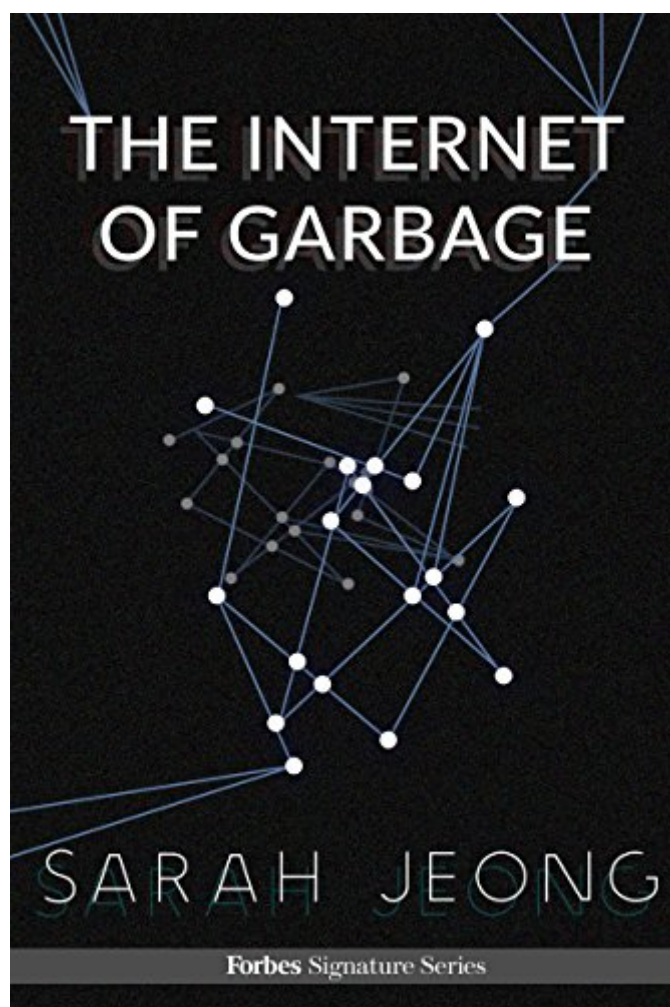


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# The Internet Of Garbage



## Synopsis

Sarah Jeong, a journalist trained as a lawyer at Harvard Law School, discusses the problem of online harassment, with various accounts of harassment that have made their way into mainstream media, as well as lesser-known ones. The Internet of Garbage considers why and how to recalibrate this ongoing project of garbage-removal from content platforms and social media networks. It's not as simple as policing offensive material and hitting the delete button online: Jeong tackles precarious issues like free speech, behavior vs. content, doxing and SPAM. She writes, "Content platforms and social media networks do not have the power to restrain stalkers, end intimate partner violence, eliminate child abuse, or stop street harassment. But they can cultivate better interactions and better discourse, through thoughtful architecture, active moderation and community management." So how do we filter content from garbage? Read on. Sarah Jeong writes about technology, policy and law with bylines at Forbes, The Verge, The Guardian, Slate and WIRED.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Internet of Garbage is an ultra-compressed and broad-ranging overview of our world-wide

problem of crap; we generate and encounter huge amounts of unwanted online content, whether it's spam, hate speech, or harassment. This book is really a gem. You will feel your mind expanding! Internet of Garbage outlines the technical, legal, and social architecture of the Internet's "garbage problem". Jeong discusses what we mean by unwanted speech, creating a practical taxonomy of harassment, including a useful description of doxing. The chapter on content moderation will be of special interest to any community manager, as well as to the developers and product designers who create the architecture of online spaces where people interact. Anyone who has followed cases of online harassment, or been an activist against harassment, will find familiar and validating lines of thought here, as well as new ideas to infuse their work. Jeong ranges further into important legal cases where copyright law and harassment intersect in her description of the case *Garcia v. Google*; this comes off as something of a digression in the middle of the book, but if you stick with it and absorb the details, they are extremely relevant, a perfect bad example of a way not to try to apply current law to situations it can never fit: "16 years of the DMCA had trained [Garcia] to think in terms of ownership, control, and deletion." There's more exploration of the DMCA and CDA 230, a very good and brief grounding in the legal climate in the U.S. As the book progresses all these separate cases, examples, and ideas are pulled together.

The Internet of Garbage is a personal reading for me because many of the issues discussed in the book have affected me personally, directly, in my online life and too often to consider them isolated incidents. The Internet of Garbage is a short book, (or rather booklet) on different issues related to the garbage invading the Internet. The book is a very honest in-depth approach to the Internet on areas like gender harassment and vilification, doxing, SWATing, trolling, moderation, free speech and spam from a person who knows, inside out, how social networks and online platforms work and the legal and technical issues affecting them. What is garbage? What constitutes spam? What does spam and harassment have in common? How does this garbage present itself online? What do we do with it? What should we do with it? Are the procedures to control this garbage working or not, and why? Moderation or blocking? Free speech or banning? Which groups are more likely to be harassed? Which groups are more likely to take the case to the Police and Court? Is harassment gendered or coloured? Why is online harassment so scary? Does harassment occur because the Internet is too big or too small? These are some of the questions that Jeong tackles and replies to in this book. What I like the most about this book is not the focus on issues that are of great interest to me, or the knowledge on the area Jeong has, but the fact that she has a natural tendency to balance her own discourse, to see the pros and cons of anything she says, and to analyse any given aspect

from different sides, never in a monolithic way. You have to praise that sort of old-school savoir fair because it is a rare thing nowadays.

If the Internet was a city, its streets would be piled so high with garbage that driving to the grocery store would be almost impossible. There would be no municipal clean-up, only that paid-for by the businesses who could afford it and extending only to the boundaries of their property. To get to the refuse-free areas, you would need to fight your way through crowds of people calling you vile names, trying to sell you things you don't want, and attaching things to your car that make it run sluggishly. According to Sarah Jeong, the Internet city has so much garbage that it has become what it is full of and appropriately titled her new book: "The Internet of Garbage." In "The Internet of Garbage," Jeong devotes chapters to the major types of garbage the Internet contains: harassment and intimidation, hate crimes, copyright abuse, malware and spam - any content that goes against the published rules or is generally undesirable to most users. With many case studies, she gives us a history of how the garbage began to accumulate, early attempts to restrict it, how we lost control of it, and suggests a few ways to begin to clear the mess. While some will find disconcerting her forays into legal issues such as attempts to use DMCA copyright laws to control harassment and an Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) proposal that would have made it harder to conceal your residential address if you owned a domain, Jeong is spot on when she says that any platform that allows interaction and user-generated content needs to have a strong set of forum rules and consistent and compassionate moderation.

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