

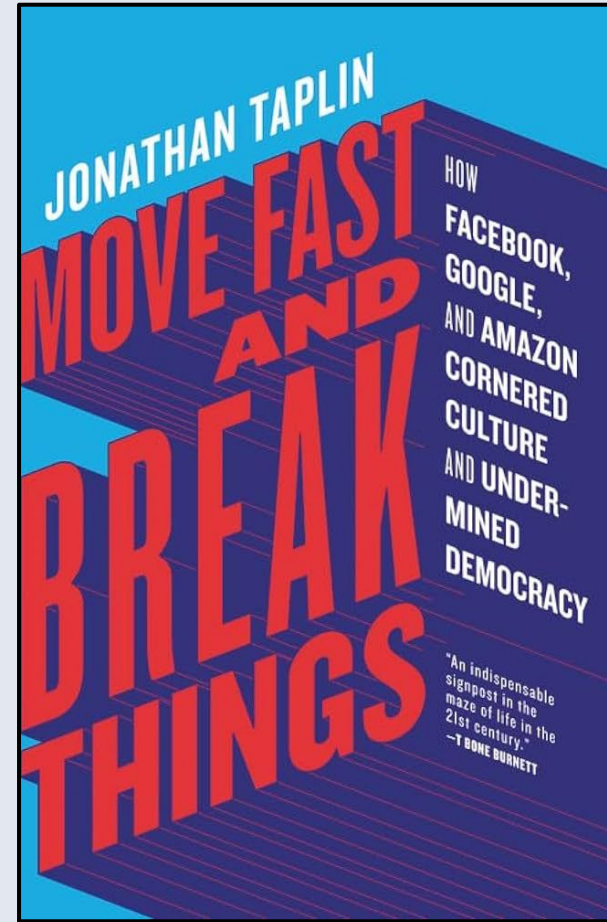


Move Fast and Break Things

How Facebook, Google, and Amazon
Cornered Culture and Undermined Democracy

Janson Duong & Kirin Kapoor





“‘If you control the menu, you control the choices.’ We cede our freedom to choose by giving networks like Google and Facebook control of the menu. How the mysterious black-box algorithms of Google, Facebook, and Amazon determine the menu can never be known by anyone outside those companies.”

– Jonathan Taplin

“My dear fellow, who will let you?”
“That’s not the point. The point is,
who will stop me?”

– Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead*

- Disruptor ethos spearheaded by Peter Thiel (PayPal, Palantir, Facebook)
- Famous Economist Milton Friedman: “there is one and only one social responsibility of business—to increase its profits.”
- Sean Parker & Napster’s decimation of the music industry in the 2000s

Corporate Power is Real



Google's response to the 2012 Stop Online Piracy Act



- TikTok praised Trump for “preventing” the company’s American shutdown
- “Revolving door” interactions between Google and the U.S Government

- **Amazon earns 51 cents of every dollar spent in online commerce**
- **Kindle acts upon consumers as a monopoly and book publishers as a monopsony**
- **Takes losses to kill off brick-and-mortar competitors**



Ethical Theories and Tech Monopolies

Utilitarianism

Digital giants concentrate wealth and power, destroying other businesses and hurting consumers

Existentialism

Monopolies limit individual choice and freedom, both directly and indirectly

Kantianism

Treating consumers as products to be used for advertising

Contractualism

Reasonable rejection and the veil of ignorance: who would support such unequal power and corruption?

Takeaways

- “Technological progress has no inherent moral arc” - Jonathan Taplin
- Unchecked lobbying leads to stronger monopolies. That has overall net effect.
- Leaves less options for consumers and businesses

Are there socially safe ways for lobbying to exist?

