

Google's Eric Schmidt Caught Rigging Elections By Paying To Hide Candidate Dirty Deeds

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Think Tank Funded by Pro-Biden Billionaires Colluded With Journalists and Big Tech To Kill Hunter Biden Coverage

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Hunter Biden / Getty Images

[Chuck Ross](#) •

A prominent think tank funded by billionaire supporters of President Joe Biden colluded with social media companies and journalists to minimize news coverage of Hunter Biden's emails before the 2020 election, internal Twitter documents show.

Aspen Digital, an arm of the liberal Aspen Institute, in September 2020 convened a working group of social media executives, journalists, and academics to develop a coverage strategy for a hypothetical "hack and dump" of Hunter Biden's emails, according to documents [published](#) this week by independent reporter Michael Shellenberger.

A month after the "tabletop exercise," the *New York Post* published emails from Biden's abandoned laptop that detailed his foreign business dealings. Though there is no evidence that the emails were hacked, many of the attendees of the Aspen event censored or downplayed the story. Twitter and Facebook, which were represented at the exercise, suppressed the *Post* article on their platforms. The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, CNN, and *Daily Beast*, which were represented by journalists or newsroom executives, either criticized the *New York Post*'s report or ignored it.

It's not clear why the Aspen organizers chose the Hunter Biden scenario, but the think tank's involvement could raise concerns that a Democrat-aligned group sought to persuade media organizations to kill negative stories about the president's troubled son.

Google cofounder Eric Schmidt [contributed](#) more than \$2.5 million in 2020 to the pro-Biden Future Forward PAC. Craig Newmark, who founded Craigslist, [gave](#) \$100,000 to Biden in 2020 and has given hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Democratic National Committee and other Democratic committees. Pierre Omidyar, the founder of eBay, has contributed to Democratic committees and gave \$100,000 to an anti-Donald Trump super PAC. They, in addition to the Ford Foundation and Hewlett Foundation, [gave](#) more than \$2 million to Aspen Digital in 2020.

Aspen organizers clearly urged reporters and social media companies to view any explosive stories about Hunter Biden with deep skepticism. An organizer of the event said that "a successful response to a hack and leak requires news organizations to blend one thing they're good at—skepticism—and one thing they're not—careful, slow deliberation."

"Early cooperation among newsrooms turns out to be key," Aspen organizer Garrett Graff [wrote](#) of the event on Oct. 7, 2020. He suggested that reporters "check with other news organizations" before publishing stories based on Hunter Biden emails. He also advised that news outlets speak with "intelligence agencies and law enforcement."

The Aspen participants broadly followed the guidance in the wake of the *New York Post* bombshell.

Twitter and Facebook sparked controversy by blocking links to the article on their platforms, falsely claiming that the emails in the *Post* report may have been hacked or that Russia was involved in their release. It has since emerged that the emails came from a laptop that Biden abandoned at a computer repair shop in Delaware.

In [an email](#) to colleagues, Yoel Roth, the Twitter executive who attended the Aspen event, cited "experts" who believed that Biden's emails were hacked and then loaded onto a laptop that was given to a Delaware computer repairman.

CNN, whose vice president for news standards attended the Aspen event, [panned](#) the *Post*'s story as "dubious" and a product of the "right-wing media machine." The *Daily Beast*, represented by then-editor in chief Noah Shachtman, published a [series of stories critical](#) of the laptop's legitimacy. The liberal outlet recently corrected stories that claimed Biden's laptop was stolen.

The *New York Times* largely refused to cover the contents of the laptop until this year. *Star Times* reporter Maggie Haberman faced heavy backlash for summarizing the *New York Post* scoop on Twitter. *Washington Post* reporters cast doubt on the provenance of the emails, with the newspaper's fact-checker referring to "Hunter Biden's alleged laptop."

Aspen Digital did not respond to a request for comment.

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