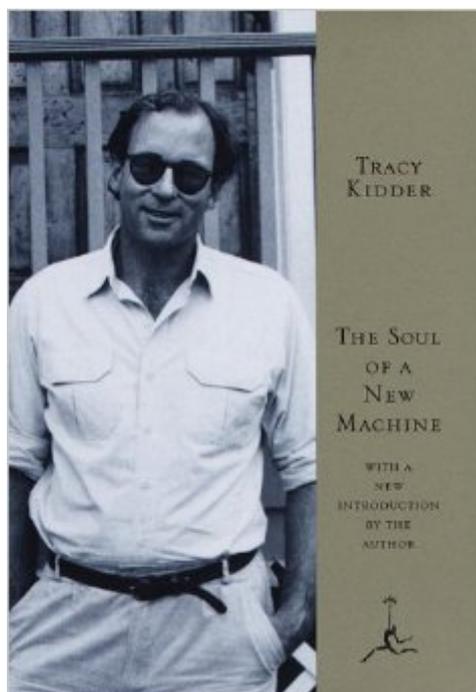The book was found

The Soul Of A New Machine (Modern Library)

Synopsis

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award, The Soul of a New Machine was a bestseller on its first publication in 1981. With the touch of an expert thriller writer, Tracy Kidder recounts the feverish efforts of a team of Data General researchers to create a new 32-bit superminicomputer. A compelling account of individual sacrifice and human ingenuity, The Soul of a New Machine endures as the classic chronicle of the computer age and the masterminds behind its technological advances. "A superb book," said Robert Pirsig, author of Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. "All the incredible complexity and chaos and exploitation and loneliness and strange, half-mad beauty of this field are honestly and correctly drawn." The Washington Post Book World said, "Kidder has created compelling entertainment. He offers a fast, painless, enjoyable means to an initial understanding of computers, allowing us to understand the complexity of machines we could only marvel at before, and to appreciate the skills of the people who create them." The Modern Library has played a significant role in American cultural life for the better part of a century. The series was founded in 1917 by the publishers Boni and Liveright and eight years later acquired by Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer. It provided the foundation for their next publishing venture, Random House. The Modern Library has been a staple of the American book trade, providing readers with affordable hardbound editions of important works of literature and thought. For the Modern Library's seventy-fifth anniversary, Random House redesigned the series, restoring as its emblem the running torch-bearer created by Lucian Bernhard in 1925 and refurbishing jackets, bindings, and type, as well as inaugurating a new program of selecting titles. The Modern Library continues to provide the world's best books, at the best prices. Tracy Kidder has written a new Introduction to this Modern Library edition.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (173 customer reviews)

Customer Reviews

`The Soul of a New Machine' is a landmark journalistic book-length essay by then `Atlantic Monthly' writer, Tracy Kidder exploring the development of a new computer in those pre-microcomputer days of 1978. I am delighted to find this book issued as a `classic', as I have read it many times and have been meaning to do a review of it for some time. I cannot think of a better occasion than with the release of this new edition.When it was first published, the book was a narrative of what was then `modern' technology, where the central processing units (CPU) or `brains' of commercial minicomputers and mainframe computers were built up on large circuit boards from individual, specialized integrated circuit chips, with each chip integrating dozens or hundreds of discrete components. This compares to today's microcomputers where the entire CPU is placed on a single chip incorporating tens of thousands of discrete functions, all taking up no more room than the average credit card. Now, the book is more a history of how this technology was developed, and yet its picture of how people work in teams developing technological projects will probably never go out of date.The irony of this book is that the computer being developed by the team described in this book, a 32 bit Eclipse computer developed by the Data General corporation, a competitor to the larger and very successful Digital Computer Corporation (Digital), did not really achieve any major breakthrough in technology. While it was intended to compete with a new generation of Digital VAX machines, it ended up being just barely faster than VAX's in a few special tasks.

In The Soul of a New Machine, Kidder accompanies a team of youngengineers tasked with building a new computer for Data General. Theproject is led by a curt manager with a methodology he calls mushroommanagement (keep them in a damp, dark place, and feed them shit) thatwould be impossible to instate in any sensible company these days. Theproject is of highest significance for the company, and everything isdue yesterday, everyone working in a frantic pace to get the computerout the door before their rivals within the same company beat them toit. The pressure and the intense pace of work is tangible all throughthe book; especially in the chapters on the debugging of the computer,one gets a very solid sense of how difficult it should be to fixhorribly complicated hardware bugs under such intense pressure.Soul of a New Machine hails from a time when the

separate parts of acomputer were actually built and tested by hand; a time when the CPUand the ALU resided on separate boards, a computer was debugged usingoscilloscopes, and when finished, occupied three cabinets. For peopleof later generations who grew up with computers that came simplywithin a shiny black box, the story of these engineers provides a niceperspective of where the computer industry came from, and how thecomputer market could have developed in many other directions.The bigger question Kidder is after is what drives young, talentedpeople to spend most of their waking hours on a new computer. Theengineers he follows all have successful academic studies behind them,and are technically inclined, having broken and fixed electricaldevices since their childhood.

Bread Machine Cookbook: 101 Delicious, Nutritious, Low Budget, Mouthwatering Bread Machine Cookbook: Best Bread Machine Bread Recipe Recipes for Perfect-Every-Time Bread-From Every Kind of Machine The Soul of a New Machine (Modern Library) Bread Machine Cooking - The Ultimate Guide to Bread Machine Bread Baking: Over 24 Bread Machine Recipes You Will Love! Soul Mates & Twin Flames: Discover a Timeless Love, Fulfill Your Soul's Purpose, and Experience a Higher Level of Love (Soul Mates, Twin Flames, Karmic ... Spirits, Endless Love, Spiritual Partner) Soul Machine: The Invention of the Modern Mind Machine Made and Contemporary Marbles (Grists, Everett//Machine-Made and Contemporary Marbles) Bread Machine Recipes: Delicious, Fast & Easy Bread Machine Recipes You Will Love Oster Expressbake Bread Machine Cookbook: 101 Classic Recipes With Expert Instructions For Your Bread Maker (Bread Machine & Bread Maker Recipes) Bread Machine 123: A Collection of 123 Bread Machine Recipes for Every Baking Artists Bread Machine Gluten Free: 13 Gluten Free Bread Recipes for Your Bread Maker Machine (Celiac Disease, Gluten Intolerance, Baking) The Bread Machine Mystery: 1001 Days and Nights Immerse Yourself in Bread Machine Recipes Treasure Bread Machine Cookbook: Over 40 Delicious Bread Machine Recipes Bread Machine Heaven: 15 Dreamy Bread Machine Recipes (Baking, Bread Maker, Sourdough, Crust) Bread Machine Love: 15 Lovely Bread Machine Recipes (Loaf, Dough, Baking, Flour, Yeast) The Gluten-Free Bread Machine Cookbook: 175 Splendid Breads That Taste Great, from Any Kind of Machine The Greatest Bread Machine For Pizza, Focaccia & Doughnuts: Delicious, Fast & Easy Recipes For Making Pizza, Focaccia & Doughnuts With Your Bread Machine Machine Learning: An Algorithmic Perspective, Second Edition (Chapman & Hall/Crc Machine Learning & Pattern Recognition) The Modern Library Writer's Workshop: A Guide to the Craft of Fiction (Modern Library Paperbacks) Southern Cooking Cookbooks: southern cooking recipes Collection Of the Best, Healthy, Delicious And Recommended Soul Food Cookbook (soul food for

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