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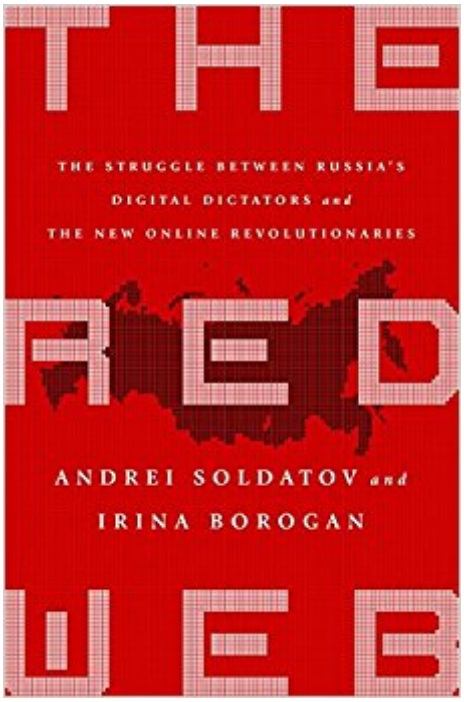
The Red Web: The Kremlin's Wars On The Internet



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Synopsis

With important new revelations into the Russian hacking of the 2016 Presidential campaigns"[Andrei Soldatov is] the single most prominent critic of Russia’s surveillance apparatus." -Edward SnowdenAfter the Moscow protests in 2011-2012, Vladimir Putin became terrified of the internet as a dangerous means for political mobilization and uncensored public debate. Only four years later, the Kremlin used that same platform to disrupt the 2016 presidential election in the United States. How did this transformation happen?The Red Web is a groundbreaking history of the Kremlin’s massive online-surveillance state that exposes just how easily the internet can become the means for repression, control, and geopolitical warfare. In this bold, updated edition, Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan offer a perspective from Moscow with new and previously unreported details of the 2016 hacking operation, telling the story of how Russia came to embrace the disruptive potential of the web and interfere with democracy around the world.

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Customer Reviews

A Library Journal Best Book of 2015A NPR Great Read of 2015"[Soldatov and Borogan] pull at the roots of the surveillance system in Russia today, and their research leads them quickly to the paranoid society of the Soviet Union." -The Wall Street Journal"A well researched and disturbing book by two brave Russian authors." -The Economist"A gripping book about of the internet and its censorship in post-Soviet Russia... Having covered technology and the security services from the

start of their careers in the 1990s, the two Russian journalists have accumulated expert knowledge few can match. And yet they have written a book not for geeks but for anyone who wants to understand how their country works." -Financial Times"A masterful study of the struggle between the Kremlin’s desire to control information and the unruly world of ordinary digital citizens." -The Guardian (UK)"Soldatov and Borogan, two young journalists, dogged and nervy, are detectives, tracking down players on all sides...A high-tech adventure." -Foreign Affairs"Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan’s The Red Web could not be more timely. It is a meticulously researched and highly readable history of Russian online communication, from its birth in the twilight of Soviet power to the flourishing social networks and varied blogposts of today." -Daniel Treisman, Digital Russia"[An] excellent, highly readable tale of the ongoing struggle to control digital life in Russia. ...[Soldatov and Borogan] have gone on to become foremost experts on the Russian secret services, and count among the country’s few remaining practicing investigative journalists." -Los Angeles Review of Books"Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, two of Russia’s top investigative journalists specializing in espionage, have given us a thrilling account of the online war between Russian surveillance and digital protesters. ... A superb book by two brave journalists. It deserves to be widely read because it asks profound questions about freedom and the future of the internet." -International Affairs

Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan are cofounders of Agentura.Ru and authors of The New Nobility. Their work has been featured in the New York Times, Moscow Times, Washington Post, Online Journalism Review, Le Monde, Christian Science Monitor, CNN, and BBC. The New York Times has called Agentura.ru "a web site that came in from the cold to unveil Russian secrets." Soldatov and Borogan live in Moscow, Russia.

Fascinating read if a little frightening. Great research, fine journalism. From , a very quick delivery.

This was easy to read and informative. It explained Russian interference in citizens’ lives clearly and makes it easier to understand where the feelings of mistrust of others comes from.

A must read if you want to know what is happening in Russia on this subject.

Excellent read!

It took me about 24 hours to read the whole book - and when I closed the last page, I felt like, well -

I want to read more!It is an in-depth history of the Russian Internet, and the way it has developed since its very first days.Putting aside the even more history about the phone communications interception and monitoring (which, by the way, is also amazing - just search the names of the people, who 'worked' there - Lev Kopelev and Alexander Solzhenitsyn; and you may be surprised to find out what they did there), the part about the Internet development is quite precise*.The authors have done a number of interviews, and have used public (and obviously some not-so-public) sources of information, and have managed to put them in an order that makes it an intriguing reading, at moments catching the reader's breath.The reader (in particular the reader from the USA) might be also fascinated by the description of Mr. Snowden's adventures in Russia - there are some facts, which were not widely known until this book was published.The American reader will also find more details about the authors of the Russian Internet policy - and these details are much more precise and factual, than similar accounts, shared for example by Richard Clarke in his book Cyber War.Here's a quote from the book, which is among my favorites (p. 304):"[Kolesnikov] insisted that what the authorities had done to the Internet was entirely immaterial: 'Look, did it affect your morning coffee?'"Today, a year after this conversation took place, the Russian Internet continues to change, and develop, and in some cases, it may have affected the morning coffee of some people.I highly recommend this book - you will have fun reading it._____* - I happened to have worked and traveled a lot of times to Russia since 1990s, and especially in the first decade of the XXI century, so I can confirm personally many of the stories that are described in the book as factually well written.** - On the picture - my copy of the book, with preferred food and drink for such a reading.

You need to read this book if you are concerned about government surveillance anywhere, or if you are a student of Russian history. The authors give us a concise history of surveillance both in and out of the former Soviet Union and today's Russia. The treatment of government response to new technology is enlightening and cause for concern.There is nothing nice I can say about the Cheka's newest abbreviation - FSB. It is just a new name for a bunch of thugs wrapped in government titles. Putin is a former intel officer who has maneuvered his way into a dictatorship. I feel sorry for the citizens of Russia who deserve better.This book is a keeper.

The authors provide an interesting discussion of the unique features of Russian Internet censorship that distinguish it from the kind practiced in other countries. I particularly liked the analysis of SORM and its connection with the Soviet past. The thesis of continuity with the past is fascinating: today

most international Internet traffic moves through one Internet exchange point (MSK-IX) in a way that is similar to how most telephone calls in Moscow during Soviet times went through one major telephone station. The artificial bottleneck, of course, facilitates control and censorship.My only criticism is that the book often reads like an overly literal translation of an original Russian manuscript. For example, the authors use the word ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“perspective research" (perspektivnye issledovaniya) ("This section took orders and research commissions on perspective research from all the agencies ...") when what they really mean is either ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“prospectiveÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• or ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“future researchÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. They say ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“fixingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (fiksirovatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢) ("Nossik also wrote that 'fixing of all incoming and outgoing Internet traffic of 75 million Russian users requires, without any exaggeration, petabytes and exabytes of disk space'") when this verb should almost always be translated as ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“recordingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. Other sentences could be rewritten for better diction: "He expressed fear that the Internet was building beyond their controlÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• should be ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“He expressed fear that the Internet was developing beyond their control.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Andreevsky FlagÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• disguises the fact that that it is a flag with St. AndrewÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s cross. The transliteration of Russian names is sometimes inaccurate: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Lev MishkinÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• should be ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Lev MyshkinÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• if the Internet handle is supposed to be modeled on the Dostoevsky character. The authors also fail to use an accurate transliteration system for the Russian sources in the footnotes. I translate Russian for a living, and I can say that the book would have benefited from being more carefully proofread by a native speaker.

ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The Red WebÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• is the definitive account of how the Kremlin has thoroughly co-opted the Russian Internet, turning it into an effective tool for the modern surveillance state. It's also a haunting commentary on how the Russian Internet was doomed from the outset, despite all its early promise during the Yeltsin era. As Soldatov and Borogan explain, Russia was locked into an inferior product ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • an Internet that was only marginally free and expressive ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • thanks to the way information was viewed by the repressive Soviet state. Where the book gets bogged down is in all the details of the Soviet era -- but it does a great job of outlining the key players in today's digital landscape. If you've been following all the twists and turns of how the Kremlin is trying to get foreign companies to relocate their servers to Russian soil and all the debate over which sites should be censored and why, this book offers a fascinating back story.

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