

Investigating Power in the Age of 'Googlization'

Information Revolution & Power Transformation
Kim Sang-bae, Hanul Publishing Group
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The "social network service" revolution, led by Twitter and Facebook, has helped bring down the dictatorial system in Tunisia that had persisted for 23 years. The outlook is that the "SNS"-initiated changes could spread to other neighboring countries, including not only Egypt but also nations in Africa and the Middle East. People now share critical views of their governments and organize protests through SNS. These new services, once deemed as innovation in the information technology sector, are increasingly affecting political upheavals.

Korea is no stranger to the phenomenon. Back in 2002, online activists played a key role in getting progressive candidate Roh Moo-hyun elected as President of South Korea. In

2008, online protesters against the import of U.S. beef led to massive candlelight vigilance campaigns.

Information Revolution & Power Transformation, written by Kim Sang-bae, professor of political diplomacy at Seoul National University, explores the process through which enhanced information exchange affects change in the political power structure. The author argues that citizens, armed with smartphones and Internet-enabled gadgets, have finally begun to challenge the way the elitist intellectuals and government officials go about business.

But Kim does not believe that the information revolution is a force that will destroy the existing powers and create new ones. Instead, the transformative force will only encourage the same powers to put on a new, subtly modified façade. For all the revolutions brought by technological innovations, the time-honored power

structure itself will not go extinct any time soon, he says.

Kim proposes a new option called the 'network knowledge nation system,' designed to help bridge the gap between new and old systems. This alternative structure is to channel various online and offline opinions to generate more benefits for the general public. Readers interested in the information revolution led by smartphones and SNS will find this book at once informative and insightful.

By Pyo Jeonghun

