Modern Internet development and the knowledge-based economy

Google Discourse Study

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Thesis Abstract:

The topic of my thesis touches two different but strictly related to each other problematic areas.

In the first of them I try to highlight a huge dependence between modern business world and communication technologies – especially the Internet. IT revolution of the last decades has introduced new ways of contact with the client, internal data management and cooperation within the company. The knowledge seen as a key asset has led to the emergence of the whole information industry whose main goal is to organize information to maximize an efficiency from its usage. Google is an excellent example of such company – it is certainly one of the most popular ones, the biggest on the market as well as with the greatest range of different services. As a leader in its field it has the biggest influence on the direction in which this technology evolve and thus its analysis can tell as more about wider changes.

The second question refers to the method that is applied. I try to investigate what mechanisms are involved to stabilize Google market position, how does it promote its own ideas about the development of the Web. The emphasis put on power relations leads to the use of a Critical Discourse Analysis approach as main theoretical framework. I have decided to analyse Google language, style of expression, promoted metaphors and products, as a carriers of the ideas and thus political statements within modern discourse about the Internet. Such a perspective helps to understand which aspects of the Information industry and consequently also the whole knowledge-based economy may be problematic and for what reasons.

'*Communication technologies are a constitutive feature of social relations in every society.*'[1] This statements certainly doesn't lose its validity in present age – on the contrary, it acquires a special importance. During the last couple of decades the landscape of our cultural, social and political world has undergone some tremendous changes. Great part of them results from rapid technological jump which simply changed the way we think about what is possible. It placed information in the foreground of our attention and showed our increasing dependence on them. In short, knowledge has been recognized as a major component of every social, cultural, political and business activity. It is described as a main creative factor and the most important capital which drives every successful change nowadays. As such it became the subject of in-depth studies of academics. Scholars from different branches of social sciences write about "information revolution", "information society" and "knowledge-based economy". They emphasize importance of accessibility to knowledge sources and try to describe its effects. At the same time, also the business world discovers how crucial role in the enterprise performance plays an efficient information management.

If we look at the employment markets of modern economies one the most striking thing will be a huge share of "knowledge workers". By this term I understand all of these professions which are more or less directly connected with information management. Their work performance is based primarily on an effective and quick access to the data, and most of their tasks is to find and appropriately process information. In accordance with this definition, the group of "knowledge workers" includes not only IT programmers or financial specialists but almost all marketing, sales or HR employees. In other words, almost all white-collar workers (those whose responsibilities do not include manual labor) are nowadays largely involved in the process of effective knowledge management in their company/organization.

This situation clearly shows that companies' performance, their position on the market and revenues, are heavily dependent on the knowledge they have an access to, and the ability to use it whenever it is necessary. It makes more and more enterprises sensitive to such issues as findability of information. They are willing to invest in informal knowledge sharing networks as well as sophisticated IT solutions. Consequently, the range of knowledge management services grows very rapidly. It brings some fascinating opportunities for

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[1] Woodward W.D*., Technologized Communications as Artifact/Discourse/Relation: The Case of the Technological City* in *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies, 2003; 3,* Sage Publications, p. 330

enterprises but at the same time it highlights some new problematic areas such as intellectual property, copyrights or data safety and privacy.   Regardless of these issues it has to be emphasized that the way information is considered has changed within the past decades. Sometimes they are described as a third factor, functioning in the market independently, next to products and services. According to other authors, they shouldn't be seen any more just as a factor of production but simply as a product itself. They can be sold and purchased by either enterprises or private consumers and used according to their will.[2]

When we talk about the "information revolution" of last decades and a new communication technologies the Internet appears as a key factor that drives these changes. In its early days, the Internet was developed mainly by academic centres and for military purposes. In 1982 there was only 200 computers communicating with each other through network technologies.[3] Its rapid growth started at the beginning of 90' when it was commercialized and become available to a broader audience. After less than three decades, approximately 1.8 billion of people (quarter of the Earth's population) use this technology every day.[4]

The development of the Internet technology took place simultaneously with mentioned before emergence of knowledge-based enterprises and certainly played a major role in this process. It has opened some huge technological possibilities for Intranet organizational networks, marketing research and of course appeared to be very strong advertising tool. Nowadays it is almost impossible to find an enterprise which, in one way or another, is not dependent on the Web. On the one side companies try to exploit newer and newer opportunities offered by the Internet, on the other they become dependent on them, they need to reckon with their constraints and simply adjust their way of doing business. Computer networks which are based on the Internet technology are one of the most important information management tools for every modern enterprise. What is important from my point of view it is the fact that business is not only the place where this technology can develop freely, but it is the business which increasingly determines them, shows the direction of further growth. As usually in such cases, the Internet which serves as a tool for other industries became an industry in itself - an "information industry".[5]

2   Freiden J., Goldsmith R., Takacs S., Hofacker Ch., *Information as a product: not goods, not services* in *Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 1998;* 16/3, MCB University Press, pp. 210-220
3   Beresford A.D., *Foucault's Theory of Governance And The Deterrence of Internet Fraud* in *Administration & Society, 2003; 35,* Sage Publications, p. 88
4   Link: Internet World Stats
5   Allen K., *Developing trends and challenges for the information industry examined in the context of the Online Information Conference* in *Business Information Review,* 2008; 25, Sage Publications, pp. 81-85

Among emerging Internet companies the Google case seems to be the most popular and impressive. The search engine introduced by two young programmers from Stanford in short period of time gained an enormous popularity and gave them one of the leading positions in the new information industry. Their financial success was accompanied by expansion of activities in new areas and resulted in a series of equally successful products and services. As a leader in their field, with all sort of products they have released, Google Company shaped the way we use Internet nowadays and it still has a large impact on how it is going to look like in the future. And since the Internet, plays so crucial role nowadays, the Google influences exceed this platform and translate into all kinds of activities related to information and communication.

In this paper I would like to use Google as an example that calls our attention to the bond connecting organizations and rapidly developing Internet. I would like to focus on this company and the way they understand the Internet, the way they talk about it and how they want to develop it. The topic is based on the assumption that modern organizations are more and more dependent on the Internet and Google is this company which has a large impact on how this platform functions. As a result, their vision, discourse about the Web they present, will influence organizations from other industries. Although on the first glance the topic seems to be limited almost only to organizational issues, it exceeds them and shows deeper consequences of informatization, not only for business world. Within the topic I would like to focus on two problematic areas,

First one is the question of power on the Internet. I'm interested how it functions, how it is executed by companies which co-create this industry, what kind of mechanisms are involved?

The present form of the Internet is not fixed yet, on the the contrary it is permanently in the state of becoming. Its features and ways of usage has changed rapidly lately and they are certainly going to change in the following years and decades. Consequently, its definition and position in the culture raises many debates. "*Different ideologies and sensitivities get tied into these debates that sound similar to earlier negotiations and struggles around the definitions of other new technologies of communication*"[6]. I treat Google company as one of the key actors in this debate and their point of view as a part of broader changes which take place nowadays on the Web. An analysis of Google discourse (e.g. how do they promote their

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[6]   Bakardijeva M., *Internet Society: the Internet in everyday life,* Sage Publications 2005, p. 130

solutions? how do they deal with allegations?) gives an insight into the dynamics of power struggles on the Internet. It is these struggles that shape our understanding of the Web and ways we use this technology in everyday life. From the point of view of the enterprises which has to function in the "knowledge-based economy", these power struggles determine their approach to effective knowledge management and thus translate into their business models.

In the second question I ask about possible consequences of changes promoted by Google. What are their results? What are opportunities and threats for the business world and consequently also for individual users?

Since my problems concern power mechanisms, especially those embedded in the language and communication technologies, I will refer to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as my theoretical framework. It seems to be especially beneficial because of its focus on the mechanisms that stabilize positions of domination in the discourse. It gets an additional advantage also because it provides with many text analysis guidelines that makes reader sensitive what to pay an attention to.

During the last couple of years many things has been written about Google. Because of its big success on the market as well as innovative solutions applied to the rapidly developing Internet technologies it has become an integral part of popular culture. There are a lot of people who are great fans of this company and at the same time it is not difficult to find critics and foultfinders. The fact that there is a lot of controversy around this company makes it difficult to analyse it without being accused of bias. In this paper I do not want to attack them neither glorify their activities. I have tried to avoid personal comments, nevertheless controversial issues in this case are primary material for power relations analysis. I want to emphasise that I'm more interested with mechanisms involved in the language and technology seen as a mediums of power rather than in blaming and accusing a particular agent.

The topic which is outlined in the introduction entails few important methodological consequences. The first remark refers to the subject of the analysis. In this paper I do not want to focus simply on the Google company. It is only a case, an example that allows me to present some occurring changes. What I am interested in, is the language and its technological consequences. Of course the message is always communicated by someone but I am interested in the ideas rather then in their carrier. I do not want to focus on opportunities, responsibilities or allegations they bring specifically for Google.

Another issue, that appears in every social research but needs to be emphasized especially when the topic causes controversy, is the subjectivity of chosen perspective. I am aware that my own opinions about the general topic as well as about the Google company had an impact on the selection of materials. I have tried to include different opinions and to refer to diverse data sources. Also in the analysis I have tried to limit personal standpoint and outline the broad picture of chosen topics.

The first crucial feature of this research is a fact that almost all of the analysed materials come from the Internet sources. On the one side the Internet provides us with a lot of materials of different kind which helps to get a broad picture of analysed issues. On the other hand it entails few negative consequences. First of all the Internet analysed from the enterprise perspective should be seen as a public space. Behind every single piece of information that appears on the official corporate websites, blogs etc. there is an implicit assumption that their potential clients, suppliers, competitors will read that text. A marketing objectives can be noticed in almost all Google text which I have analysed. Second of all, the amount of available data may simply lead to an information overload. Even if the topic is narrowed down to only one specific company there are literally hundreds of websites dedicated to related issues. It applies especially to this paper where I analyse the company which is heavily involved in the development of the Web.

As a consequences of these limitations the research process has started with very detailed selection of materials. This part is not visible in the analysis but to a great extend it has shaped how does it look like. Although such a selective approach was necessary I am aware that it brings some risks. The most important one concerns "cherry picking" - choosing only those

texts and ideas that fits our own assumption.[7] I have tried to minimize this effect nevertheless it has certainly influenced the validity of the research.

After preliminary literature overview I have decided to choose those Google services which seemed to me the best examples of investigated topic. Analysed materials included all sort of virtual outputs: corporate websites and blogs (every specific product has its own website and its own blog), white papers and products offerings, video materials from conferences, commercials promoting certain solutions. I have also tried to test all of the applications which are included in the analysis: AdWords, Google Analytics, Applications. To broaden the scope of information I have tried to find some different points of view on the on-line newspapers, independent blogs as well as business partners websites. Some of them were included in the analysis: SAP website, articles from the the Guardian, Telegraph, TechCrunch.

Another very important feature of this project is its contemporaneity. Because the topic refers to the newest changes in the "information industry" also analysed materials have to comply with this condition. Consequently, I have tried to refer rather to articles than books and to choose these which were written in the last few years. Of course, also some older materials where used as an inspiration but I have tried to choose those ideas which are universal regardless of the time they where created.

As a main theory for this project I have decided to use a Critical Discourse Analysis. It is a very diverse approach (which is more deeply described in the theoretical part) based on various theoretical inspirations and with very rich research methods tool kit. In this paper it is used in two basic ways: as a theoretical framework and as a set of guidelines for the text analysis.

In its first role it provides me with some key concepts such as: discourse, power/knowledge, power relations or dialogicality and shows how they are related with each other. It explains fundamental mechanism between language and social world, focusing especially on its power aspect. CDA is very often used to investigate inequalities in the social world for example those connected with racial or gender discrimination in the language. If we describe the approach in this way, in this paper it is used rather outside of its own field. Nevertheless the power strategies and reproduction of political domination in the discourse sill remain its main subjects.

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[7]   Wodak R., Meyer M., *Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory and Methodology,* p.11

In its second role CDA shows the main direction which should be investigated in the text analysis. It also gives some hints and examples how to look at text and which aspects of it are meaningful. What is especially important, is that it learns to pay a special attention to these aspects which are not openly claimed but sill are a constitutive features determining its reception.

The analysis part consist of two main parts. First one focuses especially on Google official characteristics. I wanted to describe what main topics appear in their text and what style specificity emerges from them. With every characteristic I have tried to emphasize in what way it is related to the topic and what power mechanisms it involves (if any). This first fragment is aimed to give a broad picture of how Google communicates with its potential customers: both private and business ones.

In the second part I focus on products and services it offers, especially those that are dedicated to enterprises. I deal with two main groups of products: those connected with search engine and advertising on the web and on-line applications defined by Google as collaboration tools. When describing them I have tried to emphasize especially mechanisms they trigger (e.g. a platform) as well as technological solutions that underlay them (e.g. cloud computing). Although descriptions of services are sometimes elaborate I am convinced it is needed to catch the complexity of involved strategies. Some linguistic reflections (for example about used metaphors and their potential consequences) appear also in this part of the analysis.

Another important methodological remark applies to reliability and validity of formulated statements. Because of the limited number of analysed materials as well as subjectivity of the interpretation they should be interpreted just as a hypothesis. Although I have tried to include many different perspectives they certainly do not exhaust all available resources and additionally are distorted by the interpretation process.

Next issue which is in some way related with the previous one is the lack of specialized, technical language in the project. Described issues to a great extent belong to the IT areas of study and such vocabulary could prove to be very useful for power relations analysis. Unfortunately I do not have a necessary knowledge to go into the details from this field. I hope that the most important mechanisms can be described sufficiently to understand the main relations without the technical language.

And the last, more technical remark. As I have mentioned already, most of the analysed materials comes from the Internet sources. Sometimes full URL addresses are very long and may be illegible for the reader. To make the text more transparent I have decided to write in the references just the names of the websites. They are market with the word „Link:”. The proper list of the URL addresses assigned to these names with last access dates can be found in the Bibliography.

As I have already mentioned in the introduction, my theoretical approach is crucial both for chosen research methods as well as for coherent interpretation of collected materials. In this part I would like to outline the specificity of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), its basic assumptions, most important notions and some of its consequences for research practice.

There are many reasons which have decided about my choice of CDA. First of all, questions posed in the introduction draw our attention to language seen as a medium of power. Exactly the same perspective can be found as one of the most fundamental issues in CDA approach – it appears then to be perfect theoretical framework for deeper reflection on power issues on the Internet. The emphasis put on language suggests the text analysis as a crucial research method. Additionally it provides us with wide range of text analysis tools.

Secondly, it is worth to mention that great part of CDA practitioners deal with new modes of communication, issues connected with informatization and knowledge-based society. Norman Fairclough, one of the pioneers of this approach, can serve here as an example. I have tried to include their opinions and hypothesis as an inspiration showing some possible directions of research within my topic.

It is also important to mention at the beginning that the Critical Discourse Analysis, although described with one name, is a varied and interdisciplinary perspective. It is presented by many different researches who often don't agree with each other and tend to explain social phenomena such as power or discourse with different terms and mechanisms. Nevertheless I hope it is possible to indicate some common basic assumption standing behind the whole approach. To present the theory as clearly as possible I have tried to point out on whom I'm going to relay in every specific aspect of it. Firstly I described general assumption shared in CDA approach and some basic notions from Michel Foucault reflection on discourse. Secondly I have tried to show how they translate into text analysis and what power strategies used in texts relate to them.

1. What does it mean "Critical"?

The first notion that appears in the name of the theory may evoke some negative connotations. In this context it has certainly different meaning from the way that is used in everyday life.

Critical perspective in social sciences has a long history starting with such thinkers as Kant, Nietzsche or Karl Marx. In modern sociology it is often associated with Frankfurt School where it was developed into regular approach to analysed materials. Literacy criticism played here a key role as well. In CDA this term refers to general perspective chosen by researcher and thus it plays a crucial role at every single stage of the research process.

First of all being critical means having distance to your own perspective. CDA assumes that every standpoint is political in one way or another (this idea will be described further in this chapter). Consequently the research is not about getting "objective" perspective but rather being aware of someone's own beliefs and ideologies standing behind them. On the one hand when the researcher analyses materials or even when he choose his topic it forces him to self-reflection. On the other hand it helps to distance himself to the data and gain a broader perspective.

The same assumption determines the approach to what is being examined. In CDA researchers try to present some other meanings which are not communicated directly, that are not obvious. It is not only about description or explanation of some social events but also about contributing to their changes by pointing out that they are historically conditioned and shouldn't be taken for granted. The belief underlying this perspective says that when we submit something into question we show that there are some other possibilities.[8] [9]

2. Some basic assumptions

Critical Discourse Analysis combines linguistic studies with social science. The first common assumption underlying this approach emphasizes then that language is a social phenomena. It express certain meanings and values of individuals as well as groups and institutions. As a result we may investigate social reality (groups, their changes etc.) by analysing the language that is used by people. And because all sort of texts (interviews, articles, law acts, blogs) are treated as a unit of language, CDA focuses mainly on text analysis as a method of social research.

Second belief underlying CDA says that people are not passive recipients of language. The interpretation is seen as an active process. Firstly it takes place on the basis of what people already know, on the basis of what they have already experienced. But, what is even more

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[8] Wodak R., *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ebrary, Palo Alto 2005, p.9
[9] Kendall, Gavin (2007). *What Is Critical Discourse Analysis?* Ruth Wodak in Conversation With Gavin Kendall,   Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 8(2), Art. 29,

significant to this process, subjects who deal with certain text are also able to put meanings into it. They modify existing meanings and finally may produce texts by themselves. By subjects I mean here not only individuals but also groups, institutions and what is important in our case organizations and enterprises. What stems from this is the idea of the language which not only convey meanings but also become a platform where the mediation of meanings takes place. [10]

Consequently, the last assumption says that language in all its aspects is closely related to power. Since meanings and values are mediated through language by different, often opposing groups, language is modified and structured in accordance with their different perspectives. Used vocabulary, grammatical forms, used genre and style – all of these things can be analyzed as a means of expression of power. In other words we can say that according to CDA language is political. Its practitioners tries to analyse *"pressures and possibilities of resistance, unequal power relationships that appears as social conventions"*.[11]

As I have already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter there is a great deal of controversy about some of these terms also among CDA researchers. Power-language relation, mechanisms of power and the role of subject in discourse creation – all of these issues in greater or lesser extend are presented differently by various researchers. Although I do learn a lot from modern CDA practitioners as Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak to explain the concept of discourse and describe some basic power mechanism I decided to refer to Michel Foucault.

3. What does it mean that language is political? The notion of discourse.
Michel Foucault is one of the most important thinkers who popularized the notion of discourse in social sciences. Because his research touches many different topics, and his theoretical approach evolved over the time it is difficult to present its coherent description. Moreover, the high degree of complexity and generality of used terms makes its application in practice quite a difficult task. Despite these difficulties I'm strongly convinced that Foucault's way of understanding discourse proves to be beneficial for my study. To cope with mentioned difficulties with application I have tried to combine it with some more concrete statements and methods used in Critical Discourse Analysis nowadays. I hope that although they are not

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[10]   Wodak R. Op.cit. p.6
[11]   Wodak R. Op.cit. p.3

entirely consistent theoretically they will function pretty well in practice.

For the purpose of this work I will define **discourse** quite generally as a system of knowledge that limits in what way we can talk about certain topics.[12]

Firstly the term "system of knowledge" points out the language as a main medium of retention and transfer of knowledge. Foucault emphasize that language limit the way we can describe world. There are some established relations between words, statements, their meanings and practices they describe.[13] These patterns of description in turn are reflected in the way we can think about the topic they refer to. We can say that discourse in some sense creates topics (e.g. In-vitro, Internet) and "show" how we should talk about them (which aspects of them are problematic, how they are defined etc.).

On the other hand the same term of system of knowledge exceeds what we usually define as a language. The notion of discourse brings a certain description of social reality that emphasizes its linguistic aspects and tries to show that struggles on this linguistic level goes far beyond text. These struggles influence also social practices, institutions and accepted norms of behaviour. The notion of discourse as presented by Foucault is strictly connected with practices, tools and technologies that were created as a products of certain ways of thinking. Beliefs and coined statement are put into field of practice. On the one hand they limit what can be thought but on the other they create frames for what is possible. Consequently they promote behaviours which, when are repeated, constitute procedures. A set of such procedures and accompanying technologies may become natural and eventually create an institution. Michel Foucault gives an example of this process in his book *"Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison"[14.]* He describes there in what way some statements about punishment (how it suppose to look like etc.) gave birth of specific technologies and practices. Finally as a result of this process the modern institution of prison was founded.

What seems to be important in this language-practice interplay is the fact that once applied technologies in some way promote beliefs standing behind them. This mechanism shows how beliefs are normalized by institutions and create ideologies. The fact that ideologies are

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[12]   Hall Stuart, *Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse* in M.Wetherell, S.Taylor, S.J.Yates: *Discourse Theory and Practice,* Sage Publications, London 2002, p.72
[13]   Foucault M. *Archaeology of Knowledge, Routledge 1972.*
[14]   Foucault M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* Vintage Books, 1979.

embedded in technologies we use every day and institutions we deal with explains why it is so difficult to change them. Another conclusion we can draw gives an important hint for research process. Products and technologies creating the Internet also promote some views which led to their emergence during last decades. On the one side, available services can tell us a lot about this vision that stays behind them. On the other, contemporary discourse (in my case presented by the example of Google company) can lead to the reflexion about some future products and services.

Mechanisms of discursive changes and stabilization are described by Foucault with the term: power/knowledge. It indicates the dual nature of discursive processes that always include simultaneous changes of power relations and knowledge they support. Since I'm going to analyse power relations on the Internet the proper understanding of this term is crucial. It is especially important in the case of Foucault theory since his views on these matters in many ways are different from classical model known from political science.

Foucault emphasize that what we can do is based on what we know about the world, how do we interpret it and what meanings we put into it. Operation of power is therefore based on what people know about the world in general or about particular topic of analysis. What do they know to a large degree means how do they describe it: What language do they use? What kind of argumentation? What metaphors do they choose to illustrate certain issues? How do they problematize them and with what vocabulary? All of these things entail for Foucault some power relations. What is more, these power relations not only make use of knowledge but also reproduce it according to some intentions. But, how Roth Wodak wrote about Foucault's idea of power: "Power is thus exercised with intention − but it is not individual intention"[15]. It is certain way of talking that promotes specific argumentation and impose vocabulary that is "proper" for example within particular genre. Therefore knowledge conveys some power relations, making some scenarios more probable then others, some solutions more reasonable then others etc.[16]

As a consequence of this relation power for Foucault is not something that anyone can own (although it is often described as such). It is not a thing that can be "used" according to someone's own will. On the contrary it should be seen as something relational that works

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[15]   Wodak R., Meyer M., *Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory and Methodology*, p.9
[16]   McHoul Alex, Grace Wandy, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, power and the subject*, Routledge, 1993.

between subjects but is not possessed by any of them. We should not describe power relationships by referring it to someone's abilities to control his environment, another person or group of people. Also the rhetoric of "sources of power" or the division between people who are "in power" and those who don't gains more relational meaning. As Barry Smart wrote: "a relation of power does not constitute an obligation or prohibition imposed upon the 'powerless', rather it invests them, is transmitted by and through them."[17] The knowledge, that includes both technologies of doing and the language, become a mean of this transmission.

This perspective brings few important consequences for the research process:

1. First of all, in every discourse there is an instant negotiation of power relations which are changing together with knowledge field. With new meanings something new become important.

2. Knowledge cannot be neutral, it always assumes some power struggles, it is always political.

3. Power is not only repressive but also productive. It creates discourses, produces genres, metaphors, ways of argumentation and concrete texts – subjects of my analysis in this paper.

Text Analysis

Foucault's approach is not so connected with linguistic criticism tradition as Critical Discourse Analysis. Nevertheless it also leads us to the text analysis as one of the most effective investigation methods of power and control relationships.

During the text analysis I will try to focus on two basic questions: "what is said in the text?" and "how it is said?". These are not separate parts of the research process but rather two different perspectives which are analysed simultaneously. First one focuses on the content: systematization of texts, products - in my case those presented by Google. Consequently it includes also ideas and beliefs they convey and try to promote. Here the analysis focuses on the question how all these elements relate to each other, what vision emerges from them. Second question touches relational aspect between **social agent** (the one who "*set up relations between elements of text(...)makes some combinations and orderings of grammatical forms possible but not others*"[18]) and the audience – presumed recipients of the message.

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[17] Smart B., *Michel Foucault,* Routledge 2002, p.70
[18] Fairclough N., *Analysin Discourse. Textual Analysis for Social Research*, Routledge 2004, p.22

First of all, an analysis of text involves linguistic investigation: grammatical figures, vocabulary, semiotics, cohesion of the text as a whole. What is emphasized in CDA it also goes beyond the text itself investigating its connections with other texts. Norman Fairclough explains that *"basically the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts"*[19] and they can be communicated both directly and indirectly. What is also really important (especially in the light of Foucault's thought) is the fact that analysed relations should include also non-discursive aspects of social setting: products, behaviours, ways of doing things, organizations and institutions. Only so broad picture, including all of these levels of analysis, may give us a deeper insight into the mechanisms that constitute discourse around certain topic. Points which are mentioned further should entail an interpretation at each of these levels.

CDA tends to focus at many different meaningful aspects of the text. Almost every feature can be interpreted, but there are few crucial "linguistic treatments" that CDA practitioners pay a special attention to. I have tried to point out these which seems to be useful in this research:

- categories of participant - how his identity is constructed in the text, what type of relation is build between participants (mentioned before social agent and the audience)

- symbols and metaphors – what type of cognitive maps they try to build up

- stereotypes, insinuations, presuppositions – it includes all type of hidden (but also explicit) assumptions

- form of used argumentation – what do they refer to and in what way they are constructed throughout the text

- *"strategies of intensification and mitigation"*[20] This aspect of text turns our attention to the fact that linguistic analysis should be interested both with things that are present in text as well as those which are significantly absent.[21]

These are the points which, from the power/knowledge perspective focuses attention as the most meaningful.

An analysis of relational aspect of the communication seems to be especially important in those topics which are debatable or controversial. For example in Google case it concerns

[19] Fairclough N., *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1992, p.84
[20] Wodak R., Meyer M., op.cit. p. 30
[21] Ibidem, pp. 28-31

allegations of monopolization and problems with personal or company's data privacy. Places where differences in opinions occur may be the best source of information about used power strategies.

To analyse these places of confrontation with difference Norman Fairclough propose a model based on the notion of **dialogicality**. It is a term coined by Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin to describe a relational existence of every text. Bakhtin draw our attention to the fact that texts gain their meanings in the constant dialogue with other text, other units of language. Although they are all constituted by this relation, texts differ between each other in their "orientation to differences"[22]. Generally speaking, texts in varying degrees are open to different opinions, perspectives etc. and the notion of dialogicality refers to the greatest openness.[23]

Fairclough tries to translate general ideas of Bakhtin into more practical model that can be applied to concrete text research. He distinguishes five different scenarios which can be used as a model situations describing five levels: from total lack of dialogicality to its full realization.

1. First level relates to the largest openness. It assumes acceptance and exploration of all arising differences.

2. On the second level differences are emphasized. Division in values and meanings leads to struggles and could escalate into open conflict.

3. At this level difference is only recognized but it does not attract so much attention. There are some single attempts to overcome differences.

4. Fourth level is called by Fairclough "bracketing". The strategy that appears tries to set differences aside, treat them as something secondary. One of the most frequent mechanisms at this level emphasizes the solidarity and convince involved parties to focus on common points.

5. The last level represents total monologue, and closure of the differences. Absolute consensus is interpreted by Fairclough negatively – normalization of certain point of view and values excludes differences from the discourse. Alternative points of view are not taken into consideration - text assumes universal status of some particular beliefs.[24]

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[22] Fairclough N., *Analysis...* op.cit., p.41
[23] Bakhtin Mikhail M., Problems of Dostoewsky's Poetics, as quoted in Gurevitch Zali, Plurality in Dialogue: A Comment on Bakhtin in Sociology 2000; 34; 243, Sage Publications, p.244
[24] Fairclough op.cit. pp. 41- 42

These five different strategies usually exist in some kind of combination. They can be treated as an "ideal" models which gives some additional hints how to analyse concrete text features to find strategies that reproduce inequalities in discourse.

It seems that Google beginnings play a crucial role in the company's vision and have a huge impact on all the initiatives it decides to engage in. An environment, in which the company was established and developed, has shaped its business model as well as values and standards. It certainly drew the attention of Google founders to information management and influenced the way they understand its role in the globalized world.

The company's story starts in 1996 at Standford University in California. Larry Page and Sergey Brin – two co-founders and today's CEOs of Google – worked together on their Ph.D. project concerning on-line search engine. They have been investigating ways of determining website's relevance, methods of labelling and ordering of increasingly growing Internet resources. The project at the cross-section of mathematics and computer science in its beginnings was entirely academic in nature. The very first version of the search engine known today as Google is a fruit of their labour from this period. When Larry and Sergey decided to commercialize their invention they moved out from Stanford servers and set up their business at their friends garage. The search solution appeared to be a great success and in a surprisingly short period of time the enterprise has obtained a stable market position. The two milestones in the history of the company is the year 2001 when Eric Schmidt, prior CEO of Sun Microsystems and today's face of the company, joined Google and 2004 when the initial public offering took place. These dates are also important because they show how short period of time was needed to develop one of the most popular brands nowadays.[25]

It is important to mention in this place a specific organizational culture the Google has and which it tries to promote among other enterprises. The flat structure and project based type of work promotes informal relations between employees. The emphasis is put on collaboration which in turn is seen as a crucial component of innovation and creativity – key assets of every knowledge enterprise. The official company's rule says that every employee can spend 20% of his work time for his own passions and interests. According to Google many of their projects has been invented and developed during their employees leisure time. To ensure this non-corporate culture there is even a designate position of Chief Culture Officer. It seems that in some way the company's inner practices and ideas they try to focus on reflect its outside

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[25]   David A. Vise, Mark Malseed, *The Google Story,* Ebrary, Palo Alto 2006. pp.20-32

strategy.[26]

A company's first area of activity was limited almost only to advertising market. Majority of their revenues came, and still comes from selling advertisements associated with keywords which are typed in their search website. The business model popularized by Google is called "pay per click" and is based on the simple mechanism in which advertisers pay their host (in this case – Google) only when the user click their link with advertisement. The price of each click is fixed so that the advertiser can consciously decide about his expenses. Such a solution has a significant advantage over the classic model. First of all you pay only for those who really have seen your website and not for those who only might seen it as it take place for example in TV or magazines. Secondly, as an advertiser you simply reach more relevant target market, and as a costumer only the products you are interested in. The mechanism based on a clear and simple rules partly explains fast Google success in this sector.[27]

An expansion into new market areas in Google case results from strategic acquisitions the company has decided to make. Firstly, the basic search engine has spread to such services as image and video search. Google Earth was developed because of the takeover of start-up company that worked on 3D Earth view. Another acquisition (one of the most popular ones) of the YouTube service gave Google company a leading position in the on-line video sector.

The growth of the enterprise has triggered a series of other acquisitions and consequently also products. Google has developed its own instant messaging application, on-line documents edition software and some desktop applications such as internet browser Chrome and graphic programme Picasa. Lately its interests includes for example their own computer system Chrome OS or Google TV. An interest is especially visible in the mobile market where the company popularizes its own operating system for mobile devices – Android, and has even produced its own mobile phone – Nexus One. Part of their products has been adapted to business customers while others where developed especially for them.

Later in this paper I will look closer to some of these products which are dedicated to enterprises. Nevertheless, I want to emphasize here how quickly the company has expanded into totally new markets.

Every time I refer to new services I will explain their purpose and core mechanisms.

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[26]   Bernard G., *The Google way how one company is revolutionizing management as we know it*, Ebrary, Palo Alto 2009

[27]   Ibid.

As I have said the range of services and areas of actual and planned development is tremendous. But it seems that all of them are subordinated to company's mission: „to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful".[28]

At the end of the case description, to show how the Google company has developed during the last thirteen years and to picture the size of its possible influences, I would like to present some statistics:

- Google runs over million servers around the world[29]

- 620 million visitors per day[30]

- around 87.8 billion (878000000000) searches every month[31]

- 57% of the top 10 000 websites in the world uses Google Analytics[32]

- Total advertising revenues in 2009 amounted to 22.889 million dollars[33]

- Its current search engine market share is 84.90%[34]

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[28] Link: Google website – Corporate information – Our Philosophy
[29] Link: ComScore search market research
[30] Link: Pingdom report – Google facts and figures
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Link: NetmarketShare website

As I have tried to emphasize in the Theory every text is an excerpt of language and in exactly the same ways as language it conveys power. It is produced from particular point of view and it communicates specific for this world-view attitude, beliefs and values. In accordance with these statements, also Google takes part in the linguistic struggle concerning the definition of the Web. A text analysis becomes an important source of information about their position and strategies it entails.

Google's official communication

As most of the organizations Google has formulated it mission – I have quoted it at the end on the case description. It has been developed into ten core principles listed on the company's main page in the article: "Our philosophy".[35] It seems that this text reflects some basic concepts and assumptions that underlay technological solutions they develop as well as strategy they present on the market. As such it is an adequate starting point for the analysis.

The first important thing that needs to be emphasized are limitations resulting from a specific genre which is used for organizational mission statement. By definition it impose very general, goal-oriented sentences and a little bit sublime style of the whole text. It also entails a default relation between the company and their audience[*] in which the organization tries to present itself, authenticate its activity and, what is not openly claimed, convince potential customers, business partners. Although officially mission statement functions as an internal guideline, its marketing role stays apparent. It is confirmed even by the fact that that the whole text is published for a broader audience on Google's main website.

This dual function, can be seen also in the text itself. "Our philosophy" consists of ten brief statements – principles that reflects proper way of doing business according to Google e.g. *"Focus on the user and all else will follow"*.[36] They all take the form of guidelines, indicative sentences that says "how something should be done". At the same time, their descriptions that appears under each sentence, looks like presentation of what they do rather then how it should be done. They focus not only on the way they understand the mission but

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[35]   Link: Google website – Corporate Information - Our Philosphpy
[*]   By the term "the audience" I understand potential visitors of Google's websites who are assumed recipients
       of the communication
[36]   Our Philosophy op.cit.

also on showing in what way they realize it, in which activities it is visible. It seems that they try to prove to their audience that these statements are not merely theoretical assumptions but a real part of their organizational activity that is put into practice every day. Although it is not communicated directly, these two elements (guidelines and examples referring to them) put next to each other cause that the whole text gets a persuasive character.

Dichotomization

Another important feature of the language that Google uses, is its intensification and dichotomization. By intensification I mean a strong focus on being as excellent as possible that the company presents. In their mission they often use superlative forms when they refer to offered services: *"we've focused on providing the best user experience possible"*, *"we see being great at something as a starting point"* *"we've broken our own speed records many times"*[37]. Together with this way of self-presentation goes very clear-cut language. Especially in the areas that are identified as controversial such phrases appear: *"we don't allow"*, *"we don't accept"*, *"We never manipulate"*, *"we firmly believe"*. The cognitive map they try to build up supports strong dichotomies between proper and bad way of doing certain things, between "smart" people who are open and innovative and the rest who don't. This way of describing the world is particularly evident in the corporate motto: *"Don't be evil"* and such quotes: *"we know what we do well, and how we could do it better"*[38]. A strong belief and confidence in the rightness of their perspective is clearly visible in their official communication. This approach seems to give a universal status to Google particular opinions. It underlies a specific form of argumentation in which the social agent eliminates doubts and in this way make it difficult to formulate objections.

Relation with the audience

In most of their texts as well as commercial video materials Google use informal, direct style with huge emphasis put on their receiver. It also applies to their mission and indicates some important features of the relation the company tries to build with its audience.

 "Our users trust our objectivity and no short-term gain could ever justify breaching that trust", *"we've focused on providing the best user experience possible"*, *"we take great care to ensure that they will ultimately serve **you**"*[39] - these are just few sentences that shows in what way Google refers to their customers. It is the company that serves it customers and

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

Google certainly puts a great emphasis on this aspect of the relation. But, what is equally important, it openly informs that Google is dependent on them: their trust, opinions and market choices.

Although in most of its official communication there is a strong division between "we" (the company) and "you" (our user) Google visibly tries to build up some kind of solidarity. The gap is bridged by very close, informal relation based on interdependence between the company on the one side and users and developers on the other. Firstly it can be noticed even in the term "user" which completely replace in Google's communication the word consumer. Of course the word is widely used to describe for example "computer users" but in this case it pays attention because of the frequency of use. It seems to blur the market division between customers (as merely recipients of goods) and companies, and assumes a right to work with products, services.

An emphasis put on solidarity, the common beliefs of the company and its customers, diverts attention from potential differences and may mitigate them. According to Fairclough such strategy can be described as bracketing of differences.[40] It works as a safety buffer of the relationship. The language in a very subtle way promotes a certain way of thinking which does not allow conflicting thoughts.

"Engagement imperative"

What is more, at every turn the audience is engaged to cooperate, to give feedback about Google's products. Every informative website contains a one question pool: "*Was this information helpful?*". They are openly informed that the whole mechanism would not work properly if they have not do their bit: "*Google search works because it relies on the millions of individuals posting links on websites to help determine which other sites offer content of value.*"[41] I would like to emphasize three very important aspects of this "engagement strategy".

The first consequence is very similar to mentioned before bracketing of differences. An engagement places the part of responsibility on users and thus it builds a strong identity around company services. This strong identity limits the number of potential critics and at the same time provides company with many supporters.

The second hypothesis brings us back to some basic theoretical assumptions of this project and it will be repeated in few other places in the text. The Google power position is

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40 Fairclough N., *Analysis...* op.cit., p.41
41 Our Philosophy op.cit.

based on the access to huge amount of information. An engagement is one of the strategies that helps to get an access to even bigger amount of data. It creates an access to particularly important information which could not be obtained from any database but only by the desire of the individual to share them with others.

The last aspect of engagement results from the previous one. Google promotes certain behaviours which are based on contribution and sharing of opinions. These in turns are closely bound with values of openness and transparency. When behaviours are repeated they eventually develop habits and procedures which are consistent with the values. According to my theoretical perspective once develop practices support and promote values standing behind them. The contribution of all users into development of Web 2.0[*] according to Google is described as natural attitude and it is the basis of services and products described in the second part of Analysis.

Personalization

In its communication Google precisely explains reasons why it counts on their users engagement. First of all their business is based on advertising so they honestly communicate that on the basis of the data that are input by their users they automatically generate other's companies advertisements. I will analyse this issue more deeply later in this part. Second reason is the need to improve their own services according to their users preferences. In the used argumentation two crucial notions appear: "personalization" and "users experience".

The "Our Philosophy" article starts with Larry Page (one of the co-funders) quote: "*The perfect search engine, would understand exactly what you mean and give back exactly what you want*". This desire, to customize search services to client's intentions as much as possible, is a key component of the company's philosophy and underlies many of their services. So strong focus on the client (in this place it doesn't matter whether it is only declaratory or not) entails an endless need for information. Of course in some sense an inclination to explore customers preferences is a natural mechanism of each company, but Google situation is so specific that this approach causes many suspicions.

While other companies need to invest in detailed researches to get to know their customers, computer mediated technology allows for continued investigation of users' preferences. On the basis of their behaviours, the way they interact with website and how they move from one subpage to another, you can adjust available services and for example

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[*] The notion initial introduced by the company O'Reilly Meadia, but incorporated into modern Internet discourse as a definition of "the new Internet" based on the engagement of all its users, interactivity and collaboration

redesign website layout to make it more intuitive for visitors. This technology brings some tremendous opportunities especially for the Google business model which is based simply on collecting and organizing data in transparent and searchable way. But at the same time it brings some threats and it gives rise to much controversy. Because every click is potentially recorded and stored it may be eventually used not according to user will and without his permission. It touches especially these information which are described as private. So strong focus on the client and practices engaging customers to contribute and share their opinions can be perceived negatively since the company's revenues are dependent on these information. Such notion as "personalization" in this context gets a negative undertone since it entails an assumption that someone is interested with our private information. When we inform that we are interested in adjusting services to improve users experience it naturally brings the second thought that we need to find out how do they think and what do they want.

This risk is perceived by customers, media and competitors and have repeatedly become the reason for allegations. Google is fully aware of this danger and in their official communication they refer to potential allegations directly: "*We don't sell users' personal information*".[42] What is more, to deal with accusations Google explains that the data are stored and processed automatically, by computers only. Company's employees has an access to statistical overviews and do not interfere with the data that would allow to identify concrete person. Of course I can not, and I don't want to determine if it is true or not. What is important from my problem perspective is a fact that this form of explanation in some way blurs Google's responsibility. Automation of data processing depersonalize the whole mechanisms, it highlights that there is no single agent reading these information. It aims to reassure users over their data safety but simultaneously it leads to such problematic issues as data ownership, accessibility and responsibility for their storage and processing.

The focus on the users personalized experience brings also some other risks which are not so often discussed publicly. The two quotes from their website illustrate where this strategy founds its limitations: "*we believe they* [offered services] *should work so well you don't have to consider how they might have been designed differently*", "*Even if you don't know exactly what you're looking for, finding an answer on the web is our problem, not yours*"[43]. Again, focus on the client, which usually is very natural and expected on the market, in this context opens the space for discussion. It seems that there is a fine line between user's convenience

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[42]   Link: Google website - Corporate Information – Privacy Policy
[43]   Our Philosophy op.cit.

and his capacity to control to which information he has an access to. When we compare these sentences with mentioned before "encouraging strategy" it looks like there is a lack of consistency in Google's standpoint. Such phrases as: "*you don't have to consider*" and "*it is our problem not yours[44]*" moves the responsibility on the Google. On the one side customers are encouraged to share their opinions, inform about their preferences, on the other Google, on the basis of collected information, is going to design better services than if users did it themselves. It shows that the position that Google has, not only gives an access to an enormous amount of information but also creates a possibility to regulate an access to these information for other Internet users.

Communication ground rules

At the end of this part of Google's communication analysis few things need to be emphasized. First of all an information industry in which Google works as well as their business model based on advertising entails some restrictions for their communication. The fact that as a private company they have an access to personal information and for their business purposes they need to record and process them is the first limiting condition. It causes that the possibility of allegations is implicitly assumed in every communication addressed to a broader audience. They refer in advance to publicly known suspicions and thus their communication often gets persuasive and protective style. As an example can serve one of the questions that appears in their security FAQ: "*Who own the data that organizations put into Google Apps?*". The answer that appears refers more to assumed allegations rather then to quoted question: "*To put it simply, Google does not own your data*"[45].

What is also important, the allegations that appear around these problems indicate a crucial role of access to information for power exertion. It certainly brings us to our theoretical assumption about strong connection between power and knowledge. If we look from this perspective at Google's position in the information business it seems natural around which topics the allegations appear the most.

The second issue is the fact that Google works on communication technologies development and thus it attaches great importance to innovation and creativity. As a future oriented company it tries to anticipate market changes and, what is more important in this context, influence them. Services they offer are designed not only to serve users but also to create new

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[44]   Ibid.
[45]   Link: Google website - Apps - FAQ

needs and modify existing usage schemes. This in turn requires a deeper vision and a strategy that carry out changes in the desired direction. Technological changes are perceived as a key component of broader cultural, social and political issues. Consequently, in Google public speaking, their business activity is often related to deeper vision of the future society - how it should look like and how it should not. Development of communication technologies is described as very useful tool of empowerment, democratization, as a medium ensuring openness and transparency and allowing for the collaboration across boundaries.[46] It makes Google an active participant of public debates concerning many non-technological issues such as: censorship in China, sexual minority rights, labor law changes, education, freedom of speech.[47] [48] Participation in these debates indicates clearly that Google is not inherently neutral provider of technological solutions but politically engaged corporation. Values which are indicated by Google as crucial for Internet development, are taken forward and promoted also in other spheres of social life. The good example of company's engagement in popularization of democratic ideas are "Doodle"[*] modifications. When in particular country elections are held the logo on the website dedicated to this country is modified and includes elements reminding about voting.

Summing up some main hypothesis from this part of the analysis:

- In the Google discourse we can identify some core values driving its activities: openness, transparency, collaboration. They all promote users behaviours that increase an amount of information on the Web. And since Google business model is dependent on the available amount of information their role for the company seems to be essential. Declared need of personalization of services and "engaging strategy" get a second, profit-oriented meaning.

- A specific Google position will be described in the next part. In this place it is important to emphasize that it gives an access to enormous amount of data and possibility to regulate an access to these data for others. Such a position brings the risk of allegations and Google identify this risk. Their communication is adjusted according to them. Narration often has a persuasive character, cognitive map is build on the basis of clearly marked divisions, clear-cut language gives a universal status to particular standpoints. An

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[46] Link: Google website - Apps - Collaboration
[47] Link: Googlewebsite - Official Blog
[48] Link: An article at the Guardian.co.uk – Google struggle with China
[*]   A characteristic Google logo that is placed on the search engine website and is modified for special occasions such as anniversaries, holidays, lives of famous people etc.

emphasis put on solidarity in the relation with the audience brackets potential differences.

Since, according the theory, also Google services are products of certain way of thinking they also should be analysed as an integral part of Google discourse.

Services offered to enterprises

Although in its official communication Google more often refers to private users, there are separate channels (websites, blog, Youtube channel) dedicated especially to business customers. Regardless of whether their customer is an organization or private person, discussed general issues concerning communication characteristics and relation they build with receivers remain the same. Now I would like to focus on particular services: the way they are introduced and communicated, power mechanisms they involve and some basic ideas that underlie them.

Searching and Advertising

As I have mentioned before majority of Google revenue comes from advertising on the web. The program that is responsible for this great marketing success is called AdWords. The mechanism standing behind it is very simple from advertisers perspective but at the same time it introduces very sophisticated way of monetizing the traffic from Google search engine website as well mechanisms of stabilization and replication of existing power relations. Although everyone who has a website can use it, most often it is used as a marketing tool by companies and organizations.

AdWords uses the same login and password as other online applications offered by the company from Mountain View. Unified identity confirmation procedure makes it easier and faster for customers to move between different services and at the same time it helps Google to organize information "left" by user in various places. When publisher wants to promote his website he simply determines how much he wants to spend and what are keywords identifying his web page. The form of the advertisement is strictly determined by Google: it needs to include a title, website address and maximum two short lines of text. The simple design in which you can not insert any graphics should ensure as fast access to the data as possible. The advertisement is displayed on the right side of the screen in separate section: "sponsored links" whenever the search query fits the profile specified by publisher. As I have

mentioned in the case description the monetization is based on the pay-per-click mechanism.

The point of controversy in AdWords program is the mechanism determining whether the the advertisement should be displayed - does it fit the words written in the search engine? When we read their step by step instruction how to set up an AdWords account we may get an impression that the text mitigate the complexity of this mechanism:

"***Your ads appear on Google***

When people search on Google using one of your keywords, your ad <u>may</u> appear to the search results. Now you're advertising to an audience that's already interested in you."[49]

No explanation of the word "*may*" is given, reader doesn't know what it is dependent on. The following sentence indicates what will happen when the advertisement will be displayed, it brings reader's attention to positive consequences thereby ignoring the alternative that have appeared in the sentence before. On the other websites we can find some information about the variables that are taken into account in this process such as localization or users history but the mechanism itself (as well as the main search engine algorithm) is a closely guarded secret of Google.

The first consequence of AdWords mechanism that seems to be related to my problematic area is the interdependence it creates between Google and businesses that use this service. The huge number of individual users who visit the search engine website every day, makes this one single place a hub of Internet traffic and thus an extremely influential marketing tool. In other words, Google's success with "searching services" directed to individual users translates into even more influential tool which is address to companies. A leading market position (85% of the search engines market with second Yahoo - 6.24% [50]) makes this success even bigger. Consequently the revenues of the companies who use AdWords program are dependent on the algorithm that decides whether their adds are going to appear as well as the further growth of the traffic on the Google website. Of course we need to remember the similar rule concerns every other advertising medium – but what makes Google case exceptional is a scale that have been made possible by the Internet technology. Described service has multiple consequences.

First of all, so much traffic concentrated in the one place together with simple mechanism of monetization opens some new possibilities for small businesses. It is much easier to start up a company with the knowledge gained from the search engine and it is easier to develop it with an instant access to millions of potential consumers. What is even more,

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[49]   Link: Google Website – AdWords Advertising
[50]   Link: NetmarketShare website

you do not need so many people to coordinate sales on the big scale - small, local companies can function on the global markets. In his public speech Eric Schmidt has indicated this issue with the following words: "*So what happens is that this* (technological jump) *creates the opportunity to do businesses... which I'm going to call micromulti nationals... these are 10 people who see themselves serving a global audience.*[51]" These are some unquestionable advantages Google brings to other businesses. It seems that Google is aware of them as well as the fact that success of the others drives their own success. Despite of the implied clearness of this relationship it is these services that cause the most controversy and face the allegations of monopolization.

Apparently, the scale of the project influences the whole model. Quantitative changes translates into qualitative ones and escape in this way the categories of description which were used so far. A new vocabulary is developed to describe the process and new metaphors are needed to explain the relation between the "supplier" and "recipients". One of the key metaphors around which the Google discourse is developed and which helps to reveal the relation they want to establish is the notion of "platform."[52]

The term is widely used nowadays in computer-related industries but since it derives from other areas its semantic richness goes far beyond the strict technological meaning. It is often used by Google representatives to describe their searching products but also new mobile operating system or such services as YouTube. They write about "*distribution platform for original creators and advertisers large and small*"[53]. Eric Schmidt says they want to "*become a third platform of choice for both consumers and the enterprise.*"[54] when referring to their new operating system Chrome OS. The use of the notion entails few important strategic assumptions.

Firstly, the term platform may refer to the foundation, the basis of actions, something on the top of what you can build. In this sense Google products serve as platforms for others to express themselves, share their opinions on-line, promote themselves etc. The quote about "*distribution platform*" mentioned above refers to this meaning. In this way it is also related to political meaning of the term where it is used to describe the stage where politics can articulate their standpoints.

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[51]   Link: Eric Schmidt public speech in Pittsburgh, 19:54 minute of the video
[52]   Gillespie T., *The politics of 'platforms'* in *New Media & Society* 12: 347, Sage 2010
[53]   Link: Google website - Youtube fact sheet
[54]   Link: An article by Michelle Maisto at eWeek.com: "Google, Flush with Android Success, Plans New Computing   Platform"

Its second meaning brings more technological connotations. It is used to describe on-line services that make it possible for users to design and develop their own applications as well as adjust applications which are created by others.[55] When Google provides users with applications needed for AdWords campaign or their website traffic analysis this meaning seems to match.

The notion of platform to a large degree expresses values and ideology of Google. Tarleton Gillespie in his article on "the politics of platforms" suggest that the term assumes that "*the role of distributing information is a neutral one, where the function is merely the passage of any and all content without discrimination.*"[56] Since it should provide the same conditions to all its users it implies neutrality and a promise of support. Its egalitarian character is guaranteed by the fact that the service providers do not interfere with the content that is presented. Eric Schmidt explains it in this way: *"We have to be very careful not to favor one publisher over another. We are not trying to get into the content business."*[57] As we can see, the "platform-type" business implies content-less mechanisms, a minimum of interference.

The word "platform" is a part of certain ideology. The assumptions it entails have also a real impact on the way the company functions. Its meaning can be found in the business model presented by Google. The core characteristic of this model is a significant number of different participants that use the same services but achieve different benefits. It is not only about large number of people that I have already mentioned before but a different kind of parties that are interested in the same services but are driven by different reasons. In Google case it includes: individual users, enterprises, organizations and public institutions, publishers, media and newspapers, software developers etc. Google platforms are designed to serve all of them, to create space for them and provide them with all the necessary tools. Developed mechanism can be illustrated in this way:

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[55]   Gillespie T., op. cit. p.349
[56]   Gillespie T., op. cit. p.357
[57]   Link: A conversation with Sergey Brin and Eric Schmidt at TechCrunch.com
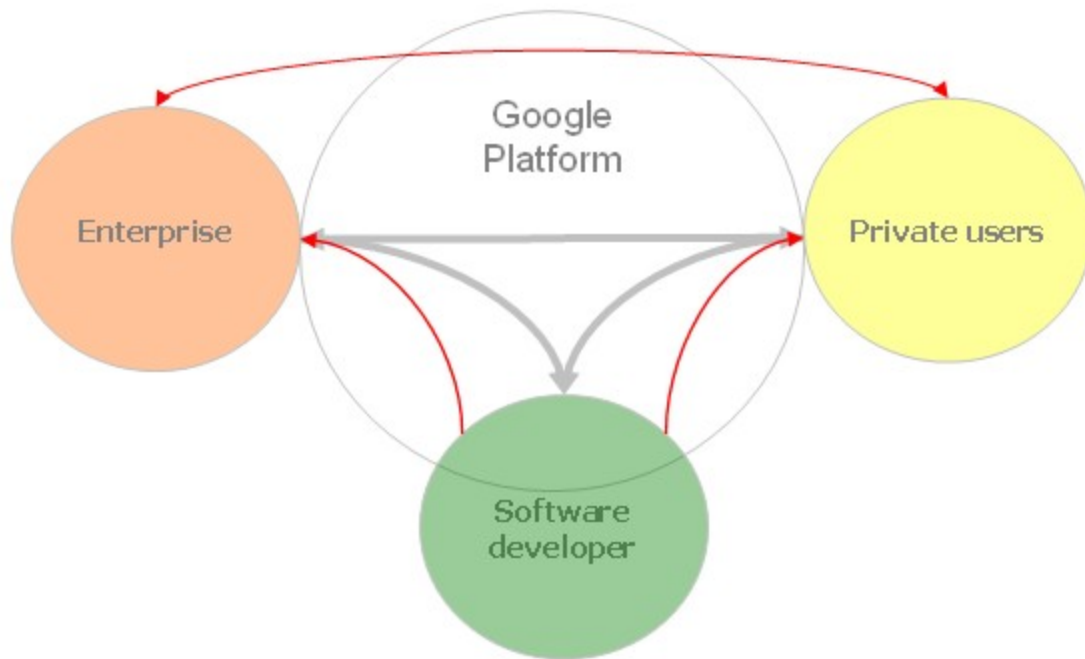
[the gray arrows represent data flow, while red ones products, services and money]

Of course the graph do not exhaust all the possible parties involved neither the relations between these which are included. Nevertheless it shows the main mechanisms that the notion of platform entails. Although its description is a little bit extensive I think that the broad picture is necessary to explain the strategy that underlies it.

The red arrow on the top connecting an enterprise with private users represents a regular products/services/money exchange. In most of the cases (beside those where Google mediates in exchange process) they happen outside of the circle, but more and more often they are dependent on the information exchange that happens inside of it.

The gray arrows in the middle of the "Google Platform" circle represent the data exchange. There is a two-way connection between an enterprise and private users and one-way flow from both of them to software developers. The search engine and described before AdWords campaigns are the most important information channels by which companies inform their potential consumers about themselves, their offers etc. In the opposite direction information are provided through the AdWords application available for its users. It provides enterprises with an information about the efficiency of their advertising campaign, localization of people who "clicked" their links and many other details that can be used to individualize their future marketing and of course improve products. Another tool that is represented on the graph with this arrow is called Google Analytics. Every website owner can put on his website a fragment of HTML code created by Google. After registration in Google

Analytics service he will get an access to statistical overview of the traffic on his website. The service helps to trace keywords used by the website visitors, predict their loyalty, identify revenue sources and provides with benchmarking information. As well as AdWords reporting system, it is designed to improve companies marketing strategies.

The Google is a mediator in this two-way communication. In accordance with the values embedded in the notion of platform they provide an open space and tools that allows communication between the agents. On the one side the business model creates a metaphor such as the platform to express itself in the language. On the other the notion justifies this model as binding and natural. Every time it is used in language it supports Google non-interference and content-less mediator position. In terms of power/knowledge relation it can be said that the word promotes certain way of thinking about the Web and this in turn shapes how discussion are conducted, what arguments are used etc. It

gives a particular shape to debates about Google and consequently also promotes development of these technologies which are consistent with this language. Some of them are described in the following parts.

What is more the notion confirms values described in the first part concerning Google official communication: openness, creativity and democratization. Eric Schmidt seems to confirm these conclusions when he says: "*We like our strategy a lot because it's consistent with our values, which are the openness and the open platform and the web platform*"[58].

Presented values and Google engagement in public debates concerning such non-technological issues as freedom of speech are also very important part of the platform mechanism. I do not want to insinuate that Google promote certain ideas because there are useful from their business model perspective. I would rather say that they both fit each other and it is difficult to indicate which one is the reason and which one the consequence. Nevertheless, openness, transparency of information and creativity are key values deciding about the amount of information uploaded on the Google servers and thus also about efficiency of their search results and eventually about revenues. The mechanisms which is triggered in this way is based on the number of users and may evoke a "closed loop effect". The more people use Google services the bigger it grows, the bigger it grows the more accurate information it provides, and the more information it provides the more parties want to work "on the top of its platform". From the power relations perspective this effect seems to

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[58] Link: An interview with Eric Schmidt at wwwery.com

be crucial for stabilization of Google dominating position on the market and consequently also in the minds of Internet users. The central position which they occupy seems to be the source of mentioned before allegations about privacy invasion and monopolization. Since I am interested how Google stabilize its position, what power mechanisms are involved, the allegations of monopolization are very important point of the analysis. I have already started this problem in the first part, when I have described how they deal with them in the communication, but now the platform metaphor gives an opportunity to picture this issue more clearly.

Since all the information go "through them" - are collected, processed and presented to final recipients by their own applications - there is an evident risk of abuse. Of course, as Google representatives often respond to these allegations, users can always change their service providers. Nevertheless, the "closed loop" mechanism makes it really difficult to change Google dominant position on this market. Google search engine success provides companies who use their other products with the most accurate information about their potential customers and thus the most accurate advertising opportunity.

First of all it needs to be said that, when we describe involved power relations, we are dealing with two different kinds of monopolization. On the one side the term is understood according with the trade and commerce regulations. It refers to the situation when one company has control over particular product or on particular market. We talk about monopoly when the control is sufficient to regulate the terms of the access for other enterprises and individuals.[59] Most of the allegations directed at Google refer to this lack of potential competition.

The second kind of monopolization that emerges from described mechanisms does not touch directly market issues but refers more to the control of information flow. It is connected with the "hub position" the Google has - an access to information it gets as well as the possibility to decide what information are available for others. I do not want to decide whether it is done or not, I only suggest the possibility that is created by the position they have in the relation with other involved parties. The key mechanism in this type of monopolization is described by Lincoln Dalhber in the following way:

"*It is not necessary to own and control all or even an extensive amount of Internet space – in terms of the data space constituted by bits – to have a major impact on online communication and use. This is because the route to the domination of online practice is the domination of*

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[59]   Link: Monopoly definition from Encyclopedia Britanica

online attention, achieved through control over key content, software and bandwidth (...)
Attention is arguably the most valuable resource online".[60]

Although, the mediator position Google has assumes no interference in the content, it gives a possibility to marginalize some information, bring out others and "lead users attention" from one content to another.

The last, not yet discussed part of the graph represents software developers and their relations with other involved parties. First of all, some the services that comes from this circle are provided by Google itself (that is why part of it creates a cross-section with the platform). I will describe some of them in the following part. But what needs to be emphasized, is a fact that Google encourages also other software developing companies to use it as a medium of information and services exchange. As a part of its services for business, Google has created an Application Marketplace where other IT companies can offer their own software. Various applications assisting with accounting, customer relations management, project management and many other areas of enterprise activity all available in one place. They are all integrated with Google services and available for every company that will decide to sign in to Google Apps. The relationship is a part of already described platform/mediator mechanism. Google provides a huge market for software developers and at the same time it attracts many business clients with software developed by someone else. The more clients will decide to use these services the more information its providers will get about them. Google stays in the middle of these transactions.

Google Applications

Google applications development has started in 2006 with popular nowadays gmail services. During the few last years they have been expanded both for private and business users. Nowadays, beside an email client it includes all sort of office tools for documents, spreadsheets, presentations and charts edition as well as websites design tools, calendar, video conferencing and instant messaging. The big change that has happened few years ago on the software market is an emergence of so called Software as a Service (SaaS). The term refers to a browser-based applications which do not require installation on the computer's hard drive. They are available through Internet-based technologies and all the files which are created with

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[60] Dalhber Lincolm, *The Corpotate Colonization of Online Attention and the Marginalization of Critical Communication* in *Journal of Communication Inquiry 2005; 105,* Sage Publications, p.164

them are saved on the servers. AdWords and Google Analytics services belong to this category but they do not have equivalents in a regular software. On the contrary, on-line office suites are designed to replace traditional applications. There are few specific communication characteristics that indicates this strategy.

Google presents the new technology in opposition to "traditional", "long release cycle", "software plus service"[61]. In its communication Google describes their solutions by comparing them with others, by emphasizing the differences. The strong division is visible in their communication between the old model versus the new one – the Microsoft Corporation is indicated as a representative of traditional solutions: "(it) *was not possible with the previous technology — Microsoft technology made it very difficult because they were not built in that model.*"[62] The formulation "previous technology" suggests that it is already gone, that the replacement have already happened. Second dividing line that can be noticed in their communication referring to this area of the market is the division between closed and open business models. The name that appears here is the well known Google competitor - Apple company. The quote form Erick Schmidt presentation explains how they understand the difference and at the same time shows how strongly it is highlighted: "*The difference between the Apple model and the Google model is easy to understand – they're completely different. The Google model is completely open. You can basically take the software – it's free – you can modify whatever you want, you can add any kind of App, you can build any kind of business model on the top of it and you can add any kind of hardware. The Apple model is the inverse.*"[63] Google directly points out differences and emphasize them. In terms of dialogicality its standpoint is rather confronting. Highlighted divisions may lead to struggles and as it turns out they actually take place in the media debates as well as in the court.

In the margin it is also worth noting, that the openness described before as one of the most important values in Google philosophy, blends here with an open-source ideas understood as a free access of developers to the software code. Although these are separate ideas referring to two different things, the fact that they are presented next to each other is not without significance. It shows how certain ideas can be moved between distinct fields of knowledge and it opens the whole debate about the relation between the language and technology. This topic will be taken further in the discussion part.

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[61]   Link: Google website – Cloud Computing
[62]   Link: Eric Schmidt public speech – Atmosphere Conference, 8:31 minute of the video
[63]   Link: An interview with Eric Schmidt at Telegraph.co.uk

On one of the Google websites we can find the comparison between the old and the new model: "*Traditional 'collaboration' falls short in today's workplace. Sharing with attachments is inefficient (...) Google Apps smooths the process*"[64] In other texts SaaS is described as an inevitable future of the Internet. Used language is rather fact-stating than persuasive. What attracts attention is also the importance of the word "collaboration". In this fragment, quotation mark suggests that in the traditional software "collaboration" was not real or at least not fully developed. Google applications are described as a collaboration tools and it is this feature that opens the biggest opportunity for enterprise knowledge management according to Google.

The technology standing behind SaaS and its new features is called Cloud Computing. In short, the model assumes that both applications and computing power are provided on-demand to private users, in the same way as the electricity. The data are stored in the networks of servers that make it easy to access them via the Internet from any device that is able to support web browser. The term "cloud computing" which describes certain way of collaboration between computers and servers gave rise to the metaphor of "the cloud". It was adopted by many IT companies nowadays. Google is one of the pioneers in this area and it often uses this metaphor when it promotes its applications.

As a metaphor "the cloud" is certainly a very useful notion that helps to avoid technical jargon when it is necessary. When Google describes how do their applications work they simply write that "*data is stored in the cloud – not on one particular computer*"[65] This one single word allows to skip many issues. For example it brackets all the security problems that usually follow new technological solution. Although its usage is understandable from the marketing perspective it may evoke some negative comments. It blurs the mechanisms in the most vulnerable place. The advantages that the technology brings for enterprises lets Google believe that companies will "go to Google" - as they describe the process in which companies are shifting from their previous software to new Google products. Again, with rather fact-stating language Eric Schmidt describes its development in the following way: "*So this rise of the cloud, and the opportunity, is actually a large business in and of itself because companies are now moving one after the other, after the other from the old model, the PC centric-mainframe centric model, to this new cloud computing model where everything is managed by others.*"[66]

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[64] Link: Google website - Apps – Collaboration
[65] Link: Google website – Cloud computing
[66] Link: Eric Schmidt public speech in Pittsburgh - 21:24 minute of the video

Google Wave

The mechanisms analysed before are taken forward with the latest Google service – Google Wave. Google once again emphasizes its orientation towards the future and shows that it has a vision and a long term plans of its implementation. The manager of this project has explained its origin in this way: *we asked ourselves the question: 'what might email look like if it was invented today?[67]*. Of course, there is no place neither the need to describe its all characteristics. Generally speaking, Google Wave is an on-line and real time communicator. Individual operations are transmitted to every place this particular "wave" is embedded, whether it is a regular wave client, website, blog, social service etc. Cloud computing technology allows the real-time communication which means that each individual character appears in all of these places as a person writes the message.

The first thing I want to draw the attention to, is an intensive creation of new Internet-related vocabulary. In the similar way as with the platform, the cloud or SaaS Google introduces and promotes certain ways of description of the Internet phenomena. In this case it concerns new model of communication denoted with the term "waving" and the thing that is created in this process: "the wave". It is also interesting how this one term gave birth to other expressions as for example greetings: "happy waving" or "wave on" used on Google blogs. The term is designed to reflect its technological characteristics and capabilities it brings for users. In this way it promotes certain way of communication via the Internet and moves into the background the classical model (once again the "old model").

The new approach tries to combine many already known communication devices in one single application. It eliminates the need to move between different applications for information – they are all in one place. Possibilities of expression are maximized while decisions can be made faster. The real-time connectivity, simplicity in use and an instant availability of the message upgrades are crucial as well. The application should cross the borders within the Internet – it does not matter where you are on the web at the moment, you always can embed the whole conversation and continue it from this place. All of these ideas are promoted with the term "wave". It fits in popular nowadays ideas of "streaming" on the web known from such applications as Twitter or Facebook. But it seems that unlike them Google does not try to build up the locality of users to one specific website[68] Some other mechanisms are involved.

[67]   Link: Google Wave comercial
[68]   Link: An article about Google Wave at cio.com

From the power/knowledge perspective the ideas promoted with such notions as cloud and wave perpetuate particular way of thinking about the Internet and implicitly indicate how it should be modified. They imply the Internet that allows for: real-time communication and collaboration, non-local data storage – not limited to one set of devices where information "*can be trapped*"[69], the easiest and the fastest access to data that is possible. Its functioning is based on transparency of information, maximization of sharing and contribution and possibility to communicate from anywhere on the web to anywhere else – with no software limitations.

In the same way as with Google Apps the company from Mountain View tries to encourage software developers to work on applications that can be integrated with their own product. In a similar way, Google provides them with the whole platform, a group of potential customers as well as programming and reporting tools needed to adjust software to the new environment. They openly say: "*but, frankly we need developers to help us complete this product, and we need your support*"[70].

But Google Wave moves this even further – it provides third parties with the whole code and communication protocol that was developed especially for this project. In short, available resources allow third parties to simply take it and build their own wave-type services. Although it seems to weaken Google position on the on-line applications market, at the same time it triggers the mechanism that makes it possible to distribute their new communication technology very quickly. Once again the specific type of activity appears which does not focus on the content. The distribution is happening on the deeper level – it is not about particular product but rather about its underlying technology. Although its first premier took place one year ago the Google Wave Protocol is already gaining popularity, also in the business world. SAP, one of the leaders in business software solutions, has already introduce his own product based on this technology called StreamWork. In one of the comments posted on their website we can find a suggestion why the technology is so important: "*What we're seeing now is that Google Wave protocol is gaining traction and has the potential to become the standard protocol for real-time collaboration between systems from different vendors. This in the same way as SMTP is the protocol that allows e-mail servers from different vendors to communicate.*"[71]

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[69] Link: Google website – Cloud computing
[70] Link: Quote from I/O developers conerence
[71] Link: SAP website

The knowledge in this case is the technology underlying a specific form of communication. It is taken by others and put into practice. In this way Google solution is distributed quickly on the individual users market through other parties that uses their ideas.

The protocol is the last mechanisms I wanted to present by which Google promotes its vision of modern Internet. Together with other described issues: Google's type of narration, cognitive maps it presents, type of relation it builds with its users, values and attitudes it promotes, the platform model it implements as well as the closed-loop effect it may induce – all of these issues should be discussed from the power relations perspective.

„As society looks to regulate an emerging form of information distribution, be it the telegraph or radio or the internet, it is in many ways making decisions about what that technology is, what it is for, what sociotechnical arrangements are best suited to help it achieve that and what it must not be allowed to become. This is a semantic debate as much as anything else: what we call such things, what precedents we see as most analogous and how we characterize its technical workings drive how we set conditions for it."[72]

Tarleton Gillespie, *"The politics of 'platforms'"*

Google discourse characteristics described in the Analysis part form a coherent whole. In this part I would like to discuss in what way they are linked with each other sum up what power relations they involve. At the end I have outlined few reflections about opportunities but also problems they bring for knowledge-based economy.

Since in the theory I have defined discourse quite broadly as a system of knowledge that limits our way of thinking, the analysis includes many different aspects of it. First of all it consists of values such as openness and transparency of information, shareability, freedom of speech and „collaboration imperative". The values can be found mainly in the language Google uses – the most obvious part of the discourse. The analysis of the language included both specificity of used vocabulary and metaphors (users, platform, cloud, wave) and some strategies of communication: building up solidarity with the audience, dichotomization of cognitive maps, confrontational style when they compare themselves with competitors etc. Since Foucault's notion of discourse indicates also practices and institutions as „carriers" of ideas and values, in the analysis I have included also descriptions of services offered by Google.

On the one side described characteristics constitute Google discourse – the way this company talks about the Internet and consequently also the way they act upon it. On the other it is just a part of broader discourse about the Web that includes many other parties: individual users, other companies, states etc. From this point of view, Google with its own standpoint takes part in the struggle concerning actual and future shape of this communication platform. Described characteristics are elements of strategies aimed at perpetuation and further popularization of Google perspective. *„These are efforts not only to sell, convince, persuade, protect, triumph or condemn, but to make claims about what these technologies are and are not, and what should and should not be expected of them. In other words, they represent an*

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[72] Gillespie T., *The politics of 'platforms'* in *New Media & Society, p.355*

attempt to establish the very criteria by which these technologies will be judged, built directly into the terms by which we know them."[73] A set of such strategies constitutes the Google model (business model as well as power relations model). In this place I would like to discuss some of the most important strategies that emerges from the analysis.

The platform mechanism means that Google is a mediator of information between other parties as well as information gatekeeper. From the power relations perspective such a position gives an access to the information and the possibility to regulate an access to them for others. The knowledge they get about their users and enterprises that conduct their activities „on the top" of their platforms can be used for advertising but also to personalize services and to adjust communication and offers to particular customers. From the marketing perspective such knowledge is invaluable and gives a competitive advantage to Google and its "affiliates" who will decide to cooperate with company from Mountain View.

The mechanism brings the risk of abuse which has been already discussed but also other risks as for example a leakage of corporate information of its business customers. On the one side it creates a challenge for Google communication to convince other companies about safety of their data. On the other it makes other companies dependant on "the medium" they use and thus even strengthens Google position.

Participatory model maximize the flow of information on its platforms and provides Google with these information that otherwise could not be obtained – personal opinions, needs and preferences. It is based on encouraging of users to share as many information as it is possible and collecting all the possible data. It is aimed to "*discover people's actual needs, including needs they can't always articulate*"[74]. This single strategy aimed to develop certain attitude in the Internet users is very important component of the whole mechanisms and seems to be similar to what Foucault calls a "confession"[75]. Google creates spaces where people can communicate with each other and at the same time indirectly share their opinions with the Google. The demand for information is created, users by definition are expected to "communicate themselves". The questions appears: How does it involve power relations? How interactivity can become the instrument of control?[76]

It appears that participation strategy is crucial component deciding about stabilization

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[73] Ibidem. p.359
[74] Link: Google website – design principles
[75] Foucault M., *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction,* Random, New York 1978
[76] Gillespie T., op.cit. p.309

of the discourse promoted by Google. The model leads us to specific understanding of power that I have tried to explain in the theory. The control does not need violence or discipline understood in its classical meaning to make people act in specified way. The "soft power" works through people, by the internalization of language and ideas it conveys rather then by forcing or struggling. In a similar way as the usage of specific language influence the way we think, also the usage of applications and technology shapes the users. First of all it lets them think about the Internet according to these values and ideas promoted by Google which have been described in the analysis. Secondly, what was not mentioned yet, it shapes how they think about themselves. It is especially important because the image of the individual that he builds up in the interaction with the technologies translates to other areas of social life. Google official communication as well as the model of open Internet platform imply a set of presuppositions about its receiver and user. She/He is a liberal individual who can decide by himself and takes a responsibility for his actions. She/He makes an autonomous decisions and thus should have an access to all the data. She/He wants to share information about himself with others and he wants to get a personalized set of information. Of course when I say that these beliefs are presuppositions I do not want to suggest that there is something wrong about them. It is only about the awareness of their existence and limitations they entail. While these characteristics are emphasized others must be marginalized.

Although, nowadays these assumptions may seem obvious for most of the representatives of the "western world" some struggles that Google has in China or Middle East show that they should not be taken for granted. It is not only about differences in cultural values. These presuppositions may appear not congruent for many other reasons. These reasons which are important from the perspective of our topic concern especially the business world. The emphasis put on these characteristics may be not accurate with enterprises where for example transparency is perceived as a value but only within precisely defined structures inside of the company. The information flow should be rather controlled then open and organization workers can make their own decisions only to a certain extant. They can share only some of the information only with clearly specified others and sometimes cannot take responsibility by themselves.

The increase of the number of users and consequently also information they transmit through Google triggers a **self-reinforcing mechanism**. The closed-loop effect which has been already described in the analysis stabilizes Google's strong market position and at the same time makes it possible to implement its ideas in the new fields. The more information it gets

the more adequate search results it presents and the more relevant adds it displays. It brings business customers who want to use for example its advertising platforms and software developers who want to get an access to large numbers of potential clients. This in turn makes that even more people decide to use its various services and share information about their preferences and expectations. The circle is closed.

An important conclusion that can be drawn from the description of these processes is that **the attention** of Internet users is the stake of the discursive struggle. In the commercialized Internet it is the source of monetization and thus also source of power. The whole advertising system with its reporting functions is designed to maximize efficiency from the perspective of the attention that is expressed in "clicks". This conclusion leads to an interesting concern.

On the one side an Internet mediated communication is certainly a two-way communication. It is described in the literature as an interactive and blurring the divisions between a regular sender and receiver. On the other hand, it seems that there is a "second layer" that does not support this interactivity. The first layer includes all the content: what people write to each other, pictures and videos they post, documents they work on etc. The second layer results from the fact that in every communication technology there is a provider, an agent that enables and regulates the communication and thus has an access to a wider range of information. It includes mentioned before "clicks" that users do, a traffic, from where to where they move, their physical localization etc. All of these signals are interpreted as indicators of users attention, their preferences, likes and dislikes. What is important from the power relations perspective is that they are collected only in one direction, users has no "attention signals".

In this place it would be useful to recall another metaphor coined by Foucault that is sometimes used in debates concerning Internet privacy – the panopticon[77]. The concept derives from Foucault studies on the prison system but it is used as a general metaphor of the the control mechanism. In short, the control in panopticon mechanism is based on a specific relation between the observer and the observed. The design makes that You know that You may be observed all the time, but You never know if it actually happens. Potentially observed person is limited only by the knowledge of the risk, by the awareness of such possibility. A similar model can be found also in the described services but the Internet mechanism is driven by market objectives. It does not want to discipline in the way the prison does – prevent from

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[77] Foucault M., *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the Prison,* Vintage Books, 1979

doing something considered by the "watchman" as inadmissible. On the contrary it engages and produces market needs and desires. It does not tell you what you should choose but it shows from what you can choose. This was recognized as an opportunity for businesses to reach, to know and to shape customer's needs. The Google seems to play a role of the mediator between the content created by the others and users attention recognized on the basis of information that only they have an access to.

These are the main power mechanisms described in the analysis that are aimed to stabilize Google market position and promote its vision of the Internet. Now I would like to sum up shortly what does it bring for enterprises and the knowledge-based economy. Of course, most of the opportunities comes from the Internet itself but they are identified by Google and developed to uncover new possibilities. It bounds the Internet with business world, finds out newer and newer forms of public communication, market research, advertising, collaboration applications and eventually also new forms of monetization.

First of all it opens an opportunity of individualized contact between the company and its customers. Findability that the Google search engine brings, makes it possible to reach a targeted audience with organizational websites, blogs, advertisements. Direct advertising with personalized offers is simply something that was not possible even just few years ago. It is accompanied with even more revolutionary communication in the opposing direction. Feedback about an efficiency of AdWords and marketing campaigns as well as statistical data about the website traffic from Google Analytics provide organization with unprecedented amount of data about their potential customers. Literally, the Internet can be seen as questionnaire by which a constant marketing research is realized on millions people sample.

Secondly it shows some new ways of development of information management within the company. Proposed applications at very low cost allow for real time collaboration and an access to theoretically non limited number of documents from any device, no matter on what operating system it works. At the same time, by providing other parties with programming code of these applications and marketplace where they can reach broad audience, they are fostering a software development in the direction designed by them.

Of course there are also some threats as for example safety issues. Arguments risen in the public debates concerning data safety refer mostly to individual people and their right to privacy. Since the boundaries of this notion are not precisely defined, also debates are blurted and it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from them. The situation look different with

corporate data which are important from the organizational strategic goals. Cloud based model with non-local information placed in different places in the world does not evoke confidence regarding data safety and their constant availability.

Another disadvantage that can be identified concern limitations of advertising offered by Google. In traditional model the data obtained from the marketing research are owned by the company and can be used for advertising purposes whenever it is necessary. In this case, Google has the knowledge that is needed to match a proper advertisement to right person. Companies do not have the data and thus become dependent on Google services.

Summing up, technological opportunities bring some corresponding to them changes in business models developed by modern companies. Very good explanation of the wider perspective gives Eran Fisher in his article *Contemporary Technology Discourse and the Legitimation of Capitalism*: "*At the center of contemporary discourse on technology – or the digital discourse – is the assertion that network technology ushers in a new phase of capitalism which is more democratic, participatory and de-alienating*"[78]

These are the features which were indicated in the analysis also in the Google discourse. They result with decentralization of businesses and a possibility to lead a small company at a global scale. The fact that such notions as 'collaboration' or 'communities' are replacing strictly economic terms 'consumers' or 'commodities' is not negligible as well. They indicate that "*The process of value creation is shifting gradually from a product and company-centric view towards a view of networked active co-creators who are becoming the locus of value creation*"[79]

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[78] Fisher Eran, *Contemporary Technology Discourse and the Legitimation of Capitalism* in *European Journal of Social Theory* 2010;13; Sage Publications, p.229

[79] Jose van Dijc, David Nieborg, *Wikinomics and its discontents: a critical analysis of Web 2.0 business manifestos* in *New Media & Society* 2009;11; Sage Publications, p.863

„Types of machines are easily matched with each type of society — not that machines are determining, but because they express those social forms capable of generating them and using them"

<div align="right">

Gilles Deleuze
Postscript on the Societies of Control.

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As I have outlined it in the introduction the purpose of this paper was to describe and analyse some characteristic features of the discourse about the modern Internet. Keeping in mind the growing role of information for globalized world and its capitalist foundations I have decided to focus on those discursive characteristics which are crucial for the business world. The Google is analysed as an example of the company that shapes how the Web is used and thus influences the way in which knowledge-based economy is developed.

The Internet that we know nowadays was commercialized at the beginning of the last decade. Consequently, an attention of its users has become a stake of the struggles that take place between information industry companies. As a powerful tool of connectivity it has brought business closer to their potential clients and made market choices possible in the private space of their homes. At the same time it has gave an access to unprecedented number of data and possibilities of effective organization of them. The Google seems to appear on the market as a company that recognize these changes, decide to implement them in their business model and take further with their own ideas and solutions. I have tried to describe them in this paper with the special emphasis put on power mechanisms they introduce to reach these goals. Of course I do not know what drives Google decisions: whether the real drive to develop connectivity, profits they gain or a mix of both. From the perspective of posted questions such a distinction between intentions and consequences is not important. The results remain the same.

At the end of this thesis I would like to highlight few other quite general conclusions that did not appear in the previous parts.

First few words of critiques. The neutrality imposed by Google as a core value underlying its services seems to contradict basic assumptions of discourse analysis approach. The idea of "pure information" that is presented to the received presuppose that the process in which information are organized can be unbiased. It is to be ensured through mathematical algorithm that removes the human factor. Nevertheless, the algorithm components are

designed by people in the same way as the websites appearance on which information are presented.

In a similar way, the ideology of openness and transparency seems to blur the fact that there are simply different kind of users with different rights (e.g. children), possibilities (e.g. financial possibilities) and limited by other relations (e.g. corporate workers). Next to the values of transparency, functions the practical, complex mechanism deciding who should have an access to which content.

Second remark refers to broader economic changes that occur next to, but also as a consequences, of described here processes. Detlev Zwick describe them very briefly: *„database markets collapse the product-consumption dichotomy by manufacturing customers as commodities”*[80]. Thanks to the computing technology the consumption process has become also a production – production of the data. Databeses with information about precisely targeted groups of people that fit companies profiles have become extremely valuable products. Very strong wording: „customers as commodities” indicates that users, who are the source of these information, can be treated by companies as an important resources. Important to the extent they supply companies with the information about themselves.[81] This state of affairs has some wider social consequences. An imperative to get to know customers needs requires from people to make newer and newer market choices, to redefine themselves constantly. Although it raises some controversy I do not want to say that this is simply wrong. My point is that there are some changes that occur and that they are sufficiently important to become a subject of further reflection as well as public debates.

Google on the one side tries to take advantage of the opportunities resulting from their search engine success and a huge amount of data they have an access to. On the other it tries to avoid allegation of selling someone's information. Consequently, there is no transaction refering precisely to the data, Google business clients do not become owners of the databases. Nevertheless the model allows to assure them that precisely defined group of people will get their advertisements.

The last remark refers to the Deleuze's quote put at the beginning of this part. It is just another explanation why the discussed changes are important. Technologies we use are in close correspondence to the way we think. They reflect some central topics of our times and

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[80]   Zwick D., Knott J.D., *Manufacturing Customers: The databases as a means of production* in *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 2009; 9. Sage Publications, p.221
[81]   Zwick D., op.cit. p.238

provide with metaphors that are applied in other spheres of life. It refers especially to communication technologies - those that underlie the way we use language. Regardless of whether described in this thesis changes are viewed positively or negatively they do become a crucial factors influencing the whole social world as well as small, ordinary things we do every day. It seems that some of them are happening in an unnoticed way and are perceived as natural consequences of the technology development. I have tried to show that there are some concrete parties involved and some complex mechanisms that drives these changes. Because of their importance I am strongly convinced they should become a part of public debates which are not limited to commercial sector only.

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4. Google website - Apps – Colaboration
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