



Free Ride: How Digital Parasites are Destroying the Culture Business, and How the Culture Business Can Fight Back

Robert Levine

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How did the newspaper, music, and film industries go from raking in big bucks to scooping up digital dimes? Their customers were lured away by the free ride of technology. Now, business journalist Robert Levine shows how they can get back on track.

On the Internet, “information wants to be free.” This memorable phrase shaped the online business model, but it is now driving the media companies on whom the digital industry feeds out of business. Today, newspaper stocks have fallen to all-time lows as papers are pressured to give away content, music sales have fallen by more than half since file sharing became common, TV ratings are plummeting as viewership migrates online, and publishers face off against Amazon over the price of digital books.

In *Free Ride*, Robert Levine narrates an epic tale of value destruction that moves from the corridors of Congress, where the law was passed that legalized YouTube, to the dorm room of Shawn Fanning, the founder of Napster; from the bargain-pricing dramas involving iTunes and Kindle to Google’s fateful decision to digitize first and ask questions later. Levine charts how the media industry lost control of its destiny and suggests innovative ways it can resist the pull of zero.

Fearless in its reporting and analysis, *Free Ride* is the business history of the decade and a much-needed call to action.

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