

Finn Brunton

Biography

Finn Brunton is an American scholar, writer, and professor whose work focuses on digital culture, privacy, obsolete technologies, and the hidden infrastructures of the internet. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, and has taught at institutions such as New York University and the University of California, Davis. Currently, he is an Associate Professor of Science and Technology Studies (STS) at the University of California, Davis, where he continues to research and write about the intersections of media history, cryptography, and digital resistance.

Brunton's work is deeply interdisciplinary, blending media theory, history, and critical technology studies. He is particularly interested in how people adapt, misuse, or subvert digital tools—whether through spam, cryptocurrency, or obfuscation tactics. His writing is both scholarly and accessible, making complex technological histories engaging for a broad audience.

Major Books

***Digital Cash: The Unknown History of the Anarchists, Utopians, and Technologists Who Created Cryptocurrency* (2019):**

A prehistory of Bitcoin that resurrects the forgotten dreamers and failed experiments behind digital money, tracing how cypher-punks, libertarians, and visionary technologists laid the ideological and technical groundwork for cryptocurrency long before it had a name.

Spam: A Shadow History of the Internet (with Helen Nissenbaum, 2013):

Explores how spam shaped the architecture of internet governance, economics, and digital security, tracing how unwanted messages quietly but fundamentally changed the way we build, regulate, and navigate the web.