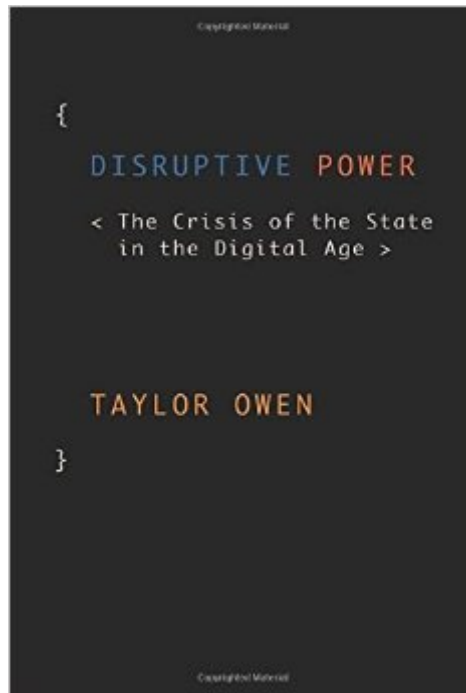


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Disruptive Power: The Crisis Of The State In The Digital Age (Oxford Studies In Digital Politics)



Synopsis

Anonymous. WikiLeaks. The Syrian Electronic Army. Edward Snowden. Bitcoin. The Arab Spring. Digital communication technologies have thrust the calculus of global political power into a period of unprecedented complexity. In every aspect of international affairs, digitally enabled actors are changing the way the world works and disrupting the institutions that once held a monopoly on power. No area is immune: humanitarianism, war, diplomacy, finance, activism, or journalism. In each, the government departments, international organizations and corporations who for a century were in charge, are being challenged by a new breed of international actor. Online, networked and decentralized, these new actors are innovating, for both good and ill, in the austere world of foreign policy. They are representative of a wide range of 21st century global actors and a new form of 21st century power: disruptive power. In *Disruptive Power*, Taylor Owen provides a sweeping look at the way that digital technologies are shaking up the workings of the institutions that have traditionally controlled international affairs. The nation state system and the subsequent multinational system were founded on and have long functioned through a concentration of power in the state. Owen looks at the tools that a wide range of new actors are using to increasingly control international affairs, and how their rise changes the way we understand and act in the world. He considers the bar for success in international digital action and the negative consequences of a radically decentralized international system. What new institutions will be needed to moderate the new power structures and ensure accountability? And how can governments and corporations act to promote positive behavior in a world of disruptive innovation? Owen takes on these questions and more in this probing and sober look at the frontier of international affairs, in a world enabled by information technology and increasingly led by disruptive innovators. With cutting edge analysis of the fast-changing relationship between the declining state and increasingly powerful non-state actors, *Disruptive Power* is the essential road map for navigating a networked world.

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Customer Reviews

Digital communication technology is affecting the global political power structure, causing changes that create a great deal of uncertainty as to just who holds power especially regarding the new relevance of government authority and control. Owen is fairly convincing in citing a crisis of government in the digital age. He puts some modern detail on the observation of Reinhold Niebuhr that incorporation of science and technology into politics leads to instability. He suggests that digital technologies are threatening the workings of familiar institutions that have traditionally controlled international affairs. It examines the relevance of Anonymous, WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden, Bitcoin, Syrian Rebels, Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street and the German Pirate Party along with other anonymous groups and the algorithmic tools that they use. Areas affected include war, diplomacy, finance, human rights activism, and especially journalism. In each area the controlling authority is faced with a changing operating environment where power is shifting from few to many. The nation state system and the subsequent multinational system were founded on a concentration of power in the state, now being threatened. A more appropriate title might be 'Distributed Power.' The disruptive element is corollary, an extension of the idea that the Internet is the new weapon of war. The idea of gathering massive data flow from a plethora of sources into a useful whole is not as new as Owen indicates. It used to be called 'data fusion.' It's an interesting study of balancing good and bad, while sometimes hard to tell the difference. Democracy is protection from governance, but if the B of R failed us the failure of the Internet is not surprising. There are more questions than answers.

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