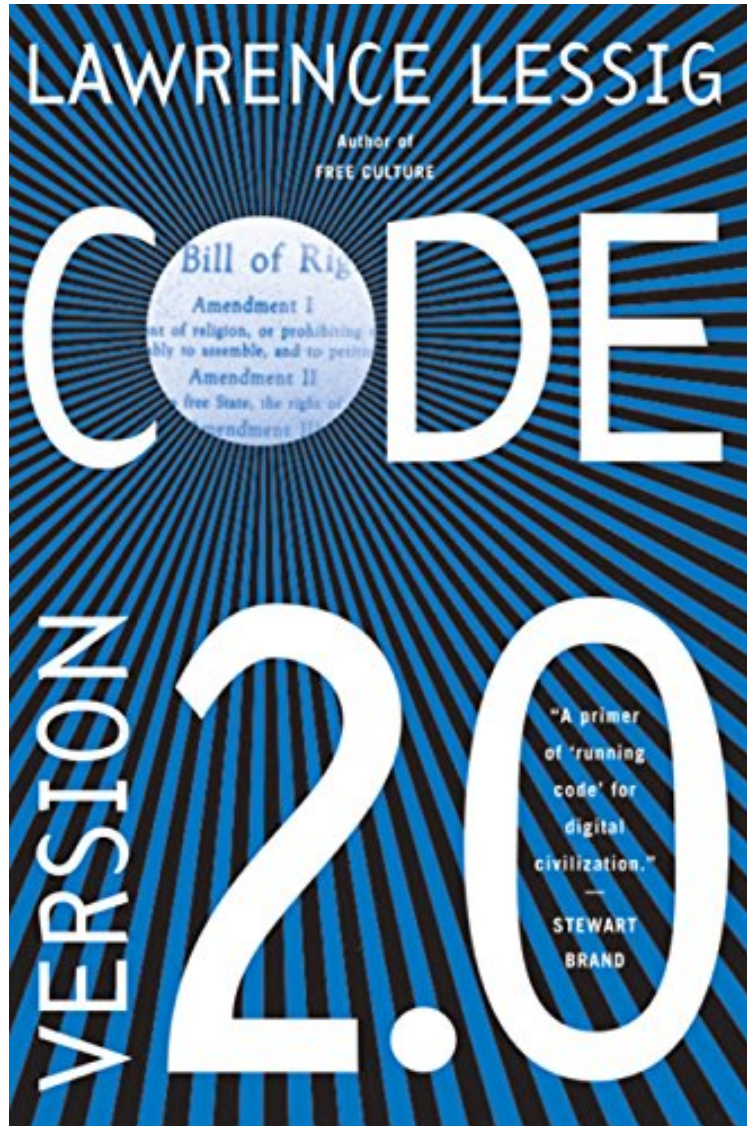


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Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0

Lawrence Lessig

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Lawrence Lessig : Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Code 2.0 summaryBy Juliet BakerCode 2.0 SummaryThe Internet is a medium through which the individual is provided with both extreme freedom and complete control. As Lessig suggests in Code 2.0, this dichotomy presents a delicate balance towards the abilities and uses of the hardware and software of the digital age. By comparing the inner workings of the regulation of cyberspace to the Constitution, Lessig establishes a dialogue that addresses the idea that a new form of regulation is to be created in order to maintain control over cyberspace. He defines code as the basic governing structure upon which the Internet is founded and

ascertains that "code is a regulator in cyberspace because it defines the terms upon which cyberspace is offered" (6). Lessig uses this definition throughout his argument to support the idea that, in its ability to do and create anything within the virtual space, it is able to establish complete control over the Internet. He presents the potential for the regulation of this code and, furthermore, the regulation of cyberspace as a whole. Through stories and examples of this paradox in action, he shows the many ways in which code can be used to control situations that initially break the possibilities in the real world. He poses the question, "We will see that cyberspace does not guarantee its own freedom but instead carries an extraordinary potential for control. And then we will ask: How should we respond?" (5). He establishes that cyberspace can be regulated through four underlying factors: architecture, norms, law, and market. These broad categories encompass that framework that Lessig suggests is the infrastructure that allows the possibility of bring order and regulation to a tool that can make virtually anything possible. The Internet is a world that defies that nature and limitations of the real world through the ability to code and create a system that, at least in cyberspace, can allow anything to be possible. In his story about "Second Life", Lessig describes a program in which people can establish and embody an alternate identity (6). Through coding their profile, the program allows them to do whatever it is they wish to do, which is not limited to things that are impossible to accomplish in the real world. Second Life is the perfect example of how cyberspace can be perfectly controlled in its perfect freedom. By establishing the code, the creator is constructing a virtual space that has endless possibilities, but the code itself is an establishment of law and management towards this supposedly limitless system. The four factors of regulation that he describes, architecture, norms, law and market, are one of the strongest points to his argument (7). He clearly establishes the techniques and constraints by which this boundless world can be managed and behavior can be regulated. Architecture describes the physical and tangible structure that allows or does not allow things to be possible. If an object is not physical available or able to do something, than the architecture directs that it cannot be done. Norms are the expectations that are established through the majority's adherence to them in order to coerce a particular action or behavior. Law addresses the set of rules that governs the situation and the consequences that occur if they are broken. There are certain laws in place; such as being allowed to smoke in a particular area and those laws are enforced by punishment if they are not followed. Market is the persuasion to behave in a particular manner through offers that make it more appealing to take one action over another. Lowering the price of an item or making a deal is persuading the buyer into purchasing what the store wants them to purchase, thus regulating their decision. Each of these modes of regulation has their strengths and weaknesses depending on the situation, but their universality is what makes them especially useful in the context of regulating cyberspace. Lessig establishes a strong idea that the modern virtual world has opened up many seemingly impossible situations that, without proper regulation, can go awry. While it is difficult to imagine keeping such a powerful and virtually limitless source under control, Lessig discusses the idea that it is indeed possible. There is a consistent parallel to the real world within his argument of regulation that suggests that the methods can be adapted to the needs of the virtual world. Where laws of crime and punishment are established in real life, the government can step in a create those for the Internet and where architecture is concerned, what is physically impossible in the real world can similarly be restricted through code. As the title suggests, his pervasive point of his argument is that code is the key to the regulation of cyberspace with the fact that it is the foundation that controls it. The individuals who know how to create code have free range to essentially control cyberspace. Lessig implies in many different ways that, in order to regulate that virtual world, these individuals need to be regulated and prevented from running rampant with the power to control cyberspace. With the continuous juxtaposition of the approaches that need to be taken to regulate the physical world and virtual world, Lessig brings forth the idea that cyberspace is an extension of the real world that can be regulated under the same concepts. He states that "The problems with that cyberspace reveals are not problems with cyberspace. They are real-space problems that cyberspace shows us we must now resolve-or maybe reconsider" (16). In this revelation, he suggests that cyberspace creates infinite possibilities for those who participate in it and it in itself is not the center of potential problems. Rather it is who controls and regulates it and how that is accomplished that poses the real threat to society. The real world systems that have been established set the example for the regulation of this world of infinite possibilities. Though it was a bit scattered, I enjoyed his argument and the relevant insight that Lessig provides regarding the rapidly increasing presence of "cyberspace".

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Precursor of the Legal Complexities of Cyberspace By Lewis Sandler The book is intelligently and well written, and a must read for those who have a serious interest in the future of our civilization. One of the fascinating things about the book, that was recently written, is that the future problems the book foresees are already passe. Internet privacy is now an illusion. Any email or message in cyberspace can appear the next day on the front page of the New York Times. Lessig would like to control the misuse of cyberspace, but his suggestions are merely theoretical and because of the chaotic state of conflicting tribes and governments, these methods have no teeth. As is so often the case, it may take a catastrophe, like breaking the code of Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0 of an encrypted lethal message between nations, to generate international regulation of cyberspace.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not what it seems. Worth a read. By Albert M. Latham While the book is, at its foundation, quite sound in the ideas it brings to the table (sometime scarily so) I think that the author's desire to lean heavily on anecdotes and stories to

make his point is heavy handed, though effective. If you are a person who wants to be politically or socially active this book is a good jumping off point. Mr. Lessig, if you read this I approve of your 'lead by example' mentality. Quite a few of the people I spoke with were yelling and screaming about how you were all for government regulation (and you just might be, but I don't really get that out of the book) without paying the slightest attention to the fact that you've been a member of the CC organization for quite some time.

There's a common belief that cyberspace cannot be regulated—that it is, in its very essence, immune from the government's (or anyone else's) control. Code, first published in 2000, argues that this belief is wrong. It is not in the nature of cyberspace to be unregulable; cyberspace has no nature. It only has code—the software and hardware that make cyberspace what it is. That code can create a place of freedom—as the original architecture of the Net did—or a place of oppressive control. Under the influence of commerce, cyberspace is becoming a highly regulable space, where behavior is much more tightly controlled than in real space. But that's not inevitable either. We can—we must—choose what kind of cyberspace we want and what freedoms we will guarantee. These choices are all about architecture: about what kind of code will govern cyberspace, and who will control it. In this realm, code is the most significant form of law, and it is up to lawyers, policymakers, and especially citizens to decide what values that code embodies. Since its original publication, this seminal book has earned the status of a minor classic. This second edition, or Version 2.0, has been prepared through the author's wiki, a web site that allows readers to edit the text, making this the first reader-edited revision of a popular book.

"[Lessig] is fast emerging as the nation's most original thinker in the new field of cyberspace." "A book that's sometimes as brilliant as the best teacher you ever had, sometimes as pretentious as a deconstructionist's conference." "In this remarkably clear and elegantly written book, [Lessig] takes apart many myths about cyberspace and analyzes its underlying architecture." "The 'alarming and impassioned' book on how the Internet is redefining constitutional law, now reissued as the first popular book revised online by its readers." "A remarkable work on the philosophy of this new medium, his latest book asks all the big questions about the role of government, commerce and the invisible hand of technology in shaping life as it is increasingly lived online." "Lawrence Lessig is a James Madison of our time, crafting the lineaments of a well-tempered cyberspace. This book is a primer of 'running code' for digital civilization. Like Madison, Lessig is a model of balance, judgement, ingenuity and persuasive argument." -- Stewart Brand
About the Author
LAWRENCE LESSIG is the C. Wendell and Edith M. Carlsmith Professor of Law at Stanford Law School and founder of the school's Center for the Internet and Society. After clerking for Judge Richard Posner on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and for Justice Antonin Scalia on the US Supreme Court, he taught at The University of Chicago, Yale Law School, and Harvard Law School before moving to Stanford. His other books are *Free Culture* and *The Future of Ideas*. In 2002 he was named one of *Scientific American's* Top 50 Visionaries. He lives in San Francisco, California.