Chokepoints: Global Private Regulation on the Internet

The internet is a vast and complex network of networks that has revolutionized the way we communicate, learn, and do business. However, the internet is not without its challenges. One of the most pressing challenges is the rise of chokepoints.

Chokepoints are points of control over the internet that can be used to restrict access to information, services, or applications. They can be physical infrastructure, such as undersea cables or internet exchange points, or they can be software, such as firewalls or content filters.

The emergence of chokepoints is a major threat to the open and decentralized nature of the internet. By controlling these chokepoints, a small number of private companies can exert a significant amount of power over the internet. This can have a chilling effect on free speech, innovation, and competition.

Chokepoints: Global Private Regulation on the Internet

by Edward Lucas

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
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There are many different types of chokepoints, but they can be broadly classified into two categories:

- **Physical chokepoints** are physical infrastructure that is essential for the operation of the internet. This includes undersea cables, which carry the majority of internet traffic, and internet exchange points, which are where different networks connect with each other.

- **Software chokepoints** are software that can be used to restrict access to information, services, or applications. This includes firewalls, which can block access to certain websites or IP addresses, and content filters, which can block access to certain types of content.

Chokepoints have a significant impact on internet governance. By controlling these chokepoints, a small number of private companies can exert a significant amount of power over the internet. This can have a chilling effect on free speech, innovation, and competition.

For example, in 2018, the Egyptian government ordered internet service providers to block access to certain websites that were critical of the government. This effectively silenced dissent and prevented people from accessing important information.

In another example, in 2019, the Chinese government ordered internet service providers to block access to certain foreign websites, including Google and Facebook. This effectively isolated China from the rest of the

world and prevented people from accessing important information and services.

The rise of chokepoints is a major challenge to the open and decentralized nature of the internet. By controlling these chokepoints, a small number of private companies can exert a significant amount of power over the internet. This can have a chilling effect on free speech, innovation, and competition.
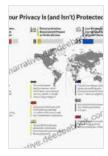
In order to protect the open and decentralized nature of the internet, it is important to address the issue of chokepoints. This can be done through a variety of measures, including:

- **Promoting competition** among internet service providers and content providers.

- **Investing in new infrastructure** to reduce reliance on a small number of chokepoints.

- **Developing new technologies** that can bypass chokepoints.

- **Advocating for policies** that protect the open and decentralized nature of the internet.

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