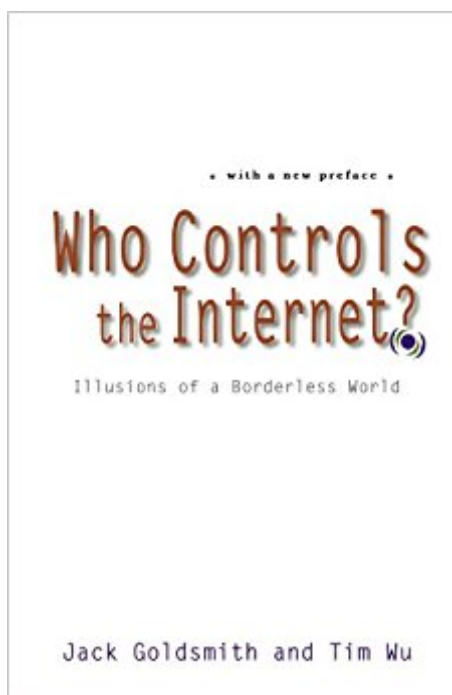


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# Who Controls The Internet?: Illusions Of A Borderless World



## Synopsis

Is the Internet erasing national borders? Will the future of the Net be set by Internet engineers, rogue programmers, the United Nations, or powerful countries? Who's really in control of what's happening on the Net? In this provocative new book, Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu tell the fascinating story of the Internet's challenge to governmental rule in the 1990s, and the ensuing battles with governments around the world. It's a book about the fate of one idea--that the Internet might liberate us forever from government, borders, and even our physical selves. We learn of Google's struggles with the French government and Yahoo's capitulation to the Chinese regime; of how the European Union sets privacy standards on the Net for the entire world; and of eBay's struggles with fraud and how it slowly learned to trust the FBI. In a decade of events the original vision is uprooted, as governments time and time again assert their power to direct the future of the Internet. The destiny of the Internet over the next decades, argue Goldsmith and Wu, will reflect the interests of powerful nations and the conflicts within and between them. While acknowledging the many attractions of the earliest visions of the Internet, the authors describe the new order, and speaking to both its surprising virtues and unavoidable vices. Far from destroying the Internet, the experience of the last decade has led to a quiet rediscovery of some of the oldest functions and justifications for territorial government. While territorial governments have unavoidable problems, it has proven hard to replace what legitimacy governments have, and harder yet to replace the system of rule of law that controls the unchecked evils of anarchy. While the Net will change some of the ways that territorial states govern, it will not diminish the oldest and most fundamental roles of government and challenges of governance. Well written and filled with fascinating examples, including colorful portraits of many key players in Internet history, this is a work that is bound to stir heated debate in the cyberspace community.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Is the Internet truly "flattening" the modern world? Will national boundaries crumble beneath the ever-increasing volume of Internet traffic? Goldsmith and Wu, both professors of law (Goldsmith at Harvard, Wu at Columbia), think not, and they present an impressive array of evidence in their favor. The authors argue national governments will continue to maintain their sovereignty in the age of the Internet, largely because of economics: e-businesses-even giants such as Yahoo, Google and eBay-need governmental support in order to function. When Yahoo, an American company, was tried in French court for facilitating the auctioning of Nazi paraphernalia in violation of French law, the company was eventually forced to comply with local laws or risk losing the ability to operate in France. As eBay grew into an Internet powerhouse, its "feedback" system could not keep up with cunning con artists, so it hired hundreds of fraud prevention specialists (known as "eBay cops"). Goldsmith and Wu begin with an overview of the Internet's early days, replete with anecdotes and key historical chapters that will be unknown to many readers, but their book quickly introduces its main contention: that existing international law has the power to control the Internet, a conclusion web pundits, cyberlaw specialists and courts across the globe will inevitably challenge. Wu's and Goldsmith's account of the power struggle between the Utopian roots of the Internet and the hegemony of national governments is a timely chronicle of a history still very much in the works. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

"Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu, two of America's leading scholars of cyberspace, have written an engaging, fluent first draft of Internet history.... Beautifully written and intricately argued, the book is likely to become a classic of Internet politics and policy." --Patti Waldmeir, Los Angeles Times "A timely look at the ways that governments make themselves felt in cyberspace. Goldsmith and Wu cover a range of controversies, from domain-name disputes to online poker and porn to political censorship. Their judgments are well worth attending."--David Robinson, Wall Street Journal "Goldsmith and Wu have written a concise, compact, and highly readable book canvassing more than their basic question of 'who controls the internet?'. It is a sweeping review of all of the key

concerns of internet history, lore and law over the last 20 years."--Melbourne University Law Review

"In the 1990s the Internet was greeted as the New New Thing: It would erase national borders, give rise to communal societies that invented their own rules, undermine the power of governments. In this splendidly argued book, Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu explain why these early assumptions were mostly wrong: The Internet turns out to illustrate the enduring importance of Old Old Things, such as law and national power and business logic. By turns provocative and colorful, this is an essential read for anyone who cares about the relationship between technology and globalization."--Sebastian Mallaby, Editorial Writer and Columnist, The Washington Post

"It is time that America learn an important lesson about the Internet--that however cyber the space is, it is also real, and subject to real space governments. This is the very best work to make this fundamental point. Goldsmith and Wu have made understandable and accessible an argument political culture should have realized a decade ago." --Lawrence Lessig, author of Code and Free Culture

"Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu are among the most creative and provocative legal scholars of their generation. In this surprising, unsentimental, and ultimately optimistic book, they reject romantic abstractions about the globalizing and transformative power of the Internet. National laws, traditions, and customs are just as important in controlling cyberspace as they are in real space, they argue. And that's a good thing because decentralized control can encourage freedom, diversity, and self-determination. Combining realism with idealism, Who Controls the Internet? offers an adult manifesto for the future of freedom in an interconnected world." --Jeffrey Rosen, author of The Naked Crowd

"Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu have written an informative, engaging and provocative book that will undoubtedly challenge most people's preconceptions of the Internet. This is the most important book about the politics of the Internet since Lawrence Lessig's Code." --Daniel W. Drezner, University of Chicago and [danieldrezner.com](http://danieldrezner.com)

"A major contribution to literature about the internet....an excellent addition to academic law libraries as well as other academic, firm, or large county libraries with collections that emphasize cyber law, intellectual property, digital copyright, and international law."--Law Library Journal

"Goldsmith and Wu have written a concise, compact, and....an highly readable book canvassing more than their basic question of 'who controls the internet?'. It is a sweeping review of all of the key concerns of internet history, lore, and law over the last 20 years."--Melbourne University Law Review

La imagen de internet se debate entre un estereotipo mediático popular que habla de su ilimitada capacidad autónoma y de recursos, frente a la realidad de las limitaciones y exclusiones con las que tropieza día a día que cada vez son toleradas y alimentadas como excusa necesaria para

un desarrollo tecnológico, económico y social. En este contexto comentaba Juan Freire hace poco: "Internet ofrece un espacio virtual de libertad, autónomo de las autoridades del mundo físico." Y mientras el deseo de un espacio virtual libre y autónomo pueda ser genuino no hay nada más alejado de la realidad vigente. El espacio de Internet está sujeto cada vez más a normas, regulaciones, fronteras, que permiten la expansión de la herramienta pero también su adaptación a realidades locales. Las cuales desafortunadamente no tienen en cuenta únicamente los gustos o necesidades de un tipo de usuarios sino que se amoldan a necesidades de gobiernos o intereses privados generando prácticas represivas y restrictivas del uso de Internet. Es así Internet la que se adapta y no el gobierno de China acepta la libertad de expresión. Por ejemplo al punto de que la información facilitada por gigantes como Yahoo es la responsable de poner a disidentes políticos tras rejas. Si hay algo que hace bien el libro de Jack Goldsmith y Tim Wu, "Who Controls the Internet?, Illusions of a Borderless World" es eso, mostrar la historia de Internet y su relación con el mundo físico, las barreras regionales, nacionales y como se está modificando el desarrollo de esta comunicación cada vez más para acomodarse a imposiciones desde arriba y no responder necesariamente a los deseos de la comunidad de usuarios. El libro es muy recomendable en su análisis de la concepción de Internet y desarrollos y casos legales en los últimos años. Algo quizás no tan novedoso para aquellos que lleven inmersos en estos debates un tiempo. Pero en particular es útil para señalar a defensores simplistas de una globalización capitalista homogeneizadora como Thomas Friedman. Desafortunadamente el libro en sus conclusiones tiene una vertiente conservadora, y mientras Friedman es un conservador global e imperial, Goldsmith y Wu muestran un conservadurismo digital que defiende y anima las restricciones regionales sin ningún pudor e incluso desprecia el pensamiento de muchos de los impulsores de internet que buscaban un espacio sin fronteras, libre y diverso. Más: [...]

Despite what most people assume and many more wish the Internet has become regulated. The Internet is controlled within a country's borders resulting in many conflicting laws. That's a problem for Internet companies who have assets across many borders. Can they get away with just following their country's laws? Time and time again the authors evince the answer being no. Companies like Yahoo, Google, Microsoft, eBay, the Dow Jones, obsequiously follow foreign laws but not necessarily sacrifice their own. Some of these companies have no qualms either assisting the Chinese filter pro-democracy websites, in short because they feel they have to. As I right this Yahoo is being sued by the World Organization for Human Rights for giving the Chinese government I.P. addresses of Chinese citizens who will then be jailed and tortured for subversion. Yahoo asserts they

were simply following the law. And that is the problem facing these companies especially with China. They really have no other choice to or get out. The book was well written, fair and balanced.

I found this book very intriguing and informative. It provides the history of the internet, how it was developed and progressed into what it is today. It also covers the internet in other countries.

Interesting read about privacy and countries warring over rules of the internet.

"Who Controls the Internet?" by Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu offers a clear-eyed assessment of the struggle to control the Internet. Starting with a discussion of the early vision of a borderless global community, the authors present some of the most prominent individuals, ideas and movements that have played key roles in developing the Internet as we know it today. As Law Professors at Harvard and Columbia, respectively, Mr. Goldsmith and Mr. Wu adroitly assert the important role of government in maintaining Internet law and order while skillfully debunking the claims of techno-utopianism that have been espoused by popular but misinformed theorists such as Thomas Friedman. The book has three sections. Part One is "The Internet Revolution". The authors discuss the early days of the Internet through the 1990s, when Julian Dibbell and John Perry Barlow articulated a libertarian vision that gained wide currency in the public imagination. The Electronic Frontier Foundation worked to protect the Internet from regulation in the belief that a free online community might unite people and melt government away. However, Jon Postel's attempt to assert control over the root naming and numbering system in 1998 was short-lived, as the U.S. government flexed its power in order to protect its national defense and business interests. Part Two is "Government Strikes Back". Users in different places with widely varying cultures and preferences want information presented in their local language and context, the authors explain. Governments use a number of techniques to pressure or control local intermediaries to restrict Internet content that a majority of its citizens find unacceptable, such as the sale of Nazi paraphenelia in France. Of course, bad government begets bad policy: the authors tell us how China uses its powers of censorship to block dissent and publishes propaganda that cultivates a virulent form of nationalism. Yet, the authors illustrate how good government can work by showing how the contest in the U.S. between the RIAA and Kazaa ultimately enabled Apple's iTunes to emerge as a legally acceptable service that balances copyright laws and the public's preference for using the Internet to source and download music. Part Three is "Vice, Virtues, the Future". The authors present an interesting case study about eBay and its founder's idealistic faith in the inherent goodness of the Internet

community; we learn that when the company found its business model severely challenged by fraud, a resolution to the crisis was made workable with the assistance of local law enforcement. According to the authors, eBay, the case of an Australian libel lawsuit against a U.S. publisher, and Microsoft's acquiescence to European Union (EU) regulation of its Passport service are examples of how the bordered Internet seeks to protect citizens from harm. They argue convincingly that as a communications medium, the Internet is not unlike other technologies that have come before and therefore the Internet is not likely to displace territorial government. Rather, it is more likely, the authors speculate, that cultural and political differences may be leading us into a technological Cold War where the U.S., EU and China develop their own competitive Internet platforms. The author's reasoning that issues of Internet law might be handled in the same manner as environmental laws at the international level brings to mind an argument made by Robyn Eckersley in her excellent book, "The Green State" where the pivotal role of the state in preserving the natural environment is asserted. While these two books might appear to be unfashionable to some by their emphasis on the state, in my opinion it appears that the facts on the ground support these authors when they suggest that government serves as the most amenable and accessible mechanism for expressing the popular will of the people, and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. I strongly recommend this engaging, intelligent and visionary book to everyone.

Although this book was published in 2006 its content is still relevant. A must read for those interested in the new challenges of internet governance.

This a very good and thought provoking book which has led me to take up others such as Tim Wu's "The Master Switch"

explains internet economics and ideology of intertwined web of knowledge to all , up there with classic wired articles get it loaned

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