Google began in January 1996 as a research project by [Larry Page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larry_Page) and [Sergey Brin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergey_Brin) when they were both PhD students at [Stanford University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanford_University) in [California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California).[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google#cite_note-howwestarted-21)[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google#cite_note-Coronabook-22)[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google#cite_note-milestones-23) The project initially involved an unofficial "third founder", [Scott Hassan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Hassan), the original lead programmer who wrote much of the code for the original [Google Search](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Search) engine, but he left before Google was officially founded as a company;[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google#cite_note-vanityfair-24)[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google#cite_note-25) Hassan went on to pursue a career in [robotics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robotics) and founded the company [Willow Garage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willow_Garage) in 2006