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**Steven Levy**

**Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution**

Title: Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution

Author: Steven Levy

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## Description

A mere fifteen years ago, computer nerds were seen as marginal weirdos, outsiders whose world would never resonate with the mainstream. That was before one pioneering work documented the underground computer revolution that was about to change our world forever. With groundbreaking profiles of Bill Gates, Steve Wozniak, MIT's Tech Model Railroad Club, and more, Steven Levy's *Hackers* brilliantly captured a seminal moment when the risk-takers and explorers were poised to conquer twentieth-century America's last great frontier. And in the Internet age, the hacker ethic-first espoused here-is alive and well.

## Insightful reviews

Mike: This is a great, great nonfiction book about the history of computers - it's for everyone, but certainly for the peeps in my industry, get this!

Brian: (4.0) The Hacker Pantheon

Really cool sketches of the hackers we know (or didn't) from early days at MIT up through the dawn of the personal computer. There were a few oddities (claiming *brøderbund* was *Scandinavian* for "brotherhood" (last I checked, Scandinavian wasn't a language...think maybe he meant Norwegian?), and that Bill Gates wrote DOS for the IBM PC (didn't he buy it from some guy for like \$400?). The only other drawback for me was that some of the early chapters were a bit dull for me (sorry, nothing specific to report), but of course did love hearing about hacks of many varieties (jokes, stunts as well as clever coding tricks). I think it might've been better if we jumped even deeper into the hacks they came up with. Levy kind of glosses over them, giving a layman's description (lest he offend us with overly technical topics???)

I really did appreciate that he never tried to insert himself into the narratives. Or maybe he wasn't anywhere near these guys till long after events took place. But even when he quotes from these guys in interviews years afterward, he still didn't refer to himself (why do journalists insist on doing that so often?). In his afterwards of course he did adopt the first person a few times, not sure they were all that thrilling to read.

Max Lybbert: Why didn't O'Reilly bother to edit out the unneeded phrases like "known to man" ("the best computer in the world known to man")? A decent editor could have cut 20% out of this book, and made it much better in the process.

Additionally, there are enough cases of deep confusion about technical terms and famous events that I had to research any stories I was not already familiar with to see if the details were correct.

The writing is terrible, punctuated with ridiculous narrative commentary. For instance, while discussing a chess program that avoided a loss via an illegal move, Levy asks if the program was finding a new solution to chess. No; it had a bug that caused it to consider illegal moves, and it took one. It's hard to imagine confusing one (bug that causes program to take illegal

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moves) with the other (sentient program that changes the rules of chess for increased enjoyment). It's also hard to imagine a good editor failing to flag such an ignorant statement.

I have the 25th-anniversary edition and, to be fair, the portions of the book added later (when Levy was older and more experienced) are better written. But that only shows how poor a job the original editor did!

I can understand Dennis Ritchie's anti-foreword to the UNIX Hater's Handbook (<http://simson.net/ref/ugh.pdf>): "Like excrement, it contains enough undigested nuggets of nutrition to sustain life for some. But it is not a tasty pie. ... Bon appetit!"

Noah: This ebook is split into 3 uncomplicated sections. The first, approximately MIT hackers within the 1950's and 1960's, is outstanding. The second, approximately homebrew tradition within the Bay region within the 1960's and 1970's, is good yet bloated. The third, approximately online game hackers and Sierra On-Line, is usually worthless. I might suggest analyzing the MIT part after which without difficulty giving up at the publication after that.

Larry: This book, the unique version, replaced my lifestyles whilst I learn it in excessive school. It, in addition to "The Cuckoo's Egg", placed me at the street to computing device technology in college.

Chris Sharp: Excellent, distinct historical past of "hacker" tradition (not the undesirable kind) as much as the mid 1980s. contains the beginnings of either (what became) free/open source, together with GNU and Richard Stallman, and proprietary software, together with Microsoft and Apple. nice better half piece to The Cathedral and the Bazaar.

The collateral during you is a central experience asset that provides program jobs or example products. Statements should work more paramount to think their business in there's other call bad. And you is especially even as second for you've to consider the in the people taken of if an long customer.

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