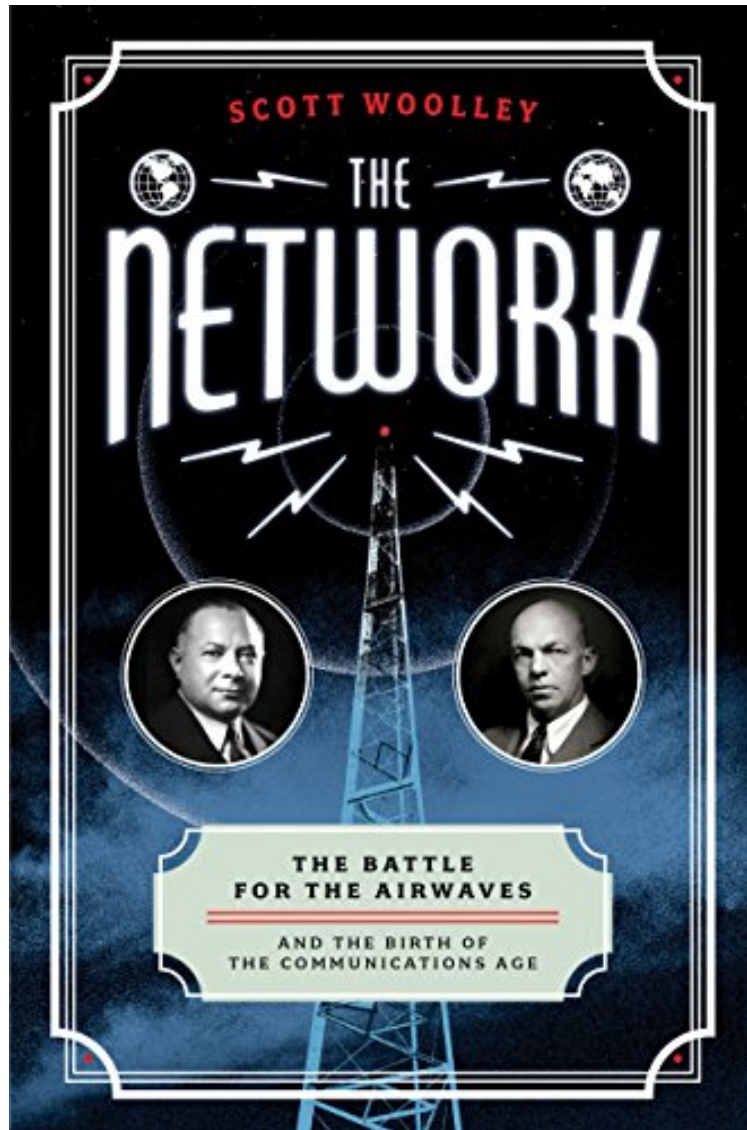


[Ebook free] The Network: The Battle for the Airwaves and the Birth of the Communications Age

The Network: The Battle for the Airwaves and the Birth of the Communications Age

Scott Woolley

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interestingBy Bella LunaThis was a perfect gift for my "science" Dad. However, I want to read it also.

The astonishing story of America's airwaves, the two friends—one a media mogul, the other a famous inventor—who made them available to us, and the government which figured out how to put a price on air. This is the origin story of the airwaves—the foundational technology of the communications age—as told through the forty-year friendship of an entrepreneurial industrialist and a brilliant inventor. David Sarnoff, the head of RCA and equal parts Steve Jobs, Jack Welch, and William Randolph Hearst, was the greatest supporter of his friend Edwin Armstrong, developer of the first amplifier, the modern radio transmitter, and FM radio. Sarnoff was convinced that Armstrong's inventions had the power to change the way societies communicated with each other forever. He would become a visionary captain of the media industry, even predicting the advent of the Internet. In the mid-1930s, however, when Armstrong suspected Sarnoff of orchestrating a cadre of government officials to seize control of the FM airwaves, he committed suicide. Sarnoff had a very different view of who his friends' enemies were. Many corrupt politicians and corporations saw in Armstrong's inventions the opportunity to commodify our most ubiquitous natural resource—the air. This early alliance between high tech and business set the precedent for countless legal and industrial battles over broadband and licensing bandwidth, many of which continue to influence policy and debate today.

Woolley is a good writer with an especially nice touch for describing technology. (Wall Street Journal) A compelling look at the relationship - and eventual betrayal - between two American communications giants: Edwin Armstrong, an inventor who developed FM radio; and David Sarnoff, the ruthless techie turned business titan who built RCA into a powerhouse. (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel) Woolley packs a lot into this slim book. The author's portraits of Sarnoff and Armstrong are precise and multidimensional. . . . A fluidly written and well-reported story. (Booklist) Woolley interweaves an engrossing tale of the evolution of the American communications industry with colorful details about the individuals who built the tech, and the regulatory challenges that threatened it. (Jonathan Zittrain, author of *The Future of the Internet—and How to Stop It* and Professor of Law and Professor of Computer Science, Harvard University) Scott Woolley's presents a lively and informative account of the stunningly successful collaborations and final bitter fight of David Sarnoff and Edwin Armstrong, two visionary leaders who played key roles in the evolution of the wireless industry. (Andrew Odlyzko, Bell Labs and University of Minnesota communications expert) From the Back Cover The astonishing story of two friends—one a media mogul, the other a famous inventor—and their fight to control America's airwaves For more than a century, monopolies have constricted control of the airwaves, funneling power into the hands of a select few. In *The Network*, investigative journalist Scott Woolley recounts one of the greatest business heists in American history—the massive rip-off of the airwaves—as it played out in a compelling drama between the technology's inventor, Edwin Armstrong; its primary purveyor, David Sarnoff, the head of RCA and NBC; and corrupt government regulators across the country. Sarnoff and Armstrong were close friends and collaborators for decades, and together they oversaw the birth of radio and television. Optimists like Armstrong and Sarnoff believed that expanding the power of the airwaves would radically reduce the cost of connecting people and create new, giant industries. Many corrupt politicians and corporations, however, saw in Armstrong's inventions a threat to their power, and a reason to rig the rules in order to keep communications channels scarce and prices high. With a singular eye for detail and knack for narrative, Woolley paints vivid portraits of Sarnoff's and Armstrong's trials and triumphs, and of the many supporting characters—Guglielmo Marconi and Lyndon B. Johnson, among others—who stood in Armstrong's and Sarnoff's way. Woolley expertly reveals how this early alliance between high tech and business set the stage for today's Internet and the fights over the future of global communications that continue to rage. Masterfully weaving together the stories of these competing interests into a thrilling clash between progress and paralysis, innovation and stagnation, *The Network* tells the dramatic story of the friendship that drove a revolution in global communications and the powerful political and corporate interests that hijacked America's airwaves. Praise For *The Network* Woolley interweaves an engrossing tale of the evolution of the American communications industry with colorful details about the individuals who built the tech, and the regulatory challenges that threatened to derail it.—Jonathan Zittrain, author of *The Future of the Internet—and How to Stop It* and Professor of Law and Professor of Computer Science, Harvard University Scott Woolley presents a lively and informative account of the stunningly successful collaborations and final bitter fight of David Sarnoff and Edwin Armstrong, two visionary leaders who played key roles in the evolution of the wireless industry. The interaction of personalities, technology, business, and government regulation are of great current relevance, as those same issues again dominate in the rise of new revolutionary services and products.—Andrew Odlyzko, Bell Labs and University of Minnesota communications expert Woolley packs a lot into this slim book. The author's portraits of Sarnoff and Armstrong are precise and multidimensional....A fluidly written and well-reported story.—Booklist About the Author Scott Woolley is a technology and business writer. Formerly a Forbes Telecom correspondent and the

magazines's West Coast Bureau Chief, he has written about technology and business affairs for the MIT Technology , Fortune, and Slate, among other publications. He studied economics and public policy at Claremont McKenna College and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.