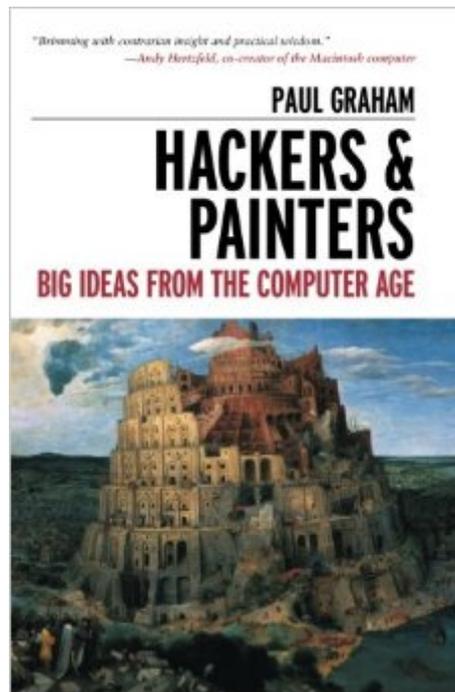# Hackers & Painters: Big Ideas From The Computer Age

Synopsis

"The computer world is like an intellectual Wild West, in which you can shoot anyone you wish with your ideas, if you're willing to risk the consequences. " --from Hackers & Painters: Big Ideas from the Computer Age, by Paul GrahamWe are living in the computer age, in a world increasingly designed and engineered by computer programmers and software designers, by people who call themselves hackers. Who are these people, what motivates them, and why should you care?Consider these facts: Everything around us is turning into computers. Your typewriter is gone, replaced by a computer. Your phone has turned into a computer. So has your camera. Soon your TV will. Your car was not only designed on computers, but has more processing power in it than a room-sized mainframe did in 1970. Letters, encyclopedias, newspapers, and even your local store are being replaced by the Internet.Hackers & Painters: Big Ideas from the Computer Age, by Paul Graham, explains this world and the motivations of the people who occupy it. In clear, thoughtful prose that draws on illuminating historical examples, Graham takes readers on an unflinching exploration into what he calls "an intellectual Wild West."The ideas discussed in this book will have a powerful and lasting impact on how we think, how we work, how we develop technology, and how we live. Topics include the importance of beauty in software design, how to make wealth, heresy and free speech, the programming language renaissance, the open-source movement, digital design, internet startups, and more.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: O'Reilly Media; 1 edition (June 7, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1449389554

ISBN-13: 978-1449389550

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (107 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #94,511 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #23 in Books > Textbooks > Computer Science > Algorithms   #28 in Books > Computers & Technology > Computer Science > Information Theory   #50 in Books > Computers & Technology > Programming > Algorithms

Customer Reviews

Paul Graham has delivered final proof that he is a marvelous essayist with his volume of fairly

diverse writings, Hackers & Painters. I first came across his writing with his article, "A Plan For Spam," on using Bayesian filtering to block spam and found it a well written and informative technical article. I next came across him some time later when he wrote an essay on his web site entitled "Hackers & Painters," and once again it was well written, informative and (more importantly for an essayist) thought provoking. I was excited to hear he had published a volume of writing and pleased with the copy I received.Literature has a long history of the essayist; since those famous theses on the church door at Wittenberg a well written and thought provoking essay on a topic has provided power and focus for important discussions. Graham has either learnt or discovered the important points in writing a good essay; brevity, quality writing and thought.In this volume Graham covers a range of topics, though all are, understandably, centered on computers. Why nerds are unpopular at school, and what this demonstrates about our eduction system; why program in Lisp; the importance of "startups", programming languages and web development are all touched on. At the same time he covers topics less techno-centric such as heretical thinking and speech. wealth creation and unequal income distribution.I found myself disagreeing with him often while reading the book, though every time I did I found his argument compelling. I agree with Andy Hertzfeld, quoted on the back cover of the book, "He may even make you want to start programming in Lisp." Graham is politically more conservative and right wing than me, he is also a fervent supporter of Lisp, while I'm a C and Perl advocate.

In "Hackers and Painters," Paul Graham presents 15 essays on topics that are variously related to computer programming. Graham has two major accomplishments to his name in the hacking world: He was one of the architects of Viaweb, an internet startup which ultimately became Yahoo Shops, and one of the first succesful hosted web applications. He was also one of the first to talk about applying Bayesian filtering to the spam problem; Bayesian filtering has arguably been the most successful technique for reducing spam in individual mailboxes.I'd advise prospective readers of this book to skip chapters 1, 3, 6 and 7, at least until after you've read the rest of the book. These four essays are the weakest in the book, and having them clustered near the beginning almost made me put the book down and stop reading.I'm glad I didn't stop, though. The chapters on software development are excellent; Graham provides some of the best insight I've seen into how programmers think. Programmers will find useful ideas that can be applied to their work; non-programmers may get an insight into how programmers think.The last seven chapters are particularly well done; in these, Graham discusses the nitty-gritty details of program design, choice of programming languages, and design of programming languages. Graham is occasionally

arrogant, but his arrogance here comes from experience and success; although not everyone may agree with his arguments about the superiority of LISP over every other programming language, one can at least recognize the thoroughness of the discussion and draw one's own conclusions.The four essays I mentioned above, by contrast, are much more poorly edited.

Hackers & Painters: Big Ideas from the Computer Age Hackers and Painters: Big Ideas from the Computer Age HACKING: Beginner's Crash Course - Essential Guide to Practical: Computer Hacking, Hacking for Beginners, & Penetration Testing (Computer Systems, Computer Programming, Computer Science Book 1) Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hackers, and the Quest for a New Utopia Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects, Volume 2 Tales from the Art Crypt: The painters, the museums, the curators, the collectors, the auctions, the art Formulas for Painters Surrealist Painters and Poets: An Anthology Dictionary Of British And Irish Botantists And Horticulturalists Including plant collectors, flower painters and garden designers The Ultimate Guide to WordPress Security: Secure and protect your WordPress website form hackers and protect your data, get up to date security updates Black Hat Python: Python Programming for Hackers and Pentesters Violent Python: A Cookbook for Hackers, Forensic Analysts, Penetration Testers and Security Engineers Bayesian Methods for Hackers: Probabilistic Programming and Bayesian Inference (Addison-Wesley Data & Analytics) Network Forensics: Tracking Hackers through Cyberspace Hackers vs. Security Pros: A Security Manager's Playbook (The CTO Playbook 1) Design for Hackers: Reverse Engineering Beauty Breakfast Ideas Value Pack II - 200 Recipes For Waffles, Omelets, Coffee Cake and Quick Bread (Breakfast Ideas - The Breakfast Recipes Cookbook Collection 10) The Unofficial Guide to Learning with Lego®: 100+ Inspiring Ideas (Lego Ideas) Wedding Decoration Ideas - Wedding Planning On A Budget, Cheap Wedding Decorating Ideas DIY Outdoor or Indoor Wedding Book Honeymoon Planning: Plan a Romantic Trip of a Lifetime: The Ultimate Honeymoon Planner Guide Book to Help Plan the Perfect Getaway: Dream Destination Ideas, Honeymoon Hotels, and Honeymoon Ideas