

# The 'Dark Side' of Social Media You Don't Know About

It's hard to paint a positive picture of big tech companies, especially when it becomes apparent that they are manipulating users.

On Sept. 19, *The Creepy Line*, a documentary on Facebook and Google, will premiere in Washington D.C. "Facebook and Google started with a great idea and great ideals," said journalist Peter Schweizer in his film. "Unfortunately, there was also a very dark side." In the trailer, a flashcard runs across the screen with the statement, "The war for your free will is already over."

Schweizer featured experts like Dr. Robert Epstein and Dr. Jordan Peterson, allowing them to explain how Google and Facebook created their products to produce revenue from users and also influence them in how they think and act. "They don't sell you anything. They sell you," said Epstein.

The premiere will be at the Landmark E Street Cinema in Washington, D.C. Director Matthew Taylor, Dr. Robert Epstein and Peter Schweizer will attend, with a Q and A session following the screening. Schweizer has written *Clinton Cash* and executive-produced *Reagan's War*.

The documentary does not just focus on conservative censorship online; it also takes a hard look at the influence Google and Facebook could have on upcoming elections. The title of the film was taken from former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, who once said his company's policy was to "get right up to the creepy line and not cross it."

Epstein said, "Google crosses the creepy line every day." In his studies, he concluded, "Google can shift the voting preferences of undecided voters by up to 80 percent in some

demographic groups just by altering the order in which search results are shown.”

Schweizer said in the film, “The fact of the matter is that we have two gatekeepers, Google and Facebook, which control what we have access to.” Those gatekeepers are untrustworthy, especially since Google has “a mission and a purpose, and it’s quasi-utopian, which leads them to manipulating their algorithm to embrace certain political views.”

In one segment, Schweizer talked about Google’s infamous motto and the problem of relative morality: “What was so interesting about this slogan, ‘Don’t be evil,’ was that they never defined what evil was. There was a sense of what it meant, but people latched onto it and sort of adopted it and trusted it, because of course nobody wants to be associated with an evil company. So people gave the term ‘evil’ their own meaning.”

The documentary had been screened at the Cannes Film Festival in May. It was written and produced by Schweizer, and directed by Taylor. {eoa}

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