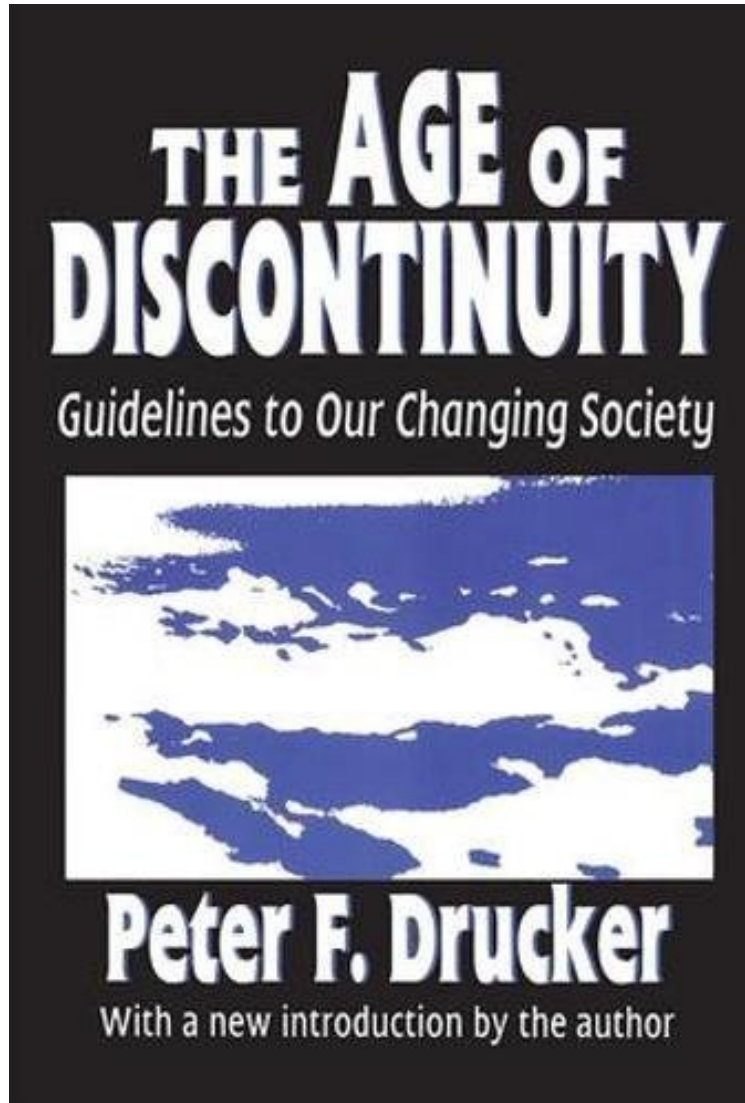


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The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society

Peter F. Drucker

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Peter F. Drucker : The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Peter F Drucker was a very smart man. By Xavier Morrison My father left all assortment of books lying around when I was a kid, stacks of them, and promoted curiosity and their consumption in clandestine ways. It was fun he convinced me as artfully as Twain could frame the joys of painting a fence. It worked and got me reading, one of the greatest gifts you can give a child... That and how to eat right; you

know fruit and vegetables, be careful of too much red meat and dairy. Oh yeah, floss every day. My father was particularly fond of philosophy, and management theory. 'The Age of Discontinuity' was one of those books I borrowed from his collection (along with Alvin Toffler and Marshall McLuhan), and was wowed by, while studying marketing in the mid 70's. I'm totally a Peter F Drucker fan. I was reminded of my dad when I saw it in my suggestions (those guys are good). I thought I'd see how good Drucker's predictions had held up. (I'm going to look back at Toffler and McLuhan too.) Originally published in 1969, a dog's age, I recalled his basic arguments, which he recaps succinctly in the 1978 preface. His style too as remembered, straight to the point, and not overburdened in statistics or economic theory, plain language. What comes through too in the later 1983 preface and 1992 introduction is to be reminded that Drucker is ten times smarter than your average bear, and he reminds you of that at every opportunity. He's most often right. Like the modern Elijah outside the temple. To brief it is four converging trends that will create a realignment of economic, political and social structure: One, is technology, "The growth industries of the last decades of the twentieth century are likely to emerge from knowledge discoveries of the first fifty or sixty years of this century; quantum physics, the understanding of atomic and molecular structure, biochemistry..." (PF Drucker 1969) How could it be argued any other way in the face of the previous 150 years. Two, is the growth of multinational corporations overriding national interests, a true global economy, and shadow economy, argued as multinationals being equipped and positioned to take greatest advantage - "...We still act as if we lived in an 'international economy', in which separate nations are the units...Fundamentally as different from one another in their economy and is in their language or law or cultural tradition. But imperceptibly there has emerged a world economy where common information generates the same economic appetites, aspirations and demands - cutting across national boundaries..." (PF Drucker 1969) That was kind of a no brainer. What is unique was Drucker's re-examination of the most basic assumptions, asking more basic questions; speaking in terms of "appetites and aspirations", the foundations of consumerism. Three, is the shift in the political matrix of social and economic life, "Every single social task of importance today is entrusted to a large institution..." - Sounds eerily prophetic of social media, facebook google, the internet and how we get our information. He also bemoans a growing lack of belief government, as an organizational entity, can get the job done, "Everywhere there is rapid disenchantment with the biggest and fastest of these institutions, modern government, as cynicism regarding its ability to perform..." (PF Drucker 1969) That one's scary. It's like he saw the Tea Party coming! He too must have hated watching the explosion of government, although he's careful enough to tip toe around the welfare state, likely though he was close to Ayn Rand, "The purpose of government, in other words is to govern. This as we have all learned in other institutions, is incompatible with "doing." Any attempt to combine governing with "doing" on a large scale, paralyzes decision making...They (govt.) are not focused on "doing." They are not equipped for it." (PFD 1969) Wow, I remembering liking Rand back then, a utopian idealist, and don't recollect feeling fascist. But I've evolved, grown comfortable with the idea of social security, and medicare. I don't think Drucker (1909 - 2005) was much of a Roosevelt fan. And finally four, which is Knowledge, "Knowledge, during the last few decades, has become the central capital, the cost center, the crucial resource of the economy. This changes labor forces and work, teaching and learning, and the meaning of knowledge and its politics..." But Drucker makes the point that these specific categories of activity are not important within themselves, it is the exploration of "Discontinuities" of previous trends and influences that is the common theme; understanding the sociological disruption as a seismologist understands an earthquake, below the crust. We are struggling mightily today within that necessity for a work force, technical and educational realignment. An element Drucker could not have foreseen would be the importance and opportunity of collaboration that comes with the capability to share heaps of info at light speed. Even Drucker couldn't have imagined how cheap and easy it was to become. To Drucker it could all be reduced to management theory, the polity only interfered, a real life Hari Seldon. He was good at what he did; a frequent consultant to Fortune 500, and whole countries alike. Like Hari Seldon, Drucker worked in solitude, a one man show. But unlike Hari, Drucker never embraced technology, he never used a computer or even word processor, it was all written down on yellow pads and transcribed by his secretary, for a long time on a typewriter, or so the story goes. He had no other employees, just the secretary, the yellow pad, and a client list that would make any consultant drool. Overall, Drucker acquits himself very well. I also now understand that I only thought I understood what he was saying, way back when, as a twenty one year old student. I think I get it better now. It was, begrudgingly and with some effort, worth the read, for me...I mean for sentimental value. My father died last year. I miss not being able to talk to him about stuff like that...1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Writing, Ugly Presentation By Jane S. Shaw I read this book many years ago and loved it. I remember Drucker's prophetic comments that a computer didn't make a revolution; you have to have an interlocking network to change people's lives. Electricity, for example, was much more than a light bulb; it was a network that linked people's homes to a source of electricity. I found that insightful and have always wanted to go back and reread Drucker's lucid discussion and see how much of it has "played out." Sadly, this book is a sloppy-looking photograph of the original and the cover is ugly. I don't know if the cover picture is supposed to be clouds or a map of something. Perhaps I should have sought an original.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. With difficulty I waded through this essay Drucker. By Matt Mayevsky Essay, because it is a form of literary-scientific, presenting the point of view of the author. In turn the "difficult" because the

arguments of the author is quite long-winded and could be reduced at least by half without affecting the substance of the content. Drucker, under the code name "The Age of discontinuity" describes the forces of changes that shape the society of tomorrow. Tomorrow, we live in today, because the author wrote the book in 1968. Interestingly, many of the comments Drucker does not become obsolete, even though the socio-economic background has changed drastically. I particularly recommend to your attention a chapter on the impact and importance of the institution, on our civilization and strikingly current description of the effects of the explosion of new technologies. Is it worth still reach for the book, which describes the time before the more than half century? Certainly yes, although the book is not for everyone.

The closing decades of the twentieth century have been characterized as a period of disruption and discontinuity in which the structure and meaning of economy, polity, and society have been radically altered. In this volume Peter Drucker focuses with great clarity and perception on the forces of change that are transforming the economic landscape and creating tomorrow's society. Drucker discerns four major areas of discontinuity underlying contemporary social and cultural reality. These are: (1) the explosion of new technologies resulting in major new industries; (2) the change from an international to a world economy an economy that presently lacks policy, theory, and institutions; (3) a new sociopolitical reality of pluralistic institutions that poses drastic political, philosophical, and spiritual challenges; and (4) the new universe of knowledge based on mass education and its implications in work, leisure, and leadership. Peter Drucker brings to this work an intimate knowledge and objective view of the particular and general. The Age of Discontinuity is a fascinating and important blueprint for shaping a future already very much with us.

"Professor Drucker's book has tremendous scope. . . . [It] is a useful, stimulating survey of the political and economic realities that may shape the next few decades." Wall Street Journal "Peter F. Drucker . . . sees no challenge that cannot be met by America and the 'have' nations of the world provided they have the flexibility to recognize that a new era is upon us." Newsday "The Age of Discontinuity is the kind of book that makes businessmen think thoughts they have never thought before. The New York Times "Drucker argues his case brilliantly." David Broder, Washington Post About the Author Peter F. Drucker (1909-2005) is known by many as the father of modern management. He was Clarke Professor of Social Science and Management at Claremont Graduate School in California and was a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He is the author of over thirty-five books, including The Ecological Vision, The Concept of the Corporation, and A Functioning Society. Peter F. Drucker (1909-2005) is known by many as the father of modern management. He was Clarke Professor of Social Science and Management at Claremont Graduate School in California and was a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He is the author of over thirty-five books, including The Ecological Vision, The Concept of the Corporation, and A Functioning Society.