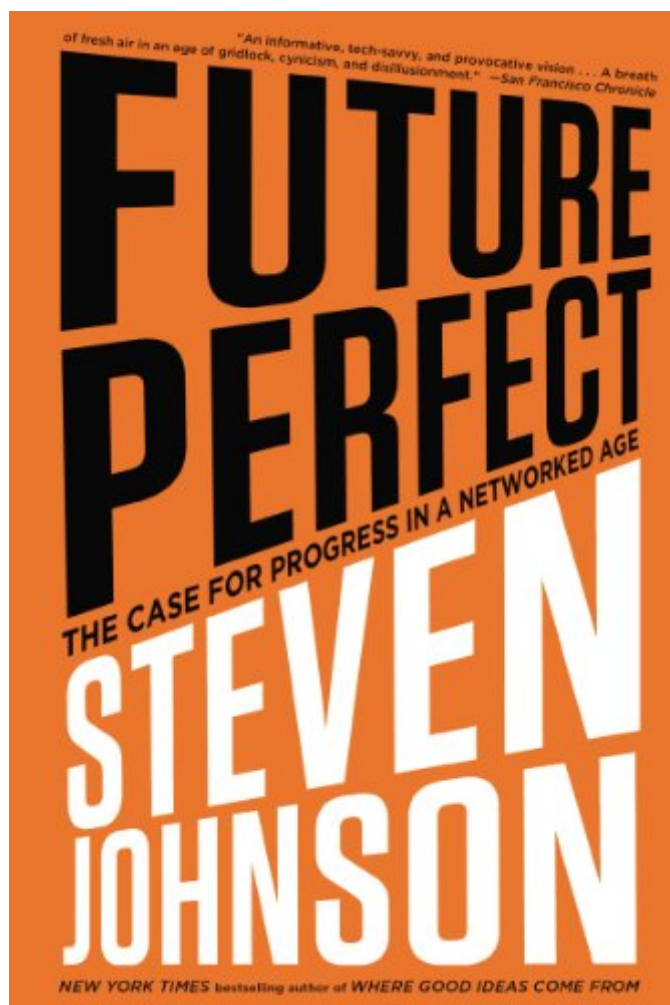


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# Future Perfect: The Case For Progress In A Networked Age



## Synopsis

Combining the deft social analysis of *Where Good Ideas Come From* with the optimistic arguments of *Everything Bad Is Good For You*, New York Times bestselling author Steven Johnson's *Future Perfect* makes the case that a new model of political change is on the rise, transforming everything from local governments to classrooms, from protest movements to health care. Johnson paints a compelling portrait of this new political worldview -- influenced by the success and interconnectedness of the Internet, by peer networks, but not dependent on high-tech solutions -- that breaks with the conventional categories of liberal or conservative, public vs. private thinking. With his acclaimed gift for multi-disciplinary storytelling and big idea books, Johnson explores this new vision of progress through a series of fascinating narratives: from the miracle on the Hudson to the planning of the French railway system; from the battle against malnutrition in Vietnam to a mysterious outbreak of strange smells in downtown Manhattan; from underground music video artists to the invention of the Internet itself. At a time when the conventional wisdom holds that the political system is hopelessly gridlocked with old ideas, *Future Perfect* makes the timely and inspiring case that progress is still possible, and that innovative strategies are on the rise. This is a hopeful, affirmative outlook for the future, from one of the most brilliant and inspiring visionaries of contemporary culture.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Future Perfect is an optimistic book about technology, society, and the future. That's remarkable in itself, since pessimistic (or at least cautionary) books tend to outnumber optimistic ones, but what's even more remarkable is the care and precision with which Johnson makes his case. The new communications technologies, he argues, are significant less for what they do than for what their capabilities enable us to do, if we choose to do it. The first of the book's two sections lays out its central premise: that distributed "peer networks" allowing the free flow of information between diverse individuals are a powerful force for social progress. decentralized networks are a powerful tool for facilitating interaction between individuals, and thus for social progress. It concludes: "We have a theory of peer networks. We have the practice of building them. And we have results. We know that peer networks can work in the real world. The task now is to discover how far they can take us." The second, longer section - a series of thematic chapters on subjects like journalism, technology, and government - makes good on that promise. It presents case studies that show what peer networks have already accomplished, and contemplates what they might accomplish in the future. Johnson's goal, in Future Perfect is not to write a primer on the theory of networks, an analysis of how distributed networks function, or a history of distributed networks (though he touches, expertly but wearing his expertise lightly, on all those subjects). Nor is his goal to predict the future: The potential applications he describes for peer networks are presented as possibilities, not certainties.

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