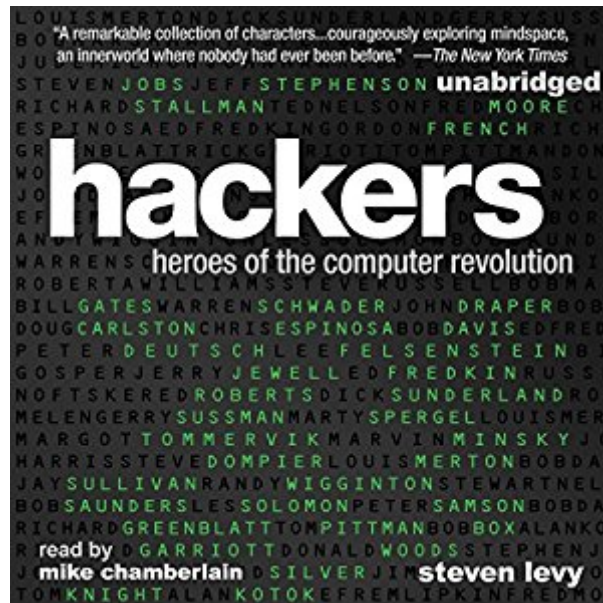


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Hackers: Heroes Of The Computer Revolution: 25th Anniversary Edition



Synopsis

Steven Levy's classic book traces the exploits of the computer revolution's original hackers - those brilliant and eccentric nerds from the late 1950s through the early '80s who took risks, bent the rules, and pushed the world in a radical new direction. With updated material from noteworthy hackers such as Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Richard Stallman, and Steve Wozniak, *Hackers* is a fascinating story that begins in early computer research labs and leads to the first home computers. Levy profiles the imaginative brainiacs who found clever and unorthodox solutions to computer engineering problems. They had a shared sense of values, known as "the hacker ethic" that still thrives today. *Hackers* captures a seminal period in recent history when underground activities blazed a trail for today's digital world, from MIT students finagling access to clunky computer-card machines to the DIY culture that spawned the Altair and the Apple II.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book is funny, informative and impossible to put down! Having grown up through the infancy of personal computers, including nearly a one-year stint as a TRS-80 salesman, I laughed often out loud as I followed the adventures of Greenblatt, Gosper and dozens of others in Levy's tales. No other book I have read gives the genealogy of both hardware and software in their embryonic periods so well as this tome. "Hackers" now has a much friendlier connotation for me than it once did now that I appreciate the openness and positive nature of the Hacker Ethic. The news media have made the hackers out as scum/criminals/bandits/general bad guys - Levy casts them in a

much different light. The book is great for its humor and history in the 96th percentile of each category! Buy it and be prepared to laugh and learn!

This is a fascinating examination of the tech culture that brought us the PC, Web, and eventually the smart phone. Took some time to slog through, but this tome is filled with engaging stories of the hackers who made our tech-world happen. I will be returning to this many times to mine the stories of innovation and creativity.

Hackers by Steven Levy is an excellent and rich book detailing the timeline of computer hackers and the hacker ethic. The book starts with the various exploits of MIT hackers and the model railroad club in the early 1950s working IBM computers such as the 704, and the infamous TX-0. The book travels all the way to the 1980s and the Sierra On-Line game company and the death of the open source hacker ethic. The book does an excellent job of personalizing the signature characters of the computer revolution proving the point that excellent hackers aren't necessarily the people who graduated with straight A's from MIT, Harvard, or Stanford. The book seems personal but also extremely informative while inspiring the same creativity that drew the hackers of the 20th century to computers. Hackers also does an excellent job of promoting and almost idealizing the infamous Hacker Ethic developed initially in the 1950s by the first computer hackers. The ethic consists of a focus on open source technology, cooperation, and an intense disapproval of the corporatization of computer software. Overall, Hackers is an excellent book if you enjoy computing history and getting into the nitty gritty of how many of the world's most popular software innovations came to be.

I have a large collection of books regarding the "computer revolution" and was afraid that this will be overlapping with certain stories. I was wrong. While it slightly touches those anticipated overlapped stories, it mainly deals with the "underdogs" of the revolution, slightly mentioning successful business entrepreneurs such as Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and John Carmack. It overly deals with the true meaning of hackers and their ethic, as their embrace of their philosophy made today's technology as it is. Almost 500 pages long with no pictures, it is written in a style that makes you a part of the past, as you were one of the "hackers" per se. Anyone who owns a computer should read this book to understand the word the media has slung into an incorrect meaning and to find more appreciation for their workstation besides browsing Facebook!

In watching, The New Screen Savers, a video broadcast by the TWIT Leo LaPorte network, I heard that multiple on-line personalities had not just one copy but multiple copies of this book (new editions with added appendices updated where the 'heroes' are today in their careers and life). Although I believe it is now in its 25 year of publication, it was a great read. It is as much a philosophy of a 'way of life' and how the nerds of the world have had a tremendous impact on technology and how their 'hacking philosophy has in most cases led to an ethical and rewarding life (even if they choose to not sell their software). I well probably buy additional copies to share with one of my sons who is a mechanical and civil engineer and a nerd. It will be on optimistic read for him! By the way, I am a retire school band teacher, h.s. principal, and superintendent. I enjoyed it both as a nerd and as a former public organization CEO. Highly recommend. Levy did a great job researching and writing as well as updating recent editions! Thanks Steven!

The only thing that is missing in this wonderful book is the UNIX era, which constitutes a story by itself. I was really disappointed to see that UNIX is mentioned in only one or two pages (and nothing is mentioned about UNIX and C hackers). Other than that, I think it paints a very vivid and humane picture of a very special period of the history of computing. I would also recommend it to people who are not technical so that they can understand the mindset and psychology of hackers better. The distinction between the styles of serious business computing and passionate, obsessive, creative and innovative hacking pushing the boundaries is also made very clear in the book. That distinction still exists today, even though the flagship of modern hacking GNU/Linux is becoming more and more of a business commodity rather than a risky playground for trying out really groundbreaking ideas. I also recommend the book to programmers, hackers and technical managers so that they know more about the past of their field. The roads taken and the roads not takes. I must admit that I learned much more about the history of Homebrew Computer Club and game hacking from this book, wish it contained more stories about Commodore, ZX Spectrum and Amiga. So grab some Chinese food, set up your hacking environment, put this book on your desk and give it a go! :)

Having lived in the times vacuum tube digital processors, and building computer by soldering components onto boards, I lived much the same stuff talking about in this book. I built an Altais and an Apha Micro AM-100, which in like a PDP-11 Computer system. I spent about \$35k, on the complete system. That in the time before I got married.

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