



All the Rave: The Rise and Fall of Shawn Fanning's Napster

Joseph Menn

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At age seventeen, Shawn Fanning designed a computer program that transformed the Internet into an unlimited library of free music. Tens of millions of young people quickly signed on, Time magazine put Fanning on its cover, and his company, Napster, became a household name. It did not take long for the music industry to declare war, one that has now engulfed the biggest entertainment and technology companies on the planet.

For **All the Rave**, top cyberculture journalist Joseph Menn gained unprecedented access to Fanning, other key Napster and music executives, reams of internal e-mails, unpublished court records, and other resources. The result is the definitive account of the Napster saga, for the first time revealing secret take-over and settlement talks, the unseen role of Shawn's uncle in controlling Napster, and hidden agendas and infighting from Napster's trenches to the top ranks of the German media giant Bertelsmann.

All the Rave is a riveting account of genius and greed, visionary leaps and disastrous business decisions, and the clash of the hacker and investor cultures with that of the copyright establishment. Napster left a generation of music fans feeling that paying the recording industry close to twenty dollars for a CD was a foolish and unnecessary extravagance, which provoked a still-growing backlash against digital media consumers that might leave them with less control than ever. Here is the inside story of the young visionary and the company that made it happen.

All the Rave: The Rise and Fall of Shawn Fanning's Napster Details

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From Reader Review All the Rave: The Rise and Fall of Shawn Fanning's Napster for online ebook

Mark says

Although I am deeply engrossed in the subject and have a fair amount of prior knowledge in the matters of intellectual property, this book had a hard time engaging me. At points its narrative got confusing, and I lost sight of what certain players were doing at pivotal moments. Shawn Fanning's story melds with the story of his several business partners, which wouldn't be so bad if the title didn't spell out so clearly that the biography is as much about Napster as it is about Shawn himself. Even less attention is paid to Sean Parker, who we hear so very little about. The focus is basically on John Fanning, the uncle who fancied himself a bigshot entrepreneur and who had a fair amount of responsibility in Napster's demise.

The overarching tale does much better than the smaller plots, and you get to understand more about the inner workings of the internet bubble, and how greed drove impossible bets forward. It's not the book it should be, but anyway, it's still the best resource available on Napster and it shouldn't be dismissed.

Jeff says

A good account of the whole Napster phenomenon from the inside. A good read that deserves a place on the shelf beside The Accidental Billionaires.

Zweegas says

Napster was of course a major revolutionary force in modern civilization, a huge cultural phenomenon that changed the world so much, but this book doesn't fully explore the cultural phenomenon aspect. Instead, this book is focused on the inside story and therefore it turns out to be more like a low-budget Barbarians At The Gate -- all about the business side of things and internal company struggles and fending off legal actions, etc.

Just the fact that anyone ever tried to run Napster as a for-profit business in the first place is hilarious.

Travis Murdock says

A good look behind the scenes of Napster. The extensive interviews with many of the founders and employees helped to document this incredible idea.

Joseph Menn says

The definitive inside account of the file-sharing revolution that overthrew the music industry, "All the Rave"

reveals the family betrayal, greed and mismanagement that hijacked one of the most fundamental innovations of the Internet era.

Named one of the three best books of 2003 by Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc., "All the Rave" has been out of print until now and unavailable in most electronic formats.

Author and veteran technology journalist Joseph Menn also wrote 2010's "Fatal System Error: The Hunt for the New Crime Lords who are Bringing Down the Internet."

Reviews for "All the Rave":

"The book, by Joseph Menn, provides a well-documented history of one of the most celebrated collapses of the Internet. But it goes far deeper, giving an inside account of the creation of Napster, the battle for its control and the maneuvering by big Silicon Valley names to try to turn music piracy into gold." -- The New York Times

"That rare business book that nicely avoids either hatchet job or hagiography." -- San Francisco Chronicle

"An admirable piece of reporting, of interest to both friends and foes of the movement Napster helped to create." -- The Washington Post

"Menn's revelations are startling...the best seat yet to the online music revolution." -- Newsweek

"An engrossing and utterly coruscating history of the original Napster that deserves to be ranked as one of the two great books written about the dot-com bubble, alongside Michael Wolf's Burn Rate." -- The Register

At age seventeen, Shawn Fanning designed a computer program that transformed the Internet into an unlimited library of free music. Future Facebook President Sean Parker, to be immortalized in "The Social Network" a decade later, joined him as a co-founder of Napster Inc.

Tens of millions of young people quickly signed on, Time magazine put Fanning on its cover, and Napster became a household name.

It did not take long for the music industry to declare war, one that would engulfed the biggest entertainment and technology companies on the planet.

Despite the mass media coverage that came with the revolution and Fanning's status as the first widely admired hacker, no one outside the firm grasped who owned the company or what its real strategy was.

The full tale, revealed only here, shows that the venture money credited with spreading Internet technology worldwide also corrupted its evolution, triggering a backlash that is still reverberating ten years later.

For "All the Rave," Joseph Menn gained unprecedented access to Fanning, Parker, other key Napster and music executives, reams of internal emails, unpublished court records, and other resources.

The result is the definitive account of the Napster saga, for the first time disclosing secret takeover and settlement talks, the unseen role of Shawn's uncle in controlling Napster, and hidden agendas and infighting from Napster's trenches to the top ranks of the German media giant Bertelsmann.

Spiced with sex, drugs and rock and roll, "All the Rave" is a riveting account of genius and greed, visionary leaps and disastrous business decisions, and the clash of the hacker and investor cultures with that of the copyright establishment.

Joshua says

Napster is fascinating. The beginning of this book is also fascinating, and it sets up a story that seems like its going to be really good. There are a bunch of young kids doing something neat that is clearly going to get them in a lot of trouble, a conniving older relative dead set on strip mining their idea for financial gain, and a long cast of ne'er do wells and incompetents jumping on the bandwagon. It sets up Silicon Valley during the 1990s bubble very convincingly and compellingly. Then the narrative gets bogged down in lawsuits, financial maneuvering, and thankless minutiae. I guess this progression is actually a pretty fair representation of Napster itself, but I had extracted all the joy i was going to get from this book by about halfway through.

Stephanie says

Overall, it's an interesting story, but the book included more details than the average reader probably wants.

Brad Hopkins says

Greed. Greed. Greed. And crazy greed. Napster was a real game-changer so it's interesting to read about its formation and ultimate demise. Interesting to find out that the Fanning that was in charge wasn't the one we all knew and loved (admired, derided, and villified).

Good read. Would recommend.

Tim Jin says

After reading about Napster and Shawn Fanning, the company seem like a digital Ponzi scheme. I'm a child from the Napster era and "All the Rave" was a decent read, but the actual company and leadership was a big joke. Terrible management.

I don't feel bad for Shawn Fanning. He might had been a good coder, but no leadership and you never do business with family. John Fanning, his uncle, was the reason for Napster failures. Maybe if Shawn's uncle wasn't apart of the company, Napster would still be here.

They pretty much destroy themselves. The company just sounded shady from the start.

Even after the death of Napster, any savvy user could easily find these files elsewhere.

Thank you Napster for bringing the technology of "sharing" to the Internet.

Skyler says

"Much of Napster's wild trajectory can be traced to that early division of power, between a young hacker who wanted to see if he could solve an interesting problem, and an uncle who recklessly aspired to riches."

Andrew says

Great behind the scenes look at why Napster closed down.
