



KEVIN SHIMOTA

THE FIRST SUPERAPP

Inside China's WeChat and the New Digital Revolution

ABOUT THE FIRST SUPERAPP

China has leapfrogged past the West in many areas of tech – China's mobile payments have surpassed the United States 100-fold and most Chinese consumers haven't used cash or a credit card for years – and at the center of this new digital revolution is WeChat, the world's first superapp.

For people in China, WeChat is now the everything app – wallet, social media, messaging, food ordering, bill paying, game playing and much more. And companies across the world are only now racing to catch up by creating a similar, all-encompassing digital phenomenon.

The First Superapp provides a glimpse of the future, and Kevin Shimota, a former top executive at WeChat, tells the inside story of how this phenomenon began in the context of China's unique internet. He tells the story of WeChat's creation and its climb to become the first superapp, providing insights on the psyche of WeChat's founder, and of modern China tech to explain the fundamentals of these new innovations and how the framework they form could be reproduced beyond China.

PRAISE

"A fascinating and educational insight into the inner workings of the most dominant tech company that nobody knows about."

— Patrick Body, editor of CKGSB Knowledge magazine



ABOUT KEVIN SHIMOTA

Digital expert and author

Kevin Shimota is a leading expert on digital technology in China, having been a senior executive at WeChat with over a decade of experience in the industry. His ongoing work includes speaking and conducting workshops for premier global companies on current trends and innovations coming out of China and how they can be adapted and integrated into the global tech community. A graduate of the University of Washington, Kevin now lives in Sydney, Australia with his wife and dog.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What makes this book unique to other tech focused ones?

Most tech books are going to give you the latest trends from Silicon Valley. However, this tech book examines trends coming from a new center of digital innovation; China. In this book, you learn about superapps, how they are taking the world by storm, and where they come from. You gain an insight into China's unique internet and consumer tastes to understand what aspects of superapps could be applied to other countries, providing readers with a recipe of how to take these Chinese innovations and apply them to other countries.

Who will be The First Superapp's main audience?

The main audience of this book are people in the technology sector from corporate to startups. They want to take lessons not just from Silicon Valley but new innovation hubs around the world, to get an edge on their competition and make new hybrid innovations. Simultaneously, the book is also for the everyday digitally-savvy reader that wants to know what's going on in China's (and the world's) tech space. Today, China has a unique internet of its own. People want to know what it is, and what interesting things are growing on the inside of China's infamous Great Firewall.

Do you believe an app like WeChat could takeoff outside of China?

I absolutely think an app like WeChat could be spectacularly successful outside of China. The only reason WeChat did not go global is because the creators of WeChat are Chinese and have humbly admitted that they know nothing about the outside world. The superapp model is applicable anywhere as it is in China, and their success can be replicated.

What's fascinating but mostly unknown about WeChat that you explore in the book?

First is WeChat's unique and hyper focus on user experience. Silicon Valley claims to focus on the user, but at the end of the day, most of those companies want to peddle ads to generate revenue and appease shareholders. WeChat truly prioritizes user experience, even to the point of innovating to reduce usage time in favor of increased efficiency and overall individual wellbeing. WeChat's founder eliminated KPIs while I was working there, which made things really confusing for me and colleagues, but he wanted us to focus on user value instead of revenue which is often the ultimate goal of companies.

Second is that WeChat as a superapp, was not made in a day. It was an iterative process. I see a lot of companies around the world trying to copy what they believe is the superapp strategy, but they're doing it wrong. They try to manufacture the entire ecosystem, they start at the end. When in actual fact it's an iterative process that needs to start small and gradually build up. When you read about WeChat's story in this book, you'll see it was a gradual, natural authentic process, and that's how superapps need to be done.