

We Just Build Hammers

Stories from the Past, Present, and Future of Responsible Tech

Philosopher Noam Chomsky is famously quoted as saying that technology is neither good nor bad, but simply a neutral tool. He likens it to a hammer, which can be used by carpenters and torturers alike. While the neutrality of tech is an idea that appeals to many technologists, this perspective is out of alignment with today's realities of pervasive ad-tech, surveillance capitalism, algorithmic manipulation, and rising techno-fascism.

We Just Build Hammers applies a lens of speculative and science fiction to connect you with a historical lineage of thinkers and activists in the responsible tech movement. Its narrative spans a century of major technological upheavals: from the advent of the atomic age to the formative years of computing; from the hacker visionaries of the turn of the century to the tech justice revolutionaries of today.

This book challenges technologists to consider for themselves whether they're really just "building hammers"—technologies whose potential for good balances their potential for harm— or if they are unwittingly contributing to systems that exacerbate inequality, inequity, and injustice.

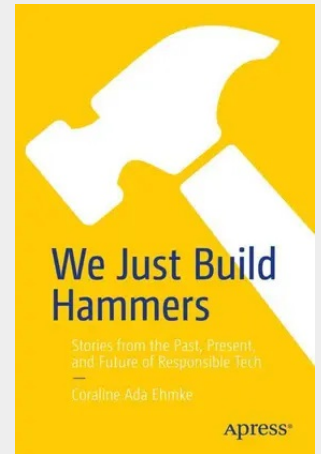
What You Will Learn

- A historic grounding and a science fiction perspective to help untangle the difficult and fraught topic of tech ethics
- Ways to bring ethical considerations into the development of new technologies
- How to navigate the increasing complexity of the techno-social world we live and work in

Who This Book is For

Designed to appeal broadly, not just to engineers and technologists, but to anyone interested in the history and future of ethics and technology.

Chapter 1: A Snare to Catch the Sun.- Chapter 2: The War to End All Wars.- Chapter 3: .The World Set Free?.- Chapter 4: The Parable of the Locksmith.- Chapter 5: Machines That Think.- Chapter 6: Machines That Kill reveals the response to Berkeley's calls for responsible tech. Speaking at the 1972 ACM 30th anniversary event, he challenged his colleagues- by name- who were working on military applications of computer technologies to quit their jobs, prompting most of his audience to walk out.- Chapter 7: Walking Around, a Mile High.- Chapter 8: The Ego and the id.- Chapter 9: We're Building The Torment Nexus.- Chapter10: Trouble on Triton.- Chapter 11: The Modular Calculus.- Chapter 12: An Ambiguous Heterotopia.- Chapter 13: Has the Future Been Written?.



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