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Privacy's Blueprint: The Battle to Control the Design of New Technologies

Opponents of tech regulations contend that there are no bad technologies, only bad users. They say, "tech doesn't hurt people, people hurt people." We already have effective privacy laws that prevent harmful collection, use, and disclosure of personal information, these opponents say.[1]

Woodrow Hartzog's *Privacy Blueprint: The Battle to Control the Design of New Technologies* argues that the markers of hardware and software design should be more prone to laws to ensure there is an effort in creating privacy. The current idea is that technology is viewed as value-neutral, meaning, only the user can decide whether the app, internet, or etc., can be used for good or evil. However, this should not be the case. Hartzog points out that popular applications and tools were purposely designed to expose and manipulate individuals into disclosing their personal information. The author provides examples in order to show how software and hardware designers should handle privacy and how design is currently being used

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[1] Woodrow Hartzog, PRIVACY BLUEPRINT: THE BATTLE TO CONTROL THE DESIGN OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES, 5 (2018).

today. The purpose of this review primarily focuses on the overall merit and significance of the book.

Woodrow Hartzog is currently a professor at Northeastern University School of Law and holds a joint appointment at College of Computer and Information Science.[2] He currently teaches data and privacy protection issues at both schools.[3] Prior to working at both schools, Hartzog worked as an attorney in private practice and in trademark for the US Patent and Trademark office.[4] After working as an attorney, he was a professor at Samford University's Cumberland School of Law and was a visiting professor at Notre Dame Law School and University of Maine School of Law.[5] Hartzog specializes his focus on complex problems that develop when "personal information is collected by powerful new technologies, stored and disclosed online".[6] Professor Hartzog has been published in *Yale Law Journal, Columbia Law Review, California Law Review, Michigan Law Review, The Guardian, WIRED, BBC, CNN, Bloomberg, New Scientist, Slate, The Atlantic* and *The Nation*.[7] In addition, he has testified twice in front of Congress about data protection issues.[8] Hartzog's book has been called "one of the most important books about privacy in our times".[9]

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[2] *See Faculty Directory*, Northeastern University School of Law, *archived at* https://perma.cc/3MAR-WXZ7 (discussing his current professional position).

[3] *See id.* (mentioning what he currently teaches at both schools).

[4] *See id.* (stating what his previous job was before deciding to become a professor).

[5] *See id.* (noting he worked as a professor in multiple schools before working at Northeastern University School of Law).

[6] *See Faculty Directory* (mentioning the areas of law Hartzog specializes in).

[7] *See id.* (pointing out Hartzog has been published in several scholarly and popular national publications).

[8] *See id.* (stating Hartzog has stood in front of Congress to discuss important issues involving data protection).

[9] *See id.* (showing how impactful *Privacy Blueprint: The Battle to Control the Design of New Technologies* is in the legal community).

Privacy's Blueprint generally discusses why design is critical for user's privacy in digital age and the need to shift the responsibility of its users to the makers of software and hardware. The book is broken into eight chapters within three parts. *Part one- The case for taking design seriously in privacy law* argues the case for a design agenda for privacy law within two chapters.[10] *Chapter one- Why design is everything* demonstrates how design is part of everything and how it is valued.[11] *Chapter two- Privacy's law design gap* points out the gap between modern privacy law and policy and discusses how a design agenda could fill the gap.[12]

Part two- A design agenda for privacy law, Hartzog creates a design agenda for privacy law called Privacy's Blueprint.[13] He breaks down this blueprint idea in chapters three through five. *Chapter three- Privacy values in design* mentions the values that courts, and lawmakers should focus on while deciding how to shape design through privacy law.[14] *Chapter four- Setting boundaries for design* suggests boundaries for lawmakers to set.[15] *Chapter five- A tool kit for privacy design* examines tools that courts, and lawmakers could use to promote good design.[16]

Part three- Applying privacy's blueprint demonstrates Hartzog applying the blueprint to the most impactful privacy information technologies.[17] *Chapter six- Social media* investigates how design in social media shapes users online experiences and making them safe or

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[10] *See Hartzog* note 1 at 14 (discussing the number of parts and chapters within the book).
[11] *See id.*
[12] *See Hartzog* note 1 at 15 (continuing to discuss the structure of the book and the variety of topics that will be discussed).
[13] *See id.*
[14] *See id.*
[15] *See Hartzog* note 1 at 16 (mentioning the break down of each chapter within the book).
[16] *See id.*
[17] *See id.*

vulnerable.[18] *Chapter seven- Hide and seek technologies* analyzes such design in search engines, browsers, spyware, drones, facial recognition technologies, deletion tools, etc.[19] C*hapter eight- The internet of things* confronts its role in design.[20]

Hartzog uses his book *Privacy's Blueprint* to educate its readers about the rising issues of design in privacy law and provides solutions as to how we can fix these issues before it is too late. The author's approach to accomplish this is by starting from the basics, such as 'what is design'. Then, in an orderly and logical way, he provides the readers with numerous common real-life examples to help his readers understand the point he is trying to make. From there he continues to build on his points until the readers fully understand the issue and then provides his blueprint solution to fix these issues. By approaching his readers this way, Hartzog is able to write an informative book that is for all kinds of readers since we are, in some way, affected by design. By writing his point this way, Hartzog does not make any faulty assumptions. Considering everyone uses some sort of design such as the internet, Snapchat, Facebook, Google, Twitter, Pinterest these days, students, academics, lawyers and professors would benefit from reading this book.

Privacy's Blueprint is a valuable contribution to the field because it is successful in explaining to a wide variety of readers the current issue with design and provides a solution in how to fix these problems before the current process is set in stone. Hartzog achieves what he sought to achieve by capturing his audience with an informative background of how the issue arose and then uses real-life examples to describe how it affects everybody today. One major

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[18] *See* Hartzog note 1 at 16-17 (elaborating further what his book entails).
[19] *See id*. at 17. (concluding the remaining part and chapters in his book).
[20] *See id*.

strength of the book is the author's ability to explain his point in layman's terms to ensure his readers are able to understand it. In addition, he uses excellent examples that grabs the reader's attention. One major weakness of the book is that Hartzog informs the reader what he is about to say, says it, then tells you again what he just said. This could potential make it harder for the reader to understand the argument at times.

Overall, I enjoyed reading this book because the author discusses a well-known issue that effects everybody. By using well thought out examples, I could understand the point he was trying to make and for his readers to understand. This is certainly an informative book, which I would recommend this to students, professors, legal professions who are interested in digital privacy law or even people who are curious to know how the law protects their privacy. However, as a heed of caution, the book may bring the reader into a state of paranoia when conducting searches and using applications on one's phone. Because of how informative this read is, I have become more cautious in using an application on a phone or using search engines. Considering how this book affected me, I would argue that this book is a convincing, eye opener with the material that it presents.