

Crypto-Anarchy and the Cypherpunks

A Brief History of Freedom, Technology and Decentralization

Intro

This is a book about technology and freedom. While technology can be used to enslave us, many brilliant young entrepreneurs, hackers, coders, builders, rebels, trolls, dissidents and in some cases scammers, all saw the potential of the internet to reshape a world that had long ago entrenched both its corruption and its power structures.

This dominant establishment has resisted disruption for centuries, largely due to the constraints of the powerful elite's smothering control over major institutions and reinforced by the limits of physical reality. The conversion to a largely digital world showed the potential to subvert this long standing order. This new paradigm allowed for many to see that with the coming internet age, we finally had the ability to create a series of tools so revolutionary that the dominant governments, corporations, bankers and the elite would inevitably be forced to bow to the power of digital change.

That change while in silent development for decades, became codified into a philosophical movement with the dawn of the cypherpunks and the philosophy of crypto-anarchy. While the original cypherpunks were explicit in their goals and morals they still varied widely in strategy and practical application.

Many others didn't identify directly with the movement, and didn't call themselves cypherpunks, often finding them to be too radical or political for their tastes, if they were even aware of them at all. However many of those people nevertheless realized the power of digital subversion that came with rapid proliferation of computing power and decentralization of networks, first across the military, and college campuses before it would eventually move into homes, corporations and eventually into our pockets and everyday life. While many of these people weren't directly cypherpunks, they embodied the spirit of the cypherpunks and emulated their desires to build a freer world by utilizing the strange new world of cyberspace and technology.

This is the story of the of the Cypherpunks, as well as the kindred spirits who utilized technology to decentralize power, and led us to a better world often through unexpected or unconventional methods. From Wikileaks and Bitcoin, to encryption and the foundation of the internet itself, this is the multi-varied story of the philosophy of crypto-anarchy and the cypherpunks who lived it.