The Five Companies That Own Your Identity

Google — 1.8 billion accounts. They have your email, your searches, your location history, your photos, your voice recordings, and your authentication to everything else. Revenue: $307 billion/year. From selling predictions about you.

Apple — 2.2 billion devices. They can remotely disable your phone, remove apps you paid for, block you from installing software they don't approve of, and revoke your purchases. Revenue: $383 billion/year. Including a 30% tax on every app.

Meta — 3.7 billion users. That's 46% of all humans. They hold your relationships, your messages, your community groups. In countries where WhatsApp is how people communicate, a Meta outage is a national emergency. Revenue: $135 billion/year. From your social graph.

GitHub — 100 million developers. Your code, your professional history, your portfolio. In 2019 they blocked developers in Iran, Syria, and Cuba. Not for anything they did — for where they were born. Owned by Microsoft.

Microsoft — 1.2 billion Office users. Your employer uses Microsoft. Microsoft controls your work email, documents, and login. Your job depends on your Microsoft account. Your rent depends on your job. Revenue: $212 billion/year.

Combined: **$1.037 trillion per year.** Funded by data you gave them for free.

How It Happened

Nobody handed Google their identity. It happened one click at a time.

2004: Free email. You sign up.

2007: Pretty phone. You create an Apple ID.

2008: Your friends are on Facebook. You join.

2011: "Sign in with Google" appears. Easier than a new password. You click it.

2020: Pandemic. Everything's online. These accounts aren't convenience anymore — they're survival.

Each click was rational. The total is captivity.

What They Know vs. What You Know

Google knows: every search you've made, every email you've sent, every place you've been, every purchase, every app, your face, your voice, your fingerprint, every website you've visited.

You know about Google: it has a colorful logo.

That's the deal you agreed to. Paragraph 47 of a document no human has ever finished reading.

The Ban Button

There is no trial. No jury. No appeal with a guaranteed timeline. No public defender. No presumption of innocence.

There is a terms of service agreement and a button.

One person at one company presses it and you stop existing. Your email, your photos, your contacts, your authentication, your phone — gone. Not because you broke a law. Because you broke a rule written by a company you never voted for, in a document you never read, governed by a legal system in a country you may never have visited.

The US government needs a warrant to read your email. Google reads every email you send. You agreed to it. Paragraph 47.

Why This Hasn't Been Fixed

Because fixing it costs them a trillion dollars a year.

Every dollar these companies earn depends on being the identity layer. "Sign in with Google" isn't a feature — it's a monopoly. If you could prove your identity without Google, you wouldn't need Google. If you didn't need Google, Google couldn't sell predictions about you. If Google couldn't sell predictions about you, there goes $307 billion.

Multiply by five companies. That's why.

It's not a conspiracy. It's just business. Your identity is their product. They're not going to help you take it back.

The Fix

Four people stand in a room. Same hour, everywhere on Earth, four times a year. Your phones confirm you were there. Everyone signs off on the head count.

That's it. You're verified. No Google. No Apple. No Meta. No GitHub. No Microsoft.

Your neighbors confirm you exist. Not a server in California.

BEFORE	AFTER
Google decides you exist	Your neighbors confirm you exist
Apple permits you to use your phone	You own your phone
Meta holds your friendships hostage	Your friendships are between you and your friends
One company bans you = digital death	Nobody can ban your body
$1.037 trillion/year to maintain	Free

The Part That Hurts

They didn't take your identity. You gave it to them.

One click at a time. Because it was easy. Because it was free. Because everyone else did.

And now five companies you never voted for, in a country most of you don't live in, get to decide whether you exist.

You can take it back. Same way you gave it away — one decision at a time. Starting with: stand in a room with three humans and say "I'm here."

No trillion-dollar company required. Just people.

The research version is (Applebee & Combe, 2026, "*Platform Gatekeeping*"). The trillion-dollar number is in the references. We're not telling you to delete anything. We're just asking: who presses the button?