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'Convertible equity': a plan to keep early-stage startups out of debt

authors

Dan "Shoe" Hsu



Dean Takahashi



Sebastian Haley



Mike Minotti



Omri Petite



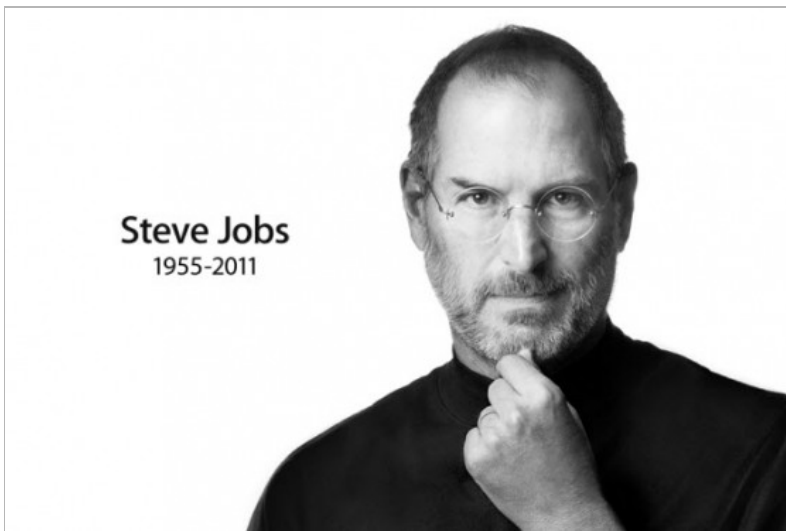
Evan Killham



Jeffrey Grubb



The top 25 technology books of all time



April 20, 2012 8:00 AM

[Dean Takahashi](#)



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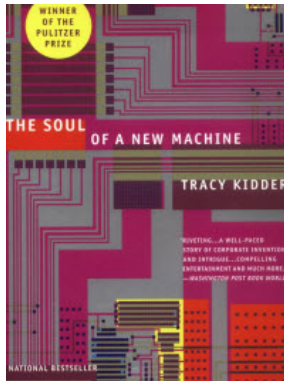
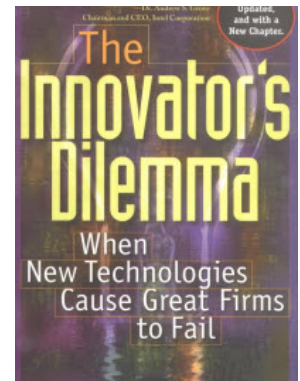
D. F. Smith



Technology teaches us to forget the past. Last year's tech news seems like it has no use whatsoever. Thankfully, historians beg to differ, and they have begun to preserve the history of the tech industry as it becomes more and more important to the evolution of our lives and world. Those who understand the history of technology and the people who made it happen can probably figure out more quickly how to build on the shoulders of giants and advance technology further. Here's some books that are great fun to read because they either relate great ideas that influenced a generation of technologists or because they chronicle the lives of people who changed the world. This list includes books that have stood the test of time and are worth a look for the history lover. And it includes new books, such as Walter Isaacson's tome on Steve Jobs, that are likely to be the new classics. It doesn't, however, include any tech textbooks. My focus is on books that deliver not just a technical understanding of how something works today, but hard-earned wisdom.

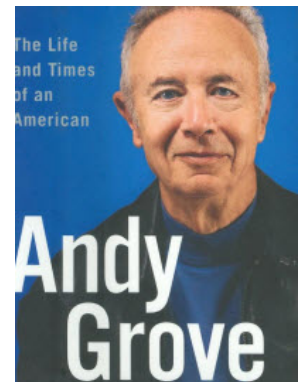
1. **Steve Jobs** by Walter Isaacson (2011). This 571-page tome captures the key moments and thoughts of Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple. Isaacson built a moving portrait of the life of the tech icon after 40 interviews with him. Aware of Jobs' reality distortion field, Isaacson also interviewed more than 100 key players about what Jobs told him, getting a full picture of the man from many points of view. All of the key players in the life of Jobs — his ex-girlfriends, former employees, board members, wife and children, and industry luminaries such as Bill Gates — talk about their interaction with Jobs, from his days growing up in Silicon Valley, to his pot-smoking days at a commune with an apple orchard in Oregon, until his death from cancer in 2011. Isaacson's book captures the complexity of a man who could be a tyrant at one moment and an emotional wreck the next. Whatever you think of Jobs or his accomplishments, it is a must-read for anyone remotely related to the business of technology. The book makes you feel like you know the man behind the legend by the time you're finished. It is so well done that it inspired me to write this list.

2. **The Innovator's Dilemma** by Clayton Christensen (1997). It took a Harvard Business School professor to see why new technologies can cause great companies to fail. After studying industries from steel to hard drives, Christensen discovered that listening to customers can cause a great executive to misread the market. Typically, customers ask for new features, and the most enthusiastic customers ask for lots of new features. The managers who accommodate requests and put them into the next version of the product run the risk of failing because they make their products too complicated. They don't notice that for ordinary customers, the technology is good enough. When a technology becomes good enough, the market leader may fail to notice, only to be disrupted by a competitor who comes into the market and offers a good enough product. Too many companies are afraid to disrupt their own products, and so they are disrupted instead. At the same time, businesses that routinely improve their products often miss the boat when a new technology comes along and becomes a huge wave. While the book focuses on business strategy, it offers a lot of insights and it had a huge impact on the tech industry. And Christensen's "Innovator's" series of books became a cottage industry. For innovators of any stripe, the whole series is worth reading.



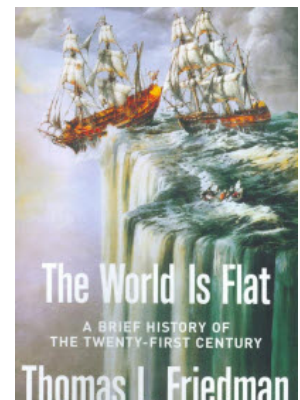
3. **The Soul of a New Machine** by Tracy Kidder (1981). This is the classic tech product creation story. Kidder writes the book so that you feel like you are a fly on the wall in the meetings at Data General, a minicomputer vendor in the 1970s. The author chronicles the turf war that takes place between two internal design groups within the company that are trying to create the great next-generation machine. The two teams are pitted against each other and they test whether a "quick and dirty" computer made by recent college graduates will make a better product or one that is painstakingly designed by an elite group. The book won a Pulitzer Prize in another era, but what hasn't changed is difficulty of dealing with egos in team dynamics or the frenetic pace of product innovation. The book has inspired countless other business tales, including my own books on the history of Microsoft's Xbox video game business.

4. **Andy Grove: The Life and Times of an American** by Richard S. Tedlow (2006). Before we move on to making a god out of Mark Zuckerberg, it's good to remember who came before him. No one had a more remarkable rags to riches story than Andy Grove, the former chief executive of Intel. He was born a Hungarian Jew in 1936 and he survived the Holocaust while his father did not. During the bloody Hungarian revolution of 1956, he fled the country, crawling across the Austrian border in the mud. He arrived in America penniless, found help and managed to work his way through college. He graduated in time to catch the wave of change sweeping through the new Silicon Valley with the creation of seminal chip companies such as Fairchild. He was the third employee at Intel and became its CEO, taking no prisoners along the way. Grove became a statesman of the valley and a feared boss for those who didn't have their act together. Among his decisions: engaging in a strategic retreat, where he and Gordon Moore decided to exit the memory chip market to focus on microprocessors. Then came IBM, looking for a microprocessor to put in its first personal computer. After that, Intel was golden and Grove was a key reason that Intel became the world's biggest chip maker.



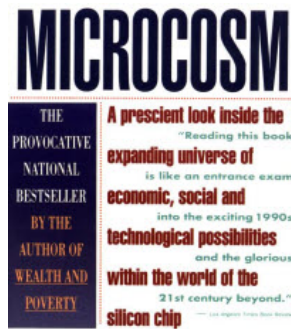
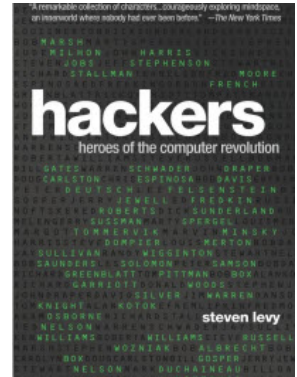
5. **The New New Thing: A Silicon Valley Story** by Michael Lewis (2001). This tale showed how all roads led to Jim Clark, the founder of Silicon Graphics, Netscape and Healtheon. Lewis, the author of *Liar's Poker*, swept into Silicon Valley and cozied up to Clark, the brilliant graphics expert who became the most important technology entrepreneur of the 1990s. The tale shows how the boom surrounding the internet turned the geeky Clark into one of the valley's first billionaires. Clark rewrote the rules of Silicon Valley and capitalism itself. Lewis also chronicled Clark's creation of Hyperion, a high-tech yacht that was more complex than a 747. Like Kidder, Lewis is a great storyteller who captured the poignant moments of Clark's life. Clark didn't set the world on fire with Healtheon, but his protégé, Marc Andreessen, has inherited the mantle of the uber-entrepreneur and investor of Silicon Valley.

6. **The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century** by Thomas Friedman (2005). The globe-trotting Friedman has the best travel budget in the world and he makes good use of it here to deliver anecdotes that show the effects of globalization across the planet. He argues that technology and economic growth have leveled the playing field so that anyone can seize an advantage in commerce. In the global market, old historical and geographical boundaries are irrelevant. The stories about individuals — from the makers of video games in India to the call center operators in China — show how emerging economies have become key parts of the global supply chain. Friedman credits the spread of the web, the collapse of the Berlin Wall, workflow software, outsourcing, offshoring, and the spread of gadgets for producing a change that all Americans will have to adapt to. The key to survival will be making the work force more educated and adaptable.



7. **The Chip: How Two Americans Invented the Microchip and Launched a Revolution** by T.R. Reid (1985). This story chronicles how the electronics revolution began. The story shows the race to create the first integrated circuit, commonly known as a chip, that became the brains of everything electronic. Robert Noyce of Fairchild Semiconductor (and later Intel) and Jack Kilby of Texas Instruments created their own versions of the chip independently. Then the legal wrangling that ensued muddied the waters about who came up with the invention first. I recall reading this book and interviewing the taciturn and humble Kilby about his accomplishments back in Dallas more than two decades ago. He was a gentle giant, while Noyce became the industry's statesman. In 2000, Kilby received a Nobel Prize for physics.

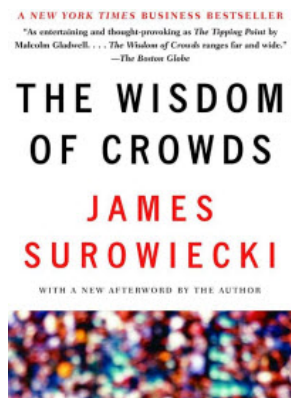
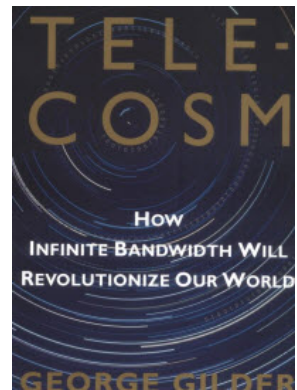
8. **Hackers:** Heroes of the Computer Revolution by Steven Levy (1984). Levy's first book coined the term "hacker" and it defined the ethos of the hacker movement as it arose from the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s. He profiled everyone from Steve Wozniak to Richard Stallman, creator of the free software movement that culminated with Linux. Whether they've read the book or not, hackers still hold to the same set of ethics that Levy chronicled decades ago. Even Mark Zuckerberg, who wrote a letter dubbed "The Hacker Way" in Facebook's initial public offering papers, professes to follow the same set of rules, starting with an open approach to technology. Levy published a 25th anniversary edition of the book and recently talked about it at the [Defcon conference in 2011](#).



9. **Microcosm:** The Quantum Revolution in Economics and Technology by George Gilder (1990). We take Moore's Law — the idea that the number of transistors on a chip doubles every couple of years — for granted. But it took the flowery and effusive words of George Gilder to explain the importance of semiconductor technology in driving the modern economy. Gilder is rightly criticized for believing too much in entrepreneurship. He believed that when we hit the billion-transistor chip, the problems of the world would evaporate. We've passed that now and we still have a few troubles, but the Microcosm and Moore's Law haven't run out of gas yet. This book inspired Mark Pincus, the CEO of Zynga, to move into a career in technology. And now he's a billionaire.

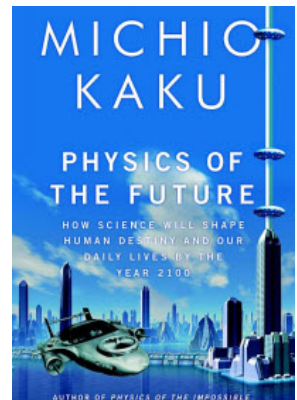


10. **Telecosm:** How Infinite Bandwidth Will Revolutionize Our World by George Gilder (2000). It took George Gilder to recognize that the age of the computer, which he had dubbed the Microcosm, was giving way to the age of the Telecosm, or the internet. An endless supply of bandwidth meant that PCs would be hollowed out and an abundance of communications networks would ensue. Gilder took a pounding for hyping the dotcom revolution, particularly as it all came crashing down just as his book was published. He missed a lot and the followers of his Gilder Technology Report paid dearly for overzealous investments during the dotcom meltdown. But the insights in the book, which laid the vision for today's cloud computing, have stood the test of time. He saw the collapse of telephone companies and the rise of internet empires and handheld computers.



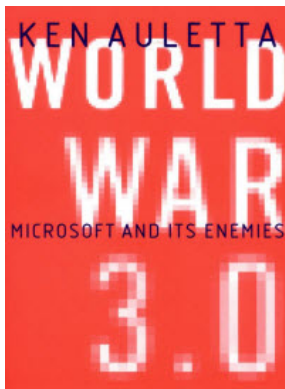
11. **The Wisdom of Crowds:** Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations by James Surowiecki (2004). This is one of those big ideas that overturned conventional wisdom: mob rule is usually right. If you go to a county fair and guess the weight of an ox, the odds are that you'll be wrong. But the average of the collective guesses of everybody will more than likely be right. The aggregation of information in groups often leads to predictions or decisions that are on the mark, whereas the predictions of informed individuals are often wrong. This newfound belief in crowds led to a number of crowdsourcing activities — prediction markets, Wikipedia, alternate reality games, or Betfair.

12. **The Physics of the Future:** How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives by the Year 2100 by Michio Kaku (2011). See the future through the eyes of a physicist, who tours the world's R&D labs to show us the technologies that will shape our lives in the year 2100. He takes an expansive view, including chapters on advanced gene therapy, nanobots, tricorders, artificial intelligence, microbiology, and jobs of the future. Kaku's views are built on top of interviews with more than 300 top scientists. Even though the book is full of crazy predictions, it hasn't become dated in any way, as is the problem with most books about the future. Sure, it's still new. But Kaku is careful ground all of his predictions as logical extensions of the technologies we have today and the researchers that are looking at the future. I listen to this book on my iPhone while jogging and I inevitably come back inspired to write some kind of story when I return.

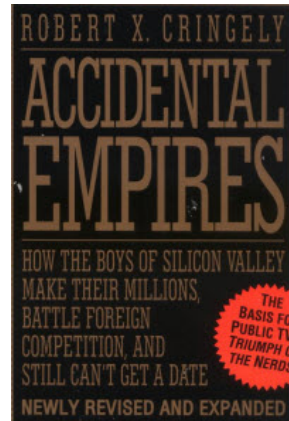


13. **World War 3.0:** Microsoft and its Enemies by Ken Auletta (2001). This book chronicles the great struggle between the government's antitrust regulators and Microsoft over reining in the company's monopolistic practices. Microsoft founder Bill Gates, government attorney David Boies and Judge Richard Posner come into sharp focus in this epic story. Auletta's ability to gain access to the top titans of business and be a fly on the wall during their key moments is unmatched. The tale showed what happened when a hodge-podge of individuals stood up against the most powerful company in the tech industry and turned the tables on it. A moment that will make you squirm is when Craig Barrett, then the CEO of Intel, bore down hard on his loose-cannon technologist Steven

McGeedy, not to testify against Microsoft and Gates. McGeedy stood his ground and testified.



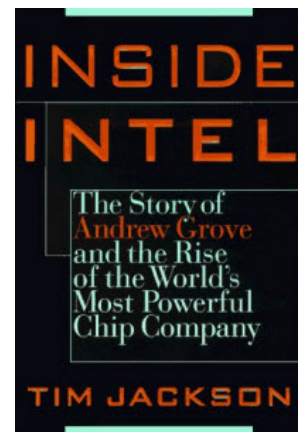
14. **Only the Paranoid Survive:** How to Exploit the Crisis Points That Challenge Every Company by Andrew S. Grove (1996). Under the leadership of Andy Grove, Intel became the world's largest chip maker with a virtual monopoly on PC microprocessors, the biggest chip business of them all in terms of dollars generated. Grove was ruthlessly efficient at managing his company through tough decisions. He tells the story of how the Japanese were attacking the memory chip business that Intel invented. Intel could no longer make money because the Japanese had dumped chips — sold them for below production costs — and improved their quality. So Grove and Intel co-founder Gordon Moore decided to do the unthinkable: exit the memory business. Instead, they chose to focus on microprocessors, and the rest is history. The book chronicles what Intel went through in 1994 when a mathematician discovered a small math bug in the company's Pentium processor. The resulting \$475 million write-off was one of the biggest of all time, but Intel rolled with the punches and survived its crisis, in no small part due to its paranoia. Grove's approach to seeing the market change and getting ahead of it — what hockey star Wayne Gretzky called "skating to where the puck will be" — is a parable that any leader can adopt.



15. **Accidental Empires:** How the Boys of Silicon Make Their Millions, Battle Foreign Competition, and Still can't Get a Date by Robert X. Cringely (1996). This irreverent book describes the rise of the tech industry personalities like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Mitch Kapor and their hacker roots. As the gossip columnist for Infoworld, Cringely was relatively early in drawing the connection between creativity and lunacy among the geeks of Silicon Valley. The book is a reminder that business empires are often built by accident, but they are only maintained by those who have truly brilliant insights. Does anyone remember Gary Kildall, the creator of the CP/M operating system? Kildall happened to be out flying when IBM approached him to license his software for the original IBM PC. So instead, IBM turned to Gates at Microsoft. The book tells these tales with a sense of humor and it looks at today's big business lords in the days when they were nothing more than nerds.

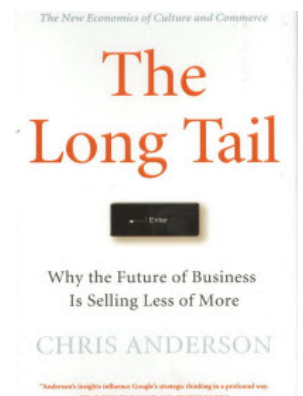
Rise of the World's Most Powerful Chip Company by Tim Jackson (1997). Tech business books were a rarity when Jackson swooped in from England and gave Silicon Valley a once over. He chose to focus on Intel in the waning years of Grove's reign at the world's biggest chip maker. Since Grove chose not to cooperate in the book, it is skewed toward stories about him that are related by other people, including a number who hated or feared him. The good thing about the book is that it spurred Grove and others to write tales from their own point of view. It's an unvarnished book that shows the consequences of aggressive marketing and tough business tactics.

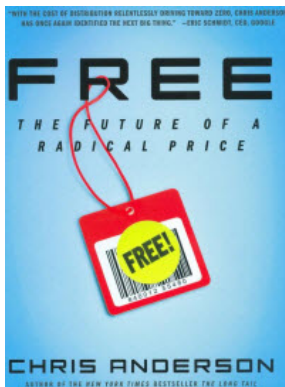
16. **Inside Intel:** Andy Grove and the



17. **The Facebook Effect:** The Inside Story of the Company That is Connecting the World by David Kirkpatrick (2010). This tale chronicles the founding of Facebook by Mark Zuckerberg and the enormous consequences that resulted from seemingly small decisions. Those decisions moved Facebook from a dorm room to a sprawling empire with nearly a billion users. The story is probably a lot closer to the truth than Ben Mezrich's *The Accidental Billionaires*, a fictionalized account of the Facebook story that became the basis of the Oscar-nominated film *The Social Network*. Kirkpatrick had the full cooperation of Facebook's executives and its investors. Kirkpatrick captures the flavor of excitement that was buzzing throughout Silicon Valley during the rise of social networking. He notes how executives came and went while Zuckerberg survived. Owen Van Natta, for instance, negotiated a deal to sell Facebook to Yahoo for \$1 billion, only to have the deal vetoed by the cherubic-faced Zuckerberg.

18. **The Long Tail:** Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More by Chris Anderson (2006). You can credit Chris Anderson with coming up with a way to succinctly describe the phenomenon of how the infinite shelf space of the internet and the efficiency of search engines enables obscure products to go on selling in small quantities forever. While blockbuster products get all the attention, the statistical reality is that a larger share of sales for any product category is in the "long tail" of a distribution graph, which means that companies can make a huge profit by selling a catalog of products rather than just popular items. It is easy to use the internet to find these obscure products and purchase them, as Amazon.com has so deftly demonstrated. The result for consumers is a new universe of choices and better competition. Businesses that figure out how to give consumers access to the long tail of products will prosper. It's one story of economics that will hold you spellbound.

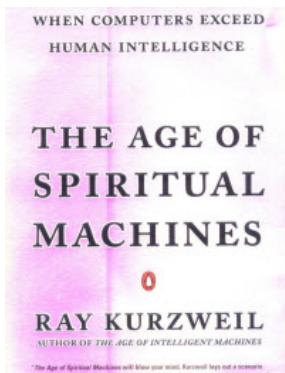
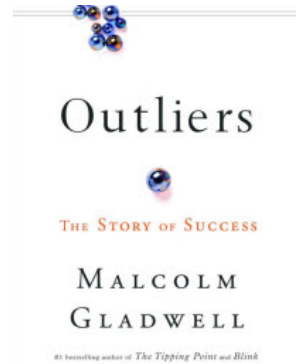




19. **Free:** The Future of A Radical Price by Chris Anderson (2009). Freemium has become the battle cry of a whole generation of app and game publishers who are disrupting the purveyors of ordinary software or console games. Anderson followed up on his *The Long Tail* by following up on its impact and how businesses can profit more by giving things away than they can by charging for them. Free, or freemium, is a business strategy that has come into its own in the age of the internet, when competition has been flattered and prices have cratered like never before. You have to be a student of Ray Kurzweil (see below) to see the impact of exponential technologies. A transistor that cost \$10 in 1961 now is part of an Intel chip with two billion transistors that sell for \$300 (making the price per transistor virtually free, or 0.000015 cents). Companies have recognized the power of freemium business models because monumental. They include Google, Facebook, Zynga, Twitter, and a host of other internet firms. The book's appendix has a bunch of different variations on giving something away for free and charging for something else.

Gladwell studied a bunch of successful people and found what tied them together. He concluded that we pay too much attention to what successful people like Bill Gates are like, and too little attention to where they are from. Important factors include their culture, their family, their generation, their experiences and their training. Gladwell observes that the common link between Gates and Bill Joy, the co-founder of Sun Microsystems, is that they got more than 10,000 hours of training writing code before they undertook their most ambitious creations. Nobody ever makes it big simply by being a genius. It takes a village to raise somebody brilliant. And this book makes you ask the question. Have you got your 10,000 hours of training in?

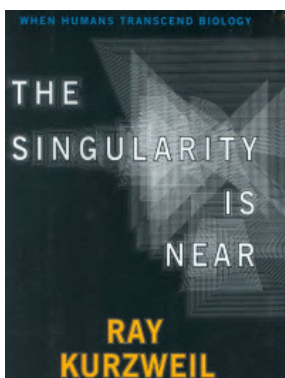
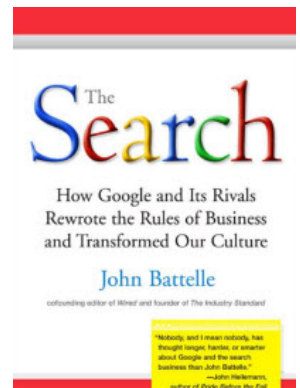
20. **Outliers:** the Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell (2008). With books such as *The Tipping Point* and *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell has shown that he can draw connections that no one else can see. In *Outliers*,



21. **The Age of Spiritual Machines:** When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence by Ray Kurzweil (1999). Just how far away are we from the moment when computers outpace the human brain in computational power? Ray Kurzweil is the expert on calculating the exponential growth of technologies and he figures we'll hit the crossover point around 2020. The artificial intelligence expert shows just how fast technology is moving. He predicts that we'll deal with automated personalities who are teachers, companions, and lovers. He also wants computers to feed data directly into our brains.

into the market long after the likes of Yahoo, Alta Vista, Excite, Lycos and others. Battelle interviewed more than 350 people to get the real story. He does a decent job describing the "database of intentions," the repository of human curiosity, desires, and exploration — and how Google is assembling that. The database of intentions may yet to have its biggest impact on the tech world.

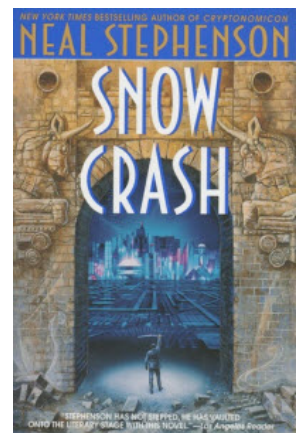
22. **The Search:** How Google and Its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business and Transformed Our Culture by John Battelle (2005). Everybody knows that Google has become one of the most important tech companies in the world as the search giant. But how did it get there? What was unique about its founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin? Battelle describes how Google rose to become the key player in search, even though it jumped

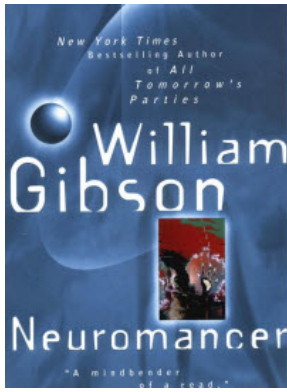


23. **The Singularity is Near** by Ray Kurzweil (2005). This book updates *The Age of Spiritual Machines* (and its predecessor the *Age of Intelligent Machines*) to give us a glimpse of what it will be like after the technological singularity, a term coined by sci-fi author Vernor Vinge whereby a super intelligence will arise that exceeds what humans can do in terms of thinking. He argues that we're approaching the singularity at an accelerated rate thanks to advances in technologies like chips and the internet. Kurzweil tries to portray what life will be like after this event. Among his predictions: human aging and pollution will be reversed, and world hunger will be soled. Lately, **Kurzweil has been trying to teach entrepreneurs** how to take advantage of exponential technologies through his efforts with Singularity University, a school for entrepreneurs he co-founded with Peter Diamandis.

list because it was prescient in its vision for what cyberspace could become. It has held up even though it was first published back in 1992. Mike Abrash, a researcher at game publisher Valve, blamed *Snow Crash* for inspiring him to do research on wearable computers and technologies that could deliver the "Metaverse" in real life. The title of the book comes from the effect that results when a computer crashes and then spits out a bunch of snow, or gibberish, on the screen. The sci-fi book tells the tale of Hiro Protagonist, a computer hacker who travels through a 3D virtual world and has to deal with a computer virus that is zapping the minds of hackers. At its funniest, the book is a parody of cyberpunk culture. The book appears on Time magazine's list of 100 all-time best English-language novels written since 1923.

24. **Snow Crash** by Neal Stephenson (1992). Yes, this is a novel. But, as game designer Will Wright has said, a dog-eared copy of *Snow Crash* is the business plan for untold numbers of Silicon Valley startups. It is on this





25. **Neuromancer** by William Gibson (1984). Gibson is the poster child of the cyberpunk movement that glorified hackers and made them into cool anti-heroes. It is another work of fiction, which no doubt provided inspiration for authors such as Neal Stephenson as well as hackers who appreciated the slang such as “flatlining” or “the matrix.” Gibson envisioned the virtual reality world dubbed “cyberspace,” giving technologists a word that they could aspire to when building out their homesteads on the internet. It is a Blade Runner-esque world ruled by corporations and crime syndicates. The book tells you what happens when you hit the “event horizon,” or the borders of the virtual world as created by the programmers. And it illustrates the pain of the cruelest punishment of all: what happens when you banned from “jacking in” to cyberspace.

If you think we've missed any of your favorites, please say so in the comments and explain your view. You can also take our poll to vote on your favorite.

What is the best tech book of all time?

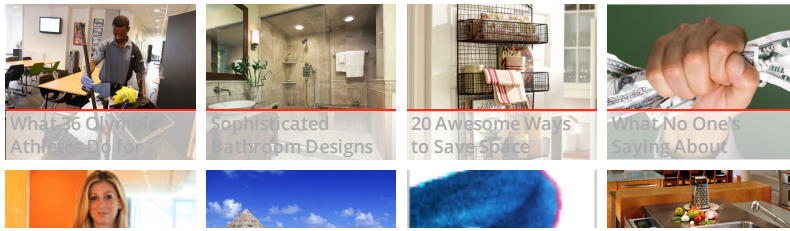
- Steve Jobs
- The Innovator's Dilemma
- The Soul of a New Machine
- Andy Grove
- The New New Thing
- The World is Flat
- The Chip
- Hackers
- Microcosm
- Telecosm
- The Wisdom of Crowds
- The Physics of the Future
- World War 3.0
- Only the Paranoid Survive
- Accidental Empires
- Inside Intel
- The Facebook Effect
- The Long Tail
- Free
- Outliers
- The Age of Spiritual Machines
- The Search
- The Singularity is Near
- Snow Crash
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COMPANIES: [Apple](#), [Facebook](#), [Google](#), [Intel](#), [Microsoft](#)

PEOPLE: [Andrew S. Grove](#), [Bob Noyce](#), [Chris Anderson](#), [Clayton Christensen](#), [David Kirkpatrick](#), [George Gilder](#), [Jack Kilby](#), [James Surowiecki](#), [John Battelle](#), [Ken Auletta](#), [Malcolm Gladwell](#), [Michael Lewis](#), [Michio Kaku](#), [Neal Stephenson](#), [Ray Kurzweil](#), [Richard S. Tedlow](#), [Richard Stallman](#), [Robert X. Cringely](#), [Steve Jobs](#), [Steve Wozniak](#), [Steven Levy](#), [T.R. Reid](#), [Thomas Friedman](#), [Tim Jackson](#), [Tracy Kidder](#), [Walter Isaacson](#), [William Gibson](#)

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Gabriel Magaña Gonzalez • 5 months ago

I stopped reading at Jobs' biography. Honestly. This is f*cking pathetic. If you are going to have a biography in a "tech" books (of all time, no less) then do a bio of a true pioneer. Knuth, Kerningham, Ritchie, whatever. But Jobs? This just is insulting.

Put Jobs' biography in a list of product management books of all time. Or of marketing. He rightfully belongs there at the top on those lists.

9 ▲ | 1 ▾ | · Reply · Share >

deantak MOD • 5 months ago • parent

No need for profanity, Gabriel. We are both entitle to our opinions.

0 ▲ | ▾ | · Reply · Share >

Sam Beal • 5 months ago

funny how lists of "all time" are biased to the recent past.

Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica by Issac Newton didn't make the cut.

6 ▲ | ▾ | · Reply · Share >



Gabriel Magaña Gonzalez · 5 months ago · parent

Lol, title should have been "Top 25 tech books (that I've read)"

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



deantak MOD · 5 months ago · parent

heh, i'm afraid i have read more than 25 tech books, gabriel.

0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



deantak MOD · 5 months ago · parent

well, can't say i've read that one. can't say i've heard many tech pioneers who were inspired by that one, either. in that respect, you can see why snow crash is on the list and that one isn't. but this isn't a list of science books, where i believe that would fit.

0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Sam Beal · 5 months ago · parent

It was tongue in cheek. The list is skewed to today's tech stars. Since technology and it's impact on the world, is advancing exponentially, a modern skew is natural. I would replace "Inside Intel" (Grove covers in Paranoid) with "Marketing High Technology by Bill Davidow.

0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Deb Ng · 5 months ago

Can a biography really be considered a technology book?

5 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



deantak MOD · 5 months ago · parent

when it's about a tech pioneer and that person's interaction with the rest of the tech industry, yes.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Eliyahu Peter Kornfeld · 5 months ago · parent

It seems a list of books about tech ideas an the effect it has on us. Also, the books are from OUR time and not all time.

Good list. Bad title...

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Igor Yeykelis · 5 months ago

But what about the books that people in the profession actually use? Where is a Gang of Four book (Design Patterns: Elements of Reusable Object-Oriented Software)?

Best regards,

Igor

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Tom Murphy · 5 months ago

None of those books should be on the list. Here is a list of the most import technology books as written by a technologist (instead of a writer)

* Advanced Programming in the UNIX Environment - by W. Richard Stevens, Stephen A. Rago

* The C Programming Language - By Brian W. Kernighan, Dennis M. Ritchie

* The Art of Computer Programming - By Donald E. Knuth

* Internetworking with TCP/IP.: Client-server programming and applications By Douglas Comer, David L. Stevens

* TCP/IP Illustrated By W. Richard Stevens, Gary R. Wright

* Linux Systems Programming - by Robert Love

* The Java Language Specification - by James Gosling

* Programming in Perl - by Larry Wall, Tom Christiansen, Jon Orwant

(I'll leave room for other technologists to add some as well)

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >




Mike Pope · 4 months ago · parent


So, technologist == programmer? Or can other technologies play, too?


1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >





Shane Day · 5 months ago


 Where's The Z-80 Reference Manual? Now_THAT_ was a technology book!
2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >


 **Kyle Granger** · 4 months ago · parent
Great book, I remember it well!
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >


 **Jason Smart** · 5 months ago
I was expecting a list of books with technological knowledge like Knuth or GoF or some of the works on cryptography. I found Isaacson dry and repetitive and I kept getting the feeling I'm not getting a very personal or insightful view of Jobs at all. The repetitive focus on the reality distortion field is what we've all heard before.
2 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share >


 **warex3D** · 5 months ago
hahhahaah no way.
1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

 **jimnorcal** · 4 months ago
I actually liked Crypto by Steven Levy. I think its better than his Hackers book.
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >


 **Andrew MacNeill** · 4 months ago
True about "all time" - couldn't one argue that Da Vinci's notebooks have had a huge impact on the world?
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >


 **Nicholas M. Cummings** · 5 months ago
Steven Johnson - Where Good Ideas Come From: A Natural History of Innovation
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >


 **Dan Sutton** · 5 months ago
Thanks for putting Neuromancer and Snow Crash in there. Actually, I'd probably rate "The Diamond Age" over either... but it's a tough call -- they're all magnificently relevant, as is (Gibson's) "Virtual Light".
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >


 **Malusi Gcakasi** · 5 months ago
Thanks for the great post @Dean Takahashi , appreciate the great work you're putting in:) I have to admit though, I was expecting something else from the headline:)when I saw "Tech books" I was expecting something like Steve McConnells "Code Complete" or "The Mythical Man Month" or even "The C programming language."


Old books to be sure, but since we were talking about "All time" I thought those would make it on. Thanks for the suggestions though:) I think I'll give them a read, your list looks really interesting. Thanks for putting in the time to make the list:)
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

 **Ingenjören** · 5 months ago
"6. The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century by Thomas Friedman (2005). "
Is this some kind of sick joke?
1 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share >

 **Gonzalo Brusella** · 5 months ago
You missed "The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood" by James Gleick
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

 **Jonathon J. Howey** · 5 months ago
Dean, the Amazon link to Facebook Effect points to the wrong book.
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

 **Adrian McMenamin** · 5 months ago
Levy's book did not coin the term "hacker", as anybody who had actually read it would understand.
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

 **Nicholas M. Cummings** · 5 months ago · parent
It did, however, herald the "hacker" into the mainstream
0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

 **Dave Mackey** · 5 months ago



Awesome list. I've added a bunch to my to-read list on Goodreads. :)

0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



deantak MOD · 5 months ago · parent
thanks dave.

0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Berick · 5 months ago

A list of books about "technology" for those who will believe a Reader's Digest, excitable-business-magazine, overview, complete with total BS (gilder) and fantasy (Kurzweil). Sad.

1 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share >



deantak MOD · 5 months ago · parent

don't think gilder is b.s. after all, the guy that he quoted as saying the internet would "hollow out" the pc was: eric schmidt.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



abelani · 5 months ago

I think your counting is off... By 20.

0 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Sean Ludwig · 5 months ago · parent

Go to the next page.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



abelani · 5 months ago · parent

Hehe I did when I got to a pc, but there's no link on mobile page.

5 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Michael Shelton · 5 months ago

The title is misleading. I agree that most of the books are great reads, but they are not "The Top 25 Technology Books of All Time". Perhaps if you add the words "For Today's Business Majors", then it'd be more accurate.

0 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share >



Mike Pope · 4 months ago

I note that people who are complaining that these aren't "technology books" then list a bunch of books that are exclusively about programming, as if that's the only technology that matters.

Anyway, it's an interesting list -- thanks for posting. Of course, everyone will have their own favorites. Books I've enjoyed about the history of technology include these:

The Soul of a New Machine - Tracy Kidder

Up the Infinite Corridor: MIT and the Technical Imagination - Fred Hapgood

Copies in Seconds - David Owen

Fumbling the Future: How Xerox Invented, then Ignored, the First Personal Computer - Douglas Smith

The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-line Pioneers - Tom Standage

Edison and the Electric Chair: A Story of Light and Death - Mark Essig

747: Creating the World's First Jumbo Jet and Other Adventures from a Life in Aviation - Joe Sutter/Jay Spenser

Genius: The Life and Science of Richard Feynman - James Gleick

To Engineer Is Human: The Role of Failure in Successful Design - Henry Petroski

The Evolution of Useful Things: How Everyday Artifacts--From

Forks and Pins to Paper Clips and Zippers--Came to Be As They Are - Henry Petroski again

0 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share >



3