

BIG TECH AND MILITARIZED SURVEILLANCE



War making, and technology exist in a symbiotic relationship, with militarization relying heavily on technological advances and also driving innovation. From the earliest weapons development to modern technology such as global positioning software (GPS), drones, or biometric recognition, technology and militarization have been intimately related. Focusing on contemporary tech-related targets is one way that organizers and activists opposing war-making and militarism may make substantial gains.

Surveillance technologies developed and maintained by “Big Tech” (Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft) are being used widely by the United States military. Bay Area organizations are already running campaigns against law enforcement’s use of Big Tech surveillance. For instance, campaigns are being run against Amazon and Microsoft’s facial recognition technologies’ use in aiding police surveillance and tracking and criminalization of protestors during last summer’s racial justice uprisings. Pre-existing awareness and opposition to these technologies could be a pathway to encourage groups involved in these campaigns and ones with related interests, to expand their attention to include the war making applications of technologies such as Microsoft’s Domain Awareness System and Amazon’s Rekognition program.

Groups in the Bay Area are already running campaigns against Big Tech



Coalitions and networks including groups based in the Bay Area are running campaigns and engaged in direct action against Big Tech’s development, maintenance, and promotion of facial recognition technology. Sample activities include **#EyesonAmazon**, support for federal legislation such as **US HR 7356**, and monitoring and maintenance of the win against the **Urban Shield** trade show. Groups such as the **Tech Workers Coalition** organizing in Silicon Valley have also been applying pressure in their workplaces to advance demands such as that Google not renew its contract for Project Maven, an artificial intelligence system for drones. These Big Tech companies are already under a substantial amount of pressure from groups with a range of politics. That pressure could be fortified by incorporating a strong anti-militarist lens.

Potential Bay Area targets



Amazon

- Digital Music, Goodreads, AWS, Twitch all in San Francisco
- Amazon Lab 126 and Alexa in Sunnyvale and Cupertino
- AWS also in Palo Alto

Microsoft

- Mountain View campus

Google

- Mountain View campus--Although Google pulled out of its contract with the Department of Defense for Project Maven, Google didn’t cut ties completely with the Department of Defense, and is still doing data analysis and algorithmic refinement for the department.