



Peer-to-Peer: Harnessing the Power of Disruptive Technologies

Andy Oram

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The term "peer-to-peer" has come to be applied to networks that expect end users to contribute their own files, computing time, or other resources to some shared project. Even more interesting than the systems' technical underpinnings are their socially disruptive potential: in various ways they return content, choice, and control to ordinary users. While this book is mostly about the technical promise of peer-to-peer, we also talk about its exciting social promise. Communities have been forming on the Internet for a long time, but they have been limited by the flat interactive qualities of email and Network newsgroups. People can exchange recommendations and ideas over these media, but have great difficulty commenting on each other's postings, structuring information, performing searches, or creating summaries. If tools provided ways to organize information intelligently, and if each person could serve up his or her own data and retrieve others' data, the possibilities for collaboration would take off. Peer-to-peer technologies along with metadata could enhance almost any group of people who share an interest--technical, cultural, political, medical, you name it. This book presents the goals that drive the developers of the best-known peer-to-peer systems, the problems they've faced, and the technical solutions they've found. Learn here the essentials of peer-to-peer from leaders of the field: Nelson Minar and Marc Hedlund of target="new">Popular Power, on a history of peer-to-peer; Clay Shirky of accelerator group, on where peer-to-peer is likely to be headed; Tim O'Reilly of O'Reilly & Associates, on redefining the public's perceptions; Dan Bricklin, cocreator of Visicalc, on harvesting information from end-users; David Anderson of SETI@home, on how SETI@Home created the world's largest computer; Jeremie Miller of Jabber, on the Internet as a collection of conversations; Gene Kan of Gnutella and GoneSilent.com, on lessons from Gnutella for peer-to-peer technologies; Adam Langley of Freenet, on Freenet's present and upcoming architecture; Alan Brown of Red Rover, on a deliberately low-tech content distribution system; Marc Waldman, Lorrie Cranor, and Avi Rubin of AT&T Labs, on the Publius project and trust in distributed systems; Roger Dingledine, Michael J. Freedman, and David Molnar of Free Haven, on resource allocation and accountability in distributed systems; Rael Dornfest of O'Reilly Network and Dan Brickley of ILRT/RDF Web, on metadata; Theodore Hong of Freenet, on performance; Richard Lethin of Reputation Technologies, on how reputation can be built online; Jon Udell of BYTE and Nimisha Asthagiri and Walter Tuvell of Groove Networks, on security; Brandon Wiley of Freenet, on gateways between peer-to-peer systems. You'll find information on the latest and greatest systems as well as upcoming efforts in this book.

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