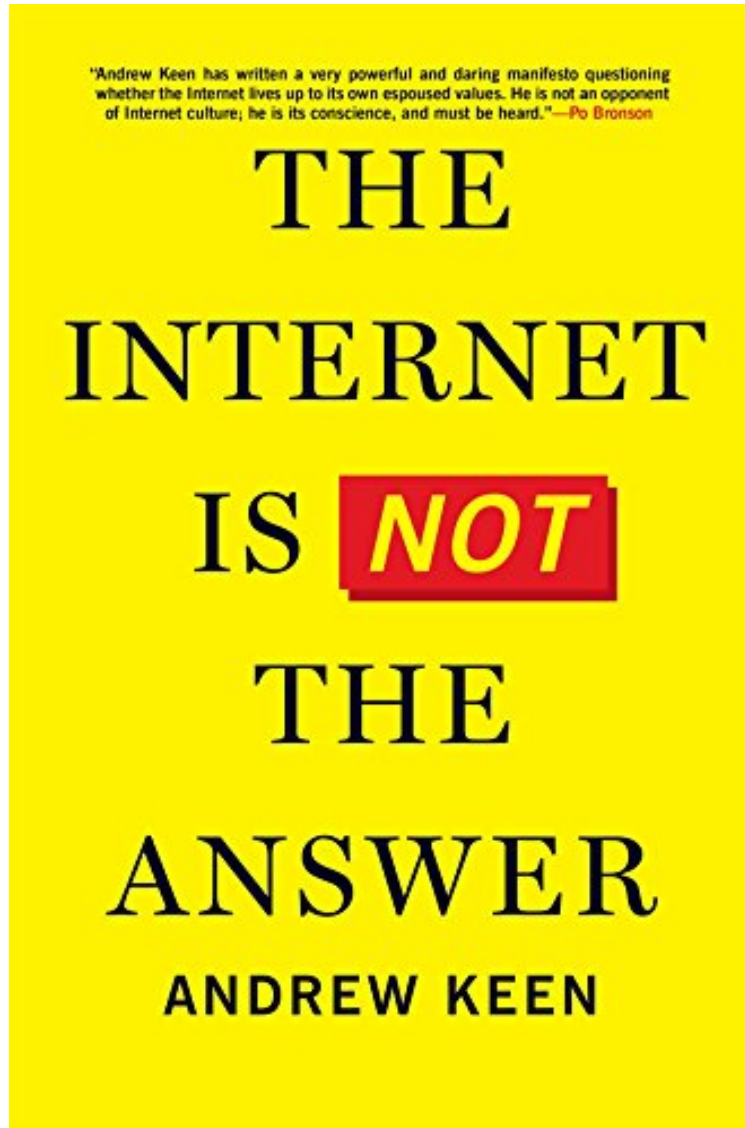


(Download free pdf) The Internet Is Not the Answer

The Internet Is Not the Answer

Andrew Keen

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Andrew Keen : The Internet Is Not the Answer before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Internet Is Not the Answer:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. just like I'm doing right nowBy Tom MoserIf you start with the proposition that the internet was going to make the world flat, this book says the mission failed. If the benefit of connecting billions of people together and to information on an equal basis was economic growth and equality, the author makes the case that has not happened. What Andrew Keen finds is the internet has made a very few people very rich and increased the economic disparity among the rest of us. In fact, he point out that many of us provide free labor to the internet elite but submitting review, just like I'm doing right now! By submitting reviews of everything from

food to cars, we drive more business to websites that use our free "labor" for economic gain. The author has researched his topic and provides interesting stories about failures and successes of internet business and website. He did not change my mind about technology and the future, but he did make me understand that the internet has not yet created a more egalitarian world as many promised or anticipated. This book is a very interesting read about an important topic.

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Keen is not keen on the internet

By Dave Kinnear

Andrew Keen is not keen on where the Internet is taking us. Keen has taken on the conventional wisdom that the internet is a democratizing force lending power to the little guy and disrupting the old school "bad guys." A strongly opinionated polemic, the passion of the converted believer is palpable in his writing. I come at this book with three "given" premises: (a) There is no human work endeavor that cannot be done by a machine — either already or relatively soon; (b) There is no way to stop technological advance — if it can be done, someone will do it and the rest will have to keep up; (c) Technology is now advancing on the steep part of the exponential curve. So while I may well agree with Keen's observations and conclusions about the way things are right now, I judge that his diatribe is helpful only in that it may serve to ignite conversation about where we are going. That is a goal I can get behind. Keen segmented the book well. Along with other topics, he separately addressed the network, money, and the Silicon Valley culture of celebrating failure. But it did not take long before I was bored with the same theme being repeated in each segment. So I was looking forward to getting to the chapter titled "Conclusion." Sadly, I still had to slog through more demonstrations of who is lined up on his side of the argument and why. I was looking for a definitive answer, or at least strong suggestions of viable alternatives, and found none.

"It's a conversation that needs to take place in Silicon Valley, Silicon Alley, and the other centers of digital power in our networked world. The time is now ripe for this." The above quotation is a conclusion which I and the many folks with whom I've been discussing this topic have already drawn. I'm thankful for the support, yet we haven't moved the conversation forward with this book. To be fair, there were some "mild" suggestions including taking regular holidays from technology, refusing to shop on-line and other individual actions. Yet those suggestions tend to back-up the three premises rather than give us a viable way forward. There is some hope for things not progressing too fast down the road to dystopia. Recent articles indicate there may be a move toward having my on-line purchases delivered to brick-and-mortar facilities. It seems that several "pure play" on-line stores are building out physical stores. That may be a welcomed compromise, but we will not stop the evolution and adoption of technology. Consumer convenience will definitely win.

102 of 110 people found the following review helpful. "Surveillance is the internet's main business"

By David Wineberg

Andrew Keen is angry. He hates what the internet has done to us. His hatred is thoroughly developed, and morphs into a totally rational, historical conclusion: this internet age is no different than feudal society or the era of Trusts 150 years ago. The inequality, the fantasy worlds of wealth, the hubris, the arrogance, the selfish navel gazing — all repeating before our Google-Glassed eyes. It's a dark truth he explores with seemingly thousands of aspects and examples. The pacing is consistent and blistering. He spends a lot of time and effort mourning the passing of Kodak, which worked at perfecting film. Today we don't care much about photo quality; we just post photos of next to nothing, in their billions. But Kodak is hardly a poster child. The same can be said for numerous other formerly precious legacy systems. In the sixties, it was all about sound quality. The measure of your household was in your stereo components. Today, we accept lousy mp3 quality over pathetic earplugs without a second thought. Our appreciation and priorities change, and the internet era is no different. But Keen seems to live in an imaginary world that used to have full employment, where everyone was polite, civil and honest, and trolls hid in English woods. The truth is, the internet simply exposes more of our inherent, narcissistic, selfish, self-centered and shortsighted selves. Greed and theft are not proprietary to internet entrepreneurs. The whole basis for the American economy is smuggling and theft, as in my review of the superlative *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America*. Apple hiding billions from the taxman is nothing new. Keen comes to the same conclusion by the end of the book. He is wrong about our knowledge of history too. Keen trots out the canard about millennials and history: how they "don't mix." Millennials live in the present only, and history as recent as the Berlin Wall is otherworldly if known at all. But it has always been this way. Keen says he is accused of elitism, and justifiably. He is better educated, more perceptive and analytical than the hoi polloi he defends. They have never put things in historical perspective, and claiming the internet has taken this away from them by keeping everything short and superficial is wrong. He seems most concerned by the net unemployment from Kodak giving way to the minimalist Instagram and its ilk. But he ignores the massive crowdfunding that has helped create thousands of businesses, not just individual jobs. Same for ebay, , etsy and alibaba. They have spawned literally millions of businesses that could not have existed before the web. Meanwhile, Kodak had to go, like the inkwell makers and whalebone corset companies before it. The parallels with the robber barons, the monopolists and the lords of the past are apt and fit like a glove. Today's internet giants are fiercely against unions, against government interference (unless their money is available), above the law, and all for their own (unprecedented) wealth and power. The internet they wield is all about bottomless oceans of personal data that would make the Stasi jealous, but it's just a byproduct they milk for profit. That people volunteer all this data, from social media to tracking devices like mobiles would move a spy to tears. That we have accepted this way of life is totally consistent with history. It's the new opiate of the

masses. Keen is correct: the internet is not the answer. What we need is a new question. David Wineberg

Since its creation during the Cold War, the Internet, together with the Web, personal computers, tablets and smartphones, has ushered in one of the greatest shifts in society since the Industrial Revolution. The Digital Revolution has contributed to the world in many positive ways, but we are less aware of the Internet's deeply negative effects. *The Internet Is Not the Answer*, by longtime Internet skeptic Andrew Keen, offers a comprehensive look at what the Internet is doing to our lives. The book traces the technological and economic history of the Internet, from its founding in the 1960s through the rise of big data companies to the increasing attempts to monetize almost every human activity. In this sharp, witty narrative, informed by the work of other writers, reporters, and academics, as well as his own research and interviews, Keen shows us the tech world, warts and all. Startling and important, *The Internet Is Not the Answer* is a big-picture look at what the Internet is doing to our society and an investigation of what we can do to try to make sure the decisions we are making about the reconfiguring of our world do not lead to unpleasant, unforeseen aftershocks.

Praise for *The Internet Is Not the Answer*: *The Internet Is Not the Answer* is the most compelling, persuasive, and passionately negative thing I've yet read on this topic. It offers a scary picture of how the ultra-libertarian superstars of Silicon Valley are leading us inexorably into a future with the sort of social inequalities not seen in the West since the early days of the Industrial Revolution. — Kazuo Ishiguro, *New Statesman* (Books of the Year) Andrew Keen has written a very powerful and daring manifesto questioning whether the Internet lives up to its own espoused values. He is not an opponent of Internet culture, he is its conscience, and must be heard. — Po Bronson Andrew Keen is the Christopher Hitchens of the Internet. Neglect this book with peril. In an industry and world full of prosaic pabulum about the supposedly digitally divine, Keen's work is an important and sharp razor. — Michael Fertik, CEO, Reputation.com This is the best and most readable critique of Silicon Valley yet. Keen is no technophobe nor a stranger to The Valley and this is what makes his book especially devastating. On the other hand it allows him to carve out a small space for optimism. — David Lowery, founder of Camper Van Beethoven and cofounder of Cracker Keen is intent on exposing the greed, egotism and narcissism that fuels the tech world. . . . Even if you don't agree with, say, his vitriolic takedowns of Uber and Airbnb, his sheer passion is likely to hold your interest. — Chicago Tribune *The Internet Is Not the Answer* claims that the only real best friend today's tech titans have is money, and until policymakers intervene, or until the digital elites adopt a more altruistic posture, the Internet will remain a winner-take-all marketplace that's widening a yawning gulf between society's haves and have-nots. . . . *The Internet Is Not the Answer* supports its convincing narrative with startling numbers and research cataloged over roughly forty pages worth of endnotes. — San Francisco Chronicle *The Internet Is Not the Answer* returns to arguments that Mr. Keen has made in previous books, expanding the case for worries about privacy in the wake of the revelations of Edward Snowden. . . . it makes a strident economic argument. . . . Unbridled techno-Utopianism shows only the revolution's benefits, and is dangerously incomplete. It is handy, therefore, to have sceptics like Mr. Keen around. — Economist [Keen] can be a telling polemicist and has a sharp eye when it comes to skewering the pretensions and self-delusions of the new digital establishment. . . . Keen has a sharp ear for the sanctimonious of tech happy talk. — Financial Times [Keen is] the most famous British tech voice in the US. — GQ Keen's larger point stands: The tech world, like industrial capitalism before it, will not become sufficiently equitable unless we legislate it to be that way. . . . So instead of waiting for technology to sort us out, Keen argues that it's time to intervene to manage digital developments in ways that increase rather than undermine human welfare. — Globe and Mail *The Internet Is Not the Answer* is the most frightening book I've read in years (perhaps in my lifetime), as frightful as the conservative Supreme Court justices and the deniers of climate change. . . . Keen is unsparing of what he calls the libertarian elites who want to eliminate all oversight, all regulations, all concern for the safety of others. . . . I'd call him a prophet. — CounterPunch Silicon Valley entrepreneur Andrew Keen takes on the very institution that provides his living. . . . Impassioned and insistent, this is a wake-up call worth considering. — Cleveland Plain Dealer Andrew Keen has again shown himself one of the sharpest critics of Silicon Valley hype, greed, egotism, and inequity. His tales are revealing, his analyses biting. Beneath the criticism is a moral commitment, too, a defense of humane society—the right to be left alone, a fair shot at success, access to the doings of the powerful, and other democratic ideals threatened by the Internet and its moguls. — Mark Bauerlein, author of *The Dumbest Generation* Keen provokes us in every sense of the word at times maddening, more often thought-provoking, he lets just enough out of the Silicon Valley hot air balloon to start a real conversation about the full impact of digital technology. But will anyone accept the invitation? And, if they do, will anyone thank Andrew Keen for bursting our bubble? If so, maybe there's hope for the digital generation after all. — Larry Downes, co-author of *Unleashing the Killer App* A provocative title and an even more provocative book. Andrew Keen rightly challenges us to think about how the internet will shape society. I remain more optimistic, but hope I'm right to be so. — Mark Read, CEO, WPP Digital Andrew Keen has done it again. With great authority he places modern Silicon Valley into a historical context, comparing its structure to the

feudal system, which produced a wealthy elite from the efforts of myriad serfs. If you have read *The Circle*, this is your next read. Like me, you may find much to disagree with. But you won't be able to put it down. This is a book that demands a reaction. The Valley will never be the same." Keith Teare, co-founder of TechCrunch, Easynet and RealNames

Keen makes a deeply important argument and offers a constructive caution that there is no Moore's Law for human progress, that technological determinism is not a good in itself, and that until we fuse technology with humanity the real power in the technology that connects will in many ways be to disconnect us from what matters." Dov Seidman, CEO of LRN and author of *How*

"For the past two decades, as we listened to a chorus of pundits tell us the Internet would generate more democracy and opportunity, the real world seems to grow more oppressive and unequal by the day. Drawing on his formidable knowledge of this New Economy, Andrew Keen explains why Uber could make billions destroying taxi unions, to cite just one example - and why some people still see this as progress. If you've ever wondered why the New Economy looks suspiciously like the Old Economy only with even more for the winners and less for everyone else put down your shiny new phablet and read this book." Robert Levine, author of *Free Ride*

The argument travels between a beach in Mexico where the photo-sharing app Instagram was invented on a laptop and the boarded-up buildings in Rochester, N.Y., that memorialize the bankruptcy of Kodak. . . . [Keen] knows the digital world inside and out both as an entrepreneur and as a journalistic commentator." Christian Science Monitor

Keen goes among the Silicon Valley hipsters those who truly believe they are on the verge of joining the one percent who own half the winner-takes-all economy and he is not impressed." New Scientist

Keen, himself a veteran of the tech industry, reveals the behind-the-scenes workings of the Internet. . . . His best message, however, is that with consideration and the application of care we can still shape a future society that utilizes the strengths of the internet while not allowing it to overwhelm us and turn us into robotic servants of the very technology that was designed to help us gain freedom and growth as human beings." The Daily News Online

If you're stuck like a fly in the World Wide Web and your life is largely lived online, then *The Internet Is Not the Answer* is a book you won't be able to put down." Journal Record

Should be applauded for rowing against the tide of veneration for technological innovation." Daily Telegraph

A punchy manifesto on the internet age. . . . [Keen] guides us through the history and excess of the net, from its arrival in 1991, through the birth of Instagram in 2010 and onwards, to the specter of privacy concerns and big data that loom over us today. . . . The book is dazzling in scope. . . . This book is a must-read for anyone remotely concerned about their lives on the net." Independent

Andrew Keen's pleasingly incisive study argues that, far from being a democratizing force in society, the internet has only amplified global inequities. . . . [Keen] wants to persuade us to transcend our childlike fascination with the baubles of cyberspace so that we can take a long hard look at the weird, dysfunctional, inequalitarian, comprehensively surveilled world that we have been building with digital tools. . . . Keen challenges the dominant narrative about the internet that it's a technology that liberates, informs and empowers people." Guardian

The most devastating book I've read in a long while. Keen describes an Internet that's not as virtuous, open and egalitarian as was promised by those who developed it. . . . this is from someone who embraces the digital age and still sees its potential." San Jose Mercury News