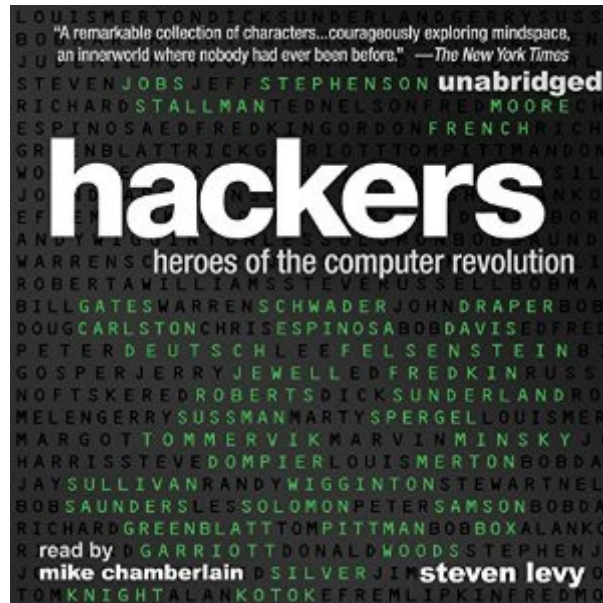# Hackers: Heroes Of The Computer Revolution: 25th Anniversary Edition

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

This book is a history of the beginning, growth and rise of the use of computers by people outside of the big businesses and governments that worked to create them in proprietary silos. This 25th anniversary edition of Steven Levy's classic book retains its detailed and interesting chronicle of the events that brought computing power to the masses. It also records some of the problems, pitfalls, and failures along the way. Here you will find many names that computer lovers are sure to recognize from Bill Gates to Richard Stallman as well as many that are not as well known, but that deserve to have their victories recorded also.I greatly appreciate that this book exists. To be honest,

it wasn't always a fun read. That isn't a commentary on the quality of the writing, but rather on the ups and downs of the narrative. There were times when I found myself wishing I was there in the middle of the action and other times when I had difficulty knowing who to root for. There were still other moments when I found myself cringing as I read about events long past, wishing that different decisions had been made or disappointed at the actions and attitudes of geniuses.I'm not going to spoil the book for anyone interested by giving out specific details. All I'll say here is that the story begins with a bunch of model railroaders who love technology and who fall in love with a computer they discover they may access freely in an out of the way room in a building at MIT in the late 1950s. They took their love of piecing together technological gadgets in imaginative and creative ways (hacks) and applied it to this new tool / toy. The story follows their exploits and adventures through the 1960s en route to a second wave of hackers in Northern California in the 1970s who take the love home, creating machines on a smaller budget that could be used by ordinary people. Hot on their heels were another group of Californians who led a third wave, hacking software to do things never before dreamed of and leading the way to the commercialization of the computer. The book ends with a series of afterwards, one written when the book was first published in 1983, another written 10 years later, and another just added to this newly published edition. Each adds details and commentary to the history that were not known at the time of the original interviews and research.If the history of hacking, free and open source software and the attitudes embodied in the current movement interest you, you will appreciate this book greatly.

I am a senior engineer for network security operations, who when nine years old in 1980 started computing on a Timex-Sinclair ZX-80. I probably first heard the term "hacker" when "War Games" was released in 1983. I read Steven's book because it is an early but enlightening account (first published in 1984) of the Hacker Ethic.Consider: in a closed, self-policed environment, like the computer labs of the 1960s and early 1970s, freely sharing information makes sense. In an open, under-policed environment, like the modern Internet, deviants abuse the Hacker Ethic. Well-intentioned "white hats" may explore the phone system purely to understand its operation, but evil-minded "black hats" abuse the same knowledge to make free long distance calls. Does this mean information should be confined? No -- full disclosure is still the best way to counter black hat activity.Steven lays the groundwork for these thoughts, and serves up gems from hacker history. His 1970s quote from Popular Electronics editor Les Solomon is the earliest reference I know linking hacking to kung fu: "The computer is...an art form. It's the ultimate martial art." Steven also shares tales of Sierra On-Line, Apple Corp., Homebrew Computer Club, the Altair, and even Bill Gates'

1975 rant against software piracy."Hackers" will make you appreciate your unlimited access to the machine on which you're reading this review. Hackers of the 1960s and 1970s would have given their first born child to possess the power and availability of modern PCs; now we take PCs for granted, like indoor plumbing or refrigeration!Those who lived the early days of PCs will enjoy Steven's trip down memory lane. Those who are younger will discover the true meaning of the word "hacker" -- one who promotes access, freedom, decentralization, meritocracy, art, and joy through computers.

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