

Former State Department official to head 'Google Ideas'

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Jared Cohen, a former State Department official credited with helping bring social networking and other Web 2.0 tools to US diplomacy, pictured here in 2009, has been tapped to head a new division at Google called "Google Ideas."

A former State Department official credited with helping bring social networking and other Web 2.0 tools to US diplomacy has been tapped to head a new division at Google called "Google Ideas."

Jared Cohen, 28, left the State Department last week after four years on the Policy Planning staff, during which he was a leading advocate of using the Web to engage in what has been called "21st Century statecraft."

Cohen, in an interview with Foreign Policy magazine published on Tuesday, said that [Google Ideas](#) is "basically a think/do tank."

"Much of the model for it is built off of my experiences on the Policy Planning staff," he said, which he described as "the secretary of state's personal start-up."

"In the same way Policy Planning works by bringing together a lot of stakeholders in government, out of government, and across different sectors, so, too, will Google Ideas do something very similar," Cohen said.

"It's not designed to be, 'Let's pool all of Google's resources and tackle global challenges,'" the former State Department official told Foreign Policy.

Cohen said challenges Google Ideas may focus on include "hard challenges like counterterrorism, counterradicalization, and nonproliferation, to some of the ones people might expect it to focus on, like development and citizen empowerment.

"What I'm interested in is the SWAT-team model of building teams of stakeholders with different resources and perspectives to troubleshoot challenges," Cohen said.

Google already supports humanitarian causes through its philanthropic arm Google.org and various other initiatives such as "Project 10 to the 100th," a commitment to provide 10 million dollars in funding to five ideas submitted by the public.

While at the State Department, Cohen, who has more than 300,000 followers on microblogging service Twitter, also led delegations of technology executives to Iraq and other countries.

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