



Mark Zuckerberg wore a shearling jacket in Seoul in February. YONHAP/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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Wait, When Did the Schlubs of Silicon Valley Learn to Dress?

Tech moguls trade hoodies for conventional style amid fresh scrutiny of the industry; dressing down 'is so played out'

By Jacob Gallagher

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It might seem as if there's nothing more to say about [Mark Zuckerberg's](#) clothes. But then one spots that cardigan.



End of an era

For years, the world has seen the [Meta](#) chief executive in all his strident slovenliness. His hoodies and his shower slides. And how Zuckerberg, the ur-underdressed coder, inspired a legion of Silicon Valley clones in their dishwasher colored hoodies and "oh whatever" sneakers.

Some, including this reporter, might have decided they'd written the final graph on his graphite sweatshirts. Not so.

Because this year, a new Zuckerberg has emerged. This Zuck wears suits that appear to have actually received the caring touch of a tailor. This Zuck wears a sturdy shearling jacket, as if he's auditioning for a "Yellowstone" sequel. This Zuck wears a trim ribbed cardigan, and then [posts a photo of himself in it on Instagram](#).

And then answers a follower's question about where said cardigan is from, as if he was some budding style blogger and not one of the richest people on Earth. (It's from John Elliott, according to [@zuck](#).)



Zuckerberg's most extravagant look of the year was the \$7,000 Alexander McQueen dragonfly embroidered blazer he wore to the [pre-wedding festivities of Anant Ambani](#), the youngest son of Asia's richest billionaire.

Zuckerberg's middle-aged makeover [reflects a style maturation](#) reverberating around the tech sector. Dressing down "is so played out," said Andrew Weitz, a Los Angeles-based executive-style consultant who has worked with tech leaders, though not the ones mentioned in this article. Hoodies, a tired cliché.

Executives are "tailored more properly, or what they're wearing is just different," said Weitz. "They don't want to look like everybody else."

Silicon Valley has long basked in its anti-conformist/disruptive ethos—which was embodied in its executives' careless attire. In 1983, the satirical "The Official Silicon Valley Guy Handbook," related that "Clothes make the man, everywhere but in Silicon Valley. Here almost everyone dresses alike, and not very tastefully at that."

Things only degraded further in the early aughts, when entrepreneurs, barely older than teenagers, led companies with billion-dollar valuations while wearing sweats.

Avoiding a 'disruption' look

But the Valley's current vibe shift comes amid fresh scrutiny for the industry. Social-media sites are facing claims of censorship from politicians and talk of new regulation. And sector stalwarts are facing fresh competition on the stock market from surging companies such as [Nvidia](#) and [Super Micro Computer](#).

For execs in the harshest spotlight, there is an imperative to dress in a way that conveys conventionality, not disruption.



TikTok's Shou Zi Chew, shown last year, has been keeping to blue suits and ties. PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER PIKE/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

Look to TikTok's Singaporean CEO Shou Zi Chew, who misfired a year ago [by wearing a Zuckerbergian hoodie](#) in a TikTok video introducing himself to U.S. users. Chew's sweatshirt diplomacy didn't pan out, and he has settled into an unobtrusive blue suit-blue tie uniform during congressional hearings and economic conferences in Qatar.

[Nvidia's CEO Jensen Huang](#) has built the [chip maker](#) into a \$2 trillion enterprise in his omnipresent black leather jacket. The look isn't exactly fresh—Huang could be fronting a U2 cover band—but the jackets fit well and do have an off-the-clock rich guy air.

The leather allegiance has certainly gotten Huang noticed: There are many Reddit threads dedicated to figuring out who makes this 61-year-old's biker jackets.

#Mobwifecore

And then there's [Jeff Bezos](#), whose [post-Amazon-CEO glow-up](#), with the [very #mobwifecore Lauren Sánchez](#) on his arm, has included calf-clinging jeans, black suits and polished double monk dress shoes. Is [Bezos keeping with fashion trends](#)? No, his pants are too suffocating for that.

But he's clearly thinking about what he's wearing and occasionally lands a genuinely good outfit, like the shawl-collared tuxedo he wore to the Vanity Fair Oscar party.



Lauren Sánchez and Jeff Bezos at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party earlier this month. PHOTO: AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Many tech-world watchers speculate that these execs have hired stylists. None have publicly said so though, and through representatives, the honchos mentioned in this article had no comment or didn't respond to a request for comment.

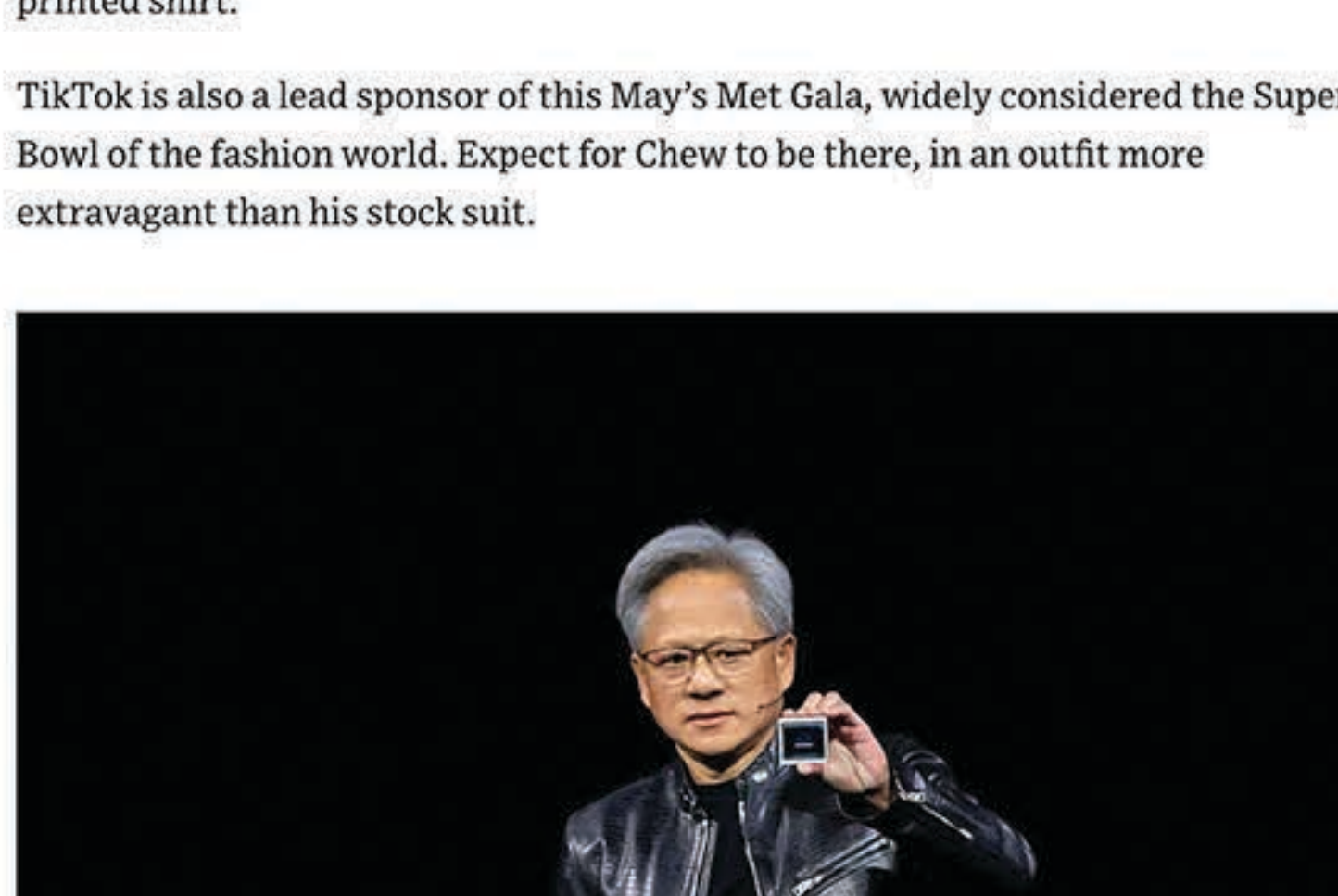
Denizens of Silicon Valley and its satellites say that these high-profile revamps have reverberated across the sector. "People are starting to care about looking respectable," said Victoria Hitchcock, a Bay Area-based stylist.

Through her work, Hitchcock has chipped away at the region's dingy dominance (she has been billed as the hoodie exterminator), dressing men in five-pocket chinos and fine [Zegna](#) sweaters. "They're not proud of seeking help, but they're getting better," she said.

Peter Nguyen, an Austin-based stylist, noted that many of the tech employees that come to him now are older, with more money at hand. "My clients are in a new phase of their lives," he said. "There's still an aspect of wanting to fit in, but be the best dressed."

With all that money sloshing around, executives have also developed a taste for luxury. See: Bezos, who's attended a Dolce & Gabbana fashion show and has worn close to \$1,000 [Brunello Cucinelli](#) jeans and a more than \$1,200 Casablanca printed shirt.

TikTok is also a lead sponsor of this May's Met Gala, widely considered the Super Bowl of the fashion world. Expect for Chew to be there, in an outfit more extravagant than his stock suit.



Jensen Huang of Nvidia in his leather jacket earlier this month. PHOTO: PAUL MORRIS/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

Grown-ups with families

Tech leaders are also no longer the brats they were in the early 2000s, storming the C-suite in bathrobes and flip flops. They are mature adults with children and receding hairlines, closer to receiving an AARP membership card than a college ID. Zuckerberg is 39, nearly twice the age he was when he founded Facebook.

As his company enters its third decade and with its stock at a new high, Zuckerberg is presenting himself as a docile, decently dressed family man.

The executives have also faced repeated governmental inquiries and manage companies with the revenue of many small countries. The [Supreme Court is considering a case about big tech censorship](#) that could have grave implications for companies including Facebook and X, while a bill is moving through Congress that will upend TikTok's U.S. business.

No wonder that Chew of TikTok chose a banal blue suit for meetings on Capitol Hill this month. Nothing says "I do not pose a national security risk" like an outfit right out of a McKinsey-consultant starter pack.

Tech CEOs—often [Elon Musk](#)—continue to behave rashly or espouse conventional ideas about hallucinogens, but much of the sector is trying, haltingly, to grow up. This is a generation that has watched turtlenecked Elizabeth Holmes and stretched T-shirt crypto-conman Sam Bankman-Fried go down in a blaze of federal charges.

There are, of course, outliers. Sam Altman, back from the brink at OpenAI, still seems incapable of letting go of his characterless henleys.

The lesson for the first generation of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs—as epitomized by the original turtleneck Steve Jobs—was to stand out, to brand yourself as a revolutionary and a motherboard guru and watch the money roll in.

The lesson for this generation might well be, keep your head down. Blend in, appear like any other executive and try not to get investigated. Buy the suit, not the hoodie.

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