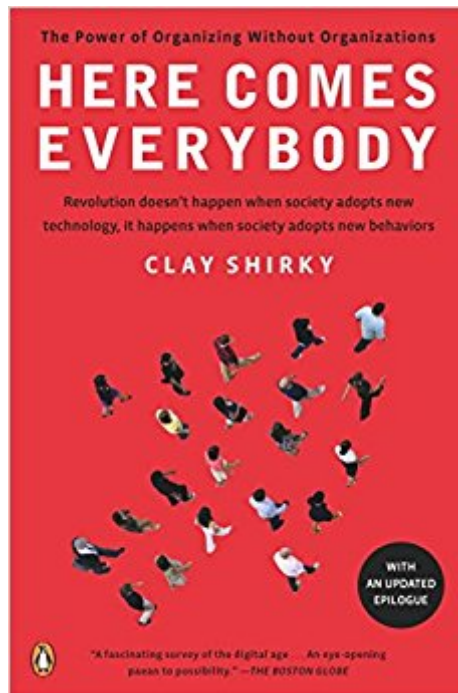




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Here Comes Everybody: The Power Of Organizing Without Organizations



Synopsis

An extraordinary exploration of how technology can empower social and political organizers For the first time in history, the tools for cooperating on a global scale are not solely in the hands of governments or institutions. The spread of the internet and mobile phones are changing how people come together and get things done – and sparking a revolution that, as Clay Shirky shows, is changing what we do, how we do it, and even who we are. Here, we encounter a woman who loses her phone and recruits an army of volunteers to get it back from the person who stole it. A dissatisfied airline passenger who spawns a national movement by taking her case to the web. And a handful of kids in Belarus who create a political protest that the state is powerless to stop. Here Comes Everybody is a revelatory examination of how the wildfirelike spread of new forms of social interaction enabled by technology is changing the way humans form groups and exist within them. A revolution in social organization has commenced, and Clay Shirky is its brilliant chronicler. "Drawing from anthropology, economic theory and keen observation, [Shirky] makes a strong case that new communication tools are making once-impossible forms of group action possible . . . [an] extraordinarily perceptive new book." -Minneapolis Star Tribune "Mr. Shirky writes cleanly and convincingly about the intersection of technological innovation and social change." -New York Observer

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Customer Reviews

Blogs, wikis and other Web 2.0 accoutrements are revolutionizing the social order, a development

that's cause for more excitement than alarm, argues interactive telecommunications professor Shirky. He contextualizes the digital networking age with philosophical, sociological, economic and statistical theories and points to its major successes and failures. Grassroots activism stands among the winners—Belarus's flash mobs, for example, blog their way to unprecedented antiauthoritarian demonstrations. Likewise, user/contributor-managed Wikipedia raises the bar for production efficiency by throwing traditional corporate hierarchy out the window. Print journalism falters as publishing methods are transformed through the Web. Shirky is at his best deconstructing Web failures like Wikitorial, the Los Angeles Times's attempt to facilitate group op-ed writing. Readers will appreciate the Gladwellesque lucidity of his assessments on what makes or breaks group efforts online: Every story in this book relies on the successful fusion of a plausible promise, an effective tool, and an acceptable bargain with the users. The sum of Shirky's incisive exploration, like the Web itself, is greater than its parts. (Mar.) Copyright © 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.

"A fascinating survey of the digital age . . . An eye-opening paean to possibility." -The Boston Globe
"Drawing from anthropology, economic theory and keen observation, [Shirky] makes a strong case that new communication tools are making once-impossible forms of group action possible . . . [an] extraordinarily perceptive new book." -Minneapolis Star Tribune
"Mr. Shirky writes cleanly and convincingly about the intersection of technological innovation and social change." -New York Observer
"Clay has long been one of my favorite thinkers on all things Internet - not only is he smart and articulate, but he's one of those people who is able to crystallize the half-formed ideas that I've been trying to piece together into glittering, brilliant insights that make me think, yes, of course, that's how it all works." -Cory Doctorow, co-editor of Boing Boing and author of Overclocked: Stories of the Future Present.
"Clear thinking and good writing about big changes." -Stewart Brand
"Clay Shirky may be the finest thinker we have on the Internet revolution, but Here Comes Everybody is more than just a technology book; it's an absorbing guide to the future of society itself. Anyone interested in the vitality and influence of groups of human beings - from knitting circles, to political movements, to multinational corporations - needs to read this book." -Steven Johnson, author of Everything Bad Is Good for You and Emergence
"How do trends emerge and opinions form? The answer used to be something vague about word of mouth, but now it's a highly measurable science, and nobody understands it better than Clay Shirky. In this delightfully readable book, practically every page has an insight that will change the way you think

about the new era of social media. Highly recommended." -Chris Anderson, editor-in-chief of Wired Magazine and author of The Long Tail "In story after story, Clay masterfully makes the connections as to why business, society and our lives continue to be transformed by a world of net-enabled social tools. His pattern-matching skills are second to none." -Ray Ozzie, Microsoft Chief Software Architect "Clay has long been one of my favorite thinkers on all things Internet-- not only is he smart and articulate, but he's one of those people who is able to crystallize the half-formed ideas that I've been trying to piece together into glittering, brilliant insights that make me think, yes, of course, that's how it all works." -Cory Doctorow, co-editor of Boing Boing and author of Overclocked: Stories of the Future Present.

So why am I writing this review? Well Clay Shirky would probably tell me (in part) that my sharing of perspectives "anchors community" and that sharing also enhances my standing within the community. So I'm helping build our society (Woohoo. I have a high social conscience!!!) while also enhancing my own social standing (Oops. I'm a social climber?). On the other hand ... I may also be an artful evader of real world responsibility (and what could possibly be a more artful evasion of real work than a book review!). Or on the other other hand, I may be a digital Don Quixote always tilting at intellectual windmills, or I simply prioritize poorly and thus waste energy on unimportant matters like reviews. I dunno. Let's all decide. Such matters are, per the author, to be understood collaboratively. More seriously, Clay Shirky is examining yours and my willingness to establish an online personae and our willingness to collaborate freely across the internet (eg. including the rationale for my spending a moment to write this review). Conversely, he explains how and why the internet is structuring itself around the ways we naturally interact with each other. Shirky connects these matters to life in describing how we, as members of one or many little societies, now continuously (re)congregate around people, information, projects, and ideas. Much (digital) ink is already spilled regarding this book. I will just take a step back and note that Mr. Shirky is chronicling an interesting parallel evolution of the Internet. The internet continues (on the surface anyway) to shift to where the money is: as a global platform for delivering monetized content. Like the old television networks, today's internet content providers of various ilk have created "walled gardens" and private streams of content through their emerging control of end point devices (See Zittrain's "Future of the Internet and How To Stop It" for worries about your cell phone and your television set top box). These providers then create communities for the purpose of monetizing that content (Yes you do). Social networking technologies are creating the possibility that we first form our own communities and associations - all for our own reasons - and just like in the real world!. We then

individually and collectively introduce and evaluate information within those communities and we collectively enhance and advance that information (or diminish it) - all for reasons distinct from external influence or interest. Clay Shirky details all of this deeply. But most interestingly his insights move us away from a world of often anonymous informational gatekeepers who in his words "filter then publish" and toward a world of infinite individual media sources (you and me) whose generated information is "published then filtered" by trusted individuals and groups. The result is an ever-richer base of information leavened with supporting context and perspective. Read this book to understand what's sociologically so interesting about Flickr, Facebook, Wikipedia, Twitter, and the such.

The book begins with an intriguing story of a girl who found a cellphone that was forgotten in a cab and later refused to return it to the owner. It happened in New York in May 2006 and was reported widely on the Internet as well as in New York Times. This story demonstrates the power of Internet crowd. They are powerful enough to change the course of action of government. A mere 10 years ago such things were impossible. The book is full of such examples. In other chapters it describes the story of Wikipedia and its unsuccessful predecessor Nupedia, the story of Linux, multiple political riots, as well as unusual cases from American life. Thus it is possible to think of this book as a series of case studies. But the author goes beyond that. Being an NYU professor, the author find out what made such things possible. He discusses multiple historic examples, for example how McCallum have thought of an org chart when he was working at New York & Erie Railroad. Another example is the invention of the printing press. Before that, the books were copied by hand. No matter how many people were doing that the literacy did not spread. It was impossible to teach people to write using book copying. What was needed was a vast increase in the number of books being read - and only after that people began trying to reproduce what they were reading themselves. The invention of printing press increased the literacy significantly. The author studied the distribution of number of contributions to Wikipedia. It turned out that most people did very few short contributions. For example, many people attempted to start an article but were not competent enough to write the whole thing. Thus they left after writing only an introduction. But such small contributions when accumulated build a solid encyclopedia. IRC was mentioned as one of the most convenient means of communication but it is probably the hackers' paradise. But the author mentions an Internet company Meetup almost in every chapter. This is just one example of a web site that facilitates group building. In Europe it is not as popular as in the United States. The author describes other companies that his students have developed. There are lots of ideas that will inspire people from around the world. Well written, with lots of examples, thought provoking, this book will

entertain IT professionals and non-computer people alike. The book greatly benefits from the fact that the author is a professor and teacher as the clarity and structure of the text is of very high quality. To me it is an invaluable historical evidence of present day changes which people will keep analyzing for a long time.

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