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Internet Policy in China: A Field Study of Internet Cafés (Lexington Studies in Political Communication)

Helen Sun

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The new Internet bar phenomenon in China reveals a contradictory time and a vital tug of war between the state and civil society. Small, private net bar operators are caught in the double roles of regulator and the regulated, struggling to survive; many Internet cafZ visitors largely enjoy emailing and online entertainment, showing little interest in political or policy issues. And both bar operators and visitors skillfully play a cat-mouse game with the state. Internet Policy in China: A Field Study of Internet CafZs reports the results of a multi-layered study of this phenomenon. Helen Sun investigates how the Internet has been used by the state and individuals, as well as the implications of Chinese Internet policies and regulations. She conceptualizes media technology as a _dependent variable_ that can be affected by other factors such as its availability, the user's uses and expectations, media policy, the market, and the nations-state. Internet Policy in China focuses on the Chinese telecommunications policy-making system, regulatory activities, and the governmental means of control over Internet access and use at both the macro and micro levels. Sun also discusses users' perceptions and uses of the Internet in net cafZs, the dual role cafZ owners play in the frantic digital arena, the mismatch between Internet regulations and net cafZ owners and goers, their interaction with governmental policy and regulation, and the social implications of their interactions during China's transitional time.

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