

Reaktion Books Press Release

A HISTORY OF THE INTERNET AND THE DIGITAL FUTURE

Johnny Ryan

Publication: 3rd October 2010 | hardback | £17.95

‘Both an enormously useful work and a great read. Read it and understand what has made the Internet different.’

– Professor Tim Wu, Columbia Law School

‘Thanks to the proliferation of cloud services, ubiquitous, low-cost bandwidth, and new devices like smartphones and the iPad, there are fewer obstacles to innovation than ever before. In the next decade, the ‘office’ need not be much more than an Internet connection. Johnny Ryan takes us through the history of the Internet to demonstrate how it has changed everything. But that’s not all; he also identifies what’s to come in the future. We are in a new era of transformation that has been powered by the Internet. Understanding the trends driving this revolution is pivotal to success. Consider this book your road map to getting there.’

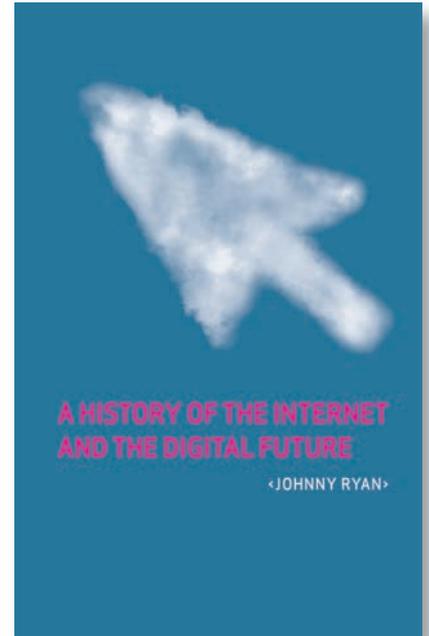
– Marc Benioff, Chairman and CEO of salesforce.com

A great adjustment in human affairs is underway. Political, commercial and cultural life is changing from the centralized, hierarchical and standardized structures of the industrial age to something radically different: the economy of the emerging digital era.

A History of the Internet and the Digital Future tells the story of the development of the Internet from the 1950s to the present, and examines how the balance of power has shifted between the individual and the state in the areas of censorship, copyright infringement, intellectual freedom and terrorism and warfare. Johnny Ryan explains how the Internet has revolutionized political campaigns; how the development of the World Wide Web enfranchised a new online population of assertive, niche consumers; and how the dot-com bust taught smarter firms to capitalize on the power of digital artisans.

In the coming years platforms such as the iPhone and Android rise or fall depending on their treading the line between proprietary control and open innovation. The trends of the past may hold out hope for the record and newspaper industry. From the government-controlled systems of the Cold War to today’s move towards cloud computing, user-driven content and the new global commons, this book reveals the trends that are shaping the businesses, politics and media of the digital future.

Johnny Ryan is Senior Researcher at the Institute of International and European Affairs, Dublin, where he leads the Digital Future programme.



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is available for interview.

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'Johnny Ryan has admirably captured the sweep of the Internet's development from its earliest days, showing us how its profound impact is in part an accident of history, a phenomenon whose most interesting and liberating aspects could fade without reinforcement of its core values.'

– Professor Jonathan Zittrain, Professor of Law, Harvard Law School and Kennedy School;
Professor of Computer Science, Harvard SEAS; Author, *The Future of the Internet – And How to Stop It*.

'Ryan describes a fundamental shift and dispersion of power from traditional centres of power to the networked individual. This is a must-read for both governments and companies who need to fully understand this shift in power and the implications it has on how they interact with the networked individuals who represent their citizens, customers, suppliers.'

– Susanne Dirks, Leader, Global Centre for Economic Development
(IBM Institute for Business Value)

'Ryan understands the power shift that the Internet is. If you see the Internet as Ryan does, you will understand how Craigslist kills newspapers, how Facebook rises from nothing and why everything is being invented anew.'

– Phil Madsen, online politics pioneer (campaign manager of Jesse Ventura, 1998)