

It's all about Google, isn't it?

On Wednesday, it drove past our Redwood City store. "It" being the Google Car, the one with the weird ball poised atop a derrick maybe 6 feet above its roof, with multiple cameras recording the view from every angle as it drives down the street. So what do you do when you see the Google Car? You run out to get a better look, of course! Although the truth is a bit different; you hope to gain the digital age's version of immortality by being viewable yourself on Google Maps. That's part #1.

Part #2 concerns Egypt. Google marketing executive Wael Ghonim became known as a [pivotal figure in the democratization of information access in Egypt](#), even being held in a jail for a number of days (and thankfully released unharmed). Having recently been to Egypt (this past December), with images of the country still fresh in my mind, I have pictured the unthinkable, something corporate Google must publicly fear and secretly think yeah, that would be pretty cool, but could never be allowed. A drawing of one of the Pyramids of Giza with a Google corporate flag flying on top.

Clearly, that would be in poor taste for so many reasons, not the least of which is that Google's marketing guy was simply a facilitator, someone who helped establish corridors of communication that helped give voice to dreams and ideas. It was a revolution of the people, not the media.

Or so I desperately wish to believe. Without the images shown to the world on TV, without the instant gatherings fostered by Facebook & Twitter postings, might Mubarak still be in power? Is Egypt an example of what China fears? Perhaps I shouldn't fear the role of corporations in giving voice to a people, but embrace it. I'm really conflicted on this issue. It certainly puts any petty concerns about the manipulation of Yelp reviews in perspective. --Mike--