



Pirates of the new age – fight them or embrace them?

We are in a new pirate age. These disruptors won't appear wearing cutlasses and tricorne hats, but they will have as significant impact on our daily lives as any previous pirates.

The pirates of today are cyber pirates, mobile pirates, data pirates and even biopirates.

In different eras, we have had the radio DJs on the sea, the more accepted piratical role of doubloon seekers in the 16th and 17th centuries and even back to Roman times when sea banditry became known as piracy for the first time.

Pirates are important today because they are the people pushing the boundaries and changing the rules. But they are not simply lone operators. Together, they form complex and sophisticated organisations that both challenge and change the course of capitalism.

Surprisingly, pirate organisations also behave in predictable ways: challenging widespread norms; controlling resources, communication, and transportation; maintaining trade relationships with other communities; and formulating strategies favouring speed and surprise. And firms, non-profit organisations, and governmental bodies can learn from them.

In *The Pirate Organisation: Lessons from the Fringes of Capitalism*, authors Rodolphe Durand and Jean-Philippe Vergne

recommend that rather than trying to stamp out piracy, savvy entrepreneurs and organisations should keep a sharp eye on the pirate space to stay successful as the game changes.

They take this one step further and suggest that as well as learning from pirates, organisations should embrace them, and invite them on board.

They go a step further, arguing that although it is undeniable that capitalism thrives where pirate organisations work, it is not necessary for capitalism and piracy to work with the state. The authors argue that capitalism could become increasingly independent from the sovereign state.

“Capitalism could seek out a coupling with the other semistable organisational forms to pursue new territories to assemble flows of capital and labour in new ways, or to normalise new trading activities. Portions of sovereign territories could also be deterritorialised and connected to flows of resources held by private organisations, leading to the creation of “franchises” within the sovereign state.....Put simply, who should we trust more to defend our rights as “netizens”? Homeland Security, Google, or Anonymous?”

The Pirate Economy – Lessons from the Fringes of Capitalism by Rodolphe Durand and Jean-Philippe Vergne

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