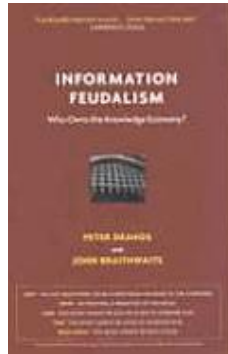


Information Feudalism: Who Owns the Knowledge Economy?

by Peter Drahos and John Braithwaite

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How multinational corporations are patenting life itself. Uncovering the story of how a small coterie of multinational corporations came to write the charter for a new global information order, *Information Feudalism* demonstrates why the world of intellectual property rights, patent regimes, and anti-trust laws is an urgent concern for ordinary citizens. As an ever wider range of everyday activities—from swinging in a swing to traditional farming techniques—are identified and commodified as intellectual property, struggles over the control of information are destined to become crucial battlegrounds in the twenty-first century. A telling example is the five-year courtroom battle fought by a coalition of activists to bring cheap versions of desperately needed AIDS drugs to South Africa—in which time one million people died of AIDS in that country alone. *Information Feudalism* traces the rise of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the little-known charter that now governs intellectual property disputes across the globe, through inside accounts of the backroom deals that gave birth to it. Along the way, the book provides a mini-history of piracy, detailed accounts of the political involvement of multinationals like Pfizer, and a thorough set of proposals to establish democratic property rights.

About the Authors

Peter Drahos is a Senior Research Fellow in Intellectual Property at the University of London. He is the author of *A Philosophy of Intellectual Property* and, with John Braithwaite, *Global Business Regulation*. John Braithwaite is a business regulatory scholar and former member of the Australian Economic Planning Advisory Council. His major works include *Corporate Crime in the Pharmaceutical Industry and Corporations*, *Crime and Accountability* (with B. Fisse).

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