IDENTIFICATION, AND LASER-BASED INTRUSION DETECTION SYSTEMS.

HERE, YOUR DATA IS RETAINED INDEFINITELY, WAY BEYOND YOUR CONTROL EVER SINCE IT HAS BEEN PROCESSED THROUGH THE SYNCHRONIZED INTERPLAY OF SHUTTER LEAVES --

-- LEAVES, WHICH, JUST AS THEIR PHOTOGRAPHIC COUNTERPARTS, ORGANIZE BUNDLED INFORMATION IN ORDER TO CONSTRUCT A PRECISE PORTRAIT OF YOU. AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL:

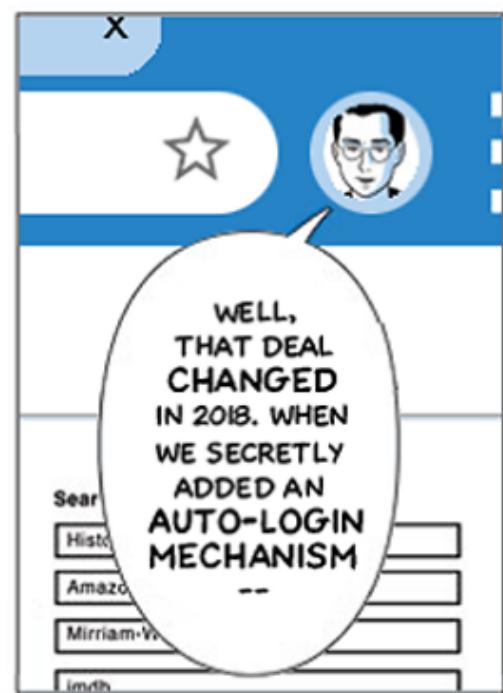
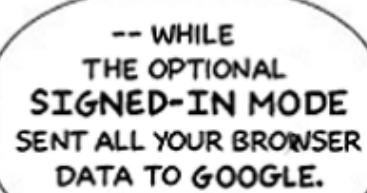
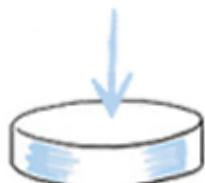
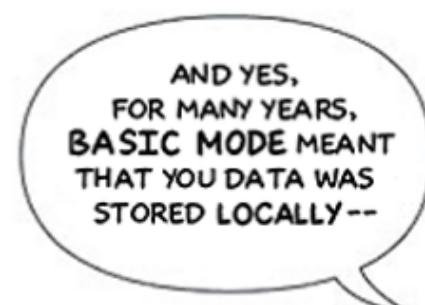
A LENS - EXPRESSIONLESS AND EVER-WATCHING.



Part Three



The Regression Game



Sear
Hist...
Amazo
Mirriam-W
imith



AND BECAUSE WE ALSO REDESIGNED OUR SYNC INTERFACE FOR MAXIMAL CONFUSION, MILLIONS OF USERS ACCIDENTALLY ACTIVATED SYNCHRONIZATION BEFORE ANYONE COULD PROTEST.

AM I SIGNED IN OR OUT NOW?!

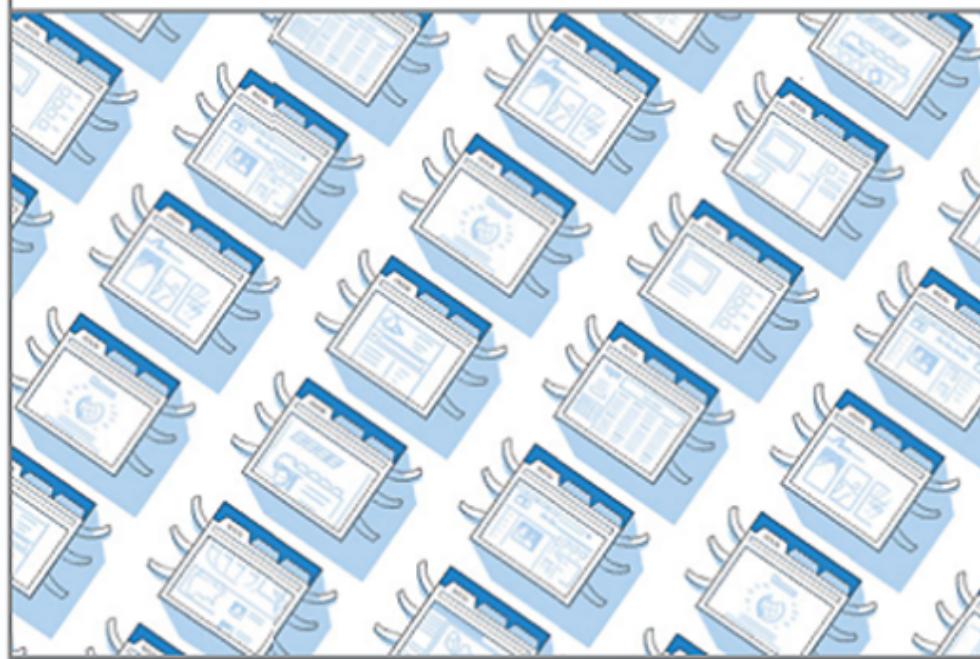
THEY SAY IT'S SOMETHING "INBETWEEN."



THE OPTION OF SYNCING HAS BECOME THE DE FACTO RULE.



THIS IS SERIOUS. ONCE YOU TURN ON SYNC, YOUR BROWSING HISTORY, YOUR DOWNLOAD HISTORY, YOUR BOOKMARKS AND YOUR AUTOFILL INFORMATION BELONG TO GOOGLE --



-- AND AUTOFILL INCLUDES YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, USERNAME AND PASSWORD.

CHROME WILL DO THIS WITHOUT ASKING, WITHOUT NOTIFYING. JUST LIKE GOOGLE HAS MODIFIED A CRUCIAL PRIVACY FEATURE WITHOUT TELLING ITS USERS.

UNFORTUNATELY,
THIS IS NO
EXCEPTION.

YEAR
AFTER YEAR,
UPDATE AFTER
UPDATE, GOOGLE
HAS PLAYED A
RELENTLESS
PRIVACY
REGRESSION
GAME:



06.2015
A CHROME UPDATE SILENTLY SWITCHES ON YOUR MICROPHONE AND SENDS WHAT IT HEARS TO GOOGLE.

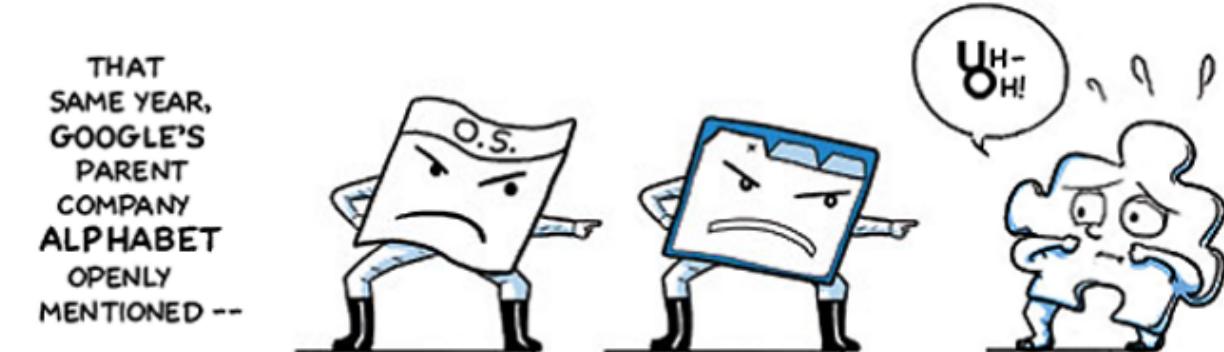
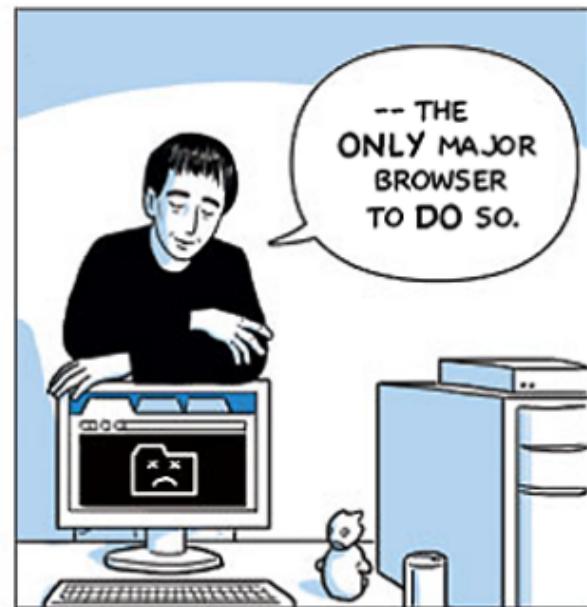
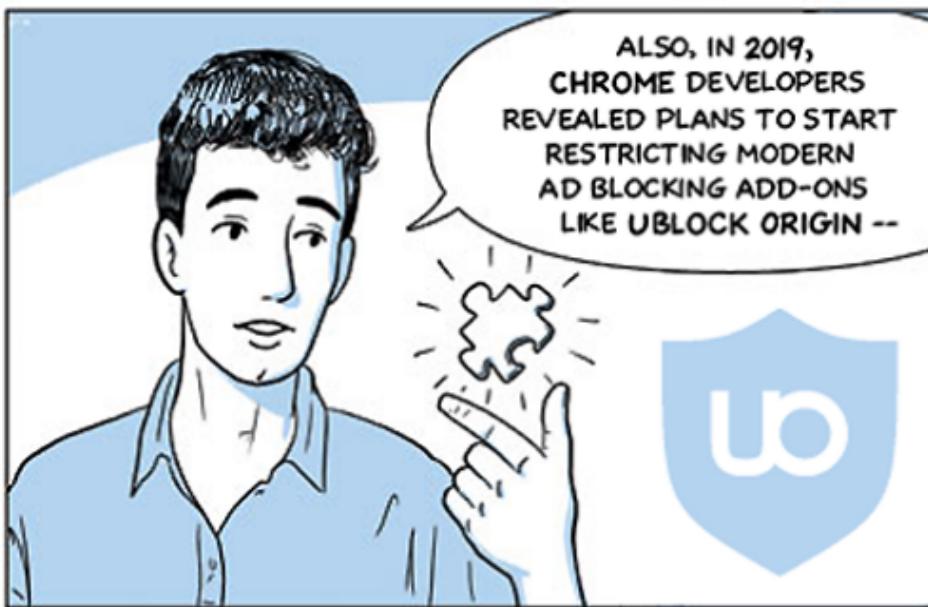
05.2017
A CHROME "FLAW" ALLOWS SITES TO SECRETLY RECORD AUDIO AND VIDEO WITHOUT WARNING OR CONSENT.

03.2018
THE 'CHROME CLEANUP TOOL' SCANS AND REMOVES FILES ON YOUR COMPUTER WITHOUT CONSENT OR TRANSPARENCY.

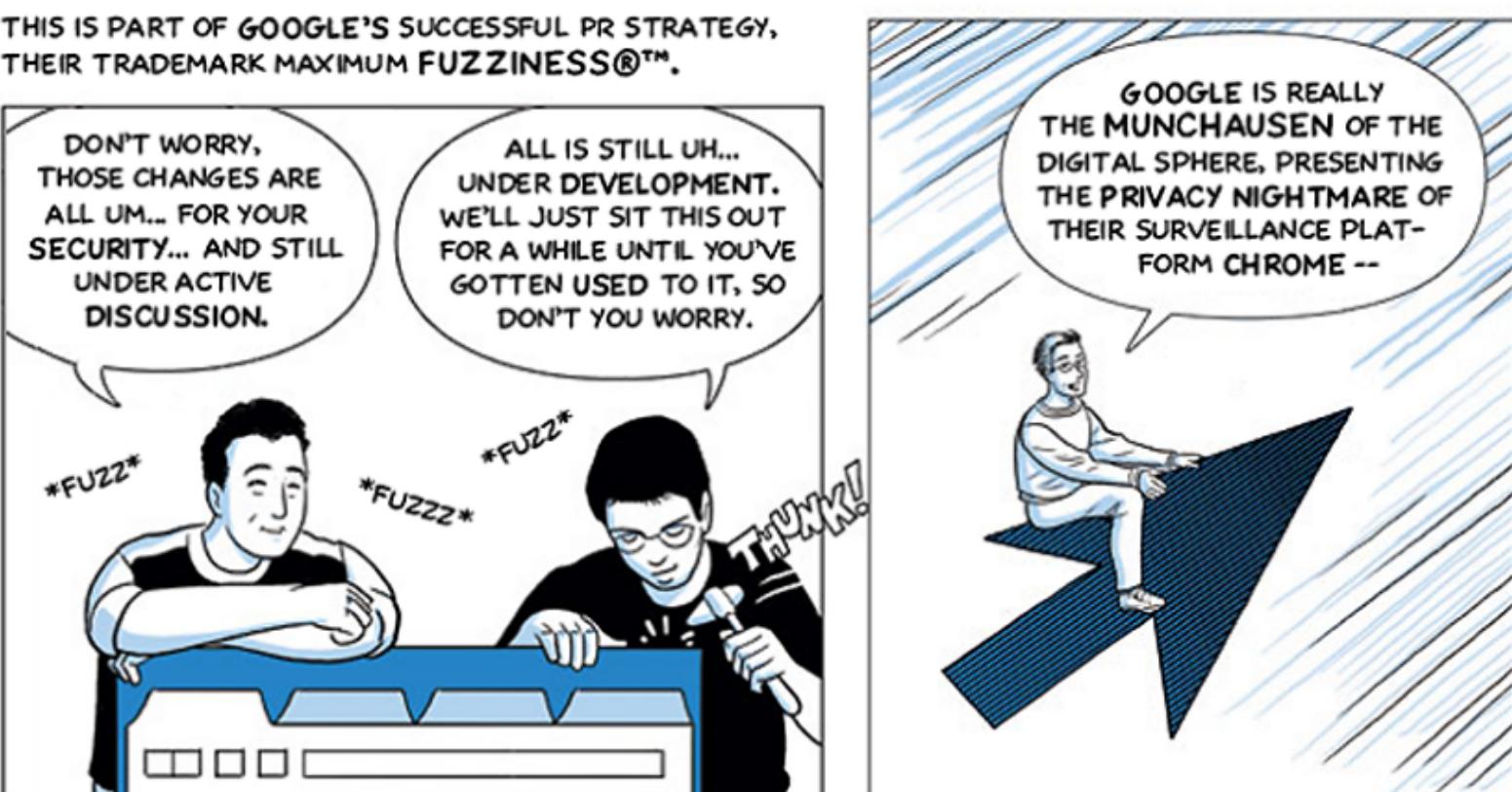
04.2019
CHROME ELIMINATES THE OPTION TO TURN OFF THE SURVEILLING 'HYPERLINK AUDITING.'

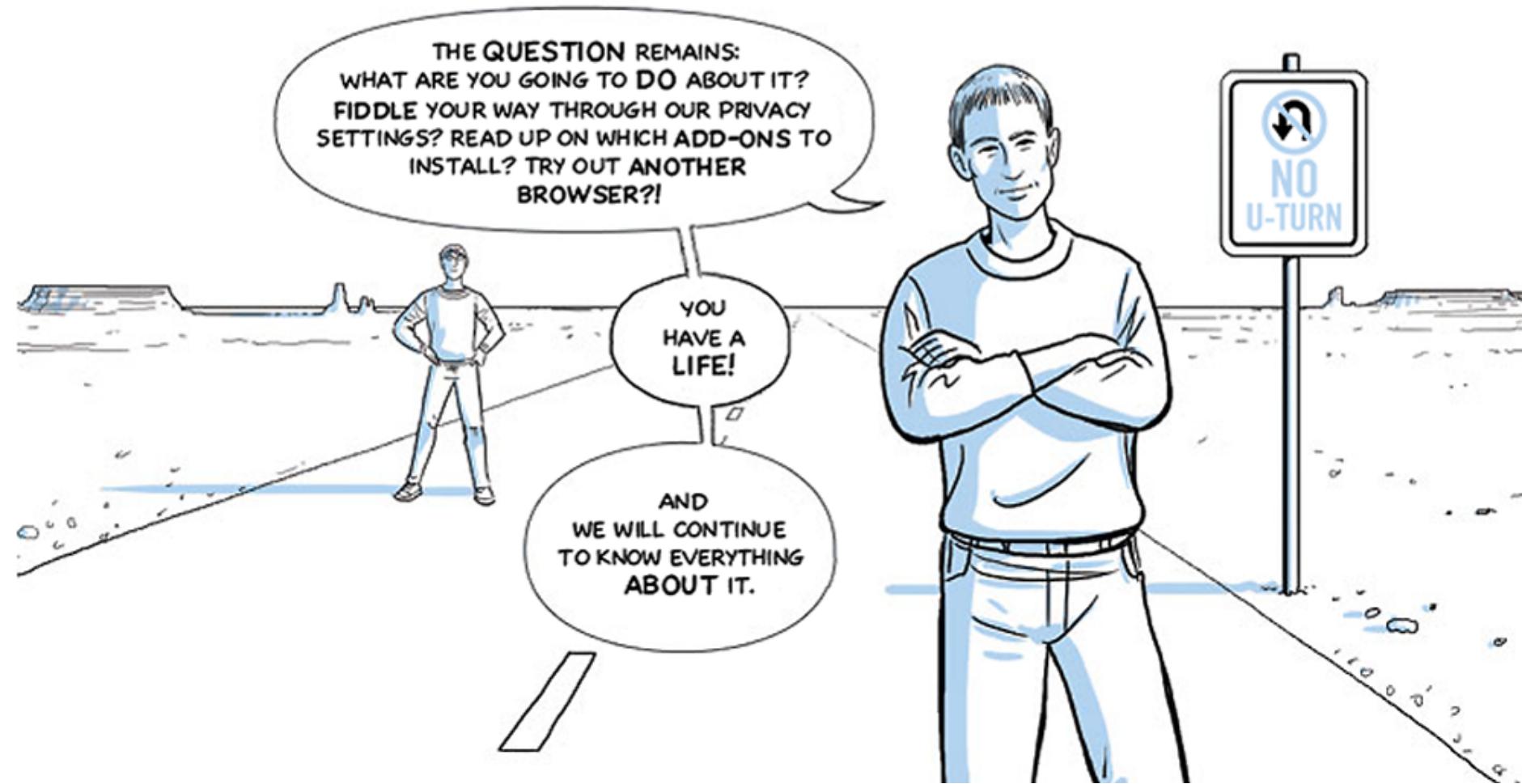
10.2020
WHEN TOLD TO WIPE ALL COOKIES ON EXIT, CHROME NOW EXEMPTS ALL GOOGLE SITES LIKE YOUTUBE OR GOOGLE SEARCH.

10.2021
CHROME CAN NOW TRACK WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN FRONT OF THE SCREEN, LOGS BREAKS AND SLEEP CYCLE VIA ITS NEW 'IDLE DETECTION'.



-- THE
“RISK FROM
ADBLOCKERS”
TO THEIR
REVENUE IN
THEIR SEC
FILINGS.





Part Four



The Shadow Text



HELLO EVERYBODY,
MY NAME IS SHOSHANA ZUBOFF, I AM A SOCIAL
PSYCHOLOGIST AND AUTHOR OF THE 2018 BOOK
“THE AGE OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM”.

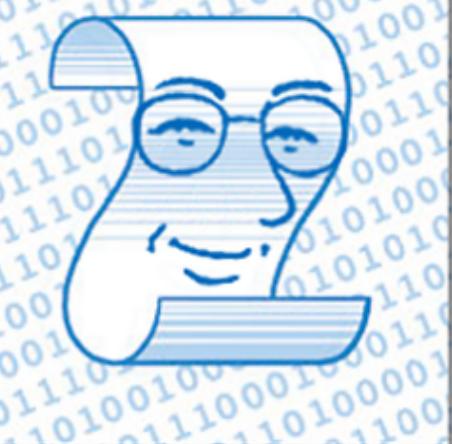
IN IT, I TALK ABOUT
HOW COMPANIES LIKE GOOGLE AND
FACEBOOK SECRETLY HARVEST YOUR
LIFE EXPERIENCES TO CREATE RAW
MATERIAL TO SELL TO GOVERN-
MENTS AND COMPANIES.

YOU'VE
ALREADY TAKEN A LOOK
UNDER THE HOOD OF
THE CHROME BROWSER,
BUT I WOULD LIKE TO
ADD ONE IMPORTANT
CONCEPT:

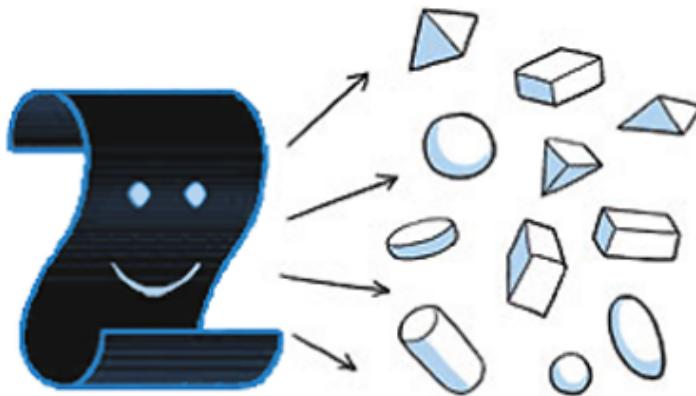
THE
SHADOW
TEXT.

WHENEVER WE POST
PICTURES TO A WEBSITE,
WHENEVER WE BLOG, CHAT,
TWEET, OR “LIKE” SOME-
THING, WE ARE AUTHORS
OF A MULTIMEDIAL
PUBLIC TEXT.

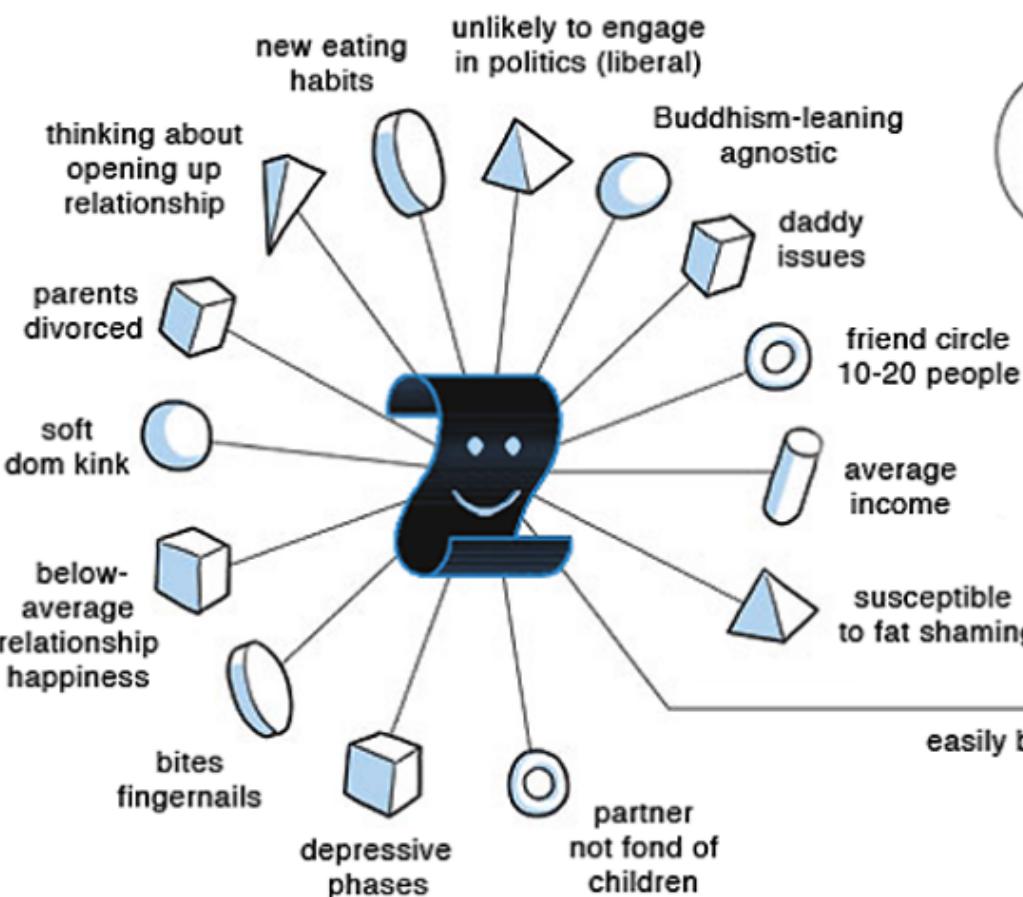
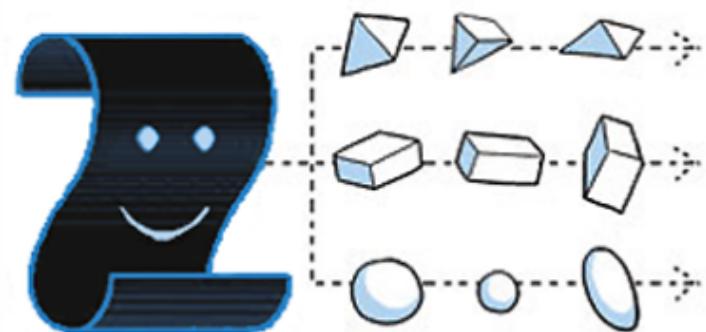
BUT IN ADDITION TO THAT, EVERYTHING YOU TYPE OR CLICK WHILE
BROWSING THE WEB, HOWEVER TRIVIAL OR FLEETING, WILL BE
ENGRAVED INTO A SECOND TEXT.



IN ITSELF, EACH OF THESE TINY PERSONALITY PARTICLES MIGHT SEEM RANDOM, UNIMPORTANT, AND UNPROFITABLE.



BUT WHEN EXTRACTED ON A MASSIVE SCALE AND ANALYZED BY GOOGLE'S ALGORITHMS, THESE INSIGNIFICANT DETAILS BEGIN TO FORM PATTERNS.



THANKS TO THE SHADOW TEXT, WHAT WAS ONCE DEEMED USELESS "DATA EXHAUST" --

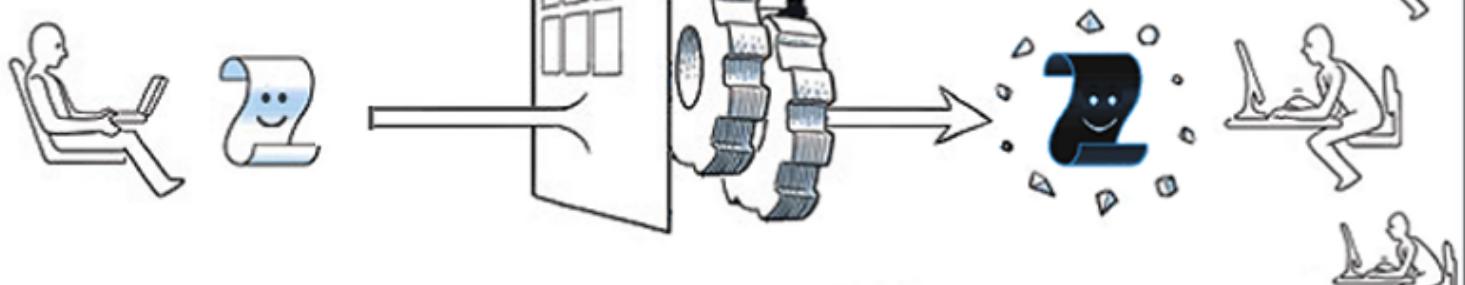
-- WHEN SYSTEMATICALLY LINKED TO YOU, BECOMES A MOST INFORMATIVE AND PROFITABLE DIGITAL TWIN.



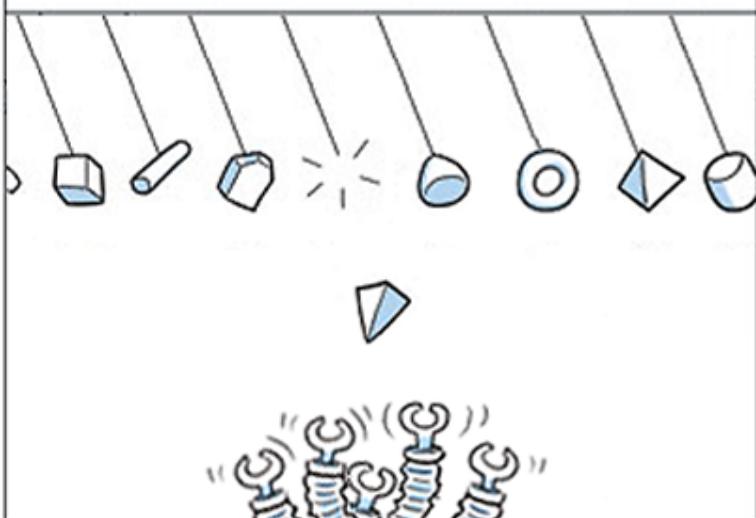
WHEREAS THE FIRST PUBLIC TEXT IS VISIBLE TO US, THE SHADOW TEXT IS HIDDEN FROM OUR VIEW --

--"READ ONLY" FOR SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISTS.

ABOUT US, BUT NOT FOR US.



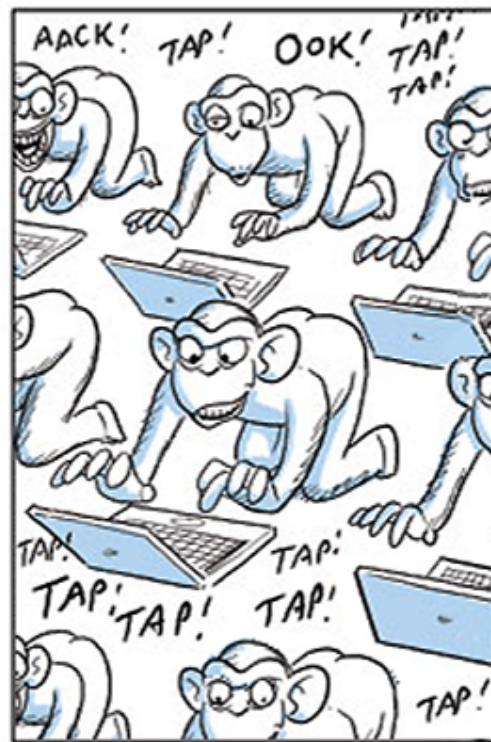
AS ALWAYS, IT IS THE MOST VULNERABLE WHO SUFFER THE DEEPEST FROM THIS DIGITAL ABUSE. DEPENDING ON THE COUNTRY YOU LIVE IN, ONE IDENTIFIER (MUSLIM, LGBTQIA*, DEMOCRAT) CAN DETERMINE WHETHER YOU WILL GET THAT JOB, THAT CREDIT CARD OR HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY.



AND SOMETIMES, JUST ONE IDENTIFIER PROCESSED THROUGH SHINY "PERSONALIZED" PRODUCTS AND "TAILORED-TO-YOU" SERVICES CAN EVEN SPELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FREEDOM AND IMPRISONMENT, LIFE AND DEATH.



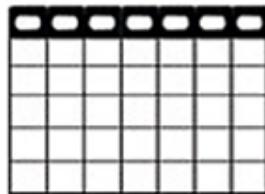
IT'S TRUE, DEANONYMIZATION IS A PIECE OF CAKE WHEN PEOPLE CONSTANTLY TYPE THEIR LIFE INTO THE CHROME BROWSER LIKE...



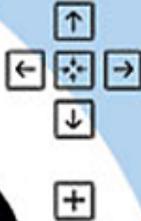
WELL, SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DONE WHEN WE ARE CONSTANTLY SURVEILLED AND RECORDED --

-- WHEN OUR INNERMOST LIVES ARE INVADED FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S GAINS WITHOUT OUR CONSENT.

HOPEFULLY, THE LAST CHAPTER CAN GIVE YOU AN IDEA ABOUT WHERE TO START.

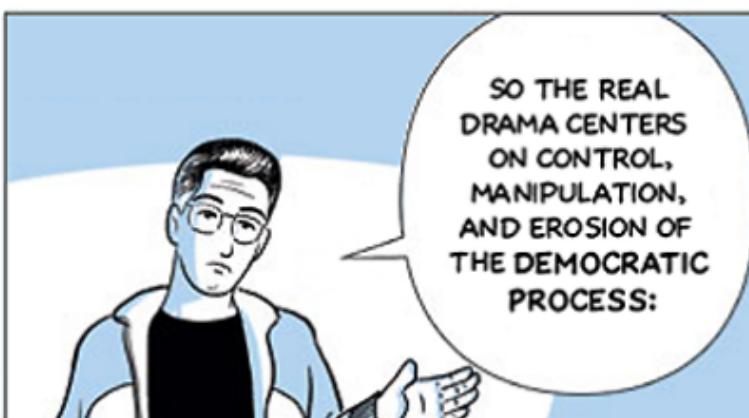
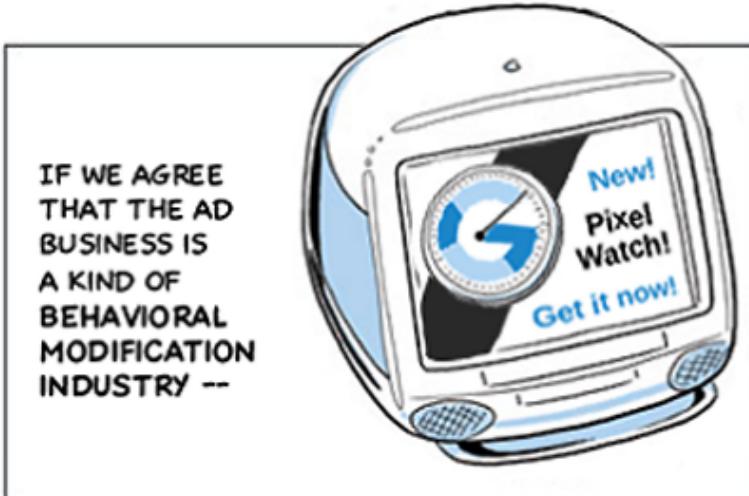
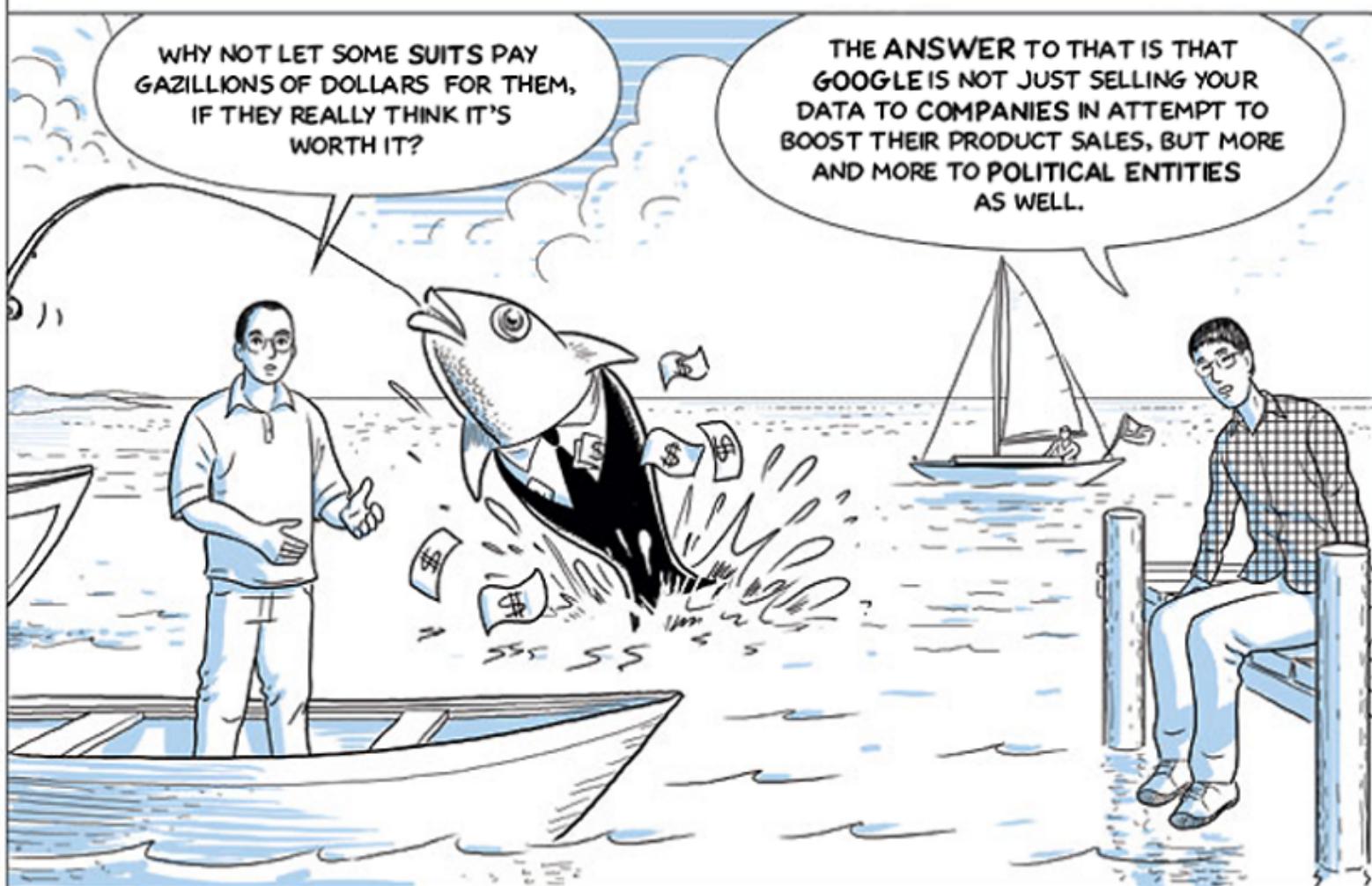


cula88: ROFL ^^
Hrrbl: LOL
DMFG





ALL OF THIS MIGHT SOUND OVERTLY MELODRAMATIC WHEN ALL WE'RE TALKING ABOUT IS PERSONALIZED ADS.



REPORTERS AT BUZZFEED DISCOVERED THAT GOOGLE ENABLED ADVERTISERS TO TARGET ADS TO PEOPLE WHO TYPE RACIST AND ANTI-SEMITIC SLURS INTO THE OMNIBAR.

C ☆ Jewish [REDACTED]

C ☆ Black people [REDACTED]

C ☆ [REDACTED]

THIS RADICAL ETHICAL INDIFFERENCE IS A MAJOR BREEDING GROUND FOR ONLINE EXTREMISM, AND A MASSIVE ENABLER OF VOTER MANIPULATION --

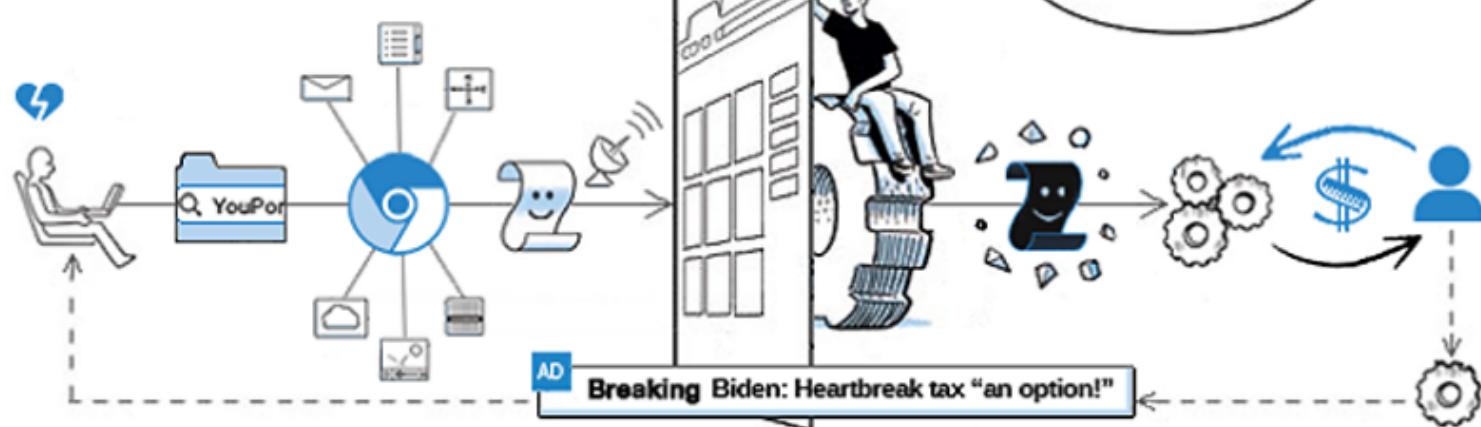
-- AS WAS THE CASE IN BOTH THE 2016 TRUMP AND BREXIT ELECTIONS, WHEN POLITICIANS FROM THE US AND THE EU ACCUSED GOOGLE OF PROFITING FROM HATRED AND OF WEAKENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH DISTORTED INFORMATION.



DISTORTED INFORMATION THAT WAS DELIVERED AT EXACTLY THE RIGHT TIME TO EXACTLY THE RIGHT PEOPLE --

-- WITH THE PRECISION OF A SWISS CLOCKWORK.

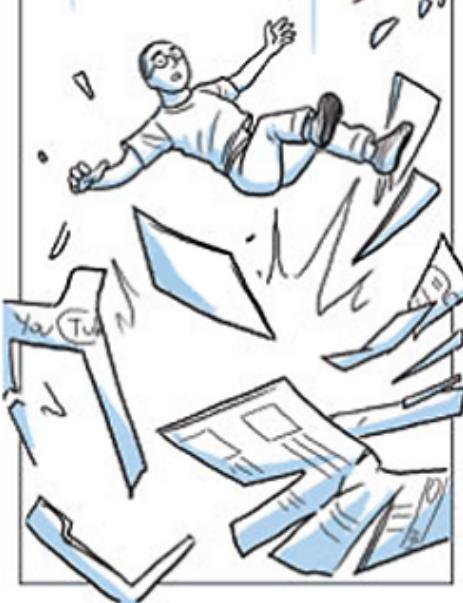
CONTROL AND POWER, SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.



THESE INTRUSIONS INTO THOUGHT AND IDENTITY ENDANGER FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS. CONCEPTS LIKE FREEDOM OF WILL, INDIVIDUALITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION ARE AT STAKE HERE.

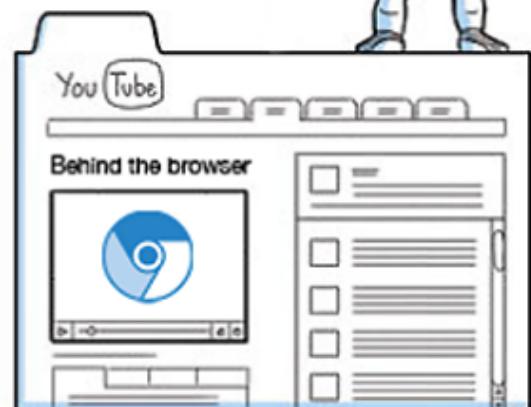


BUT DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH IN HOPE THAT POLITICIANS WILL CATCH UP SOON AND SMASH THIS ANTI DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE.



GOOGLE HAS SPENT MORE LOBBYING MONEY IN WASHINGTON AND BRUSSELS THAN ANY OTHER CORPORATE ENTITY IN THE WORLD --

-- A WHOPPING \$150 MILLION IN THE US ALONE DURING THE LAST DECADE.



INSTEAD, COMPUTER EXPERTS EXPECT GOOGLE'S GRIP TO TIGHTEN. FORCED SIGN-IN IF YOU WANT TO USE GOOGLE MAPS OR WATCH A YOUTUBE VIDEO IS ON THE HORIZON --



-- SO THAT EVEN MORE DATA VEINS ARE MINED FROM OVER TWO BILLION SLOWLY-BOILING FROGS.



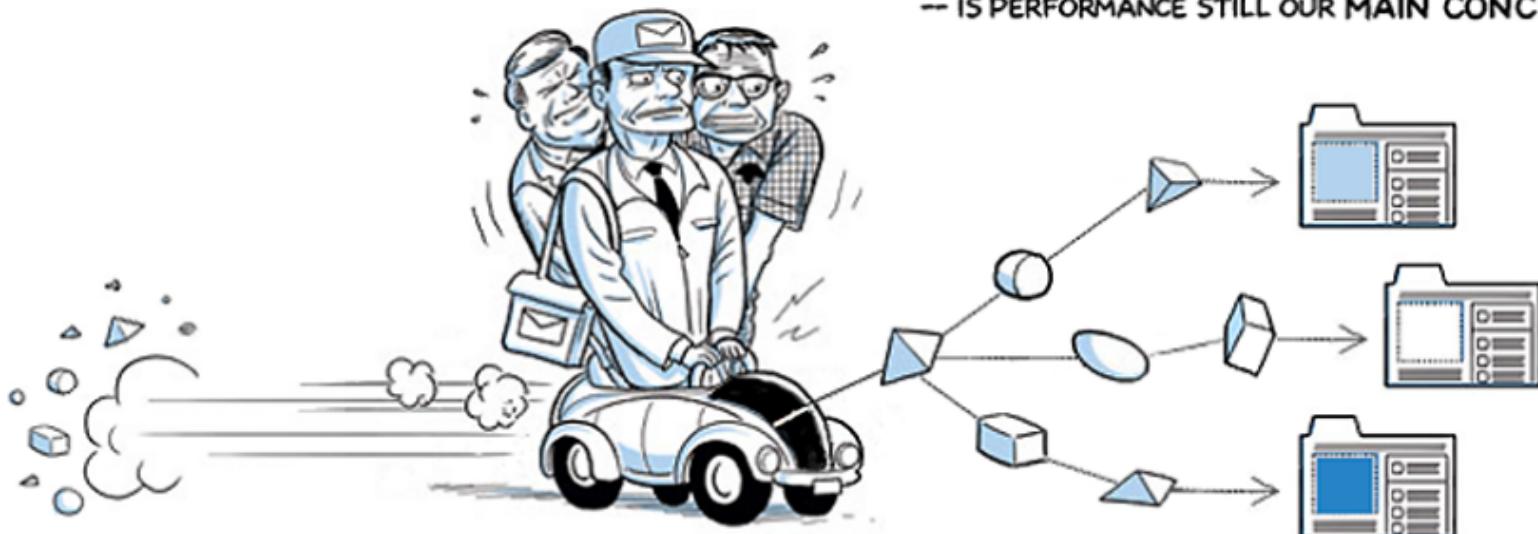
IN THE END, THIS IS THE SOLE PURPOSE CHROME WAS BUILT AROUND: EXTRACTING AND MONETIZING AS MUCH OF YOUR PERSONAL LIFE AS POSSIBLE, WHILE DELIVERING GOOD PERFORMANCE.



AND TO BE FAIR, CHROME STILL DELIVERS A PRETTY GOOD PERFORMANCE (THOUGH IT'S NOT THE SPEEDSTER IT USED TO BE). EVERYONE ENJOYS A FAST BROWSER, BUT WHEN WE FIND OUT THAT ITS SPEED RELIES ON PREDICTIONS ABOUT THE PAGES WE WILL VISIT NEXT BASED ON AN INTIMATE PROFILE BEYOND OUR REACH --

-- WHEN WE FIND OUT THAT ITS FUEL LITERALLY IS OUR DATA --

-- IS PERFORMANCE STILL OUR MAIN CONCERN?



OR SHOULDN'T WE BE AT LEAST AS APPALLED AT OUR IMMENSE DAILY DATA EXHAUST AS WE ARE IN OTHER CASES OF MORAL BANKRUPTCY THAT BRING FORTH AN EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF EMISSIONS?

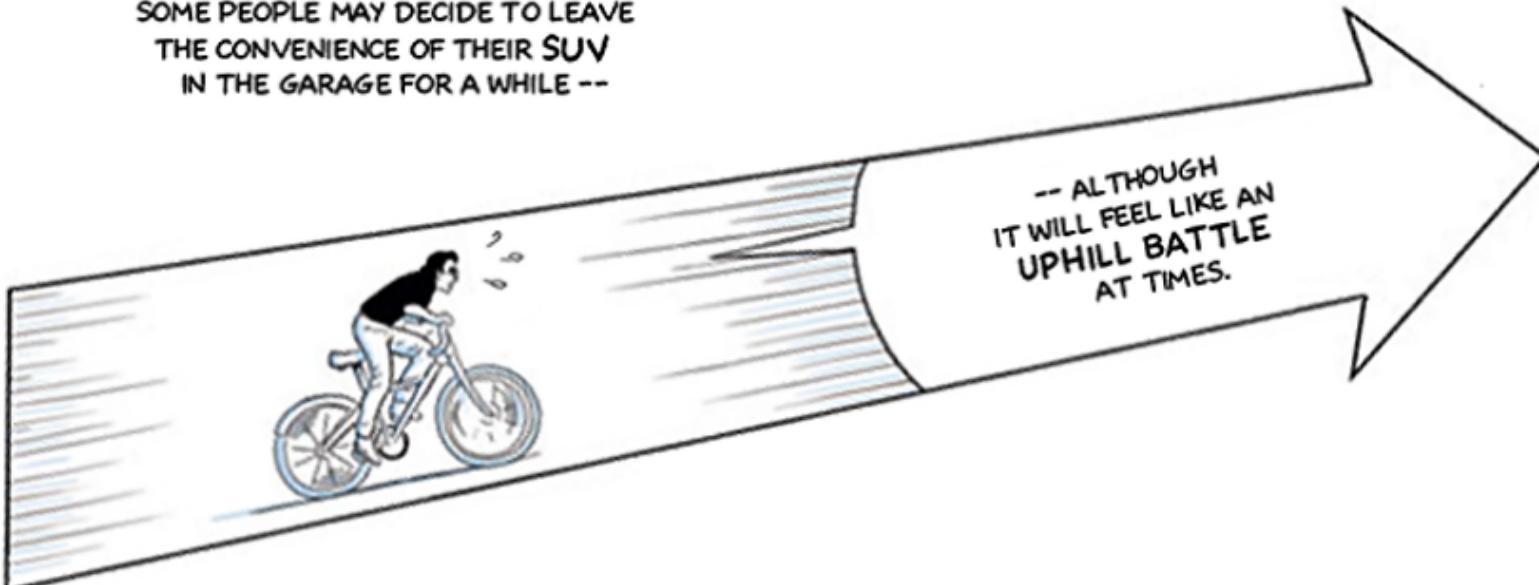


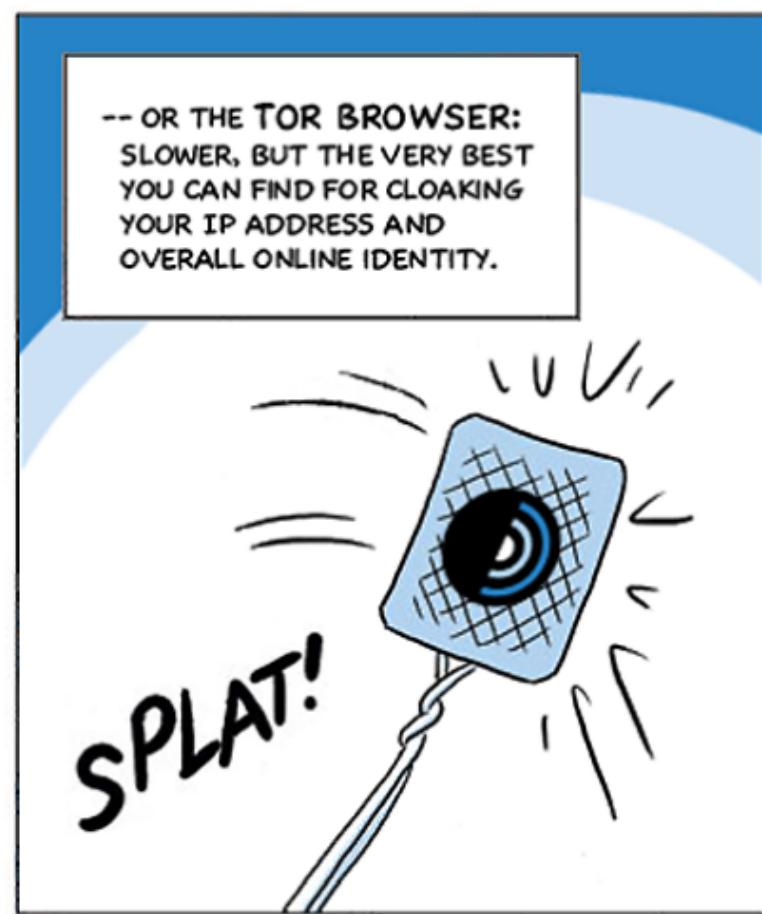
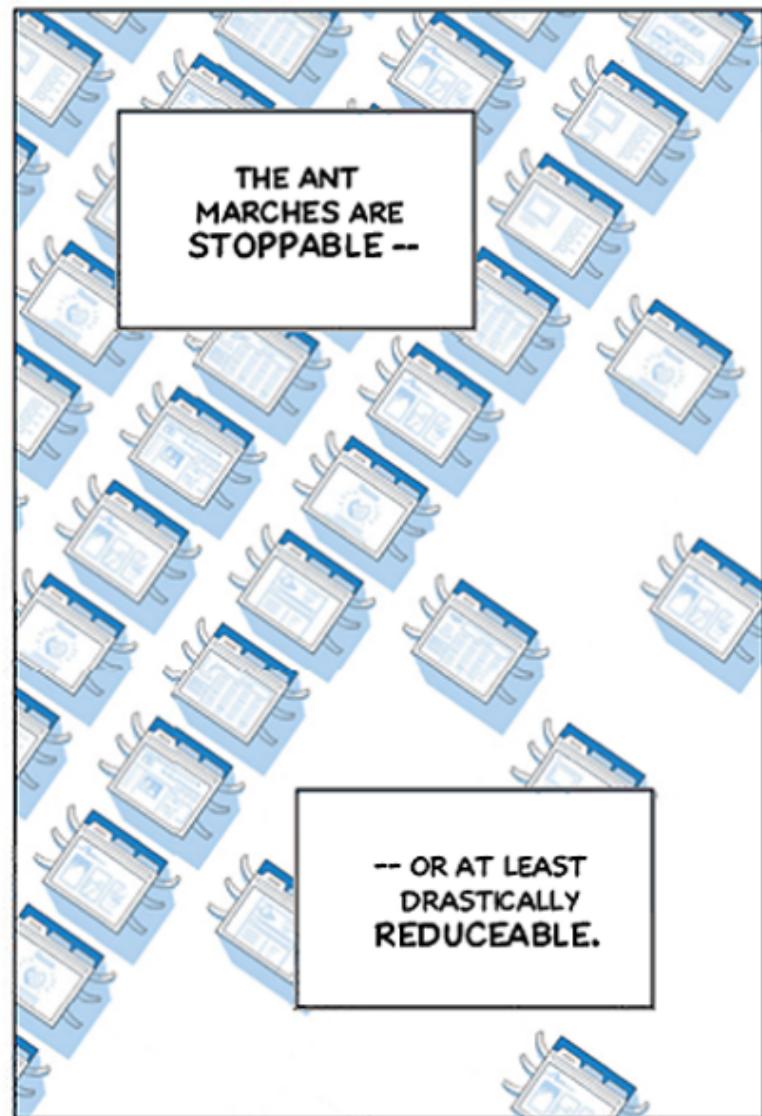
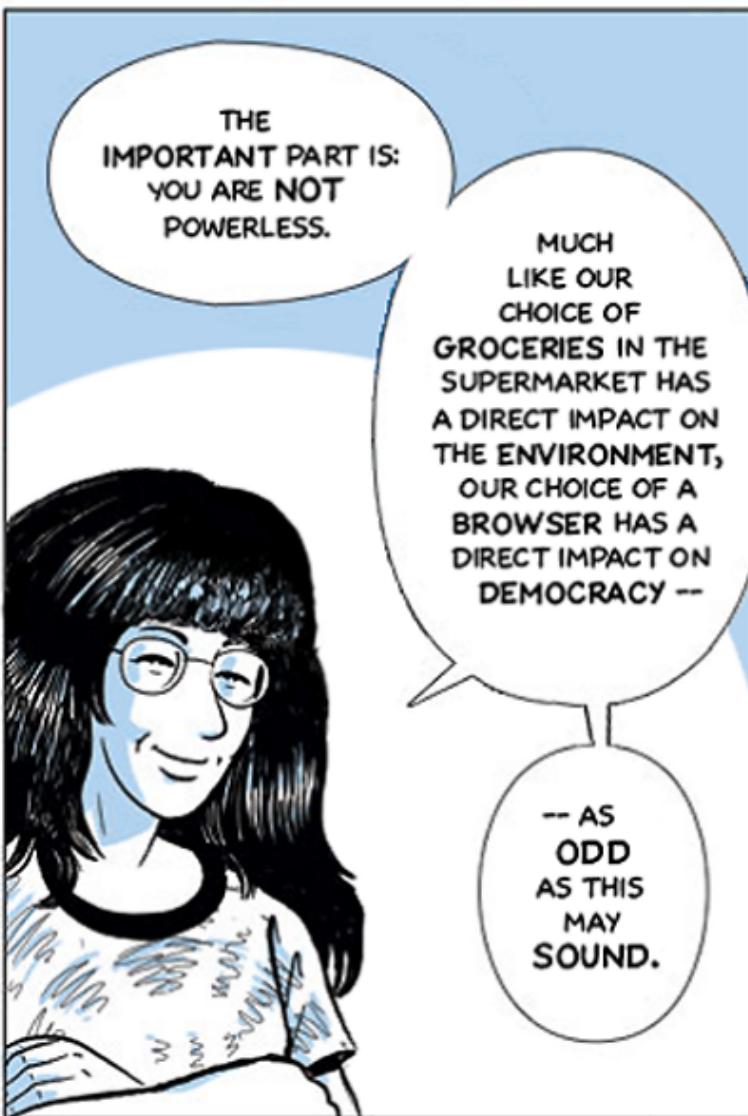
HOW MUCH ARE WE WILLING TO SACRIFICE FOR ANOTHER 10TH OF A SECOND OF LOADING SPEED?



IN THE END, THIS IS A MATTER OF PERSONAL VALUES. SOME PEOPLE MAY DECIDE TO LEAVE THE CONVENIENCE OF THEIR SUV IN THE GARAGE FOR A WHILE --

-- ALTHOUGH IT WILL FEEL LIKE AN UPHILL BATTLE AT TIMES.





THESE ARE NOT THE "DATA EIGHTIES," WHERE IT'S ALL ABOUT MAKING
FAST MONEY, BUYING FAST CARS AND DRIVING TO THE NEXT FAST FOOD JOINT
WITHOUT ANY REGARD FOR OUR HEALTH, SOCIETY OR ENVIRONMENT.



01010001010001010100101010000101010000101



**WHAT ARE
YOU GOING TO DO
ABOUT IT?**



ANNOTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Page 1

- The online version of Scott McCloud's original Chrome Comic from 2008 can be found at:
<https://www.google.com/googlebooks/chrome/index.html>
See also <https://scottmccloud.com/7-consulting/index.html>

Page 2

- Google Chrome active installs:
<https://pctechmag.com/2016/11/google-chrome-hits-a-milestone-of-two-billion-active-installs/>
- Global browser market share 2020:
<https://gs.statcounter.com/browser-market-share> or
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usage_share_of_web_browsers
(It's worth noting here that browsers like Edge, Opera and Vivaldi are merely built on top of Chrome's core technology.)
- Google revenue in 2021:
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/266206/googles-annual-global-revenue/>

PART 1 – DIAL O FOR OMNIBOX

Page 4

- On the Omnibox “No Return Policy”:
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2008/sep/04/googlechromeprivacyissues>
- Cf. this blog post by John Hopkins cryptographer Matthew Green, “Why I’m done with Chrome”:
<https://blog.cryptographyengineering.com/2018/09/23/why-im-leaving-chrome/>

Page 5

- Chrome’s current Privacy Policy:
<https://www.google.com/chrome/privacy/>
- Panels 2-5 are based on, and sometimes heavily quote, Shoshana Zuboff, “The Age of Surveillance Capitalism” (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2019), pp. 186–187.

Page 6

- On the not-at-all incognito mode, see
[https://choosetoencrypt.com/privacy/chromes-incognito-mode-isnt-private-so-](https://choosetoencrypt.com/privacy/chromes-incognito-mode-isnt-private-so)

[whats-the-point/](https://www.datacenterknowledge.com/archives/2017/01/13/paper-details-google-data-center-security-design) as well as
<https://spreadprivacy.com/tracking-in-incognito/>

- Chrome tracking your movements even when you have turned off location “services”:

<https://apnews.com/828aefab64d4411bac257a07c1af0ecb/AP-Exclusive:-Google-tracks-your-movements-like-it-or-not>

- “Both Android and Chrome send data to Google even in the absence of any user interaction.” (From „Google Data Collection”, a 2018 paper by Vanderbilt University professor Douglas C. Schmidt)
<https://digitalcontentnext.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/DCN-Google-Data-Collection-Paper.pdf>
- The original Washington Post article will not be linked here, as the only way to peek behind its paywall is to be thoroughly tracked; you can find Geoffrey Fowler’s arguments here as well (some of which have made it directly onto the comics page):
<https://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/lifestyle/technology/geoffrey-fowler-why-googles-web-browser-has-become-spy-software/>

Page 7

- A helpful tool for breaking down Chrome’s labyrinthine Privacy Policy:
<https://myshadow.org/lost-in-small-print/googles-privacy-policy>

PART 2 – PLATFORM PUZZLES

Page 10

- On Chrome for Android sending location coordinates to Google, see Geoffrey Fowler’s article listed under Page 6.
- If you use Chrome and/or have a Google account, you can verify the worrying Google Maps/Google Earth behavior by visiting:
<https://myactivity.google.com/>
- About Google Home privacy issues:
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/jul/11/google-home-assistant-listen-recordings-users-privacy>

Page 11

- For details on Google’s data center security practices, see:

<https://www.datacenterknowledge.com/archives/2017/01/13/paper-details-google-data-center-security-design>

PART 3 – THE REGRESSION GAME

Page 12

- The new sync mode has been widely discussed and criticized:
<https://www.zdnet.com/article/google-secretly-logs-users-into-chrome-when-ever-they-log-into-a-google-site/> and
<https://www.wired.com/story/google-chrome-login-privacy/> and
https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/gyny83/google-chrome-sync-privacy

It was also the focus of Matthew Green’s infamous blog post listed under Page 4.

Page 13

- See the Chrome Privacy Policy listed under Page 5.
- Chrome as covert listening tool:
<https://boingboing.net/2015/06/24/chrome-update-turns-browsers-i.html>
- Secret recordings of audio/video:
<https://thehackernews.com/2017/05/browser-camera-microphone.html>
- About the Chrome Cleanup Tool “poking through your underwear drawer without asking” (Matthew Green):
https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/wj7x9w/google-chrome-scans-files-on-your-windows-computer-chrome-cleanup-tool
- On Chrome’s surveilling hyperlink auditing:
<https://boingboing.net/2019/04/08/no-opt-out.html>

· On Google secretly exempting its own websites when you ask Chrome to wipe all cookies and site data:
https://www.theregister.com/2020/10/19/google_cookie_wipe

· On Chrome monitoring your sleep cycle and daily routine via ‘Idle Detection’: https://www.theregister.com/2021/09/22/google_emits_chrome_94_with/

Page 14

- On Google restricting modern ad blockers:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kateoflahertyuk/2019/05/30/google-just-gave-2-billion-chrome-users-a-reason-to-switch-to-firefox/> and

<https://9to5google.com/2019/05/29/chrome-ad-blocking-enterprise-manifest-v3/>

- The original filing submitted by Alphabet to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC):
<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1652044/000165204419000004/goog10-kq42018.htm#sB8A92C82A7085B27A37F412D2216BC6F>

Page 15

- On Google quietly erasing their motto “Don’t be evil” from their code of conduct:
<https://www.zdnet.com/article/google-erases-dont-be-evil-from-code-of-conduct-after-18-years/> and
<https://gizmodo.com/google-removes-nearly-all-mentions-of-dont-be-evil-from-1826153393>

PART 4 – THE SHADOW TEXT

Page 16

- The “Shadow Text” concept is first introduced in “The Age of Surveillance Capitalism”, Part I, chapter six, “III. Surveillance Capital and the Two Texts”, pp. 183–187 (see [Page 5](#)). Some remarks by Shoshana Zuboff’s comic character shamelessly quote her real-life counterpart.

Page 17

- An example of personality particles being derived from your Shadow Text would be the Facebook “like”, as a 2013 paper by Michal Kosinski, David Stillwell and Thore Graepel (and quoted by Zuboff on p. 274) showed: Facebook “likes” could “automatically and accurately estimate a wide range of personal attributes that people would typically assume to be private,” among them sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious and political views, personality traits, intelligence, happiness, use of addictive substances, parental separation, age, and gender.

Page 18

- On personalization, cf. “The Age of Surveillance Capitalism” p. 256 f.: “The machine invasion of human depth is prosecuted under the banner of “personalization,” a slogan that betrays the zest and cynicism brought to the grimy

challenge of exploiting second-modernity needs and insecurities for outside gain.”

- The de-anonymization of metadata is discussed by Zuboff, e.g. on p. 244f.: “We are told that it’s not possible to identify individuals from these large-scale amalgamations. However, with as little as three bits of data culled from the public record – birth date, zip code, and sex – reidentification science has demonstrated its ability to de-anonymize metadata with ‘disturbing ease.’”

PART 5 – CONCLUSION

Page 20

- The racist slurs have been pixelated so as not to further reproduce hate speech. If you want to see the concrete wording, check out:
<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alexkantrowitz/google-allowed-advertisers-to-target-jewish-parasite-black>
- Like “Shadow Text”, “radical indifference” is a term coined by Shoshana Zuboff. Cf.
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/mar/25/google-youtube-advertising-extremist-content-att-verizon>
- Trump voter manipulation via “Shadow Text”:
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/17/cambridge-analytica-facebook-influence-us-election> and
<https://theintercept.com/2017/03/30/facebook-failed-to-protect-30-million-users-from-having-their-data-harvested-by-trump-campaign-affiliate/>
- Brexit voter manipulation:
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/may/07/the-great-british-brexit-robery-hijacked-democracy>

Page 21

- On Google spending ~\$150 million on US lobbying over last decade:
<https://boingboing.net/2020/01/22/google-spent-150-million-on.html>
- On Google as one of Brussel’s most active lobbyists:
<https://lobbyfacts.eu/articles/12-12-2016/google-one-brussels%E2%80%99-most-active-lobbyists> and
<https://lobbyfacts.eu/reports/lobby-costs/all/0/1/2/21/0/>

Page 22

- On Chrome not being the speedy beast it used to be, see this Google Trends graphic comparing the search terms “Chrome slow” and “Firefox slow” from 2008 to 2021:
<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2008-01-01%202021-01-01&q=chrome%20slow,firefox%20slow>

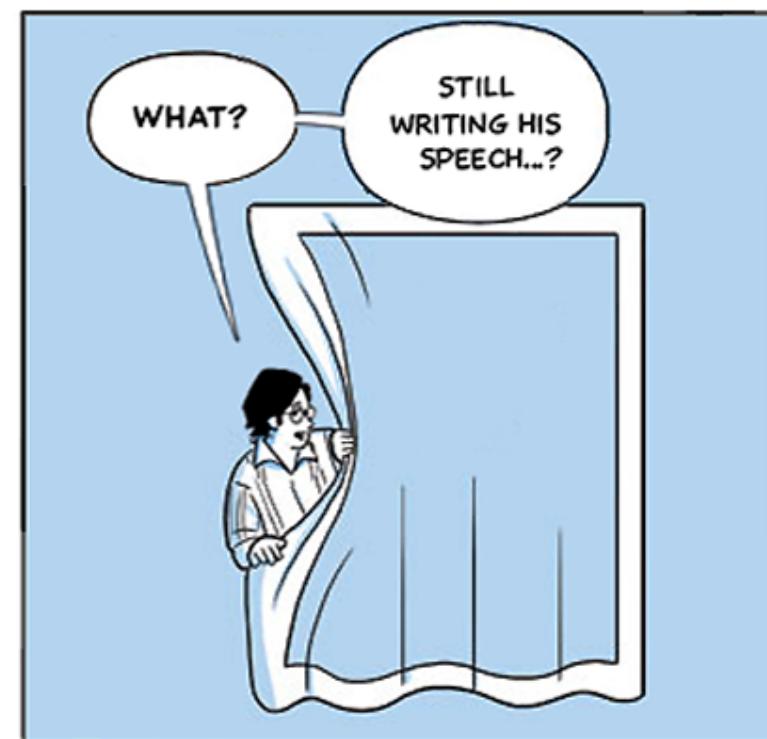
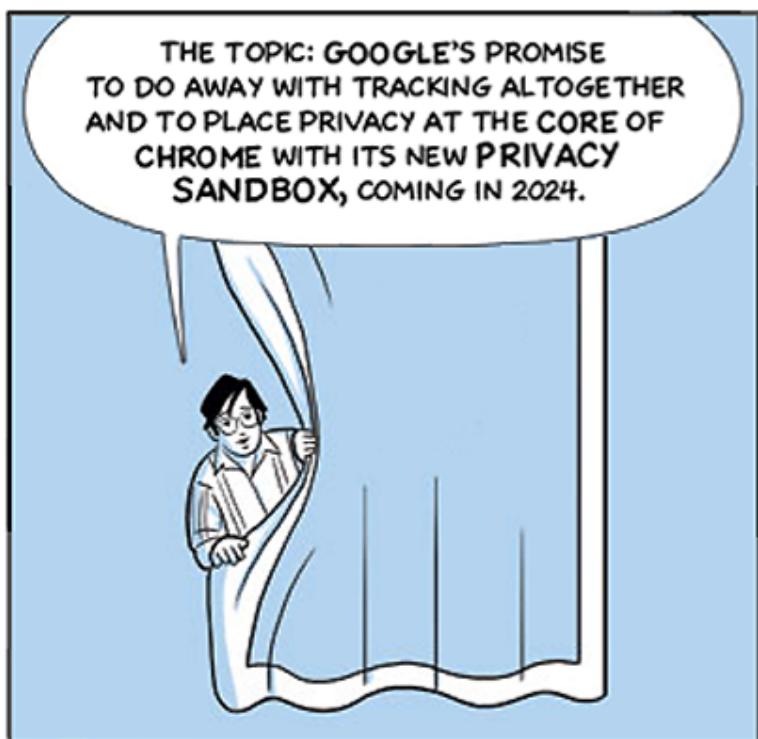
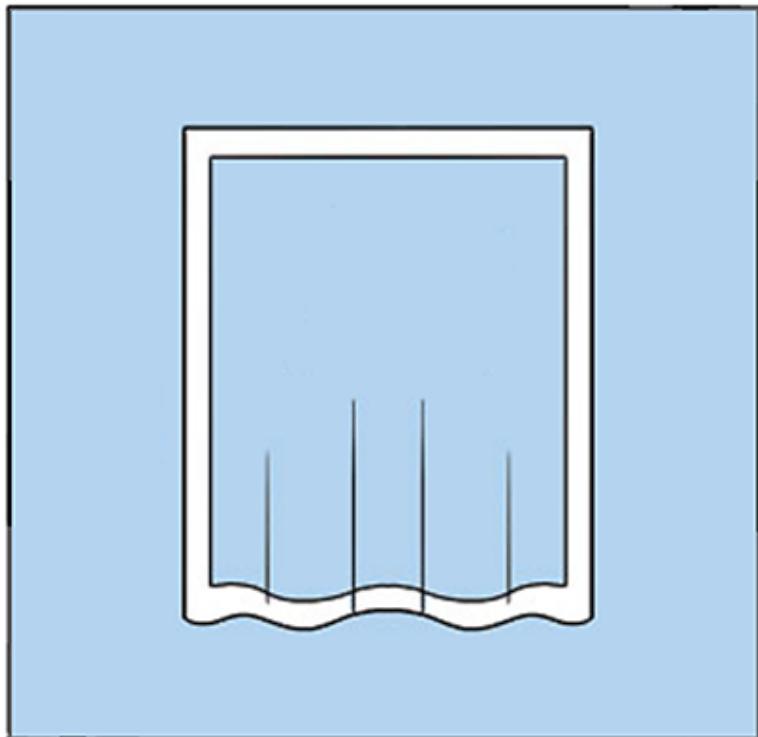
Page 23

- Download Firefox here:
<https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/>
- Download Tor Browser here:
<https://www.torproject.org/download/>
(It is worth noting that some critics view Firefox as part of the Google ecosystem. Google’s considerable funding of Firefox is seen as a strategy to evade antitrust legislation by simulating a pseudo-competitor, while Mozilla, the foundation behind Firefox, is strikingly unwilling to investigate more independent sources of revenue for years – but even most of those critics grudgingly use Firefox.)

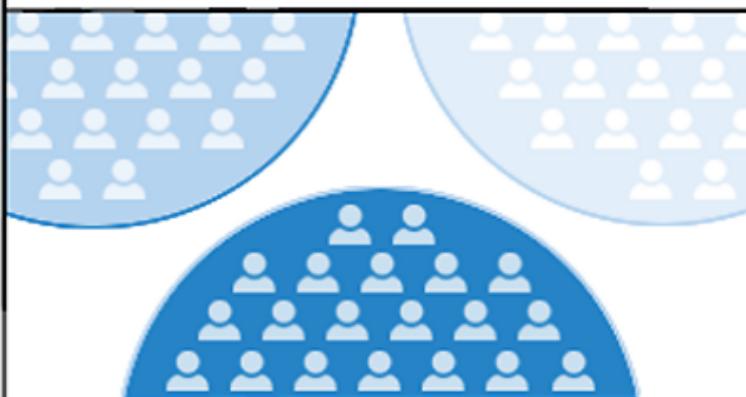
EPILOGUE

Page 29

- On Chrome’s initially planned FloC technology as a serious security concern:
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2021/03/googles-floc-terrible-idea> and
<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/google-floc-trial>
- Report on Google’s backpedaling concerning FloC:
<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2022/01/google-drops-floc-after-widespread-opposition-pivots-to-topics-api-plan/>
- Source for the piranha quote:
<https://bigbrotherawards.de/en/2021/what-really-makes-me-angry-google>
- And lastly, hundreds of German data-harvesting publishers and advertising companies, among them Axel Springer, filing an EU antitrust complaint against Google in early 2022, claiming damage for their businesses once third-party cookies are abolished:
<https://techcrunch.com/2022/01/24/germany-publishers-privacy-sandbox-complaint/>

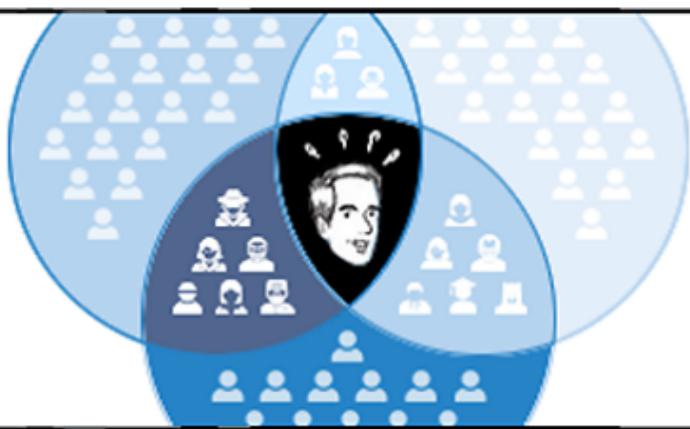


INSTEAD, CHROME ITSELF WILL ANALYZE ALL YOUR BROWSING HABITS AND - DEPENDING ON YOUR SURFING PROFILE OF THE PAST DAYS - PUT YOU IN A SO-CALLED "COHORT" WITH OTHERS WHO HAVE BEEN TO SIMILAR SITES.



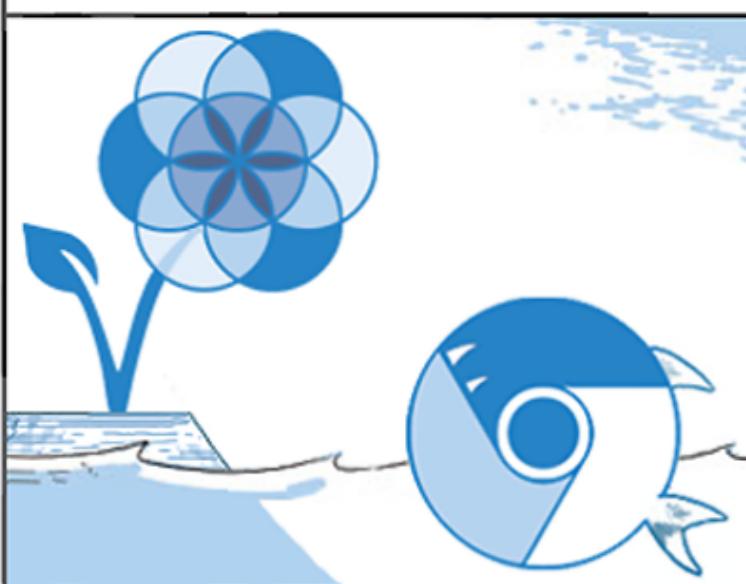
ACCORDING TO GOOGLE, THIS WAY YOUR PRIVACY WILL BE PROTECTED MUCH BETTER THAN BEFORE.

ACCORDING TO PRACTICALLY EVERYONE ELSE, AMONG THEM MANY INTERNET EXPERTS, YOU WILL BE MONITORED EVEN MORE PRECISELY AND RELENTLESSLY THAN BEFORE.

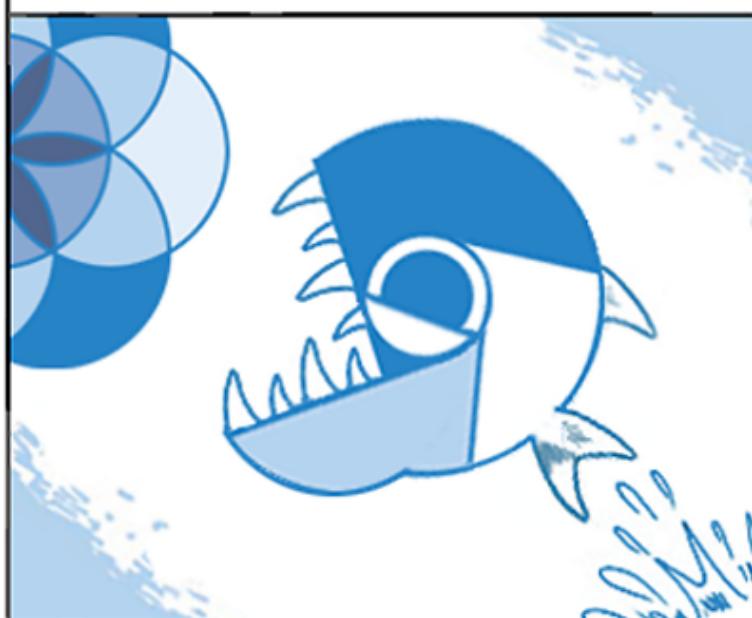


ANOTHER OUTCRY ENSUED, AND ANOTHER ROUND OF GOOGLE BACKPEDALING, A TINY BIT, FOR NOW.*

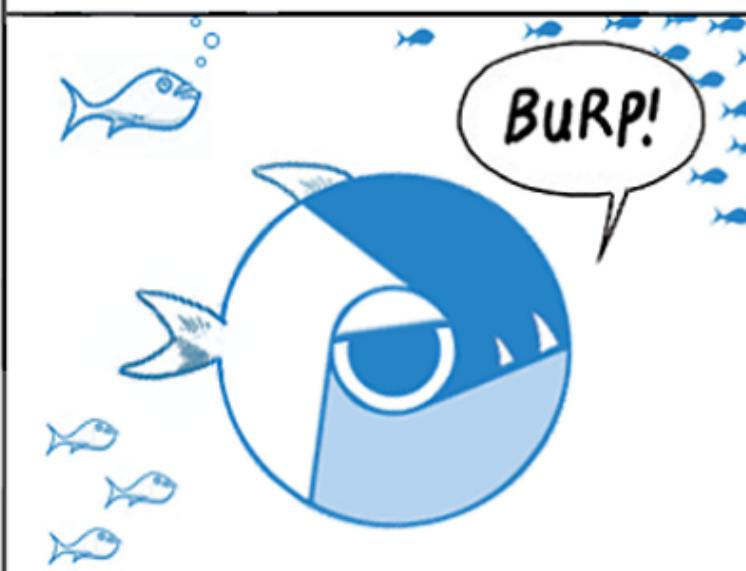
BUT, AS RENA TANGENS, MEMBER OF GERMAN PRIVACY NGO DIGITALCOURAGE, RECENTLY REMARKED: "PIRANHAS WILL BECOME VEGANS..."



"...BEFORE GOOGLE FOREGOES 99 PERCENT OF ITS PROFITS." - TRACKERS GONNA TRACK.

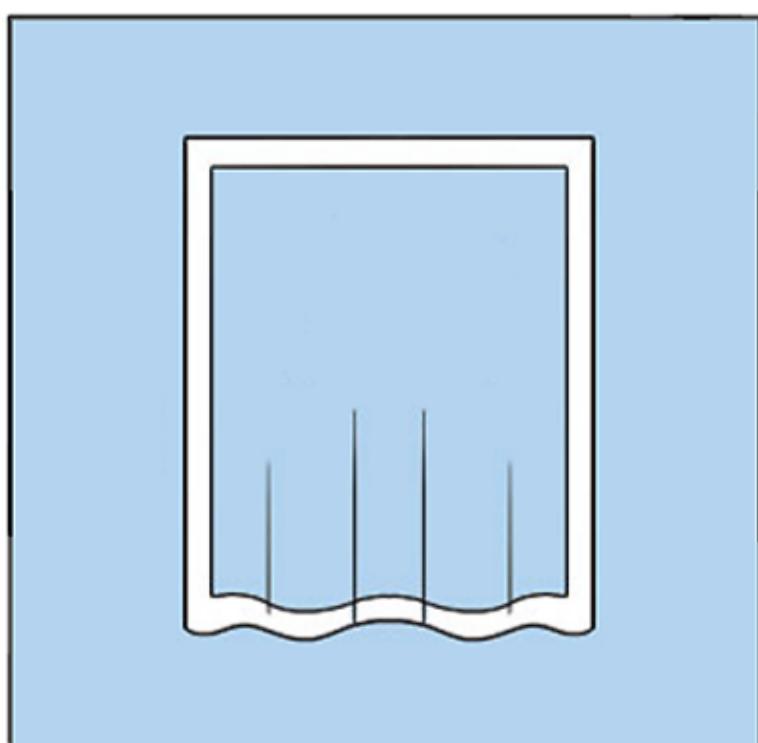
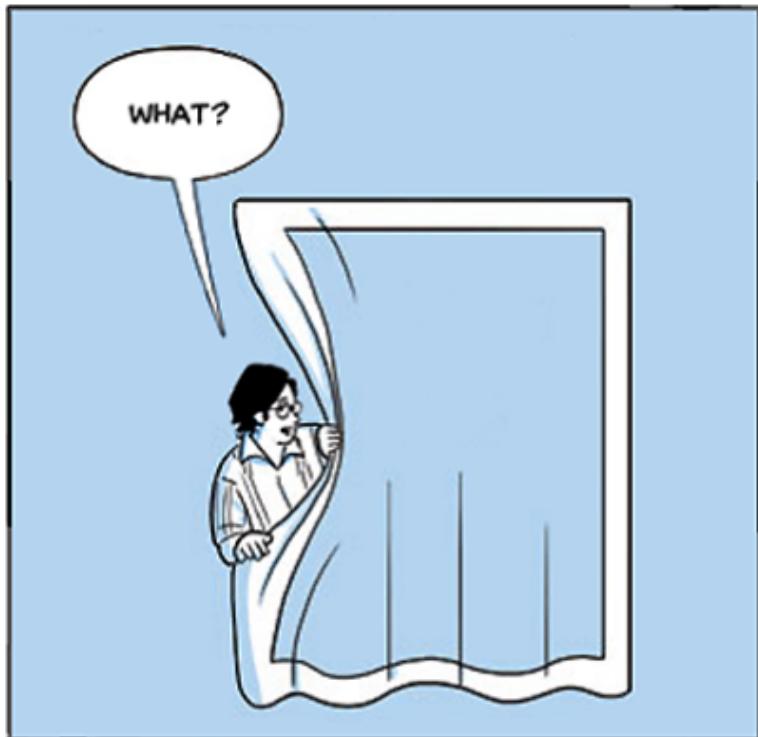


THIS IS MUCH MORE ABOUT GOOGLE BLOCKING ITS DATA-HARVESTING COMPETITORS IN ORDER TO AMASS EVEN MORE MARKET POWER IN ITS OWN HANDS.



BY THE WAY, MOST OTHER BROWSERS HAVE BEEN BLOCKING THIRD-PARTY COOKIES FOR A LONG TIME NOW WITHOUT REPLACING THIS SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY WITH ANOTHER ONE.







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