



[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Now](#) | [Repos](#) | [Cards](#) | [Contact](#) | [RSS](#) 

I'm an American software developer and the "broligarchs" don't speak for me

(Or anyone I know.)

Page created: **2025-03-19**

Updated: **2025-03-23**

Sometimes you just want to be understood.

Here I am, a software developer in the year 2025. I look around at "tech" in the news and in culture and I don't like what I see. Something has gone very, very wrong with the Big Tech bros. I can no longer keep silent because it pains me to imagine these people representing ME.

The broligarchs do not represent me. They do not speak for me.

If all I can accomplish here is represent myself, that's enough. But I have a feeling I'm not alone. I have a feeling that there are a lot of other people in the tech world who do not want to be thought of as the cold-blooded instruments of mad kings bent on destroying everything in order to remake the world as a dystopian techno-state.

Actually, my distaste for Big Tech is nothing new. It's been building for decades.

First, little stuff like the inkjet printer that you invited into your house that claims to need, "Just a little more cyan, bro. I'll print your black and white page after I get my cyan. Come on, bro."

Or that McAfee antivirus nagware bundled with the PDF reader by Adobe, one of the world's richest software companies, that will be forcefully installed unless you play the find-the-checkbox game every. Single. Update.

Or how about the abusive question du jour: "Would you like to use our new 'AI' feature NOW or be asked again TOMORROW?"

Or bigger stuff like selling our data to third parties, increasing social media "engagement" by promoting the most contentious and conspiracy-oriented content in our social media. Or here's

one: Stealing all existing human-created works to feed into the aforementioned 'AI' systems, which, by the way, will also be used to replace your job, deny your health insurance, flag your face for arrest, and also write the police report when they bring you in.

Yeah, that was all plenty bad, but that was so last year.

What we're seeing 2025 is breathtaking. Just *look* at the elites jockeying for positions of power. They're like jackals licking their chops as they watch fences torn down around a daycare.

Have you heard these people talk? Have you seen what they've been up to lately?

When did this become the face of tech?

A line was crossed at some point. Maybe that happened around the same time the tech company announcements titled "New Update!" went from being fun and exciting to scary and nauseating.

"Tech", as portrayed in the public eye right now is something I barely recognize. It's almost universally negative: Social media, ad tech, blockchain, 'AI'. I don't work on any of that stuff. Am I even part of the same industry? (I don't actually have an answer to that question.)

Despite all of this, I'm not some tech apostate. I still love computers.

It's said that the lathe is the most universal tool in the machinist's shop, a tool that can be used to create all other machine tools, including other lathes.

A computer goes even further. Any general-purpose computer can simulate any other other computer (albeit slowly) and can therefore run all the programs that have ever been written, or, as far as we know, will ever be written. Computers are mind-blowingly cool tools. They are the most universal machines we have ever created.

Computers can be used to create things, connect people, assist the disadvantaged, and inspire the young. We only barely know how to program these things effectively and yet look at all we've done with them. I'm convinced our best work has yet to come.

To me, a programmable computer is a toy that never, ever stops being interesting.

But, for all their infinite wonderful uses, computers can also be used to: Spy on people; divide, frighten, and confuse with misinformation; advertise, addict, and automate mundane evils. They can be encumbered by digital locks enforced by bad laws.

This later description is increasingly the face of these machines as seen by the public. Machines that, by design, do not serve the user at all, but rather an invisible master that wishes to trick them into giving up personal data, money, time, or attention. This very unpleasant face leads to a public perception of tech that is understandably boiling over into a general distaste and distrust.

Software alone does not account for this face of tech, of course. The most visible and most rancid pieces of flesh plastered on tech's grinning skull are the megalomaniacs behind each decision, the greedy scumbags that would turn our computers against us.

Harvey Milk once gave a speech on the steps of San Francisco City Hall:

"The black community made up its mind to that a long time ago. That the myths against blacks can only be dispelled by electing black leaders, so the black community could be judged by the leaders and not by the myths or black criminals. The Spanish community must not be judged by Latin criminals or myths. The Asian community must not be judged by Asian criminals or myths. The Italian community must not be judged by the mafia, myths. And the time has come when the gay community must not be judged by our criminals and myths."

"Like every other group, we must be judged by our leaders..."

What about the tech "community"? Who are our leaders? Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, and Elon Musk? Larry Ellison, Peter Thiel, and Marc Andreessen? The thought makes me want to weep, or throw a CRT monitor out the window. Or both.

The most visible people in computing right now, the wealthy big tech elite, have shown themselves to be voracious monsters. They have shown that they care nothing of humans. And if you're not in this industry, the thing that might surprise you is, guess what? They don't care about computers either.

These big tech bros may claim to want free markets and individual liberty but make no mistake: What they seek is the "freedom" to take every single cent of wealth from every single market on Earth and the "liberty" to use their enormous wealth and also the law to pull the ladder up behind them to make sure no one can ever, ever follow them up.

Oh, but, sorry, that was the tech-bros before. It's much worse now. The old hungry, hungry tech-bro caterpillar that munched all the leaves on the branch hardened into a chrysalis sometime recently. What hatched was not a butterfly, but an even more enormous grub, the brologarch, which turns around with rage to devour its branch, the tree, the forest. It eats the bodies of the living, leaving behind a trail of radioactive slime. It cannot stop because despite its outward appearance of invulnerability, it is weak with fear of its own mortality.

Being wealthy beyond all possible imagining is no longer enough. Because now the goal is to run the whole country or even the whole world like a business where "like a business" really means having the dictatorial powers of the company C-suite.

(Aside: Having the wrong power structure is barely scratching the surface of why running a government like a business is an awful idea. Rural mail delivery loses money, so I guess that's out. A defense department "for profit" would be a decent start to a scary movie, not a way to defend your country. But the biggest reason is that "like a business" simply ignores the fact that there are values other than money: protecting people from harm, enforcing laws, safeguarding our land and resources, and providing a social safety net. None of those are business values. That's something I didn't understand when I was a larval libertarian-leaning single guy living in an apartment, supporting no one but myself.)

These are the same people who want to make your car play an advertisement while you're at a stoplight or have your TV harvest your viewing habits to sell to the highest bidder or make it impossible to own any digital goods so you have to rent them for a monthly fee forever. Just think about what that sort of person would do with the kind of power they're attempting to take now.

I don't understand how these people live with themselves. I suspect they're pretty miserable. They already have *everything* and it's not enough.

I like writing software because it's challenging and interesting and I can make tools that automate boring and tedious stuff. For money, I work on tools that automate boring and tedious *business* stuff. If I have a repetitive task on the computer, I'll have way more fun if I can write a little script to automate it. Even better is writing a little script for somebody else: I get to solve a puzzle *and* make somebody's day. I love that. I wish this were more accessible to more people.

I will never, ever understand how someone can bring any amount of misery, big or small, to another person's life to make a buck.

To quote Roger Ebert:

"To make others less happy is a crime. To make ourselves unhappy is where all crime starts. We must try to contribute joy to the world. That is true no matter what our problems, our health, our circumstances. We must try. I didn't always know this, and am happy I lived long enough to find it out."

The Big Tech situation is so bad that it often feels like commercial software was written expressly to *impede* doing anything useful on the computer. This has been going on long enough that people are starting to accept a certain amount of pain as a natural part of the computer experience.

One explanation I've seen recently is the mention of the military funding behind much of our early computing technology. The implication is that we should expect the worst, after all, because computers are just tools of destruction. The part about military funding isn't *wrong* per se. But it reduces the history of computation to mere funding. It ignores the actual people behind the innovations. It ignores the big thinkers that came before and after the invention of the transistor or packet-switched networks. Computers have ever been the tools of dreamers and misfits.

People like me are not a product of DARPA, we're a product of the home computing revolution.

I've been very lucky, by the way. First, I had the fortune to be born into a middle-class family that through the influence of family friends, bought a used home computer in the 1980s and then a PC in the 1990s. When my interest took off, I had the time, allowance money, and parental support to go to the bookstore and buy some books on the subject. (Shout-out to "C For Dummies" by Dan Gookin!)

As if that wasn't enough, I got my start programming "professionally" (as in getting paid for it) in the late 1990s and, let me tell you, that was a golden time of opportunity and adventure. Anyone who was savvy enough to teach themselves some HTML and a little JavaScript could land a job "making websites." The self-taught nature of the market suited my obsessive learning style perfectly.

It wasn't until the Dot-Com crash of 2000 that I actually realized how fortunate I was as I watched the job market suddenly turn sour. Not only had I managed to turn a teenage hobby into gainful employment, I had secured my place in the job market just in time to weather out the crash. I remember thinking about how unfair it was that other people who were like me, but who had the misfortune to arrive just a bit later, were not getting the same opportunity I was.

(Possibly Related: Since I was a little kid, I always hated the phrase, "Life isn't fair." As soon as I was old enough to put the ideas and words together, my motto has been, "Life may not be fair, but we should always be striving to MAKE it fair." This penchant for fairness and justice might also explain why I like playing board games, which have rules and why I get along well with computers, which always follow rules.)

I didn't dwell *excessively* on this unfairness, mind you. I was young and could be shamefully egocentric. Shamefully. Egocentric. But it stuck with me nonetheless. And I have ever since been grateful for my good fortune.

Another thing about the Dot-Com crash: It was clear to me and my cohort that while people weren't ready to buy pet supplies online *yet*, they inevitably would. The eventual domination of the Web was just as certain to me as any law of physics. Like industrialization, only much more so. Software scales up like nothing in the physical world. A physical factory takes time and money to create, but in our world, we can make a perfect copy of a machine (program) in a split second and it costs essentially nothing.

Heady stuff for a young person starting out. But in those days, I never imagined this would be a bad thing. Sure, getting rich sounded pretty great, but obviously we were going to do that by building fun and exciting things that people would love.

I've got lots of fun memories from the early days of my career: Usenet, Yahoo!, Netscape, Slashdot, and the greatest of all: zombo.com. Shelves of O'Reilly technical books with the Dover print animal covers. Dial-up modem Internet Service Providers. And yes, Google's arrival. Google had vastly superior search results, a server made of Duplo blocks, and the motto "Don't be evil".

To be sure, the big software companies were often stupid and greedy, but they seemed relatively harmless to me during that time because progress was so fast, everybody was racing just to keep up. Nobody could capture the market. It was too quick and too slippery to hold.

The early Web browsers were incredibly buggy and constantly in flux, but to the young developer, it was all just another fun challenge to overcome and another obscure set of skills to add to the wizard's grimoire.

Back then, I'll admit, I remember feeling like a little Master of the Universe. It didn't hurt that every media outlet was talking about the "revenge of the nerds" and how us computer geeks were now taking over everything. People were impressed and excited when I told them I was a software developer. It's a little embarrassing to say, but I do miss that golden glow. "And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns."

I also remember the general sense that ours was a "meritocratic" field, which meant that it didn't matter what you looked or sounded like so long as you had interesting ideas and skills. As the joke went, it didn't even matter what species you were, like the 1993 New Yorker cartoon that goes, "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog." I always liked that idea.

(Aside: It was only much, much later and with a fair amount of pain that I realized "meritocracy" has a dark side. There was a question I wasn't asking: Who, exactly, decides *which* ideas and skills have merit? And the scary answer is that it turns out there are people in this field, people who would describe themselves as "rationalists", who would say they have that answer. Sadly, we have among us those who believe that you can quantify merit. If you listen to those people and follow that train of thought too far, you end up in a very bad place, rubbing shoulders with eugenicists and other creeps.)

Looking back, the early days of the Web really were a pretty special time.

It would be easy to wrap up in that nostalgia like a warm and comfortable blanket and say that nothing will ever be as good ever again.

So it might surprise you to learn that's not how I feel at all. In fact, if you ask me, right now is the most amazing time to be in computing.

I'm serious. RIGHT NOW is, in a number of ways, far better than when I got started.

Here's the facts:

Hardware is unbelievably cheap and powerful and energy efficient. I can buy a used laptop computer for the price of a pair of pants. And that laptop would be perfectly capable of word processing, cranking out spreadsheets, developing software, writing email, surfing the Web, and just about anything else you can think of doing short of playing the latest games.

I have a computer in my basement that runs pretty much everything I do (I'm writing on it right now over an SSH connection) that uses, on average, less electricity than a household LED light

bulb.

Current generation semiconductor manufacturing technology is simply incredible: Laser pulses vaporize microscopic tin particles to produce extreme ultraviolet light with which we "print" components that are literally invisible to the eye. Chips are made under conditions of cleanliness and elemental purity that is like nothing that has ever existed before and is difficult to even fathom. This technology is the result of a fairly recent globe-spanning research and development project with a size and scope that reminds me of the space race of the 1960s. And unlike a Saturn V rocket, there's a good chance the results of that manufacturing process are in your pocket right now. How cool is that?

I can buy a 32Gb USB flash drive for the price of a cup of coffee, store a compressed copy of Wikipedia on it, and throw it in my pocket like it's no big deal. That's incredible.

Computers can be made so cheaply now that every single person on the planet could have one, run it sustainably from solar power, and be enabled to learn and unlock its secrets.

(I know that not everyone will love computers like I do. But everyone should have a chance to find out for themselves.)

And that's just the hardware side. Look at where we're at with software! For years now, I've been able to use a free operating system and free applications for everything I do from programming to drawing to editing video. I used to have to pay for all of this stuff and it was often buggy and unfriendly anyway.

Browser compatibility used to be AWFUL. (Either you lived through the IE6 hellscape or you didn't.) I complain a lot of about the insane complexity of modern browsers, but the truth is that with the slightest bit of care, you can write Web applications with a high degree of certainty that they will work *everywhere* with near-perfect backward compatibility into the foreseeable future. And that's amazing. In many ways, the browser has fulfilled the promise of a truly universal computing platform, and it's still relatively young.

Or how about connectivity? It's not perfectly distributed or affordable for everyone yet. But for many of us, broadband access has made extremely high speed downloads and streaming content as second-nature as water and power service. (Hey kids, gather around and I'll tell you about when it took forever to download a tiny JPEG image over dial-up.) Now I can stream video on my phone over a cell network. And that's nothing compared to the fiber connection that comes to my house. Amazing.

It gets better. All of these hardware and software advances would be no fun if it weren't for people. And sure enough, right at this very moment, an untold number of people are making indie games, open-source applications, ad-free websites, and blogs. There's more new amazing stuff being created by awesome people every single day than you could possibly keep up with. Way more than "back in the day". You just have to find it.

Believe me, I'm as nostalgic about the old Web as anyone, and yet a lot of those old websites still exist. Many of them never went away (like this website!). Plus now there's even more of them. Honestly, it's not even *that* hard to find them once you start exploring outside of the Google/Microsoft/Meta silos.

(Also, zombo.com still exists.)

And here's another thing that's gotten even better: Access to knowledge *about* computers. An excellent computer science education awaits anyone who has the patience to read free material online, use free tools, and watch free video lectures from prestigious universities. (You just won't get a diploma, those cost money.) You can use the same tools used by top programming professionals right now, for free.

Do you see where I'm going with this?

We should be able to *celebrate* this stuff every day. What a time to be alive. We've got all this great stuff! Everyone party all the time!!!

But, yeah, it's really hard to celebrate when the face of tech, the face that *most* people see every single day, is user-hostile, ad-driven, opaque, and morally bankrupt.

It's hard to celebrate when just about every tech company seems hell-bent on going to warp speed to monetize (and in the process, destroy) every single thing we have. A lot of that manifests as surveillance advertising, but it also takes form in confidence games like cryptocurrency, NFTs, and selling LLM ('AI') services in increasingly desperate ways before the bubble bursts.

(Aside: On that last item, Microsoft has to take the cake. Everything it owns from Windows to Github now pushes unwanted 'AI' tools into your face. They're even pushing this stuff on **children**! Microsoft has become one giant advertising mechanism for Copilot because they've blown unthinkable amounts of money on the gamble that this will be the next money-printing machine of endless growth if only they can get people dependent on it, lock them in, and then start turning the screws on the subscription prices. No vampire was ever as thirsty. Their behavior is so outrageous that only deep lock-in on a personal and corporate level can explain why people put up with it.)

It's hard to celebrate tech when the Web has been completely overrun with 'AI'-generated slop. The quality of search results has gone off a cliff. It's disgusting and even though it was predicted, it's still *shocking* how fast it happened. And on top of that, Google has intentionally destroyed their search engine for the purpose of serving more advertisements and *even more* generated slop, often semi-digested from *other* crap-spewing machine-generated sites. If you're getting a little nauseated at this point, you're getting it.

Ed Zitron's [Never Forgive Them](https://wheresyoured.at) (wheresyoured.at), goes to cathartic length to describe just a *fraction* of the everyday miseries perpetuated by modern big tech.

I'm telling you, it doesn't have to be this way.

I know it can be better because I'm living it.

I want everyone to have the same computer experience I have right now. I run a free operating system that serves no ads and does not update unless I explicitly tell it to. I trust the software tools I use because they are written by fellow enthusiasts. I visit ad-free websites. My computer hardware is cheap and plentiful. The computer serves me, not the other way around and I call the shots on everything.

But, there's a catch. The reason I can have this utopian computing experience is because I've made sacrifices. The first is a certain amount of convenience (when I can't make something work without bending my principles, I do without it). The second is that I've put a lot of time into learning how to use the free operating system and the free tools.

So yeah, that's great for me. But that's not good enough. There is absolutely no reason my path should be so difficult or so rarefied.

Everyone, regardless of skill level, money, or time, should be able to experience computers the way I do. There is NO TECHNICAL REASON we can't have that.

There's only one thing standing in the way: The insatiable greed of Big Tech.

The decisions of a few have made technology anti-user.

And the computing experience is, unfortunately, just the tip of the iceberg.

Garry Kasparov (yup, former World Chess Champion 1985-2000, Garry Kasparov) says of our new era, "The danger we face is of a new breed of ideologically-motivated billionaires, ones who believe that democratic institutions have lost purpose in our world, and are ready to use their wealth and connections to advance their own alternative vision."

I know this can come across as hyperbolic, but the big tech brologarchs can only be fully understood in the context of techno-feudalism, "The Network State", "Freedom Cities", "TESCREAL", etc. Researching these topics is a lot like reading a young adult dystopian sci-fi novel. Except it's not fiction.

[The Network State Coup is Happening Right Now](https://thenerdreich.com/the-network-state-coup-is-happening-right-now/) (thenerdreich.com)

If you're new to this stuff, maybe it seems funny. Yeah, ha ha, except the true believers, the ones who are ACTING ON IT RIGHT NOW, are unbelievably wealthy people. They're now in high-ranking positions in the federal government of the United States. They listen to Curtis Yarvin. They are not fans of democracy. They have already built their underground bunkers. This is not a drill.

(Aside: Hey, so, I know we're all used to hearing about billionaires by now. But that's just a word. It's really, really hard for the human mind to comprehend this scale of wealth. If you haven't seen

it yet, this page helps us get a sense for it by making you scroll and scroll and scroll...:

<https://dbkrupp.github.io/1-pixel-wealth/>)

A bunch of these guys are explicitly or implicitly accelerationists. They believe that removing regulations to allow unhindered technological "innovation" and growth will solve all of the world's problems. And if that happens to result in a techno-state and makes them powerful lords over that state, well, so be it. Certainly, there is no question that they've cranked the throttle up to 11. Jeff Bezos's Amazon announced last month that you'll no longer be able to download your Kindle book purchases. And just yesterday they announced that the Amazon Echo ("Alexa") will soon be sending all voice recordings to Amazon for processing, even if you previously set it to local-only for privacy. Similar headlines from the other big players are coming eye-wateringly fast. (You'll see why I picked Jeff Bezos for these examples in a moment.)

In a way, I'm an accelerationist, too. Because I've seen how people get used to increasingly hostile technology and allow themselves to get locked into services they hate but can't stop using. The "boiled frog" approach is the one that scares me. I honestly don't know if my fears are in the right place. I guess we'll find out, because the boiling pot has been replaced with a blast oven. I'm just hoping that once people get a load of where all of this is heading, they're not going to put up with it.

The biggest problem is just getting the word out in time. Billionaires own traditional news media and they've done a disturbingly good job of keeping this stuff out of the public eye...

...With a little help from the opinionless "voice from nowhere" school of journalism.

Again, let's focus on Jeff Bezos, also owner of the venerable Washington Post newspaper (the same Washington Post that broke the story of the Nixon Watergate scandal), who went from promising to never interfere with the paper (2013) to interfering (2024), to stating that they would no longer be publishing editorials critical of "personal liberties and free markets" (2025). Again, we can see the accelerating timeline.

Bezos is just one of the most obvious examples, but follow the money with the rest of the big legacy news sources and it's pretty stark. Mainstream news is shaped by enormously large and rich companies and people.

But it's not like they're *hiding* what they're doing, either. They're on podcasts and they write articles and give talks. This isn't some hidden conspiracy. You can hear them say all of these things in their own words.

From what I can tell, a lot of the tech billionaires enjoyed the same science fiction and fantasy genre books and films I did when I was growing up. But those books and films usually had pretty clear messages. So they either didn't understand the message, or worse, they got the message and decided it would be cooler to be the *bad guys*.

Listen to a big tech billionaire talk about any subject outside of their field of business. It's ridiculous to the point of parody. It pierces the idea that these guys are geniuses. They're clever and utterly ruthless. They're willing to exploit things the rest of us wouldn't. But the idea that they're all geniuses is a myth. (I'm not a genius either, by the way.)

Let's take Elon Musk, for example. I don't doubt that he has (or had) the mental aptitude to be considered "very smart" in a traditional sense. There is no doubt he has been really, really good at *selling* himself as a genius to the public for many years. But sit him in a room with someone who has real expert knowledge about a subject and let him talk. They'll tell you: he's full of crap. But you know what sealed the deal for me? When he was caught cheating on video games. Never mind how pathetic it is that a billionaire cheated at games. The question I've gotta ask is: HOW STUPID DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO THINK YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH THAT? Did he really think he could fool actual gamers? Seriously? I mean, let that sink in for a bit.

The more you examine these people, the more obvious it is that they're tech-adjacent business bros who have almost no interest in technology at all outside of being a means to control people and make absolutely ridiculous amounts of money. A lot of them clearly have no idea how things work under the surface and they don't care.

This is why I can't celebrate tech at this moment.

But I can tell you what I believe:

I believe technology should serve people.

I believe everyone can have fun with computers.

I believe the next generation should have the same opportunities I've had in technology.

I believe a diversity of people and a diversity of thinking makes tech better. I believe usability matters. I believe technology should be inclusive, that everyone should be able to participate fully and feel welcome in tech and have an equal opportunity to succeed. I believe in fairness. These are my intuitive ethics.

If you don't know about the diverse people who have contributed to the history of computing, you do not know the history of computing. And, sadly, even that history can only include the ones who managed to stick with it *despite* all the barriers thrown in their way. An untold number of brilliant people didn't get past those barriers and we will simply never know what we're missing.

On that subject, now is the time to speak very specifically about transgender people. The trans community is small and vulnerable, which is exactly why they are being targeted. Which is all the more reason attacking them or attempting to erase them from history, like our government is doing, is gutless, spineless, brainless, and heartless. The transgender computer geeks are, by volume, some of the most creative, interesting, and prolific contributors we've ever had. This is purely

anecdotal and I'm purposefully not going to list any names, but if you know, you know. If I had to pick a single hill to defend in 2025, this is the one.

And you know what else I believe? I believe that in broad strokes, geek culture has pretty much always been on the right side of this. (Nobody's perfect, especially me, so I'm painting with a big mop brush here.) Nerds and geeks know about being the underdogs. It's in our mythology. Our stories have always been about a diverse group, often outcasts, banding together against evil forces.

My heroes don't break or bend laws to make a buck, use their power to bully people, or think it would be cool to be feudal lords over a frightened populace of vassals. My heroes create things and share what they know and they stand up for others.

The broligarchs are not techie culture. They are not our leaders. They have nothing in common with us. They are vultures. They don't speak for us.

Okay, what can we do about it?

Well, as I see it, their power comes from their platforms and their money. And *our* power is in our voices, our sheer numbers, and our wallets.

Doing easy things is infinitely better than doing nothing.

- First, stop giving big tech your money. For example, I [canceled my Amazon account last year](#).
- Stop using big tech's social platforms. Consider a service in the Fediverse such as Mastodon.
- Use alternative search engines such as Viktor Lofgren's incredible <https://marginalia-search.com/> as a jumping-off point to start exploring the non-commercial Web.
- Support journalists. I've ramped up subscriptions to a bunch of publications who are (in my opinion) doing good, brave work. Since I'm specifically addressing tech here, I'll just list:
 - [404 Media](#) (404media.co) - They've been absolutely knocking tech journalism out of the park and they have an RSS feed.
 - [2600: The Hacker Quarterly](#) (2600.com) - Defenders of free speech since 1984. No other tech publication has this pedigree. Get it in print or digital.
 - [Techdirt](#) (techdirt.com) - Has taken a strong stand for democracy. Quote: *"So, here's the bottom line: when WaPo's opinion pages are being gutted and tech CEOs are seeking pre-approval from authoritarians, the line between 'tech coverage' and 'saving democracy' has basically disappeared. It's all the same thing."*
 - [Citation Needed](#) (citationneeded.news) - Molly White's incredible coverage of cryptocurrencies and the madness of the blockchain bros. I was apparently foolishly optimistic when I thought we were already done with this stuff a couple years ago. Sigh. Thanks for your work, Molly White!
 - Wired magazine - I've re-subscribed because they're doing good work *now*. But I'm keeping an eye on them. They were previously fawning over the worst big tech

billionaires, featuring them on the front cover and giving them puff interviews. So this is not a strong endorsement *yet*.

- Consider buying physical media instead of streaming so you can buy rather than rent and curate your own tastes rather than letting a company feed you stuff.
- Donate to Wikipedia and the Internet Archive:
 - <https://www.wikipedia.org/>
 - <https://archive.org/>

Don't feel bad if you can't quit big tech services entirely. Shopping choices are often limited by financial or accessibility needs. Do what you can. Every little bit makes a difference. It's about our powers combined. Even small but persistent dips freak them out and send the message.

Here's another one that's a little less obvious from a technology standpoint: Make use of your local library. Keep those institutions alive. Print books are going to just keep getting more valuable as a source of real information written by actual humans going forward. Remember: IT stands for "Information Technology." There's literally no point in having invented globe-spanning lossless communication network stacks if we're not transmitting *actual information*.

To anyone outside the software development field: I can't actually speak for most techies, but what I *can* say with confidence is that a non-zero amount of us, we who are actually at the keyboards making software every day, do not support the unethical tech-bro stuff. We do not want to be feudal lords. We do not want to put everybody else out of work. Crappy and abusive software drives us absolutely up the wall too (but even more because we *know* it doesn't have to be this way).

I wish I could just say, "You know, it goes without saying that most techies don't support this stuff." But to my great frustration, it does NOT go without saying. Which is pretty much why this page exists. This is me saying it.

To my fellow devs, here's a fact: We could collectively end the broliarch problem right this very moment by refusing to work for them. No pitchforks or torches would ever need be lifted. We wouldn't even need to leave our houses. Easier said than done, I get it. But at the very least, you need to have a line in the sand. I will NEVER intentionally write software that steals information from people or manipulates or hurts them. Where is your line?

Postscript

I've never had such a hard time writing something as I've had with this. I feel like I've somehow written too much and also not nearly enough. I've struggled to express myself. In the last couple months, the text has grown and shrunk until at least three times what you see above ended up in `/dev/null`. You're not missing anything, believe me.

While I was writing, deleting, and rewriting, current events have changed so rapidly that it felt like my writing was trivial and pointless. It's still extremely unclear what the USA is going to look like

in a month, let alone a year. Much of what I've written here might seem like wide-eyed innocence a short time from now. *No one* can say for certain. Still, I've felt compelled to keep going.

There's a good chance this page wouldn't exist had I not read Timothy Snyder's powerful little book, *On Tyranny*. In particular, Chapters 8 "**Stand out**", 19 "**Be a patriot**", and 20 "**Be as courageous as you can.**" I wish I could say that I was able to lean heavily on Chapter 5 "Remember professional ethics," but...yeah, software development isn't exactly winning any awards in that area, is it?

My final push to the finish line came in the form of Joan Westenberg's [The Case for Embracing Cringe](https://joanwestenberg.com) (joanwestenberg.com). *"The powerful benefit from your aversion to the cringe. They feed on your silence. Every time you bite your tongue, every time you shrink back, every time you let the fear of embarrassment hold you hostage—they win."*

This page was last generated 2025-04-23 10:48:16 -0400

Using anything on this website to train large language models (LLMs) is strictly forbidden.

All content © Copyright Dave Gauer