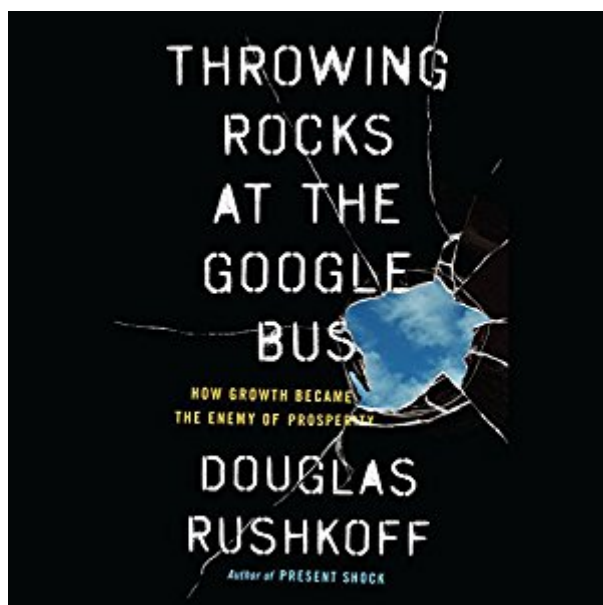


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# Throwing Rocks At The Google Bus: How Growth Became The Enemy Of Prosperity



## Synopsis

Digital technology was supposed to usher in a new age of distributed prosperity, but so far it has been used to put industrial capitalism on steroids. It's not technology's fault but that of an extractive, growth-driven economic operating system that has reached the limits of its ability to serve anyone, rich or poor, human or corporate. Robots threaten our jobs while algorithms drain our portfolios. But there must be a better response to the lopsided returns of the digital economy than to throw rocks at the shuttle buses carrying Google employees to their jobs, as protesters did in December 2013. In this groundbreaking book, acclaimed media scholar and technology author Douglas Rushkoff calls on us to abandon the monopolist, winner-takes-all values we are unwittingly embedding into the digital economy and to embrace the more distributed possibilities of these platforms. He shows how we can optimize every aspect of the economy - from central currency and debt to corporations and labor - to create sustainable prosperity for business and people alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Douglas Rushkoff is one of those rare writers and friends. He can ask big gnarly questions, and then before you know it, present a buffet of solutions that leave you with a ravenous appetite to dig into the future. In *Program or Be Programmed*, Rushkoff made the compelling case for the need for all of us to be programmers. Choose to program and you gain access to the control panel of civilization. Choose the latter, and it could be the last real choice you get to make. • Yikes, I read that and immediately went to use my limited HTML skills on my nascent website. Despite my admiration for his past work, I approach his new book with some trepidation. I guess I thought

Rushkoff was going to be the one throwing rocks. Nope. I should have known better. Rushkoff is always more complicated than that. In *Throwing Rocks At The Google Bus*, Rushkoff begins with some powerful truth telling. The digital economy is breaking things. The media can't seem to survive digitization. Drivers are losing to Uber. Airbnb is turning neighbors apartments into rentable dorm rooms, and as he lays out the current state of play – event tech visionaries find the demands of the startup economy closing their vision. But Rushkoff isn't claiming Google GOOGL +1.29% is at fault. He says: "there is something troubling about the way Google is impacting the world, but neither its buses nor the people in them are the core problem; they're just and easy target. He says we've brought a set of industrial age. "We are running a 21st-century digital economy on a 13th Century printing-press era operating system," writes Rushkoff. Now it's not all bad.

"How growth became the enemy of community" can also be phrased as, 'How profit became the enemy of community.' Doug has a positive agenda: ...we have the potential to move towards a much more functional, even compassionate economic system, favoring money flow over accumulation, which rewards people for creating value instead of [cleverly] extracting it. (p 10). Neither individuals, small businesses, corporations, nor even whole governments need to live [and value themselves in terms of] their rate of growth. ... the sooner we accept this, the sooner we'll all be off the hook. Then and only then will we be capable of ushering in the sort of economy [human beings] deserve. Ongoing, sustainable, and distributed prosperity is simpler than it sounds, and well within our reach. It can be our new normal (p 11). We are developing our new technologies not for the betterment of humanity; but, to maximize growth of the speculative [Wall Street] marketplace. It turns out these are not the same thing (p 6-7). Companies with new technologies are free to disrupt almost any industry they choose--journalism, television, music, manufacturing [taxicabs]--as long as they don't disrupt the financial operating system churning beneath it all. ...most of the founders of these digital companies don't seem to realize this operating system even exists (p 7). [The competitive capitalist paradigm is] an extractive, growth-driven operating system which has reached the limits of its ability to serve anyone (p 4). By refusing to acknowledge the existence of this man-made landscape and our complicity in perpetuating it, we render ourselves incapable of [perceiving] beneath its surface (p 5).

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