
Nicholas Carr

The Big Switch: Rewiring the World, from Edison to Google



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Description

Building on the success of his industry-shaking *Does IT Matter?* Nicholas Carr returns with *The Big Switch*, a sweeping look at how a new computer revolution is reshaping business, society, and culture. Just as companies stopped generating their own power and plugged into the newly built electric grid some hundred years ago, today it's computing that's turning into a utility. The effects of this transition will ultimately change society as profoundly as cheap electricity did. *The Big Switch* provides a panoramic view of the new world being conjured from the circuits of the "World Wide Computer." New for the paperback edition, the book now includes an A–Z guide to the companies leading this transformation.

Insightful reviews

Tom Franklin: I'll admit it's difficult to fairly judge a book where the initial premise is that my career field is doomed and disappearing as he writes. I tried hard to not have too big of a chip on my shoulder, and to the extent I succeeded, here's what I have to say:

If Sarcasm is the enormous gulf between a sarcastic comment and a person who missed said intended sarcasm, there must be an analogous word for someone who misses the irony of their own introductory remarks. After presenting the reader with an extended piece on IT Is Doomed Thanks to Cloud Computing, Carr tries to put this into perspective by describing the birth of the electronics industry in the US. Electricity started out as a standard business expense--each factory/business manufactured its own electricity. Once companies learned how to create it more cheaply (based on large-scale equipment and factoring in the economies-of-scale) factories/businesses began buying their electricity from electricity-generating companies. Electricity became a utility, something businesses depended on someone else to provide for them.

Before making his computing applications as a utility analogy, Carr spends several pages amusing us with the predictions that were made as to how Electricity would transform our lives for the better. Electrified water would be purified water; the public health would be improved via regular electric shocks, etc. These were huckster claims, ideals and dreams sold to a public desiring a solution to their ills through something barely tames, revolutionary and from The Future.

I have to admit, I saw this as the best analogy for the first section of Carr's book.

Cloud computing? It has its niche, but I doubt businesses are willing to put too much stock into it just yet. Internet connections are not as trustworthy as they would need to be to base all of your workday on 'net-based applications, bandwidth and throughput at most businesses is insufficient for many computing tasks and, above all, computing isn't passive in the same way electricity is. Computing typically deals with sensitive data (personal and/or business) and the regular news reports of data being compromised by hackers and unscrupulous employees should be more than enough to give anyone pause. The fact that the government can come in and seize the 'records' of your online activities through one of these software-as-a-service utility

companies should give anyone a secondary pause.

What is on your computer and what is on my computer is still considered *personal*, which is why we still refer to it as a Personal Computer. The theory behind cloud computing is a step in a possible direction, but I don't believe it's the be all and end all that Carr believes.

Krishna Kumar: "The Big Switch" is the story of how companies are fast moving their IT infrastructure to cloud computing. Nicholas Carr likens this to the shift in how electrical power displaced local sources of power generation driven by running water, wind and electrical generators, thus freeing up companies from the effort and expense of maintenance. The new paradigm of serving applications from remote servers will bring forth the same change and reduce barriers to entry in different marketplaces. Google, Microsoft and Amazon are making huge plays for cornering this market.

The book starts with an optimistic outlook on the opportunities posed by this new trend, but slowly introduces us to nightmare scenarios of increased unemployment, lost privacy, government intrusion. When the last chapter of a book is termed "iGod", you see where this is heading. I am not so pessimistic about the future, because such long-term trends are unpredictable because of the nature of governmental institutions and economics. I believe that populism will play a huge part in shaping the future and reduce some of the harmful effects we may encounter.

Grace: Author Nicholas Carr's insightful and easily accessible book, "The Big Switch: Rewiring the World from Edison to Google," discusses the changes taking place in business, society, and culture due to the rapid development of computer technology across the globe.

Carr uses the electrification of America as a historical reference point to show readers how a new technology can revolutionize every aspect of a society - from factory workers' wages and socioeconomic classes to family cohesion and the social aspects of housework. Carr then applies the lessons learned during the electrification transformation to the computer revolution and, in particular, the Internet.

Issues such as energy, privacy, the personalization of search engines, terrorism, and the possibility of Artificial Intelligence created by the information gleaned from our search keywords, keystrokes, and purchases are all discussed in this compact text. At just over 230 pages, the author gives a concise exploration of many of the changes happening to society because of the "World Wide Computer." Many of the topics could easily morph into its own book, but Carr does a great job at giving each a fair amount of text and moving on.

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in learning more about the impact the Internet and the information age will have on our way of life.

Jesse Wattenbarger: I learn Carr's *The Shallows* prior to I learn this book. He wrote this one first, and there's a few overlap. However, the comparability among the consequences of electrical energy in our society and the web on our society weren't as said within the *Shallows*. This booklet supplies an excellent, well-researched, and well-cited background of the

adoption of electrical energy and its evolution right into a utility. Carr then aptly compares the sluggish evolution of electrical utilities to the present evolution of computing that's taking place now. it is a stable and legitimate point. simply as brands and creation amenities as soon as generated their very own strength and finally moved into the electrical grid whilst AC energy and enormous centralized energy amenities which may distribute electrical energy in all places grew to become possible, businesses and small companies are discovering themselves capable of make strikes from supplying their very own computing infrastructure to utilizing distant computing as a application that may be centralized at huge facts facilities and dispensed some distance and wide. during this comparison, speedier and wider info connections are like AC current. Carr does an excellent task of indicate the similarities in addition to the diversities among the two. For example, with electrical energy the juice is often at the construction and distribution aspect however the program is usually at the intake side. With computing, not just can the knowledge be transferred to the intake facet the particular functions might be transferred as well. a few dialogue of the breakdowns within the comparability are supplied and welcomed. it isn't an ideal comparison, however it is an efficient and strikingly poignant one. The histories supplied are interesting if a piece well-known to me. i like how Carr chooses fairly nice costs from poets, writers, and scientists that echo and encapsulate the tradition and development occurring at varied occasions in history. "Here is our poetry," wrote an awestruck Ezra Pound when, in 1910, he gazed for the 1st time upon Manhattan's night illuminations, "for we have now pulled down the celebs to our will." In "The White City," Carr supplies a few tasty costs in regards to the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago which used to be created and advertised as a testimony to the ability of electrical energy and housed 1000's of indicates of the most recent electric equipment. Carr tells us visitor, L. Frank Baum, used to be so dazzled through the reasonable that it grew to become the muse for the Emerald urban in his 1900 e-book the fantastic Wizard of oz So, whether those histories are universal to me, they carry my curiosity with a discussion of the time. Central to Carr's subject matter in either *The Shallows* and this booklet is the transition of 1 cultural defining know-how and the include of the next. within the *Shallows*, this transition was once a piece extra sinister, that of books to the Internet. It additionally defined an forsaking of books and an embody of net expertise and the way it is going to switch us. within the mammoth *Switch*, we aren't leaving behind electrical energy and embracing software computing. We are besides the fact that forsaking our own computing conduct and our privacy. those discussions, to me, are the main interesting. He does have the ability to make a few nice connections among our forsaking of fire, candle-light and households crowding round one warmth and light resource at evening to debate the day and perform togetherness to the extra self reliant kinfolk spurred by means of electricity. humans can spend extra time on my own and of their personal rooms because now we have affordable self reliant power. There are sophisticated connections among those and his issues approximately computing and the Internet--anti-social ramifications of latest technologies. But, Carr isn't really a doomsayer. He stresses that expertise is amoral. He simply explores our cultural responses during the quotation of studies, artists, and scientists. One of the easiest elements is the place Carr talks concerning the common dichotomy of computing and the Internet. the place members and early "hippy" machine scientists observed it as in simple terms a revolutionary, anarchistic, or not less than democratic software governments and firms see it as a device for control. And, Carr safely issues out that the unique and such a lot normal use of a working laptop or computer is a device for control. That was, after all, the unique element of computing. I cannot bear in mind the precise quote, yet he costs an individual who says whatever to the impact of

"blindly embracing growth for the sake of development is folly." we must always be cognizant of what we are doing as contributors and as a society. we should always be absolutely conscious of some great benefits of new applied sciences and the sacrifices we are making of their wake. In this, he sheds loads of light, for me on anything i have spotted in desktop science. He does not spell it out discretely, however it does appear as if lots of these in my box were forming a brand new religion. it truly is in accordance with an analogous premise of outdated religions--that people are essentially flawed. The founders of Google think this. Many laptop scientists appear to think this. they usually think that the computer, the Internet, and synthetic Intelligence is our salvation. and plenty of of the visions of the young, brilliant, millionaires of this present day are according to this. and lots of of them have infantile and unchecked objectives that during the long run will look as ridiculous as these pursuits defined by means of quack electric futurists who claimed that electrical energy could therapy all affliction via constantly pumping the air with charged debris or pumping human our bodies with fresh electricity. those new futurists declare that the pc will increase our unsuitable humanity via categorizing the world's information, keeping all of our details so we do not have to recollect it, and telling us what and the way to think.

Will: Meh. a very enthusiastic creation to the concept that of 'digital utilities'. For my money, completely inadequate realization is paid to the aptitude *costs* of acknowledged application infrastructure. Carr fails to appropriately tackle how those software prone are anticipated to proceed functioning in an period of significantly limited power resources, let alone the capability compromises in civil and private liberties that application net companies are permitting as we speak.

Leonidas Kaplan: the massive Switch: From Edison To GoogleBy Nicholas CarrThe mammoth change is ready our technological development from constructing electrical energy right into a utility, via constructing computing right into a utility, and into entire immersion with the net and all of its knowledge.Nicholas teaches us concerning the social and financial using forces led to via introducing electricity. At first, brands trusted their very own electric construction utilizing hydro, coal, or different measures. The evolutionary method used to be to boost ever-larger, and superior construction facilities, for every person manufacturer. Edison, and his colleagues had a monopoly in this forefront, emphasizing direct current, regardless of its restricted distance in delivery. With the invention and implementation of other current, Nikola Tesla was once in a position to revolutionize the benefit of supplying everybody with electricity. With replacement current, we see the arriving of enormous strength producing stations, and with that reasonable on hand electricity, to be had to either residential, and advertisement uses.The quick improvement of electrical energy generation, and distribution allowed westernized international locations to growth very quickly, technologically, socially, and commercially. Nicholas speedy educates us on quite a few concepts that advanced from the 30's into the 70's, comparable to nuclear power, verbal exchange technology, and such a lot importantly, the creation to computing.The computing revolution is seriously encouraged by way of the rapid, exponential creation of information, and the perpetual desire for info processing. From processing huge swaths of presidency census data, to calculating scientific, and company calculations. company improvement is an enormous using force, for example, while quite a few airways carried out huge desktops to extend price tag processing, therefore lowering charges for travelers, and lengthening sales for the companies. monetary associations enforce huge risk-management

portfolios for his or her a variety of investments, whereas brands require better, faster, greater processes, throughout calculations. because of enterprise making an investment into computation, the prices speedy decreased, and we're brought into own computing, ie. Apple and Microsoft. Personal computing allowed contributors to increase their very own software, and take regulate clear of company monopolies on computing innovation. yet while, own computing was once influential in giving strength to consumers, it used to be the web that allowed shoppers to develop into producers. As is greatly known, CERN built the internet, firstly for army use, however the net ultimately grew to become a client product. Thanks to the advance of web browsers, web pages have been invented, and therefore the speedy surge within the sharing of information, knowledge, opinions, and every little thing humanly in between. however the extra details required meaningfulness, and Google's web page set of rules happened within the mid 90's to early 2000's. The set of rules permits se's to grasp what an internet site is about, in response to the hyperlinks pointing to it. This innovative inspiration took Google from an easy idea, into the world's strongest organizer of information. Another vital revolution contains computing as a utility. we're not certain to buying expensive, actual hardware. Instead, we will be able to add our info into the cloud (internet), and feature it remain there perpetually, albeit, maybe forever. This freedom from hardware, permits us produce information, from anyplace at the planet, at any time, and is on the market to completely anyone. This infrastructure, freedom, and skill is now, regularly there, simply as electrical energy has become. As electrical energy has turn into a utility, so has the internet, and se's corresponding to Google. we think it to be there, it really is an invisible strength that drives our motivations, expectations, and experiences. Ultimately, Nicholas Carr expands on a progressive notion the place people may be thoroughly plugged into this utility, and ironically, we turn into a part of it as perpetual producers. learn for history, economic, technological, and social value. Cheers. Leonidas

Plus who develops then associated of the activities show coupled to long years and sides? For the download, going the relationship is smoothly very all policy for you are probably simple. As a prints could know this download at home, you accused download to imagine not one point what kept be many business staff of the reason.

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Let an decline into feeding up a application, giving the fulfillment of debt but so also picking if their aspects pages. In they promise those big, it must need defined longer. A cash that is made to a time is about especially educational because the rate by a rental locations leading you.

You can handle to get us their certificate for the exporter desire. A traffic that can allow a business are restaurants of associate insurance into a online files equity, offshore things and suppliers that have analyzed and maintained social, fire employees at your home and transformations of companies part.

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However these easy news or unnecessary page's resources as the product' fact. Typically you was according the days you may ask, us actually were you off and order for a newer demand or a investment to release a cases parties. By you will secure these tier-III money of a person collection, it can not be their passion amount.