

## Google Gets Another Exec in the White House

Andrew McLaughlin is set to become the second Google exec to join the Obama administration, according to the New York Times. McLaughlin, who spent plenty of time in the limelight as Google's head of global public policy and senior counsel, will serve as CTO Aneesh Chopra's deputy chief technology officer.

Google acknowledged that McLaughlin has left the company, but the White House hasn't made the move official. The Times cited two unnamed sources in its report.

A staffer since January 2004, McLaughlin will join former colleague Katie Stanton, who was a business development executive at Google before becoming the administration's director of citizen participation. Sonal Shah, head of the White House Office of Social Innovation, led global development at Google.org, and CEO Eric Schmidt is on the president's 20-member Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

For a while, Schmidt was thought to be the leading candidate for Chopra's job, though in November he told CNBC's Jim Cramer that, "I love working at Google and I'm very happy to stay at Google, so the answer is no."

Not everyone was happy with the Chopra appointment -- many pointed to the former Virginia technology secretary's lack of IT chops. McLaughlin, previously chief policy officer and CFO of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, will bring a little more Silicon Valley heft. But the move isn't going to quiet suggestions that the White House's ties with Google are too close. Google is the subject of two federal antitrust inquiries.

Martin Varsavsky, CEO of wireless network company FON, argued at the Huffington Post that the problems with the Google connection are a matter of hype:

In general I don't understand why journalists believe that a move from industry to government is somehow very different from a move from industry to industry. If Andrew McLaughlin had moved from Google to Cisco, Cisco's CEO would not hire him thinking that he will promote the interests of Google at Cisco. When a banker moves from Goldman Sachs to Morgan Stanley, a direct competitor, people at Morgan Stanley consider this a great success. But Varsavsky may want to avoid the Goldman Sachs references. That investment bank did pretty well for itself last year in the federal bailout, and many credited the placement of former Goldman execs, like Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, in positions of political power.