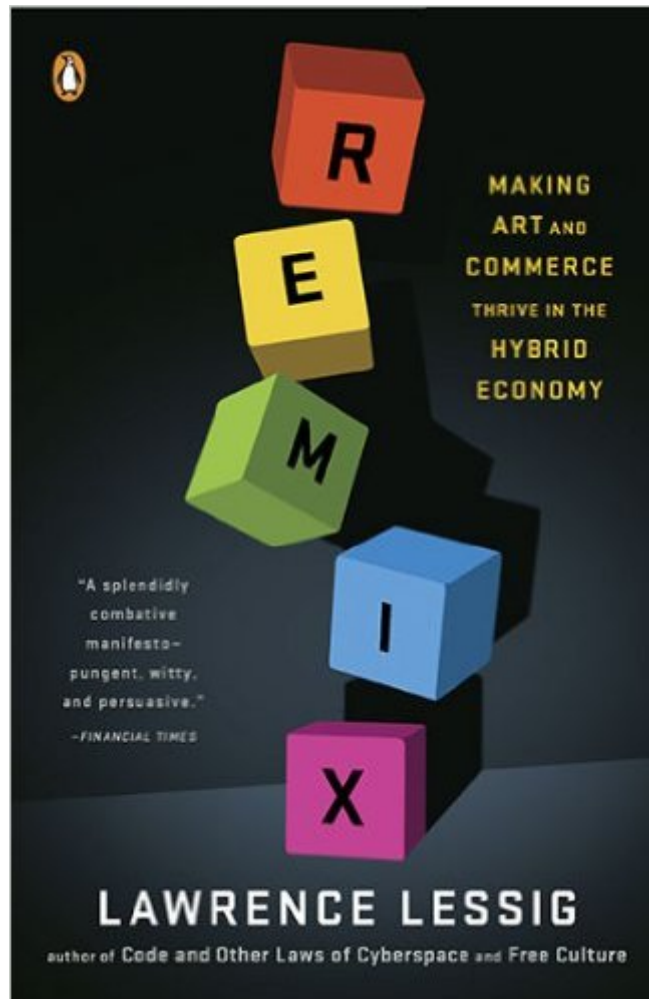


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Remix: Making Art And Commerce Thrive In The Hybrid Economy



Synopsis

The reigning authority on intellectual property in the Internet age, Lawrence Lessig spotlights the newest and possibly the most harmful culture war—a war waged against those who create and consume art. America's copyright laws have ceased to perform their original, beneficial role: protecting artists' creations while allowing them to build on previous creative works. In fact, our system now criminalizes those very actions. *Remix* is an urgent, eloquent plea to end a war that harms every intrepid, creative user of new technologies. It also offers an inspiring vision of the postwar world where enormous opportunities await those who view art as a resource to be shared openly rather than a commodity to be hoarded.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

By its own account, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) has threatened thousands of people -- many of them teenagers -- with lawsuits for sharing copies of copyrighted music without permission. Most individuals pay several thousand dollars to settle out of court. In the only such case to go to trial in the United States, the jury awarded the RIAA \$222,000 in a verdict against a woman from Duluth, Minnesota, who shared 24 songs that had a retail value of \$23.76. Massachusetts youth Joel Tenenbaum has also refused to settle, and his trial will soon begin -- more than \$1 million is at stake for allegations that he shared seven songs. In *Remix*, Lawrence Lessig says 'enough' to this situation, arguing for a hybrid approach that differentiates private and commercial use. His book is an important and urgent work of radical moderation. It seeks to get

both sides to stand down and respect one another, using arguments couched in terms of each party's values. Lessig wants to persuade traditional publishers -- the purveyors of 'read-only' culture -- that they should not fear their own fans. Publishers stand to make more money by embracing those who make new works from old standards than they do by criminalizing them. More subtly, Lessig argues that a strict divide between the world of sharing and the world of commerce is counterproductive. He wants to refocus attention away from the stalemated copyright wars and towards a more vibrant 'read-write culture' that remixes rather than replaces what came before. The future lies with hybrid enterprises that wisely blend the mercenary 'me' and the charitable 'thee'. Lessig points out that the act of writing is near-universal. We teach our children how to write at an early age, and the tools to do so have long been accessible.

I have been reading Lessig since *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*, and this book is by far the most advanced in terms of synthesis. *Code 1.0* and *Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0* present the basis of arguments for an informed discussion about the law and its application to our lives as technology, too, enters our lives. They barely argue, but the facts themselves are wonderful agents for provoking arguments, especially amongst the many competing beliefs we may have about what is right, what is just, what is practical, and what is legal. *Free Culture: The Nature and Future of Creativity* and *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World* are arguments. They are compelling arguments, passionate and brilliant, but they are merely arguments. What is completely new about *Remix* is that it finally and fully embraces the human context that was always present in Lessig's writing, but always subordinated to facts and arguments. In *Remix* it becomes clear that we can no longer dismiss his writings as "of the elite for the elite by the elite".

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