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# Theft Of Trade Secrets From Google

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# Case Background



**Anthony Scott  
Levandowski**

Born March 15,1980 [1]

- French-American Self Driving Car Engineer. [2]
- Google- (2007- 27<sup>th</sup> January,2016) – Software Engineer. [2]
  - Founding Member – Project Chauffeur(Waymo). [2]
- Signed employment agreements with Google – (2007, 2009, 2012). [2]
- Downloaded 14000 project Chauffeur files – December 11, 2015. [2]
- Transferred the files onto his personal laptop – (October’15 – January’16). [2]
- Resigned from Google without prior notice. –January 27, 2016. [2]

# Case Background Cont'd

- 280 Systems(Ottomotto)- (2015-2016)- Founder. [2]  
- (May 2016)- Tyto. [3]
- Uber – (2016-2017) - Robocar Project (Ottomotto). [3]
- Charged with 33 counts of theft and attempted theft of trade secrets. – August 27, 2019.[3]
- Uber fired Levandowski in 2017 and then settled a lawsuit from Alphabet over the misuse of trade secrets.[4]
- Filed for bankruptcy because of owing \$179M to Alphabet (Parent Company of Google).[4]
- Found guilty to one of the 33 charges and was sentenced to 18 months in prison - August 2020. [5]
- Pardoned less than six months later on January 20, 2021, the last day of Donald Trump's presidency.[6]

# Ethical Issues

- Stored files without the prior consent of Google.
- Revealing previous employers trade secrets.
- Sold the rights of the project to Uber and did not inform about the origin of the files.
- Did not inform Uber about the involvement of other engineers.
- Violation of the agreement of privacy policy.
- Conducting unethical act and harming professional reputation.

# Engineer's Responsibility to Public Safety

- ✓ To protect the privacy of the public.
- ✓ Prevent the spreading of data to the wrong hand so that no misuse of confidential data can occur.
- ✓ Follow proper engineering standards by taking all safety precautions before implementing any project.

# Social Impacts

## ❖ Positive Societal Impacts

- Engineers will think twice before repeating the same offense.
- Engineers will try to be more professional to avoid complications.

## ❖ Negative Societal Impacts

- As the punishment was reduced, some engineers may dare to repeat the same offense twice.
- Engineering society lost a skillful engineer.
- Anthony lost his dignity.

# Engineer's Rights and Responsibilities

## ❖ Rights

- ❑ To store the files for himself with the prior consent of the employer.
- ❑ To know the terms and conditions imposed by the employer.
- ❑ To have proper access to the project (if involved) relevant files.
- ❑ To get pardon (if valid reasons are explained).

## ❖ Responsibilities

- ❑ Asking permission from the employer which files can be stored.
- ❑ To protect the terms and conditions imposed by the employer.
- ❑ Inform employer about the details of the files used in a project.
- ❑ Acknowledging fault and seeking pardon.

# Right Actions

- Requesting permission to store files for further use.
- Informing employer regarding the origin of files.
- Involvement of other engineers regarding the files should be informed.
- To abide by the terms and conditions imposed by the employer.
- Showing professional attitude.
- Accepting errors and seeking pardon if proven guilty.

# Conclusion

- Stealing trade secrets is a punishable crime. No matter how or whoever is involved in this crime.
- A professional engineer should never involve in anything that may harm the professional reputation.
- By any chance, if any engineer is involved in any crime, he must accept his errors.
- Employer should examine employee or project properly before engaging themselves.

# References

[1] LinkedIn, “Anthony Levandowski”, available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/anthony-levandowski/>

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[4] “Anthony Levandowski: Ex-Google engineer sentenced for theft - BBC News.” Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53659805>.

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