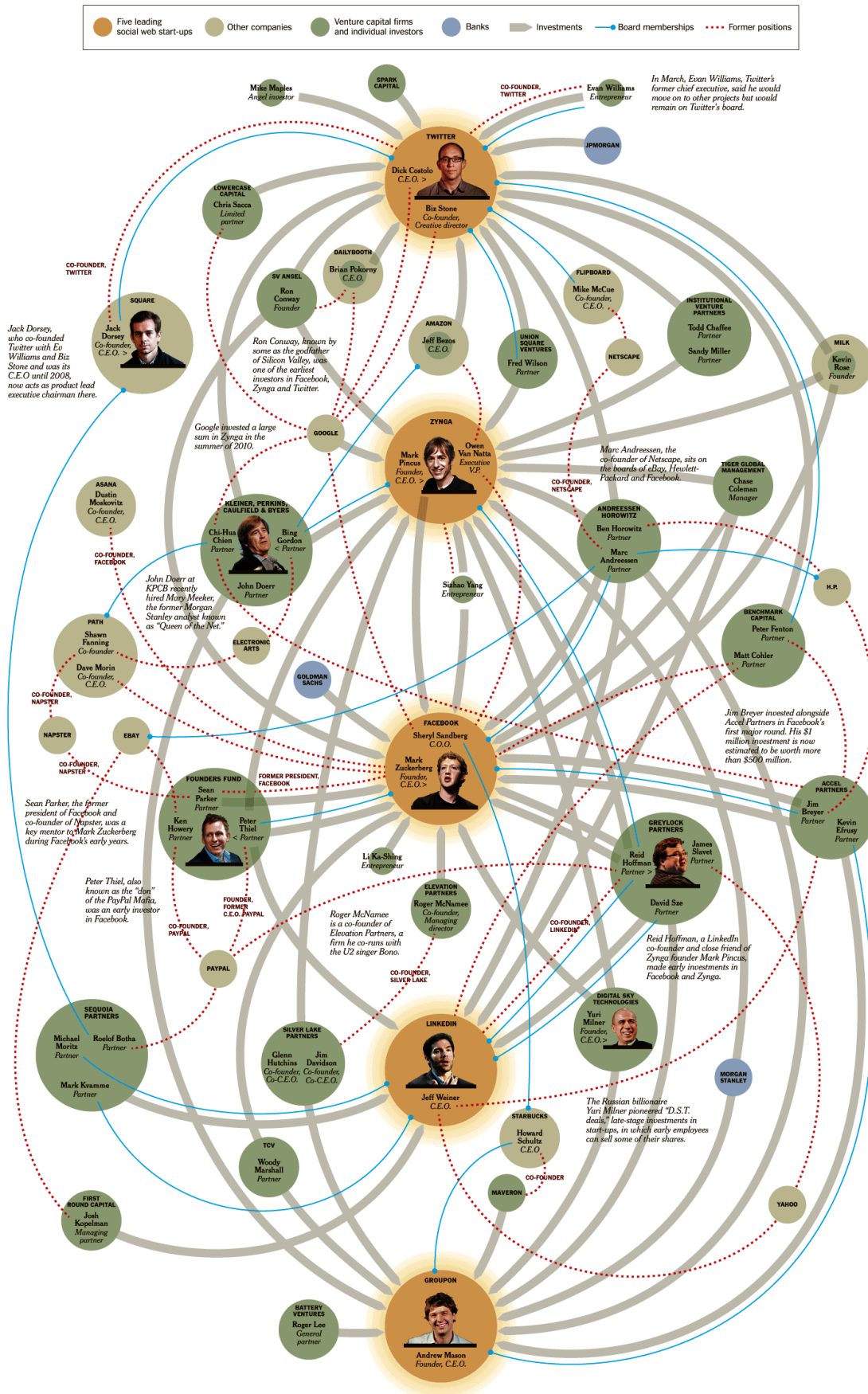


The Money Network



RESEARCH BY EVELYN RUSL; GRAPHIC BY GUILBERT GATES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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By Evelyn M. Rusli

Facebook, Zynga, Groupon, Twitter and LinkedIn have come to define the social Web. Founded within the last five years, the quintet of start-ups is now estimated to be worth more than \$71 billion.

Behind these companies is a tangle of venture capitalists, founders, engineers and angel investors who stand to profit handsomely if these start-ups go public. For some companies, it is just a matter of when. Groupon is considering a 2011 offering that would value the social buying site at \$25 billion, while Facebook has signaled that it will go public next year.

The club of technology insiders is a deeply connected, interdependent network, with many players overlapping at one time or another on the same investments, boards and payrolls.

For example, the Russian billionaire Yuri Milner — who was virtually unknown in Silicon Valley before his first Facebook investment in May 2009 — is a critical connector in this ecosystem. Mr. Milner, the founder of the investment firm DST Global, has plowed more than \$1 billion into Facebook, Zynga and Groupon in the last two years. He has also drawn the Wall Street elite into this world, joining with Goldman Sachs for a \$1.5 billion investment in Facebook.

“Silicon Valley is not only building and investing in social networks, it is an efficient network of relationships where each individual can be activated or brought into a deal with just a few e-mails or phone calls,” said Jeff Clavier, an investor who owns stakes in Twitter and Groupon. “That can be fascinating, or irritating, to watch for outsiders.”