

Michigan Every Day

By Patrick Sullivan and Carole Eberly

Sept. 15, 1997
Domain name Google registered

Larry Page grew up in East Lansing, the son of Dr. Carl Victor Page, a computer science professor at Michigan State University. Page attended the University of Michigan, where he earned a bachelor's degree in engineering, before moving to California to attend Stanford University, where he studied computer science and went on leave before earning a Ph.D.

Page grew up with an interest in computers. While at Michigan, he built a laser printer out of Lego bricks. At Stanford, Page stumbled on how to create a search engine after he took an interest in how websites were linked to one another. Page teamed up with Sergey Brin, a math genius and native of Moscow who also was at Stanford.

They developed an algorithm that ranked websites based on the quantity and quality of the sites that linked to them, a method that returned better search results than existing search engines. Inspired by its possibilities, they named their company Google, after googol, the term for the numeral 1 followed by 100 zeros. Page registered what would become the most valuable real estate on the web on Sept. 15, 1997.

Page may have left his hometown for California but he didn't turn his back on Michigan. In 2007, the company opened an office in Ann Arbor, home to its AdWords division that was to employ as many as 1,000 people.