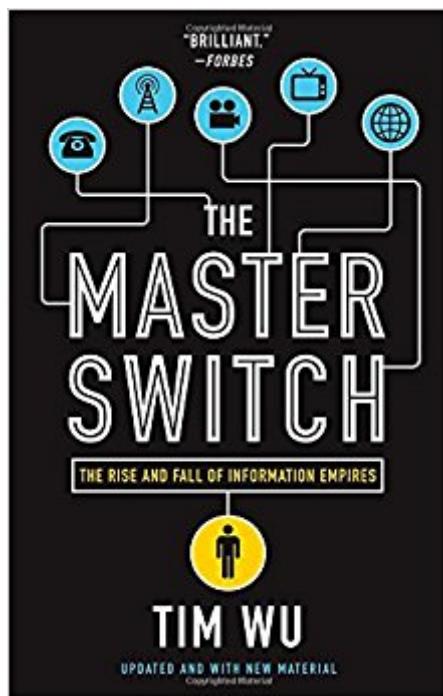The book was found

The Master Switch: The Rise And Fall Of Information Empires

Synopsis

A New Yorker and Fortune Best Book of the YearAnalyzing the strategic maneuvers of todayâ ™s great information powersâ "Apple, Google, and an eerily resurgent AT&Tâ "Tim Wu uncovers a time-honored pattern in which invention begets industry and industry begets empire. It is easy to forget that every development in the history of the American information industryâ "from the telephone to radio to filmâ "once existed in an open and chaotic marketplace inhabited by entrepreneurs and utopians, just as the Internet does today. Each of these, however, grew to be dominated by a monopolist or cartel. In this pathbreaking book, Tim Wu asks: will the Internet follow the same fate? Could the Webâ "the entire flow of American informationâ "come to be ruled by a corporate leviathan in possession of "the master switch"? Here, Tim Wu shows how a battle royale for Internetâ ™s future is brewing, and this is one war we dare not tune out.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. According to Columbia professor and policy advocate Wu (Who Controls the Internet), the great information empires of the 20th century have followed a clear and distinctive pattern: after the chaos that follows a major technological innovation, a corporate power intervenes and centralizes control of the new medium--the master switch. Wu chronicles the turning points of the century' s information landscape: those decisive moments when a medium opens or closes, from the development of radio to the Internet revolution, where centralizing control could have devastating consequences. To Wu, subjecting the information economy to the traditional methods of

dealing with concentrations of industrial power is an unacceptable control of our most essential resource. He advocates not a regulatory approach but rather a constitutional approach that would enforce distance between the major functions in the information economy--those who develop information, those who own the network infrastructure on which it travels, and those who control the venues of access--and keep corporate and governmental power in check. By fighting vertical integration, a Separations Principle would remove the temptations and vulnerabilities to which such entities are prone. Wu' s engaging narrative and remarkable historical detail make this a compelling and galvanizing cry for sanity--and necessary deregulation--in the information age. Copyright Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review A veteran of Silicon Valley and professor at Columbia University, Wu is an author and policy advocate best known for coining the term net neutrality. Although the Internet has created a world of openness and access unprecedented in human history, Wu is quick to point out that the early phases of telephony, film, and radio offered similar opportunities for the hobbyist, inventor, and creative individual, only to be centralized and controlled by corporate interests, monopolized, broken into smaller entities, and then reconsolidated. Wu calls this the Cycle, and nowhere is it more exemplary than in the telecommunications industry. The question Wu raises is whether the Internet is different, or whether we are merely in the early open phase of a technology that is to be usurped and controlled by profiteering interests. Central in the power struggle is the difference between the way Apple Computer and Google treat content, with Apple attempting to control the user experience with slick products while Google endeavors to democratize content, giving the user choice and openness. This is an essential look at the directions that personal computing could be headed depending on which policies and worldviews come to dominate control over the Internet. --David Siegfried --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Wide eyed and wiser for the read. The "Cycle" of decentralized and centralized information industry history sounds like it could be dry. But this book blew my mind. I had no idea the early days of radio looked much like our internet today. A multitude of hobbyists (bloggers) and businesses used it in a freewheeling way, until megalomaniacs in govnt and big biz rounded it up into NBC and CBS and made it illegal to broadcast if you weren't them. Same for film and TV.This book tells the story of the consolidation of new inventions that impact our world in the hands of a few people who have their

finger on a master switch of sorts.Master Switch argues that the internet age is not so different from the age of the telegraph (they were working on a way to get "texting" machines into every home before radio hit!) or radio, or Hollywood, or Television, or cable TV.The story is the same. A new disruptive technology comes along, and people with big lawyers and big world changing monopolist visions usurp it from small operators and inventors. Patent stealing, inventor scamming, government policy manipulation, and big law are used as levers to hoist new technology onto monopolist mounds of media conglomeration.As a result we get stifling, repression of cool new inventions. Television, invented in 1929, doesn't see the light of day until 1939 and is totally usurped by the radio kingpins by 1949. AT&T invents the magnetic drive, answering machine, optical cable (breakthroughs we associate with the past 30 years) in 1930! But because these would cannibalize their core business, we had to wait until the breakup of MaBell in the 70's and 80's to see hard drives, high-speed internet, and answering machines...50 years after they were invented. It all just sat in Bell Labs R&D. They were a monopoly. And that is the story of the book. It squeezed-to-death what vestiges of naivete I had for the internet age freedoms we apparently enjoy today. I now understand Net neutrality. and the "cycle" of consolidation that is in play right now.I now understand AT&T's evil plans against Google. And Googles evil plans against AT&T.One owns the wires and can flip the master switch in collusion with the govn't. One owns the mind share of the citizenry and can manipulate perception with it's master switch much the way TV has influence culture before cable. AT&T owns the wires of the internet, Google owns our intentions via search. Will they decentralize? Will they become bigger monopolies?Great book to read to get your head around whether or not the internet will go the way of all information industries before it.

I had really looked forward to this given all the positives, and associations with all-time classics like Postman's "Technopoly". Unfortunately I was mostly underwhelmed, and left disappointed. The central theme is the interplay between centralized models (in the extreme a vertically integrated monopoly), versus decentralized, free market competition....with the former as one might imagine being the bad guy. (Oddly however for most of the book, the author seems unsure if centralized monopoly or decentralized competition is best for media and communications industries (including content), often citing exceptions to positives and negatives of both.)The first 2/3rds or so of the book are somewhat torturous while building to the last section. The writing is dry, delivering a not very insightful summary of the US media and telco industry. It's central expose' simply stated is that large enterprises co-opt with the government to keep out new disruptive entrants that pose a threat to the existing power structure. Is that really surprising? Is it seriously any great revelation that upstart new

entrants argue for competition when taking on a monopoly, and a monopoly argues for better service and public interest to protect itself? Is it shocking that when a new entrant fully succeeds in uprooting the monopoly, it starts acting like one and tries to defend itself by making the same argument of the monopolisticÃ¢Â Â‹ firm it replaced? As the ages old saying in politics goes, 'where you stand is a function of where you sit". Is it really insightful to point out that larger, better capitalized firms use the legal system to starve and delay weaker rivals? More specifically, does the author really think Steven Ross Warner Brothers conglomerate (which he started putting together in the 70's), was the business world's first attempt to lower the risk profile of volatile lines of business by combining them with more stable ones?It doesn't start getting good until the 3rd to last chapter "A Surprising Wreck", where he puts in context the failed time Warner - AOL merger. Hindsight being 20/20, I probably should have just started reading here. The next chapter "Father and Son" is probably the best, with quality insight on the philosophical differences between Apple co-founders Wozniak (open system) vs Jobs (closed, vertically integrated), and how they define and inform the Book's central theme. His contrasting of Apple and Google is also decent.But alas the momentum established by the two preceding chapters is quickly extinguished by closing one where the author conveys his policy prescription for guarding against the dangers of private sector concentration/monopoly in the information age. It contained so many leaps of faith, and unimplementable recommendations it was of little value. At the end day what the author may have failed to appreciate are 3 important things about the US system:- The courts over time generally do a respectable job of breaking up monopolies;- Innovation and the freer market, tend to root out inefficient biz models;- Closed and open systems (i.e. Apple and Google) can co-exist, and it becomes more a matter of consumer choice.But all that criticism aside, Wu does leave one with the impression that states (often acting in concert with large concentrated private entities) will attempt to wrestle control of promising and disruptive information technologies...and for those who didn't get that already, the book thus serves a highly useful purpose.

I would highly recommend this book for anyone who has an interest in history, technology, or net neutrality. Since I fall into all three categories, for me, this book read like a gripping, page-turning novel. This 100+ year journey through multiple information industries was quite educational and entertaining, though a clear bias against corporate self-regulation or government sponsored monopolies can be found on nearly every page. Still, I felt the author's position was compellingly built. To take on over a century of history in less than 400 pages is very ambitious, but I was impressed by the level of detail the book went into for the various subjects covered. I do not claim to

be an expert on the material, so I cannot comment on the level of misinformation, but the plentiful sources and footnotes adds to the book's credibility. I did find myself on rare occasion saying, "Hmm... I don't think that's quite right."The only thing I was disappointed by was the relatively brief exploration of modern issues, including net neutrality. I cannot call this a criticism as the book is not marketed as a primer for net neutrality, but I was hoping for a little more content relating to the recent history of the Internet and the important issues to be solved for the future. Even though I tend to side with the author's position, I would agree that a more equal treatment of the other sides of this debate would have strengthened the argument. That said, I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent reading through "The Master Switch" and would enthusiastically encourage everyone to give it a look.

The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires History of Empires: Rise and Fall of the Greatest "Empires" in History! Understanding The: Roman Empire, American Empire, British Empire, & Much More. ... Mesopotamia, Byzantine Empire Book 1) Switch On, Switch Off (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science 2) Switch On, Switch Off (Let's Read-And-Find-Out Science) War and Peace and War: The Rise and Fall of Empires History of the World in Maps: The Rise and Fall of Empires, Countries and Cities Empires of Medieval West Africa: Ghana, Mali, and Songhay (Great Empires of the Past (Library)) The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium (Oxford Studies in Early Empires) Empires of Medieval West Africa (Great Empires of the Past) Empires of Ancient Persia (Great Empires of the Past) OVER 200 Effortless Gourmet Thanksgiving Dinner, Winter and Fall Recipes - Autumn Favorites - Soups, Salads, Entrees, Sides, Desserts: Fall and Winter ... - Thanksgiving, Fall, Autumn and Winter) King of Capital: The Remarkable Rise, Fall, and Rise Again of Steve Schwarzman and Blackstone That's Not How We Do It Here!: A Story about How Organizations Rise and Fall--and Can Rise Again Fitz-John Porter, Scapegoat of Second Manassas: The Rise, Fall and Rise of the General Accused of Disobedience A Star Shattered: The Rise & Fall & Rise of Wrestling Diva The Rule of Empires: Those Who Built Them Those Who Endured Them and Why They Always Fall Master Mind: The Rise and Fall of Fritz Haber, the Nobel Laureate Who Launched the Age of Chemical Warfare Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires Looking for Information: A Survey of Research on Information Seeking, Needs, and Behavior: 4th Edition (Studies in Information) Looking for Information: A Survey of Research on Information Seeking, Needs, and Behavior (Studies in Information)