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The New Digital Age: Reshaping The Future Of People, Nations And Business



Synopsis

In an unparalleled collaboration, two leading global thinkers in technology and foreign affairs give us their widely anticipated, transformational vision of the future: a world where everyone is connected - a world full of challenges and benefits that are ours to meet and to harness. Eric Schmidt is one of Silicon Valley's great leaders, having taken Google from a small startup to one of the world's most influential companies. Jared Cohen is the director of Google Ideas and a former adviser to secretaries of state Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton. With their combined knowledge and experiences, the authors are uniquely positioned to take on some of the toughest questions about our future: Who will be more powerful in the future, the citizen or the state? Will technology make terrorism easier or harder to carry out? What is the relationship between privacy and security, and how much will we have to give up to be part of the new digital age? In this groundbreaking book, Schmidt and Cohen combine observation and insight to outline the promise and peril awaiting us in the coming decades. At once pragmatic and inspirational, this is a forward-thinking account of where our world is headed and what this means for people, states and businesses. With the confidence and clarity of visionaries, Schmidt and Cohen illustrate just how much we have to look forward to - and beware of - as the greatest information and technology revolution in human history continues to evolve. Inspiring, provocative and absorbing, *The New Digital Age* is a brilliant analysis of how our hyper-connected world will soon look, from two of our most prescient and informed public thinkers.

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Customer Reviews

I meant to give this a three star review, not one. I've been in the tech industry for over twenty years (Microsoft, Oracle and Telco industry). I had built up high hopes to read something that wasn't obvious and everything in this book is relatively obvious and not in the future at all. If you're not in the tech industry and particularly if you work in foreign policy, this book is a must read. It appears to me that Jared contributed more to the book than Eric Schmidt. I encourage you to read both of their backgrounds to understand from where their perspective is grounded. I enjoyed the international historical examples that peppered the book, presumably coming from Jared. Now to the more critical concerns I have with the book. It's not visionary. The future examples are usually obvious or show some naivete and lack both depth and breadth. I am concerned that it reads like a book written by the progressive part of our US government instead of a broader view. The criticism in the first fifty pages of Assange shows a clear alignment with traditional US government views and ignores the broader questions and issues around transparency. There was little to no discussion about some of the big technological/policy battles in this space that are taking place daily and accelerating. For example - is the fourth amendment still relevant in the modern world where it becomes increasingly impossible to maintain privacy? What about the new NSA Utah datacenter and Stellar Wind type projects which leave all up citizens lives bare? And how is the increasing secrecy of governments along with the increasing openness of citizen data creating potential imbalances in society? What about the other elephant in the room with regards to corporate storage of the same information about citizens?

As an Afghan war veteran and an historian of technology, I found this book both important and valuable, but also oversimplifying complexity in places. Important and valuable for one overriding reason: for alerting a mass readership of the current and accelerating social-economic-military-political disruptions arising from the expansion of the internet. But excessively oversimplifying of complexity in several key instances. One example of this illustrates my concerns: see discussion of "More Innovation, More Opportunity", starting page 18 and the key sentence, pg 19, two lines from bottom of the page. (I will discuss pg 66 and the claim that technology is neutral in the "PS" section, at bottom of page) The issue in these two pages (18-19) was that of globalized competition for jobs, wherein borders and community boundaries fall in the face of internet outsourcing of jobs. Schmidt and Cohen oversimplify as they discuss how workers in Orange County must compete with workers in Uruguay. How is this oversimplified? By not accounting for the multiplicity of factors that come into play, for example, what is the cost of living for

a working family in Orange County compared to an overseas location? What are the working conditions of any number of overseas labor markets? But the most striking case of over simplification comes near the bottom of page 19: "Globalization's critics will decry this erosion of local monopolies, but it should be embraced, because this is how our societies will move forward and continue to innovate." So, where are the problems with this sentence? At least two instances. Case one: to use the word "MONOPOLIES" when referring to local workers is a needlessly perjorative phrase, especially in the US.

Authors Schmidt and Cohen have outstanding backgrounds that would help produce an very insightful and detailed book. Instead, we get non-stop pros and cons, and not even very insightful ones. It's basically a summary of lots of bits and pieces that most readers are probably already familiar with - eg. background information about Moore's Law, the rising number of people using the Internet and mobile phones, and how photonics is doubling the data coming out of fiber-optic cables every nine months, but no insight as to when Cox Communications (my local source of Internet frustration) and others will replace cable Internet with fiber-optics. Continuing, we get one small example of some third-world residents are using cell-phones to improve profits (fishermen in the Congo), a quick reference to Xbox 360 capabilities, extremely superficial comments about the future of robots, Khan Academy, and 3D-printers, but nothing about the revolutionary potential for MOOCs in our colleges and universities, or the obvious limitations of 3D-printers (materials used, size, speed). Then there's babbling about improved physician-patient feedback for the health care sector - a tiring topic because that's the least of the problems in American health care. The #1 problem in American health care is extremely high costs caused by lack of government regulation, thereby allowing providers to take advantage of the extremely inelastic demand for health care and bleed patients and payers to the point where we spend far more than every other nation - 18% of GDP, vs. 8% for Taiwan and Japan, 4% for Singapore.

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