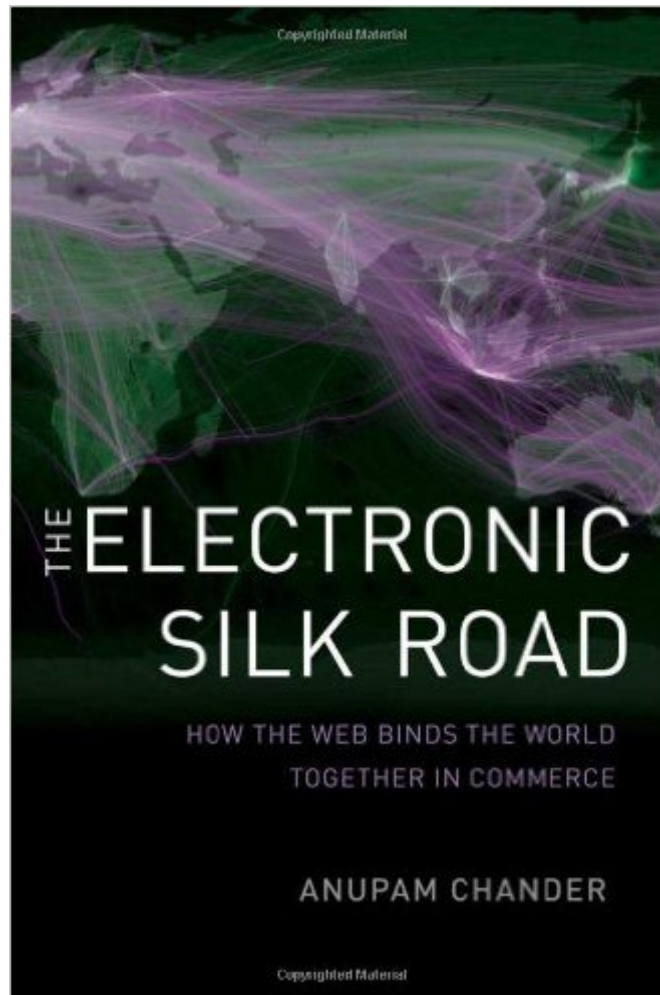


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The Electronic Silk Road: How The Web Binds The World Together In Commerce



Synopsis

On the ancient Silk Road, treasure-laden caravans made their arduous way through deserts and mountain passes, establishing trade between Asia and the civilizations of Europe and the Mediterranean. Today's electronic Silk Roads ferry information across continents, enabling individuals and corporations anywhere to provide or receive services without obtaining a visa. But the legal infrastructure for such trade is yet rudimentary and uncertain. If an event in cyberspace occurs at once everywhere and nowhere, what law applies? How can consumers be protected when engaging with companies across the world? In this accessible book, cyber-law expert Anupam Chander provides the first thorough discussion of the law that relates to global Internet commerce. Addressing up-to-the-minute examples, such as Google's struggles with China, the Pirate Bay's skirmishes with Hollywood, and the outsourcing of services to India, the author insightfully analyzes the difficulties of regulating Internet trade. Chander then lays out a framework for future policies, showing how countries can dismantle barriers while still protecting consumer interests.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed Anupam Chander's Electronic Silk Road and can recommend it to anyone who is looking to connect the dots between international trade theory and Internet policy / ecommerce developments. It is an extremely accessible text such that either a trade policy guru or a Net policy wonk could pick it up and learn a lot about the opposing issues they may not have heard of

before. Chander's over-arching goal is to sketch out and defend "a middle ground between isolation and unregulated trade, embracing free trade and also its regulation." In a writing style that is clear and direct, Chander explores the competing forces that facilitate and threaten what he refers to as "Trade 2.0." At the heart of the book is an old tension that has long haunted trade policy: How do you achieve the benefits of free trade through greater liberalization without completely undermining the sovereign authority of nation-states to continue enforcing their preferred socio-political legal and cultural norms? After all, as Chander notes, "States will be loathe to abandon their law in the face of the offerings mediated by the Internet." "If crossborder flows of information grossly undermine our privacy, security, or the standards of locally delivered services, they will not long be tolerated," he notes. These are just a few of the reasons that barriers to trade remain and why, as Chander explains, "the flat world of global business and the self-regulating world of cyberspace remain distant ideals." Chander wants to counter that impulse to expand the horizons of Trade 2.0, but he argues that, to some extent, nation-states will always need to be appeased along the way.

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