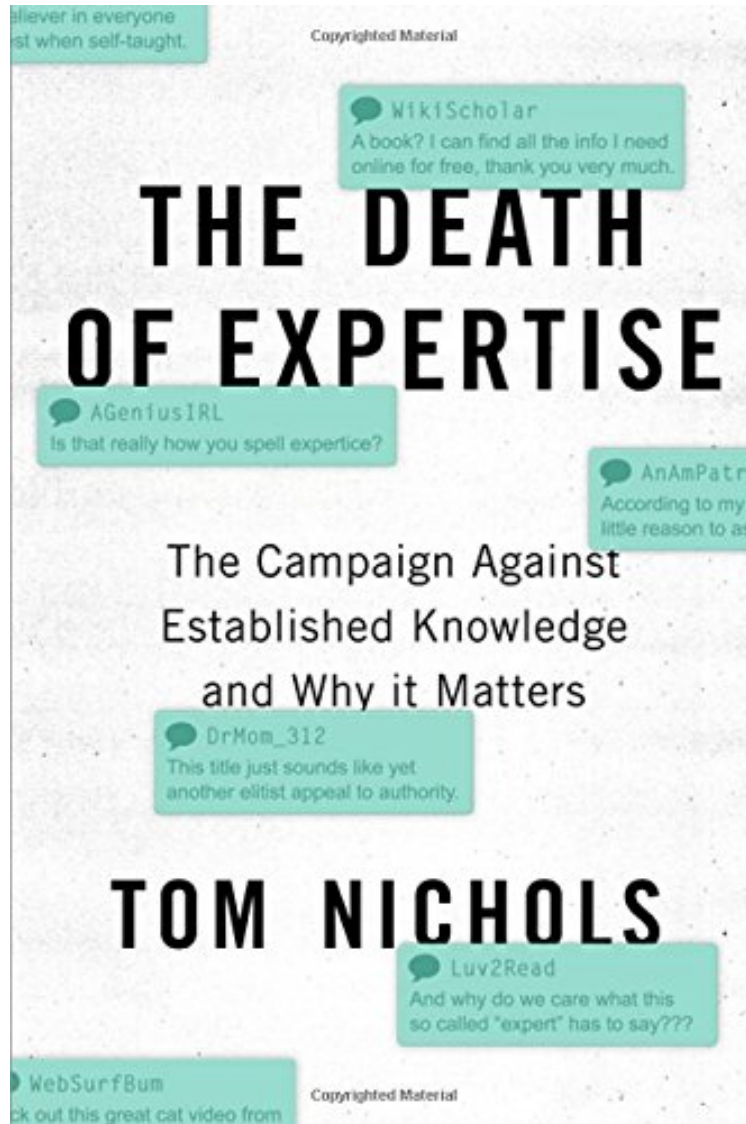


The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters

Thomas M. Nichols

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Thomas M. Nichols : The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters:

373 of 389 people found the following review helpful. From one expert to another, to the publicBy Charles D. Payet,

DDSTo become a dentist, I had to study for 4 years of college and another 4 years (40 hours/week) of dental school. Since graduation nearly 20 years ago, I have taken at least 1,500 hours of Continuing Education at my own expense. And yet, despite my best efforts to be an extraordinarily good dentist, I am now more aware than ever of how much more there is to learn and master. And that's in my own profession, in which people rely upon me as an expert! Nevertheless, every week I hear or read from people that they somehow know more than I do, because they "did their research online." A few years ago, I read Daniel Kahneman's remarkable book, "Thinking, Fast and Slow." While many of the studies in the book have now been called into question (an excellent illustration of one of Tom Nichols' sections about when experts are wrong), I still found it fascinating how I, a person with a graduate-level degree and extensive self-education through extensive reading, knew so very little about so much. I became aware of how easy it is to think that I know more than I do. It was quite humbling, which I need to remember more frequently in discussions on many topics. At least I am aware of how little I know, though. Sometimes. And I know that, even as an expert in my own field, I can make mistakes. How much do we see today, though, of people without any education or training or experience, claiming that their opinion is as valid as any expert, or dismissing experts as nothing more than "elites," as if that allows them to be ignored? In a time when our entire world is built around technology and knowledge and the experts who understand them, Americans are forgetting how that all happened. They are so ignorant of the knowledge and experience and understanding that exists, that they don't have a clue that they don't have a clue. Dunning-Kruger writ large. And it is slowly destroying democracy and our republic. Tom Nichols can only recommend what is key, and what even our Founding Fathers understood: the electorate must be an INFORMED electorate. The populace must understand enough to make the decisions to choose both smart experts (Knowers) and policymakers (Deciders) and understand the limits of each. The conclusion of Tom's book, if anything, offers little hope. Sadly, I agree. We both do hold out some hope, of course, but it will take a massive effort on the part of all sides. If it will happen, no one can predict, not even the experts. But without experts and policy makers who listen, and an educated, informed populace that helps choose and respect them.....I worry for the world of my children. HIGHLY recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well worth the read if you are interested in understanding our current culture better! By D. Meyer Really, this is a 4.5 stars rounded up. In my opinion this is a really important idea, very well expressed. It is a great conversation starter, so I think it would be a great book for a book club. I think it ties in really nicely with the literature on the Narcissism epidemic, led by Dr. Jean Twenge, for those who study educational psychology or cultural phenomenon, as I do. So why not 5 stars? At times Dr. (?) Nichols does seem to be a little bit whiny, though he does acknowledge that. And some readers may be looking for answers/solutions and helpful resources, and this treatise is just a bit short on those (IMHO). 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book should be on the "must read" list for many undergrad college majors!! Eye Opening! By William N. Parker The book has benefitted me in a number of ways: First, it has made me an even more humble, dedicated learner. Second, it has helped me understand why others, particularly the 30 to 50 age group, often think they are experts by seeing and repeating factoids on social media. I captured the entire last chapter as a Word document to share with training and developing colleagues and former clients with, and for whom I have worked. This book is one of the very best books that I have enjoyed this year. I am only sorry that it ended. I was ready for more, even when it ended! A sincere THANK YOU, Tom Nichols, for your timely, most interesting, scholarly, conversational, and enjoyable work!!

People are now exposed to more information than ever before, provided both by technology and by increasing access to every level of education. These societal gains, however, have also helped fuel a surge in narcissistic and misguided intellectual egalitarianism that has crippled informed debates on any number of issues. Today, everyone knows everything: with only a quick trip through WebMD or Wikipedia, average citizens believe themselves to be on an equal intellectual footing with doctors and diplomats. All voices, even the most ridiculous, demand to be taken with equal seriousness, and any claim to the contrary is dismissed as undemocratic elitism. As Tom Nichols shows in *The Death of Expertise*, this rejection of experts has occurred for many reasons, including the openness of the internet, the emergence of a customer satisfaction model in higher education, and the transformation of the news industry into a 24-hour entertainment machine. Paradoxically, the increasingly democratic dissemination of information, rather than producing an educated public, has instead created an army of ill-informed and angry citizens who denounce intellectual achievement. Nichols has deeper concerns than the current rejection of expertise and learning, noting that when ordinary citizens believe that no one knows more than anyone else, democratic institutions themselves are in danger of falling either to populism or to technocracy—or in the worst case, a combination of both. *The Death of Expertise* is not only an exploration of a dangerous phenomenon but also a warning about the stability and survival of modern democracy in the Information Age.

"A sharp analysis of an increasingly pressing problem..." -- Kirkus s "Nichols has issued a sadly necessary and urgent call... but it helps that his righteous indignation is coated in a healthy dose of wit." --Mark Hemingway, *The Federalist* "We live in a post-fact age, one that's dangerous for a whole host of reasons. Here is a book that not only acknowledges this reality, but takes it head on. Persuasive and well-written, *The Death of Expertise* is exactly the book

needed for our times."--Ian Bremmer, President and Founder, Eurasia Group "Americans are indifferent to real journalism in forming their opinions, hoaxes prove harder to kill than a slasher-flick monster, and the word 'academic' is often hurled like a nasty epithet. Tom Nichols has put his finger on what binds these trends together: positive hostility to established knowledge. The Death of Expertise is trying to turn back this tide." --Dan Murphy, former Middle East and Southeast Asia Bureau Chief, The Christian Science Monitor "Tom Nichols does a breathtakingly detailed job in scrutinizing the American consumer's refutation of traditional expertise. In the era of escapism and denial, he offers a refreshing and timely book on how we balance our skepticism with trust going forward."--Salena Zito, national political reporter for The Washington Examiner, CNN, The New York Post, and RealClearPolitics "Tom Nichols has written a brilliant, timely, and very original book. He shows how the digital revolution, social media, and the internet have helped to foster a cult of ignorance. Nichols makes a compelling case for reason and rationality in our public and political discourse."-- Robert J. Lieber, Georgetown University, and author of Retreat and Its Consequences "Nichols expands his 2014 article published by The Federalist with a highly researched and impassioned book that's well timed for this post-election period... strongly researched textbook for laymen will have many political and news junkies nodding their heads in agreement." - Publishers Weekly "Tom Nichols is fighting a rear-guard action on behalf of those dangerous people who actually know what they are talking about. In a compelling, and often witty, polemic, he explores why experts are routinely disregarded and what might be done to get authoritative knowledge taken more seriously." - Sir Lawrence Freedman, Emeritus Professor of War Studies, King's College London, and author of Strategy About the Author Tom Nichols is Professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, an adjunct professor at the Harvard Extension School, and a former aide in the U.S. Senate. He is also the author of several works on foreign policy and international security affairs, including The Sacred Cause, No Use: Nuclear Weapons and U.S. National Security, Eve of Destruction: The Coming Age of Preventive War, and The Russian Presidency. He is also a five-time undefeated Jeopardy! champion, and as one of the all-time top players of the game, he was invited back to play in the 2005 Ultimate Tournament of Champions. Nichols' website is tomnichols.net and he can be found on Twitter at @RadioFreeTom.