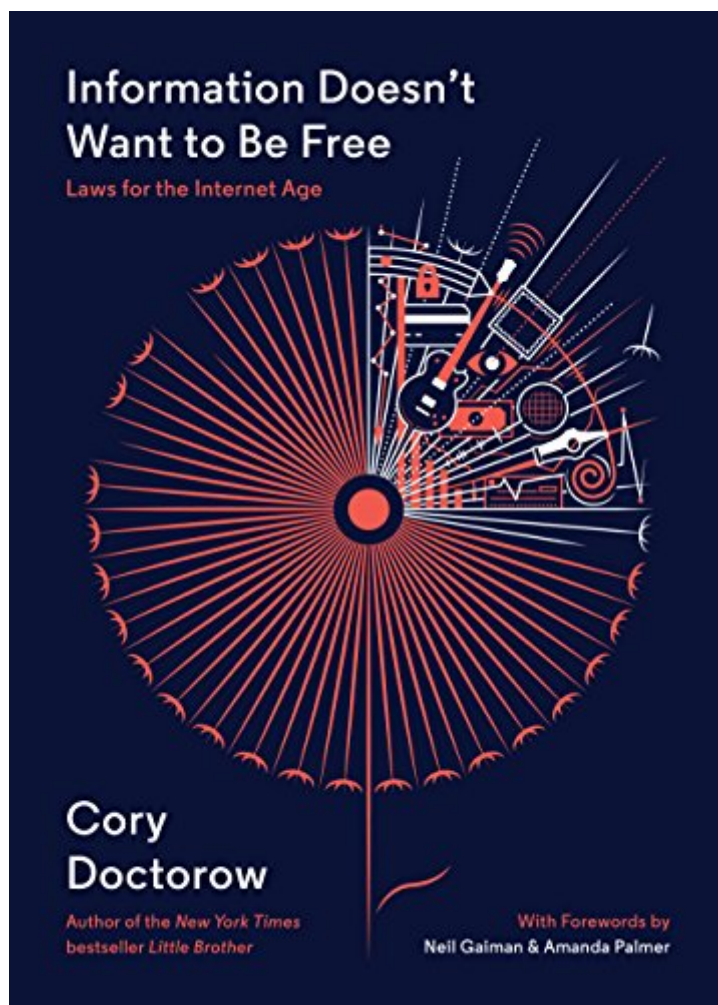


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# Information Doesn't Want To Be Free: Laws For The Internet Age



## Synopsis

• Filled with wisdom and thought experiments and things that will mess with your mind. •  
Neil Gaiman, author of *The Graveyard Book* and *American Gods* In sharply argued, fast-moving chapters, Cory Doctorow's *Information Doesn't Want to Be Free* takes on the state of copyright and creative success in the digital age. Can small artists still thrive in the Internet era? Can giant record labels avoid alienating their audiences? This is a book about the pitfalls and the opportunities that creative industries (and individuals) are confronting today; about how the old models have failed or found new footing, and about what might soon replace them. An essential read for anyone with a stake in the future of the arts, *Information Doesn't Want to Be Free* offers a vivid guide to the ways creativity and the Internet interact today, and to what might be coming next. This book is DRM-free.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Book mentions copyright over and over. What is odd is that with all the mentions of copyright there

is no real overview of how copyright works and what the history of it is. I already have that knowledge so the book worked OK for me but if you are an author or musician and you don't have scholarly/legal background on copyright I don't think the debate is going to be as useful. I think a 4-5 page background/context on copyright would have made a big difference. Now that a reader knows this you might want to consider doing some background copyright reading before you read this book. There is also commentary by Doctorow about things like SOPA that mean more if you have followed the SOPA debate. Doctorow did define SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) but there seems to be an assumption that you know about the SOPA debate. Many people do especially if you are the kind of person that might read this book but if you are an author that has been holed up working on a book you might not have the background. After you read Doctorow's book once you might want to make note of terms; research their context, and then you can reread what Doctorow wrote and it may be more meaningful with additional context. The book is broken into three laws that Doctorow has devised: First law: Any time someone puts a lock on something that belongs to you, and won't give you a key, they're not doing it for your benefit. Second law: Fame won't make you rich, But you can't get paid without it. Third law: Information doesn't want to be free people do. I found someone that synthesized Doctorow's three laws from talks he had given and the way that person had written them made a little more sense. If you read the chapters related to the rule you get these points but you still have to extract them. When they are written this way I think they are clearer. (Synthesis of rules taken from Doctorow talks) First law: Any time someone puts a lock on something that belongs to you, and won't give you a key, they're not doing it for your benefit. Second law: It's hard to monetize fame but it's impossible to monetize obscurity i.e. fame won't guarantee fortune, but no one has ever gotten rich by being obscure. Third law: making it easy to censor and spy on everyone to protect copyright is a bad idea and bad practice i.e. information doesn't want to be free, people do.

This is an important book. It is important, not so much because of the undeniable skill and passion with which Cory Doctorow lays out his arguments, but more because the subject he addresses, the freedom and openness of the Internet, are of vital interest to everyone who uses the Net. According to Internet Live Stats that means just over 3 billion people and increasing by the second. To put it another way, in 1995 about 1% of the population of planet Earth were connected to the Internet, today, less than 20 years later, it's a tad over 40%. Doctorow explores why this boom in Internet access and use has proved to be such a blessing to everyone, but then goes on to explain why the copyright laws as they are currently enacted in all leading industrial nations are utterly lacking in

fitness and applicability to the real digital world and, more importantly, why they lead to all manner of abusive corporate behavior. He is at his compelling best when he cites specific corporate abuses and explains the economic motivations behind the behavior. But if this was just a book about the dark side of the Internet it would be selling the reader short. Instead, having carefully laid out the problems with DRM (Digital Rights Management), Spyware, Digital Locks, unwarranted surveillance, and other abuses, Doctorow then suggests practical and workable solutions that take account of the interest of all parties involved. This book is part of a large and important debate. It makes very telling arguments against just accepting the direction in which the entertainment conglomerates and national governments would like to push the digital world and suggests an alternative vision which is fairer and more just for the 3 billion of us who happen not to be major music labels, film production studios or spy agencies.

Doctorow has always been a powerful voice in the information age, and generally approaches many subjects from a fresh and nuanced point of view. For those interested, this book delves into the subject of copyrights, digital rights management, and piracy from the perspective of someone who creates media for a living. Overall I feel like Doctorow has a lot of great things to say about the subject, but the way information is presented tends to be somewhat chaotic and hard to follow. He often uses examples to illustrate his points, but they end up feeling like they are more like tangents (albeit interesting ones). Overall a decent read, but it feels like lots of shorter essays that were squished together in places.

Great introduction to the advantages and pitfalls of creative works available through the internet. The book is clearly presented in succinct easy to read chapters. The language used to describe both legal and technical computer science issues is easy for a well educated lay person to understand. Doctorow presents some of the ethical dilemmas that come along with the new distribution channels. I think both sides of the arguments are presented well, but the author is never shy about making his opinion clear. Those opinions are largely well reasoned and interesting. It certainly opened my eyes to some potentially coercive business practices. We live in wonderful times with such a diversity of music, books, visual media available to the choosy consumer. I hope books like "Information Doesn't Want To Be Free" help to promote new ways of thinking about artistic business to keep those options open to us all.

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