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INSIDE TIMES2

Deborah Ross
Trump, my son is 'high quality' too

Google pays academics millions for key support

British and American researchers get secret funds

Mark Bridge Technology Correspondent
Tom Whipple, Oliver Moody

Google has paid millions of dollars to academics at British and American universities for research that it hoped would sway public opinion and influence policy in favour of the tech giant.

A watchdog identified 329 pieces of research funded directly or indirectly by Google since 2005 in key public policy areas where regulatory changes could cost it a fortune in fines and lost earnings. The authors, who received payments of between $5,000 and $400,000, did not disclose Google's funding in two thirds of cases. Emails suggest that some researchers shared papers with Google before publication, seeking suggestions for changes.

Some papers appeared in peer-reviewed journals and others in obscure publications, lacking "basic academic rigour", according to the Campaign for Accountability, the US watchdog behind the analysis.

Much of the research made arguments in Google's favour. Authors argued that the internet search company and publisher did not use its market dominance improperly, for example, or concluded that collecting huge volumes of personal data was a fair exchange for its free services.

Researchers at the universities of Bournemouth and Sussex were among those who did not disclose funding from Google, alongside academics at US Ivy League schools. Academics at other British universities, including Oxford and Edinburgh, also received funding to write on policies of interest to Google but declared the payments. The academics who were directly funded by Google received between $5,000 and $150,000, or up to $400,000 for their institutions as "research awards" or "gifts".

Maurizio Borghi, a law professor at the University of Bournemouth, received a Faculty Research Award of $30,000 from Google in 2014. Last year he published a paper suggesting that volunteers could be used to identify the copyright status of books to be digitised and put online, and track down rights holders where necessary. Google has digitisation projects, such as Google Books, which would benefit from such crowdsourcing, but he did not declare the funding.

He said yesterday that the award was not relevant as his specific research was supported by other funders. "It is true that this is a topic in which Google has a material interest, but it is also true that the award has not prevented me from expressing very critical views on Google," he said.

Nicolo Zingales, a lecturer at the University of Sussex, received a Google policy fellowship in 2013 and a year later published a paper on anonymity online and the role of intermediaries, such as Google, in policing it.

He quoted a European Court of Human Rights ruling that holding a news site liable for anonymous defamatory comments was not a violation of the freedom of expression. Dr Zingales wrote that "the core objective of this article is to show the problems that an acceptance of [the case] would generate

Continued on page 2, col 3

JAMES WHATLING

Queen Letizia of Spain, a former journalist who covered the Iraq war and 9/11, arriving for last night's state banquet at Buckingham Palace in a strapless gown

Spanish royal couple offer warm words on Gibraltar

Valentine Low

The King of Spain raised the prospect of a negotiated settlement over Gibraltar yesterday, triggering an angry riposte from the disputed territory.

Felipe was speaking to MPs and peers at the beginning of a three-day state visit to the UK with his wife, Queen Letizia — the first by a Spanish monarch for 31 years.

In the traditional address to both Houses of Parliament, he said Britain and Spain have a long shared history and have "frequently stood shoulder to shoulder" as friends, partners and allies.

"It is just as true, however, that during our rich and fruitful history there have also been estrangements, rivalries and disputes," he said. "But the work and determination of our governments, authorities and citizens have relegated such events to the past. I am certain that this resolve to overcome our differences will be even greater in the case of Gibraltar and I am confident that through the necessary dialogue and effort, our two governments will be able to work towards arrangements that are acceptable to all involved."

The flag of Gibraltar was on display in Parliament Square as he spoke. Earlier its presence had been welcomed at prime minister's questions by Andrew Rosindell, the Tory MP, who urged Theresa May to remind the king that the territory of Gibraltar was British despite longstanding Spanish claims.

The Gibraltar government said that bilateral talks with Spain would be "undemocratic" because they ignored the wishes of its 30,000 population. Fabian Picardo, the chief minister, said the territory's wishes must be respected, "and that means understanding Gibraltar will remain 100 per cent British".

Felipe's emollient remarks were in contrast to his message to the UN last September, when he said Britain should "end the colonial anachronism" and "restore the territorial integrity of Spain".

Last night Letizia made a coded reference to the dispute at a state banquet at Buckingham Palace. "With such a remarkable shared history, it is inevitable that there are matters on which we have not always seen eye to eye," she said.

State visit, pages 8-9; Times 2

IN THE NEWS

Donating to terror

Small donations from the UK worth hundreds of thousands of pounds in total are the main income for Islamist extremist organisations, a secret report found. Page 2

Tall men's cancer risk

Each additional 10cm of height increases a man's risk of developing aggressive prostate cancer by 21 per cent, research by Oxford University found. Page 11

Too many tourists

Edinburgh risks becoming a "hollow shell museum" with residents displaced by tourists seeking tartan and whisky, a heritage watchdog has warned. Page 19

Trump Jr criticised

Donald Trump Jr should have informed the FBI about a purported offer from the Kremlin to influence the US election, its new director has told senators. Page 32

Bank 'should end QE'

The Bank of England should follow America's example and consider ending quantitative easing earlier than planned, one of its policymakers has said. Page 39

Murray crashes out

Hopes of British glory at Wimbledon rest with Johanna Konta, who faces Venus Williams today, after Andy Murray lost to Sam Querrey. News, page 15; Sport, page 76