

The challenge here is to understand how a system filled with good people becomes in this sense corrupt.

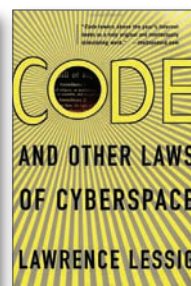


Lawrence Lessig

□ Debate-defining thought leadership on law and society, business and governance. □

One of America’s most original and influential public intellectuals. Innovative reformer addressing ‘corruption,’ defined as the inappropriate influence of money on our institutions. Expert on intellectual property and copyright law; world-renowned authority on cyberlaw. Author of five books.

Professor, Harvard Law School. Director, Edmond J. Safra Foundation Center for Ethics.



Ahead of the Curve

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Highlights

Law professor Lawrence Lessig is **one of the most original and influential public intellectuals of our time**. His work has recast the very terms of discussion in many areas of the law and he's had a **profound impact** on wider society, especially on the evolution of the Internet. *National Law Journal* has twice named him to their list of 100 Most Influential Lawyers.

For much of his career, Larry Lessig has focused on **law and technology**, especially as it affects copyright and the Internet—he is **the leading expert on 'cyberlaw.'**

Lessig has written five books on these topics, argued a landmark case before the U.S. Supreme Court, testified before Congress, and won numerous awards.

He was a professor at Stanford Law School, founder of the Stanford Center for Internet and Society, and cofounder of Creative Commons.

Now Lawrence Lessig has begun a new career, with a **new focus on governance and corruption**, by which he means **the corruptive influence of money on our institutions**. He speaks on what corruption has become and what we can do about it—**how an economy of influence develops** around money to produce incentives which shouldn't be where they are.

He has moved to Harvard Law School and is the new director of the Edmond J. Safra Foundation Center for Ethics, where he will lead a five-year study of money's influence on institutional decisions.

Larry also has created a Wiki on corruption and cofounded Change Congress, a nonprofit dedicated to keeping big money out of politics. He serves on the boards of MAPLight.org and the Sunlight Foundation.

Lawrence Lessig is professor of law at Harvard Law School and director of the Edmond J. Safra Foundation Center for Ethics. *Scientific American* has named him to their list of Top 50 Visionaries. He blogs at lessig.org/blog/.

Corruption

I am interested in non-obvious corruption—instances in which a decision is improperly and/or subtly influenced by an actor's anticipation of some sort of indirect economic gain or loss.

Many of our institutions have become corrupt, argues Larry Lessig, not in the sense that someone is paying someone else off for a favor, but rather, where decision-makers routinely face incentives to favor interests other than those they claim to be advancing—or should be advancing. The incentives are legal, even considered normal; the actions of favoritism are legal, even expected. But the incentives and actions are wrong, nonetheless.

This happens in business, in academic and corporate research, and, of course, in government. Lessig became interested in this form of corruption when advancing the cause of fair copyright law, where he saw that governments consistently ignored the easy case for sane copyright law and got it wrong. Why, he asked? Because of the inappropriate influence of money.

• Credentials

- Professor, Harvard Law School
- Director, Edmond J. Safra Foundation Center for Ethics, Harvard University
- Formerly, Professor Stanford Law School
- Former founder, Stanford Center for Internet and Society
- Fellow, Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society