TECHNOLOGY

THE REAL OWNERS BEHIND THE WORLD'S BIGGEST TECH COMPANIES

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Technology dominates our everyday lives, with devices such as smartphones, computers, and televisions playing a major role in how people work, rest, and play. As such, it shouldn't be a huge surprise that many of the largest companies in the world are tech companies. While there are some notable exceptions – such as the state-owned petroleum and natural

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The likes of Apple, Microsoft, Nvidia, Amazon, and Alphabet are worth trillions of dollars and have made famous entrepreneurs like Bill Gates, Elon Musk, and Mark Zuckerberg among the wealthiest people to have ever lived. However, while these well-known names are often the face of these tech companies, the truth is that most have a surprisingly diverse set of owners that are made up of individuals and investment firms.

Here, we are going to look at who actually owns the biggest tech companies in the world and how many shares they actually possess.

Alphabet Inc.

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Alphabet Inc. is the name of the company that was once simply known as Google. The multinational conglomerate is headquartered in California and is one of the largest tech companies in the world. Google was restructured in 2015, with Alphabet becoming the parent company of Google and several other subsidiaries that were once under the Google umbrella. The aim was ultimately to help separate projects and companies that were unrelated, allowing Google to operate as a slimmer and more focused brand. However, the biggest source of income for Alphabet by far is its Google products and services.

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Alphabet's shares are split into three different types. Class A shares are publicly traded and are mostly held by institutional investors. These include investment management companies like Vanguard Group and BlackRock, which jointly own around 15% of Class A stocks and around 13% of Class C stocks. Major individuals shareholders include Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin. They each control more than 40% of Class B stocks, with venture capitalist L. John Doerr owning a little over 2% of Class B stocks. This has made Page and Brin some of the wealthiest individuals in the world, each having a net worth of around $150 billion.

Amazon

David Ryder/Getty Images

Amazon is another of the big five tech companies that are based in the United States. Amazon originally starting life as an online store, however the company has also diversified in recent years and is involved in a lot of other areas outside of e-commerce. This includes cloud computing with Amazon Web Services, self-driving cars under the Zoox subsidiary, and streaming thanks to Prime Video. This has allowed the company to grow to the extent that it now has revenue in excess of $500 billion, largely thanks to advertising income and cloud computing sales.

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Amazon went public with an IPO in 1997 and has remained in public ownership since then. Founder Jeff Bezos remains the largest individual shareholder with around a billion shares, allowing him to reach a net worth in excess of $200 billion. Andrew Jassy is the next highest shareholder, with a little over 2 million shares. As is common with large public companies, the likes of Vanguard, BlackRock, and State Street are all major institutional holders, accounting for around 20% of the total shares of Amazon.

Apple

For several years, Apple has been in direct competition with Microsoft for the title of the most valuable company in the world. Apple became the first company to reach a market capitalization of $1 trillion and is estimated to be worth more than $3 trillion today. While the company began as a computer manufacturer, it has expanded over the last two decades to produce a wide array of additional devices and also offers services such as Apple Music and Apple TV+. The vast majority of its income, though, comes from its highly profitable iPhone smartphones.

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Co-founder Steve Jobs originally owned around 11% of Apple but sold most of his shares following his departure from the company in 1980. Current Apple CEO Tim Cook owns around 3.2 million shares, less than a single percent of the total stock, while chairman Arthur Levison has 4.4 million shares. Former vice president Al Gore, who has served on the board of directors, is another major individual shareholder. Vanguard, BlackRock, State Street, Berkshire Hathaway, FMR, and Geode Capital Management hold around a quarter of the total shares in Apple.

Microsoft

Also a member of the big five tech companies, Microsoft has long been among the most valuable organizations in the world. Initially offering software for personal and business computers, such as its Windows operating system and Office suites, Microsoft has followed a trend by technology companies to expand into diverse ventures. It now operates the Azure cloud computing platform and is a major player in the gaming industry thanks to its recent purchase of Activision Blizzard. With revenues of hundreds of billions of dollars a year, Microsoft has a current market capitalization of over $3 trillion.

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Bill Gates is still a major shareholder in Microsoft, although his share of stock has dropped significantly in the last decade or so. He now holds an estimated 1.38% stake in the company. Other Microsoft executives such as Satya Nadella, Bradford L. Smith, and Amy Hood hold between 400,000 and 900,000 shares. Like other publicly owned companies in the United States, investment firms such as Vanguard, BlackRock, State Street, FMR, JP Morgan Chase, and Geode Capital Management own a large proportion of shares, up to a quarter between them.

Meta

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Meta is the parent company behind Facebook and its associated social media platforms and services. These include Instagram, WhatsApp, and Threads, as well as its Meta Quest devices, some of the only virtual reality headsets that are currently worth buying. It rebranded to Meta from Facebook in 2021 and has continued to grow over the last few years. The company makes the vast majority of its revenue from advertising, with the company rivaling the likes of Google when it comes to total advertising market share.

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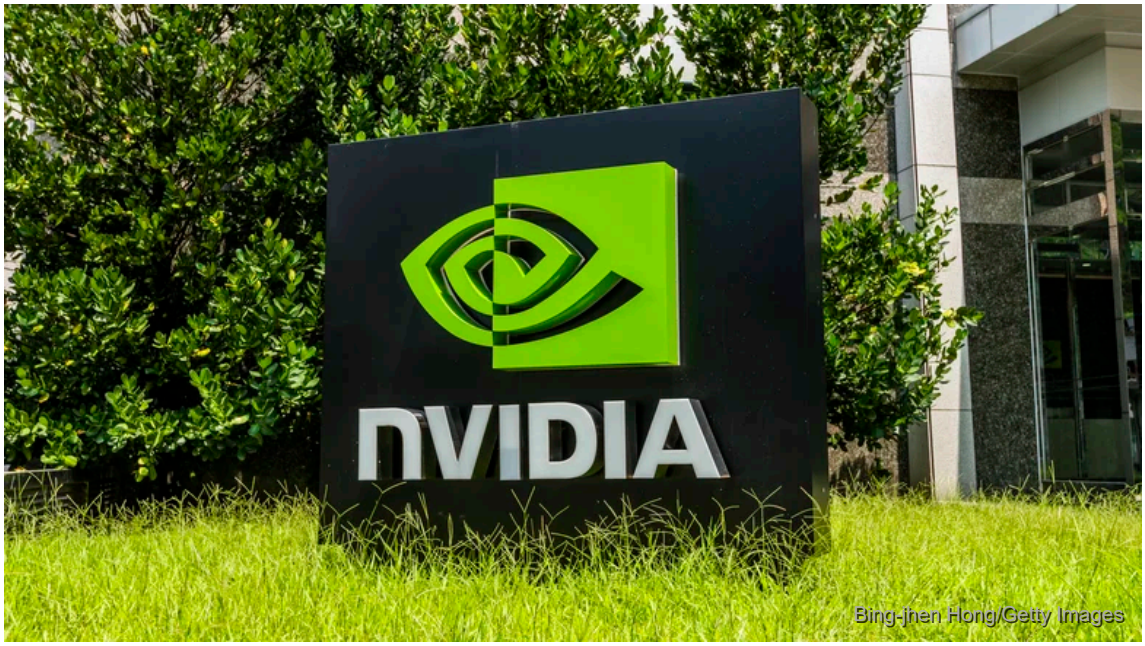
Co-founder Mark Zuckerberg remains a major shareholder and controlling force within Meta. His net worth of nearly $200 billion largely comes from his shares in the company, which are estimated to be around one million shares of Class A stock and 346,000,000 shares of Class B stock. Sheryl K. Sandberg and Christopher K. Cox are also major individual shareholders. As you might expect, investment firms Vanguard, BlackRock, FMR, State Street, and JP Morgan Chase own about 25% of the total shares.

Nvidia



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Although Nvidia has been around a long time, it is a relative newcomer when it comes to standing amongst the absolute largest technology

software and other computer hardware.

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The largest individual shareholder is Jensen Huang, the CEO and founder of the company. He owns more than 860,000 shares in the company, giving him a net worth of a little over $100 billion from his 3% holding in Nvidia. Institutional owners of stock in Nvidia include Vanguard, BlackRock, FMR, State Street, Geode Capital Management, and Price Associates, who own roughly 30% of all outstanding shares.

Tesla

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Unlike many other major technology companies in the United States, Tesla is headquartered in Texas rather than the West Coast. It is also unique in that it mainly focuses on a single market rather than expanding into many different areas. Known by many as the premier electric car manufacturer, Tesla has a number of vehicle models available that often have driving assist technology so that they require fewer user inputs when being driven on public roads. Tesla also designs and sells solar energy generation systems and batteries.

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One of the major shareholders of Tesla stock is the controversial Elon Musk, officially the richest man in the world with a reported net worth of over $250 billion at the time of this writing. He owns some 14% of Tesla — more than any other individual or institutional shareholder. Kimbal Musk and Jeffrey Straubel are also large shareholders, although they have far fewer stocks than Elon Musk. Vanguard, BlackRock, State Street, Geode Capital, and Morgan Stanley are all among the largest investment firms who have holdings in Tesla.

Oracle

Oracle Corporation is a multinational technology company that focuses on computing. Founded in 1977, the company has grown significantly in recent

billion and a market capitalization of around $470 billion.

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The single biggest shareholder in Oracle is co-founder and current chief technology officer Larry Ellison. One of the wealthiest people in the world thanks to his net worth of $204 billion, Ellison owns 1.14 billion shares in the company, roughly 40% of all the outstanding stock. Other major shareholders include Vanguard, BlackRock, State Street, and JP Morgan Chase & Company. The total stock held by institutional holders is almost equivalent to the shares owned by Ellison, making him the most powerful single person at Oracle.

IBM

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IBM has changed a lot throughout its history. As its original name of International Business Machines suggests, it was initially focused on business-based systems such as record-keeping and punch-card tabulation. During the age of computing, it expanded into creating mainframe and personal computers. At one point, it was producing some 70% of all computers worldwide. In more recent years, it has diversified, entering markets such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, robotics, digital systems, and research — in fact, IBM submits applications for hundreds of patents every year.

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IBM doesn't compete with the "big five" tech companies when it comes to revenue, with the company bringing in income of around $60 billion each year. That means that individual shareholders aren't worth as much as those from the likes of Microsoft and Apple. Arvind Krishna and Michelle H. Browdy are two of the largest individual shareholders but they only own a tiny proportion of the total outstanding stock. The vast majority of shares are owned by investment firms, which include Vanguard, BlackRock, and State Street.

Netflix

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Despite facing stiff competition from the likes of Disney+, Amazon Prime

based company has a market capitalization of almost $300 billion and has seen steady growth over the last decade and a half.

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Netflix co-founder and executive chairman Reed Hastings is the single biggest individual shareholder. He owns more than two million shares in Netflix, a small percentage of the total outstanding stock. Until relatively recently, he held more shares but gifted some $1.76 billion worth of stock to the Silicon Valley Community Foundation in 2024. Major shareholders include both the Vanguard Group and BlackRock, who own over 15% of all stock, alongside the likes of FMR, State Street, and Price Associates.

Sony

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Unlike many of the other technology companies in this article, Sony is not based in the United States. Instead, it is a Japanese company that operates throughout the world. With revenue of $90 billion and a market capitalization of $109 billion, it is dwarfed by many of the other major tech companies. It is a diverse company that has a number of specialties that many people may not be aware of.

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semiconductors, cameras, and imaging software. It also operates in the entertainment industry, with Sony Music and the Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group, as well as developing formats such as the Blu-ray disc.

Sony has no major shareholders who own a significant number of shares. Institutional holders like Primecap, Aristotle Capital Management, Fisher Asset Management, and Bank of America all have less than 1% of the total outstanding stock. Mutual funds who own stock include Vanguard and BlackRock, although these are similarly small.

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