

From Database Systems to Global Platforms: Cyberspace and the new Rules of Geopolitics

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Abstract

Database systems have been designed to optimize legacy organizations, such as administrations or banks. They contributed to a considerable improvement of both the efficiency and the reliability of traditional functions of society. The progressive densification of a network infrastructure, which connects everything continuously thanks to standard protocols to a global system, triggered a radical change in the cybernetics of societies. The database community adapted to a new paradigm, dealing with poorly structured data from innumerable sectors, instead of forcing data into its rigorous models. The digital was on the verge of freeing itself from the constraints of the old world. New actors emerged, platforms, which are in control of the mediation over increasingly many two-sided markets, condemning many actors to obsolescence, while changing the norms and forcing the laws. Beyond people and institutions, platforms are also changing the geopolitical landscape at a time where the challenge is not only the positions of nations in a conflictual game, but the collective adaptation to a fundamentally new global scheme: stay in a safe operating space for humanity.

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