

2343 **Entering the Quantum Era—How Firefox got fast again and where it's going to get faster** (hacks.mozilla.org) submitted 1 day ago by [\\_Garbage\\_](#) 550 comments share save hide report

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[\[-\] e1805](#) 176 points 23 hours ago

The joke implies that, instead of using all that memory to display web pages, Chrome is using it to store data for Google, effectively turning your computer into a (mini-) server for Google. The fact you can use Chrome as a web browser is suggested to be a minor feature, instead of the main purpose of the application.

To understand the joke, you have to know a bit about how Google stores their data. Google has been an early and steadfast advocate of fault-tolerant [distributed databases](#); heck, they created several of their own from scratch, most famously [BigTable](#) and [F1](#). The purpose of this type of software is to spread data out over many computers (that's the "distributed") to increase speed, and to decrease risk of data loss ("fault-tolerance") by storing multiple cross-checked copies of the data. This is Serious Business for them, as Google has a truly ridiculous amount of data stored -- they needed [two and a half million servers](#) to fit it all back in 2016, and they've only added more since then. That kind of capacity isn't cheap -- again, in 2016, Google spent the better part of eleven billion dollars on their datacenters, whose primary purpose is to, well, *store data!*

Another bit of foreknowledge is that many Google services have a hidden *quid-pro-quo* that, while not exactly nefarious, might not be immediately apparent to their end users. For example, the (free) Google voice service and its voicemail-to-text feature allowed Google to build better voice-recognition software, which is how their "Okay Google" feature works as well as it does. Google's ReCAPTCHA originally helped them digitize books, and its newest incarnation, the one with the "check the cars/street signs/shops," almost certainly has you training their image-recognition AI, which will likely find its way into self-driving cars sooner rather than later. Projects like Android and Google Fiber are really initiatives to get more people using more Google services, and thus sell more Google-syndicated ads, earning Google more in extra revenue than they spent on the projects. Nothing evil, but as they say, there's no such thing as a free lunch.

Finally, both database software and Chrome are notorious for slurping up as much memory as they can get their hands on.

Put it all together, and you get a suggestion that Google is using Chrome to help them store some of their massive quantities of data -- storing it in *your* computer's memory in exchange for your use of a fast web browser! It's not true, of course, and clearly not something they'd be likely to do for a number of reasons, but it's still not wholly out of character -- which is what makes the joke funny.

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[\[-\] Nexuist](#) 1 point 9 hours ago

What a great explanation :D

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