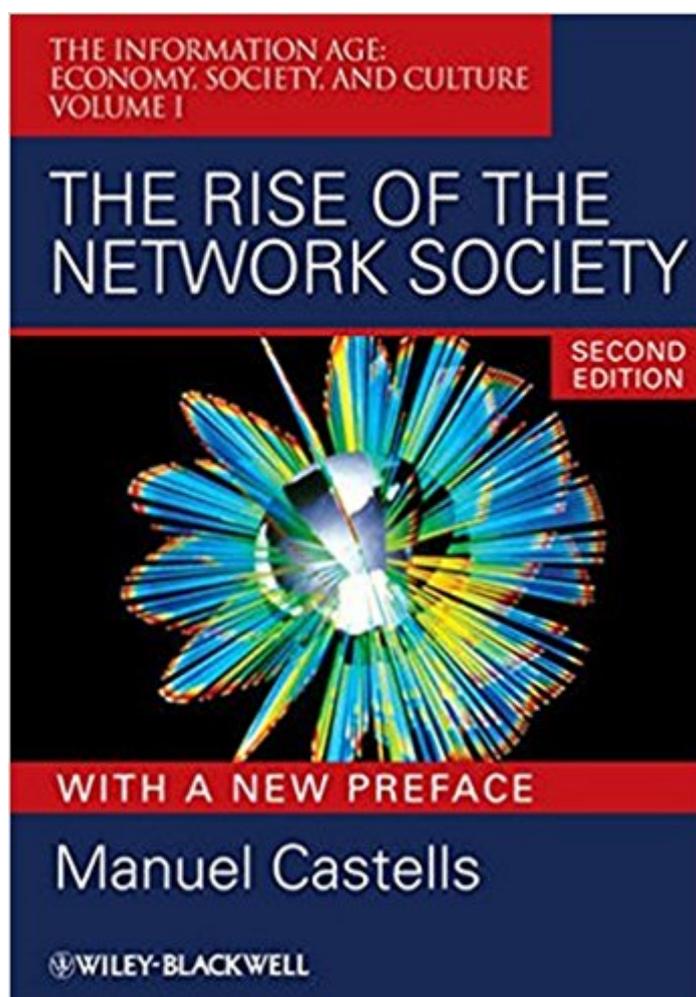The book was found

The Rise Of The Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, And Culture Volume I

Synopsis

This first book in Castells' groundbreaking trilogy, with a substantial new preface, highlights the economic and social dynamics of the information age and shows how the network society has now fully risen on a global scale. Groundbreaking volume on the impact of the age of information on all aspects of society Includes coverage of the influence of the internet and the net-economy Describes the accelerating pace of innovation and social transformation Based on research in the USA, Asia, Latin America, and Europe

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Customer Reviews

Given Castells' huge range of understanding and the sheer ambition of his work, it seems a bit unfair to really criticize this book. Few writers would try to tackle the huge ideas that Castells covers here - vast theories about the state and direction of humanity in relation to the rising information society. On the other hand, theory-of-everything books like this, as frequently attempted by polymaths such as Fritjof Capra, have their own unavoidable problems which deserve to be criticized. When a theorist tries to combine knowledge of everything into a huge integrated and unified theory, the writing becomes monstrously diffuse and unfocused. That is the exact problem with this book.Castells obviously has an understanding of all the disparate theoretical areas that would be encompassed by such a huge endeavor. As the book progresses, Castells is not afraid to move from areas like astrophysics to rural sociology to corporate architecture to programming language to everything else you could think of, often in successive paragraphs. But when describing everything, Castells eventually reaches conclusions on nothing. Bringing together disparate realms

of knowledge is one thing, but reaching insights that make sense is much more difficult.That all makes this book extremely tiresome for the reader. In that exasperating theory-of-everything fashion, Castells can't stop piling on new terminology like real virtuality, technopoles, or milieux of information (terms created by himself or others) that merely illustrate the smashing together of ideas, rather than synthesis.

The Rise of Network Society brings up many important issues regarding globalization and what Manuel Castells calls the network society. He argues that the technological revolution that began in the late 70s in Silicon Valley has had a profound impact on all aspects of society. The changes, he argues are most apparent in the new relationships between the economy, state and society that have been formed. He suggests that an increase in the flexibility of management, a decentralization of production and an increased reliance on networking has caused many of the immediate changes taking place. Castells suggests that it is through the decline in the labor movement and the devaluing of the laborers that capital has become an increasingly powerful network. This, he suggests has caused networks such as labor, criminal or mafia groups, and financial markets to be realized on a global rather than local scale. By looking at how new relationships and identities are being conceived of in what he calls the informational age, Castells is able to theorize about the ways in which technology and information have will continue to transform society. Castells suggests that as distances between places become shorter, time will also be changed. Technologies such as the internet, television and computers have decreased the space between different parts of the world to such an extent that we now have the capabilities to process information in real time. The fragmentation of the local community has led to an increasing reliance on global community organizations or the "net". People can now keep in touch with friends, date and divorce over the internet.

The fact is, Manuel Castells is one of the most cited social science scholars in the world. This kind of intellectual discourse is beyond the experience of casual users and typical college students.Here are excerpts from a more qualified reviewer:"The trilogy begins with The Rise of Network Society, a syncretic masterpiece that builds on many of Castells's earlier insights (Cf. Castells 1989). The second installment, The Power of Identity, contextualizes the "culture wars" of the late twentieth-century in the changing political economy, while the third, End of the Millennium, extends those arguments into a cautious, not altogether surprising, cultural futurology. It is safe to say that few others could have attempted the scope of this work and that this paean to the information age is

the only one of its kind. Remarkably, Castells is largely successful in his evocations of contemporary political economy and identity, a testament to a lifetime of teaching and scholarship.While Castells leaves us with no doubt-courtesy of a series of carefully plotted case studies--that similar processes of "fixed architecture" and "variable geometry" are at work at every level in all places on the planet, the breathtaking scope of his work (extended research and interviews on every continent), conceals the extent to which the social sciences are imbricated in the same forces that work to transform other areas of life. Hence, the "information explosion" in sociology, anthropology and urban studies has been matched by the attenuation of "information" in the public sphere to a conservative consensus castigating the victims of failed neoliberal policy.

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