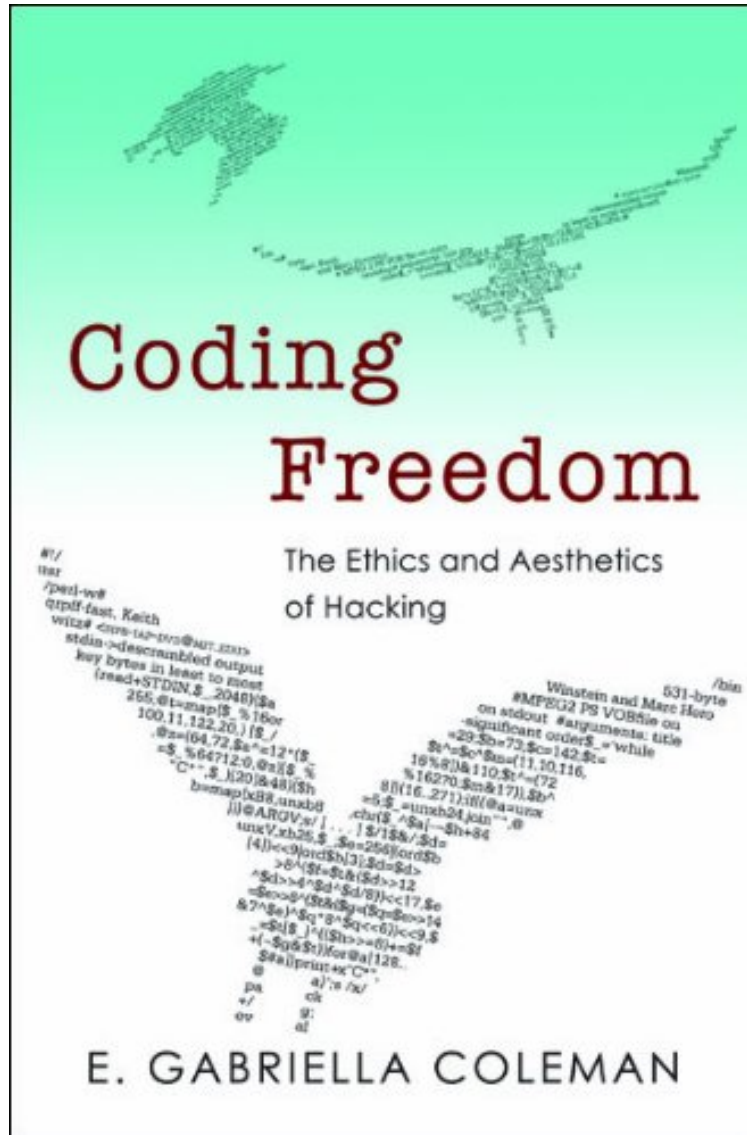


# Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking

E. Gabriella Coleman

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**E. Gabriella Coleman : Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great book very interesting research and findings By yael vaya Excellent book, refreshing to read an anthropological study on FOSS (and the Debian community in particular) and, such a thorough one. Many insights, one of the most impressive (to me) was that FOSS is rooted in liberal thought. By creating the copyleft license, Stallman, according to Coleman, implied the same kind of skills he used for

solving complicated bugs. By creating, as it were, a patch, to a conflict rooted at the heart of western, capitalist liberalism. That of Individual freedom verses copy right law. This insight is impressive as I personally never read or heard anyone provide evidence for such an idea. What's more, Coleman describes processes and change within FOSS - for example, the development of FOSS discourse over freedom. Her demonstration of the way in which liberalism is incorporated on the individual level by FOSS developers is also insightful - constant self-improvement verses consumption. However, for me the greatest take is that by tying between liberal thought and FOSS, Coleman provides a great base for researching the role of FOSS within society, not just Hacker culture. What's more it holds the potential of shifting the discussion from WHAT is being produced by FOSS developers and the ways it can be utilized, to the question of WHY is it being produced in the first place and what kind of need does it fulfill? 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Observing hackers very close! By Pedro Demo Very nice book about what does it mean to be a hacker. A great ethnographic research that addresses the intimacy hackers' lifeworld, their faith in freedom (free from speech, not from beer), their conferences and meetings replete of rituals, bibles and sacred texts, their love to free software, their fight against capitalist appropriation of common goods and so on. They are evangelists of a better world, melding technique and politics. They appreciate a moral of universal access to internet, web, networked nets, cultural goods, intellectual achievement, because merit is more important than market. Hackers have bad fame, when they are recognized as immoral invaders of sites, as copyright laws breakers, as defying preachers against capitalism. We need them! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Timely and informative By JShak As a general insight into the culture of free software developers it lines up nicely with the new interest in the cyber realm (malicious hackers are not covered in the book). It is written very densely with Coleman featuring a pleasant, eloquent style of writing, though the myriad of influences that helped form her world view and the wealth of information at times make it a bit laborious to read. Nonetheless, the insight this ethnography presents is enriching not only for the general reader, but also the field of cultural anthropology itself. Thank you.

Who are computer hackers? What is free software? And what does the emergence of a community dedicated to the production of free and open source software--and to hacking as a technical, aesthetic, and moral project--reveal about the values of contemporary liberalism? Exploring the rise and political significance of the free and open source software (F/OSS) movement in the United States and Europe, *Coding Freedom* details the ethics behind hackers' devotion to F/OSS, the social codes that guide its production, and the political struggles through which hackers question the scope and direction of copyright and patent law. In telling the story of the F/OSS movement, the book unfolds a broader narrative involving computing, the politics of access, and intellectual property. E. Gabriella Coleman tracks the ways in which hackers collaborate and examines passionate manifestos, hacker humor, free software project governance, and festive hacker conferences. Looking at the ways that hackers sustain their productive freedom, Coleman shows that these activists, driven by a commitment to their work, reformulate key ideals including free speech, transparency, and meritocracy, and refuse restrictive intellectual protections. Coleman demonstrates how hacking, so often marginalized or misunderstood, sheds light on the continuing relevance of liberalism in online collaboration.

One of Choice's Outstanding Academic Titles for 2013 "Coding Freedom is insightful and fascinating, a superbly observed picture of the motives, divisions and history of the free software and software freedom world."--Cory Doctorow, BoingBoing "Anyone who thinks about programmers, open source, online communities, or the politics of intellectual property should have a copy of *Coding Freedom* on the shelf. It is an invaluable portrait of how free-software coders work, individually and collectively."--James Grimmelman, Jotwell "The hacker ethic may be peculiar to outsiders. But it stems from a deep commitment to justice, fairness, and freedom. Anthropologist Gabriella Coleman describes in her phenomenal book *Coding Freedom* how hacker ethic gets encoded into both technical and political practice."--Danah Boyd, Wired "Though occasionally she uses academic jargon, her book is an intriguing read and connects the dots. . . . Reading this book will help you to understand the conflict, as well as hacker culture."--David Hutchinson, io9.com "[S]triking and important. . . . Coleman has captured a great deal of the essential spirit of the free- and open-software movement. . . . I strongly suggest that you buy a copy of the book."--John Gilbey, Times Higher Education "[I]t is well-written and the analyses really get to the heart of some deeply ethical questions about individual, group and political relationships in voluntary groups which are rarely considered in such detail."--John R. Hudson, Briefing Bradford "This work by Coleman is at once history, ethnography, cultural criticism, and storytelling. . . . Once can read the book as a narrative of the free software and open source movements, or as a sympathetic description of the behavior norms of hackers. . . . Some readers will likely not consider hackers' aesthetic appreciation of good or clever coding as beauty, nor hackers' humor as funny, but these are Coleman's courageous attempts to provide a rounded depiction of this subculture. This book seems likely to be one of the defining works of cultural anthropology."--Choice "Coding Freedom is a persuasive piece of writing that tackles some of the questions central to the current political climate."--Sebastian Kubitschko, Culture Machine "Coding Freedom is an important analysis of F/OSS that offers deep ethnographic detail and creates a complex appreciation of this phenomenon. Coleman is also

able to take this rich detail and extend it into the ethics and politics of F/OSS, connecting internal community principles to wider political effects, of which she provides a unique analysis. This book is compulsory reading for anyone interested in the cultural and social meaning of F/OSS and will powerfully repay anyone interested in the nature of ethics and society in the 21st century."--Tim Jordan, *American Journal of Sociology* From the Back Cover

"Coleman knows, understands, and lives free culture. No one is more credible or more fascinating when describing the lives of the women and men whose mission is an open, free information age."--Cory Doctorow, author of *Little Brother* and coauthor of *The Rapture of the Nerds* "Coleman's book is definitive--everything in it is lovingly detailed, exhaustively researched, fluently written, and packed with provocative insights. A monument of scholarship, it combines the best of anthropology with an unconventional and fresh approach to law, political theory, and ethics. From the conference-going world of software programmers to the humor and pleasures of code-fu, and from the phantasms of free speech to the passion and pathos of technical committees, Coleman is an extraordinary guide to the world of contemporary hacking."--Christopher Kelty, University of California, Los Angeles "Coleman's book on free and open source software programmers and hackers is desperately needed and will be a significant, landmark contribution to our understanding of the current technologically mediated moment. Coleman mixes case studies with learned treatments of this community, changes in the legal environment, and other relevant dimensions."--Thomas M. Malaby, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee "This is a revelatory ethnographic look at the origins and evolution of the free and open source software subculture. Coleman provides entirely new insights into the humor, aesthetics, and social life of hackers, while exploring the philosophical implications of open source for ideas about personal freedom, labor, and markets. *Coding Freedom* is an essential study of the technological revolution of our times."--Joseph Masco, University of Chicago

About the AuthorE. Gabriella Coleman is the Wolfe Chair in Scientific and Technological Literacy in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies at McGill University.