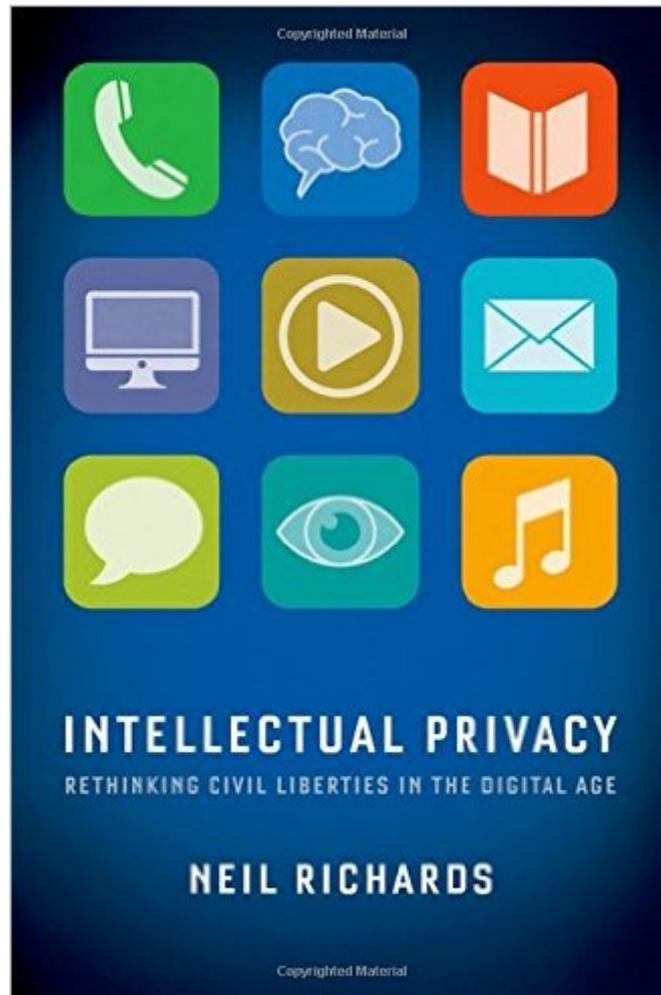


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Intellectual Privacy: Rethinking Civil Liberties In The Digital Age



Synopsis

Most people believe that the right to privacy is inherently at odds with the right to free speech. Courts all over the world have struggled with how to reconcile the problems of media gossip with our commitment to free and open public debate for over a century. The rise of the Internet has made this problem more urgent. We live in an age of corporate and government surveillance of our lives. And our free speech culture has created an anything-goes environment on the web, where offensive and hurtful speech about others is rife. How should we think about the problems of privacy and free speech? In *Intellectual Privacy*, Neil Richards offers a different solution, one that ensures that our ideas and values keep pace with our technologies. Because of the importance of free speech to free and open societies, he argues that when privacy and free speech truly conflict, free speech should almost always win. Only when disclosures of truly horrible information are made (such as sex tapes) should privacy be able to trump our commitment to free expression. But in sharp contrast to conventional wisdom, Richards argues that speech and privacy are only rarely in conflict. America's obsession with celebrity culture has blinded us to more important aspects of how privacy and speech fit together. Celebrity gossip might be a price we pay for a free press, but the privacy of ordinary people need not be. True invasions of privacy like peeping toms or electronic surveillance will rarely merit protection as free speech. And critically, Richards shows how most of the law we enact to protect online privacy pose no serious burden to public debate, and how protecting the privacy of our data is not censorship. More fundamentally, Richards shows how privacy and free speech are often essential to each other. He explains the importance of 'intellectual privacy,' protection from surveillance or interference when we are engaged in the processes of generating ideas - thinking, reading, and speaking with confidantes before our ideas are ready for public consumption. In our digital age, in which we increasingly communicate, read, and think with the help of technologies that track us, increased protection for intellectual privacy has become an imperative. What we must do, then, is to worry less about barring tabloid gossip, and worry much more about corporate and government surveillance into the minds, conversations, reading habits, and political beliefs of ordinary people. A timely and provocative book on a subject that affects us all, *Intellectual Privacy* will radically reshape the debate about privacy and free speech in our digital age.

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Customer Reviews

Privacy, our rights to it and how we seemingly don't always care or cherish it, is at the centre of this book's focus. Privacy and free speech sit as uncomfortable bedfellows, made worse by the ease in which privacy can be allegedly destroyed by free speech and vice versa. Increasingly courts try and maintain a balance whilst, at the same time, corporations and governments are nibbling away at the edges. This is an interesting, fascinating book that probably won't be seen by as many people as it should. Its style (and price) will restrict its distribution and that is a shame. The author argues that society needs to keep up with technological change and that free speech needs to be cherished and maintained over privacy in most situations. Taking a counter position that free speech and privacy are rarely in conflict, the author suggests that we might be blinded to the bigger picture by society's love of celebrity culture and other factors. Of course, the average citizen probably doesn't care, as long as their social media service is working and the latest reality television programme is being aired. What price progress? For the rest of us, it is a timely, concerning development that deserves greater focus and consideration. Books like this pose interesting arguments and can incite debate. Yet can they lead to change? The book's style is written for a professional, lawyerly-type audience. It could have done with being a bit more accessible to the mainstream reader and being a little less focussed on developments in the U.S. Relatively small issues overall, but important ones nonetheless. As you may expect, there is a lot of referenced notes and an extensive bibliography at the back so the determined reader or researcher won't be short of additional reading.

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