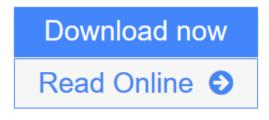# Digital Wars: Apple, Google, Microsoft and the Battle for the Internet

Charles Arthur

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Which of Apple, Google and Microsoft had an office with a "drawer of broken dreams" ---and what (real) objects lay inside it?
When did Microsoft have the chance to catch Google in making money from search ---and who vetoed it?
Why did Google test 40 shades of blue on its users?
How long did outside developers wait before asking to write apps for Apple's iPhone after Steve Jobs announced it?
Who said that Microsoft should have its own music player -- and why did it fail?

Digital Wars starts in 1998, when the internet and computing business was about to be upended -- by an antitrust case, a tiny startup and a former giant rebuilding itself. Arthur looks at what are now the three best-known tech companies and through the voices of former and current staff examines their different strategies to try to win the battle to control the exploding network connecting the world. Microsoft was a giant -- soon to become the highest-valued company in the world, while Apple was a minnow and Google just a startup. By February 10 2012, Apple was worth more ($462bn) than both Microsoft ($258bn) and Google ($198bn) combined.

The chance had come from tumultuous battles between the three. To win their battles:
Apple used design, the vertical model of controlling the hardware and software and a relentless focus on the customer to the exclusion of others.
Microsoft depended on the high quality of its employees' programming skills and its monopolies in software to try to move into new markets - such as search and music.
Google focused on being quick, efficient and using the power of data analysis - not human "taste" - to make decisions and get ahead of would-be rivals.

With exclusive information from interviews with current and former employees of the three companies Arthur also addresses:
- What the inventors of the hard drive used in the iPod thought it would really be used for
- How Apple transformed the smartphone market
- Which of Android or Apple forced Microsoft to abandon Windows Mobile
- What happened to Microsoft's tablet plans

Digital Wars: Apple, Google, Microsoft and the Battle for the Internet Details

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From Reader Review Digital Wars: Apple, Google, Microsoft and the Battle for the Internet for online ebook

Peter Mcloughlin says

This very short book lays out the struggle between Apple and Microsoft from the 1998 to 2011. It is a David and Goliath story with Microsoft a juggernaut in the 90s against apple which had seen better days. The story talks about the new page rank system by Google which transformed the internet but the bulk of the book is on the apple/Microsoft rivalry. Apple with Steve Jobs rolled out first the ipod and opened a string of music stores to upload music into its devices which launched the comeback of the company in the early 2000s. It was followed by the Iphone and a plethora of apps to sell. Finally it concludes with the rollout of the ipad a tablet device and David comes out on top. This story is probably well known to technophiles and early adopters but the nice thing is the book makes the story accessible to luddites like myself.

Brandon Johnson says

Amazing innovation from these three companies. Good read!

Trung Nguyen Dang says

Great, fast paced, easy book on how these companies compete with one another in early days. It does explain fairly well why these companies behave like they do, eg Microsoft was negatively influenced by the anti-trust issue ... The author included a lot of quotes from industry insiders and ex-employees, which is great. I find the book insightful. The only downside is that it's fairly outdated. It came out in 2014 while these battles were more or less settled in the current form.

Diogo Pacheco says

Very factual and Not lot of insight but still a good read for who likes to learn the history of the Big companies in tech and the industry developed over the year as they aimed to achieve their internal goals.

Emre says

Üç büyük ?irketin 2012 y?l?na kadar tarihini çe?itli alanlarda anlatan güzel bir kitap. Özellikle ak?ll? telefonlar üstünde uzunca durulmu?. Kitaptan sonra teknolojini bu üç devinin bak?? aç?s? ve çal??ma mant???n? daha yak?ndan anla??l?yor.

Eustacia Tan says

So thanks to the Understanding Media by Understanding Google course that ended recently, I developed an interest in Google, Apple, and the rest of the tech giants. So I was really happy to see this book in NetGalley.

Digital Wars looks at Apple, Google and Microsoft, and how each of them have been reacting to the digital age. Microsoft established its dominance early on, but Google has overtaken it since then, and Apple has turned out to be a formidable contender.

This book goes through a quick introduction, and looks at the Microsoft antitrust case. After that, it looks at Search, Digital Music, Smartphones, Tablets and China, and compares how each of these three companies have done in each respect. So while it's not a chronological narrative, it does capture a good snapshot of how each company has performed in a given field.

I found this book to be very easy to read and extremely interesting. I haven't really considered Microsoft at all, but this book has showed me that they have been trying to regain their former dominance - although they don't seem to be succeeding in search or digital music.

As the different types of technology start to converge, what with rumors of an Apple smart watch, the debut of Google Glass, Microsoft 8, anyone with an interest in the technology market should read this book. Understanding how these companies have been acting in the past will help understand what they're doing today.

Disclaimer: I got a free copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for a free and honest review.

This review was first posted at Inside the mind of a Bibliophile

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Mark says

Not a bad read per se, but the whole song and dance around Apple and Jobs gets overbearing, making it clear that this is not an attempt at a neutral narrative, unlike what the title might suggest. It is basically an "Apple wins" story that narrates the trajectory of its competitors as it goes. Not an essential book by any stretch, but it can be used as one narrative to be pieced together with other sources by the reader.

Dupido1 says

Good! Has a nice timeline which its follows and makes it easy to see parallels between the companys and their action.

Bülent Kulaks?z says

Before reading this book, ? did not how terrifying competition is between the companies.I strongly

recommend to be read.

Tariq Mahmood says

This has been a great experience for me as I have been associated with the Telecom/IT industry for the past 22 years of my life. The great competition between the giants Microsoft, Google and Apple is very elegantly presented in this narrative, with examples from their many wars over the years starting from the time Steve Jobs took the top job in Apple till his death. I found the chapter on the phone wars very interesting indeed with Apple's superior strategy of aligning user experience with their new product as opposed to Microsoft's reliance on their superior reputation. But I guess with Apple there could not have been any other strategy as it was the smallest player among the three. Come to think of it Google and Apple together have managed to fight off the giant Microsoft by chipping away certain businesses like search and mobile phones away from it. A lot of the success of all three companies is also due to the fact that they are based in USA, based relatively close to each other, thus sharing a common pool of resourcing and knowledge. The position of Nokia in the phone wars was also well explained. How Nokia and Sony-Ericsson missed the ride altogether, even when thy were first to patent technologies but their size worked against them by introducing red tape-ism. Size also seems to have played a huge role in Microsoft lukewarm response to Apple and Google's aggressive marketing strategies.

KC says

Interesting, informative, and relevant to observers of modern progress and consumers in modern society. The narrative takes us through operating systems, personal computing, search, music, mobile phones, and tablets, while giving the play-by-play of the moves and counter moves of Apple, Google, and Microsoft.

The story of course is not finished, as the final chapter wraps up with no epilogue hinting at home-centered computing (e.g. Alexa, Google Home, etc.) or the next frontiers in emerging interaction platforms (AR, VR, wearable, bionics, etc.)

Recommended for anyone who wishes to be an informed observer of the march of progress relative to consumer technology, and who wishes to see how, despite its tremendous and profitable successes, Microsoft managed to be too little, too late, time and time again.

Menglong Youk says

Whenever I read science books, I feel like I at least have some basic understandings of the topic, but with this book, I ventured into an unfamiliar territory: digital technology. "Digital Wars" is about the history and the interconnectedness of Apple, Google and Microsoft: the biggest tech-companies today.

I didn't extract as much information as I wanted from this book, but what it showed me is that everything in technology is connected one way or another, the competitions between those companies will result in more advanced devices, and no new innovation will either make one stand still or go backwards compared to others (I'm looking at you, Microsoft).

Bojan Tunguz says

The last couple of decades, and the more recent years in particular, have seen a remarkable advances and achievements in all fields of consumer technology. Hardly a day passes without a news article about some new breakout gadget, website, or software being launched. The struggle in the market for the hearts and minds of the increasingly tech-savvy and interconnected users is assuming, with only a slight exaggeration, epic proportions. At stake are not only new markets and new product opportunities, but the very nature of how we live, work and interact with each other. And yet, at the core of these "digital wars" are just a handful of companies that exert an oversize influence on the rest of the tech sector. Three of these – Apple, Google, and Microsoft – have by now become the defining and dominant players, and this book explores their rise over the past fifteen years (or in the case of Microsoft a gradual decline and struggle for relevance).

There have been many books written about each one of these three tech giants, but this is the first one that I know of which explores their interactions and strategic maneuvers with the respect to the others. The book is written in a very accessible journalistic style, but it still manages to go in depth when needed explaining certain relevant technological terms and concepts. The author clearly understands the relevant technological trends and the ways that these companies have managed to capitalize on those – or not. Although I am a huge fan of technology and follow these companies and their products much more closely than the average person, this book was still able to provide me with a lot of new information and insights.

I would have liked, thought, that in addition to the three giants this book covered a few more "minor" players in the tech arena. Amazon and Facebook in particular come to mind, as well as a host of other interesting companies whose products and services are having a major impact on the way I work, interact and amuse myself – Twitter, LinkedIn, Yahoo, Netflix, etc. I would have also liked that instead of focusing on companies this book dealt more with the tech trends in their own right. Granted, many of these trends are single-handedly defined (or used to be defined) by the three profiled companies (search and Google, smartphone and Apple), but I think that the broader approach would have been more informative and provided us with an idea of what we can expect in the next decade or so of high-tech innovation.

Weather you are a seasoned tech-aficionado or just someone who is interested in learning more about the most prominent tech giants of today, this book will have a lot to offer. But you might want to hurry and read it very soon – many of the trends and insights from this book may become dated already a year form now, if not sooner.

Gary Beauregard Bottomley says

The subtitle could have been "and how Microsoft stood still while Google and Apple moved ahead". It doesn't matter that the book is three years old. The story is still the same.

Ian Gonzales says

Deep and thorough insight in the beginnings of the digital age. Everything we use today more or less revolve

around these three technological giants from the internet to search to desktop computers.

Fascinating how these three giants fought each other over different fields and how each became the dominant over the other.

You have:
Microsoft vs Apple on PC
Microsoft vs Google on search
Apple and Microsoft on digital music
Apple vs Google on mobile (and Microsoft sadly on the side)

Looking forward to Digital Wars 2020 on smart homes, artificial intelligence, drones, self driving electric cars, space exploration.