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Biography of Eric Schmidt

Eric Schmidt is an American software engineer, and the Executive Chairman of Alphabet, Inc.

Schmidt grew up in Blacksburg, Virginia, where his father was a professor of economics at Virginia Tech. He entered Princeton University as an architecture student but changed his major to electrical engineering before graduating in 1976. He then studied computer science (M.S., 1979; Ph.D., 1982) at the University of California, Berkeley.

From 1979 to 1983 Schmidt worked for the Xerox Corporation at its Xerox PARC installation in Palo Alto, California.

One of the initial jobs he held was at the Bell Labs. There he worked alongside Mike Lesk to rewrite Lex, a program to generate lexical analyzers for the Unix computer operating system. He worked on a regular-expression description and converted it into an important tool for compiler construction.

He became a software manager at Sun Microsystems in 1983, only one year after the founding of the company.

He possessed great technical knowledge and a high degree of business acumen and rose through the ranks in the company.

In 1985 he was promoted to vice president of Sun's software products division, and in 1988 he became vice president of the Sun general systems group.

In 1991 Sun Microsystems was reorganized, and Schmidt was made president of one of its offshoots, Sun Technology Enterprises.

In 1994 he returned to Sun Microsystems as chief technology officer. At Sun he was involved in the development of the Java programming language, and he enthusiastically promoted its use in his capacity as a company executive.

In 1997 Schmidt left Sun to become chairman and CEO of Novell, Inc. The tech company was then in need of innovative leadership, as its NetWare network operating system was losing market share to Microsoft NT.

Schmidt's efforts revived the company somewhat but could not reverse a long-term decline.

In 2001, Schmidt was interviewed by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the founders of Google. Founded in 1998, Google was still a young company and the founders were looking for an experienced person to run the company.

In March 2001 Schmidt was hired by Google as board chairman. Less than five months later he was given the additional title of CEO.

At this time Google's two founders, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, became president of products and president of technology, respectively.

According to a Silicon Valley witticism, Schmidt was hired as “adult supervision” for the founders, who were still in their twenties.

In fact, the three ran Google as a triumvirate.

Schmidt is credited with introducing elements of conventional business structure into the company.

He oversaw Google’s initial public offering of stock in August 2004 and also served as a company spokesperson.

Google, already the proprietor of a successful search engine, introduced many new products and services during Schmidt’s tenure, notably Google News (2002), Blogger (2003), Google Books (2004), Gmail (2004), Google Earth (2005), and Google Maps (2005).

Google acquired the YouTube video sharing site in 2006 and the advertising company DoubleClick the following year.

In 2008 Google challenged Microsoft with the Chrome Web browser and Apple with the Android mobile operating system

In 2011 Page reclaimed the Google CEO position he had left 10 years earlier, and Schmidt took the new title of executive chairman, withdrawing from day-to-day management of the company.

In 2015, when a new holding company called Alphabet Inc. was formed, with Google as a subsidiary, Schmidt became chairman of the executive committee of the Alphabet board of directors.

In addition to his corporate responsibilities, he is also a member of the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) in President Barack Obama’s administration.

Philanthropic work:

Eric Schmidt along with his wife Wendy created the private foundation, The Schmidt Family Foundation, in 2006 to address issues related to responsible use of natural resources and sustainability. The foundation has made grants to several organizations including the Energy Foundation, the California Academy of Sciences, the Regeneration Project, the Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health, and Green for All. The couple established a University of Chicago summer school program for aspiring data scientists called the “Eric & Wendy Schmidt Data Science for Social Good Fellowship”.

The Schmidts also gave \$25 million as an endowment to the Schmidt Transformative Technology Fund at Princeton University in 2009.

Famous quotes by Eric Schmidt:

“The Internet is the first thing that humanity has built that humanity doesn’t understand, the largest experiment in anarchy that we have ever had.”

“A mind set in its ways is wasted. Don’t do it.”

“if you focus on your competition, you will never deliver anything truly innovative.”