

The Trump administration has expanded Palantir's work with the government, spreading the company's technology — which could easily merge data on Americans — throughout agencies.



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May 30, 2025

In March, President Trump signed an executive order calling for the federal government to share data across agencies, raising questions over whether he might compile a master list of personal information on Americans that could give him untold surveillance power.

Mr. Trump has not publicly talked about the effort since. But behind the scenes, officials have quietly put technological building blocks into place to enable his plan. In particular, they have turned to one company: Palantir, the data analysis and technology firm.

The Trump administration has expanded Palantir's work across the federal government in recent months. The company has received more than \$113 million in federal government spending since Mr. Trump took office, according to public records, including additional funds from existing contracts as well as new contracts with the Department of Homeland Security and the Pentagon. (This does not include a \$795 million contract that the Department of Defense awarded the company last week, which has not been spent.)

Representatives of Palantir are also speaking to at least two other agencies — the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service — about buying its technology, according to six government officials and Palantir employees with knowledge of the discussions.

The push has put a key Palantir product called Foundry into at least four federal agencies, including D.H.S. and the Health and Human Services Department. Widely adopting Foundry, which organizes and analyzes data, paves the way for Mr. Trump to easily merge information from different agencies, the government officials said.

Creating detailed portraits of Americans based on government data is not just a pipe dream. The Trump administration has already sought access to hundreds of data points on citizens and others through government databases, including their bank account numbers, the amount of their student debt, their medical claims and any disability status.

Mr. Trump could potentially use such information to advance his political agenda by policing immigrants and punishing critics, Democratic lawmakers and critics have said. Privacy advocates, student unions and labor rights organizations have filed lawsuits to block data access, questioning whether the government could weaponize people's personal information.



Migrants apprehended by U.S. agents in November. President Trump could potentially use government data to police immigrants. Paul Ratje for The New York Times

Palantir's selection as a chief vendor for the project was driven by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, according to the government officials. At least three DOGE members formerly worked at Palantir, while two others had worked at companies funded by Peter Thiel, an investor and a founder of Palantir.

Some current and former Palantir employees have been unnerved by the work. The company risks becoming the face of Mr. Trump's political agenda, four employees said, and could be vulnerable if data on Americans is breached or hacked. Several tried to distance the company from the efforts, saying any decisions about a merged database of personal information rest with Mr. Trump and not the firm.



Palantir has had federal contracts for years, including for defense work. In 2023, it showed a military vehicle in Las Vegas. Patrick T. Fallon/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images



Palantir worked with the U.S. government on vaccine distribution during the pandemic. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

This month, 13 former employees signed a letter urging Palantir to stop its endeavors with Mr. Trump. Linda Xia, a signee who was a Palantir engineer until last year, said the problem was not with the company's technology but with how the Trump administration intended to use it.

"Data that is collected for one reason should not be repurposed for other uses," Ms. Xia said. "Combining all that data, even with the noblest of intentions, significantly increases the risk of misuse."

Mario Trujillo, a lawyer with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital rights group, said the government typically collected data for good reasons, such as to accurately levy taxes. But “if people can’t trust that the data they are giving the government will be protected, that it will be used for things other than what they gave it for, it will lead to a crisis of trust,” he said.

Palantir declined to comment on its work with the Trump administration and pointed to its blog, which details how the company handles data.

“We act as a data processor, not a data controller,” it said. “Our software and services are used under direction from the organisations that license our products: these organisations define what can and cannot be done with their data; they control the Palantir accounts in which analysis is conducted.”

The White House did not comment on the use of Palantir’s technology and referred to Mr. Trump’s executive order, which said he wanted to “eliminate information silos and streamline data collection across all agencies to increase government efficiency and save hard-earned taxpayer dollars.”

Some details of Palantir’s government contracts and DOGE’s work to compile data were previously reported by Wired and CNN.

Palantir, which was founded in 2003 by Alex Karp and Mr. Thiel and went public in 2020, specializes in finding patterns in data and presenting the information in ways that are easy to process and navigate, such as charts and maps. Its main products include Foundry, a data analytics platform, and Gotham, which helps organize and draw conclusions from data and is tailored for security and defense purposes.

In an interview last year, Mr. Karp, Palantir’s chief executive, said the company’s role was “the finding of hidden things” by sifting through data.



Palantir's role is "the finding of hidden things" by sifting through data, Mr. Karp has said. Mark Abramson for The New York Times

Palantir has long worked with the federal government. Its government contracts span the Defense Department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. During the pandemic, the Biden administration signed a contract with Palantir to manage the distribution of vaccines through the C.D.C.

Mr. Trump's election in November boosted Palantir's stock, which has risen more than 140 percent since then. Mr. Karp, who donated to the Democratic Party last year, has welcomed Mr. Trump's win and called Mr. Musk the most "qualified person in the world" to remake the U.S. government.

At the I.R.S., Palantir engineers joined in April to use Ffoundry to organize data gathered on American taxpayers, two government officials said. Their work began as a way to create a single, searchable database for the I.R.S., but has since expanded, they said. Palantir is in talks for a permanent contract with the I.R.S., they said.

A Treasury Department representative said that the I.R.S. was updating its systems to serve American taxpayers, and that Palantir was contracted to complete the work with I.R.S. engineers.



At the Internal Revenue Service, Palantir engineers were recently brought in to use Foundry to organize data gathered on American taxpayers, two employees said. Eric Lee/The New York Times

Palantir also recently began helping Immigration and Customs Enforcement's enforcement and removal operations team, according to two Palantir employees and two current and former D.H.S. officials. The work is part of a \$30 million contract that ICE signed with Palantir in April to build a platform to track migrant movements in real time.

Some D.H.S. officials exchanged emails with DOGE officials in February about merging some Social Security information with records kept by immigration officials, according to screenshots of the messages viewed by The New York Times.

In a statement, Tricia McLaughlin, a D.H.S. spokeswoman, did not address Palantir's new work with the agency and said the company "has had contracts with the federal government for 14 years."

Palantir representatives have also held talks with the Social Security Administration and the Department of Education to use the company's technology to organize the agencies' data, according to two Palantir employees and officials in those agencies.

The Social Security Administration and Education Department did not respond to requests for comment.



Palantir has talked with the Social Security Administration about using the company's technology to organize the agency's data. Adriana Zehbrauskas for The New York Times

The goal of uniting data on Americans has been quietly discussed by Palantir engineers, employees said, adding that they were worried about collecting so much sensitive information in one place. The company's security practices are only as

good as the people using them, they said. They characterized some DOGE employees as sloppy on security, such as not following protocols in how personal devices were used.

Ms. Xia said Palantir employees were increasingly worried about reputational damage to the company because of its work with the Trump administration. There is growing debate within the company about its federal contracts, she said.

“Current employees are discussing the implications of their work and raising questions internally,” she said, adding that some employees have left after disagreements over the company’s work with the Trump administration.

Last week, a Palantir strategist, Brianna Katherine Martin, posted on LinkedIn that she was departing the company because of its expanded work with ICE.

“For most of my time here, I found the way that Palantir grappled with the weight of our capabilities to be refreshing, transparent and conscionable,” she wrote. “This has changed for me over the past few months. For me, this is a red line I won’t redraw.”

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A version of this article appears in print on , Section B, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: Palantir Tapped to Compile Americans’ Personal Data