IWoz: How I Invented The Personal Computer And Had Fun Along The Way

Synopsis

The mastermind behind Apple sheds his low profile and steps forward to tell his story for the first time. Before cell phones that fit in the palm of your hand and slim laptops that fit snugly into briefcases, computers were like strange, alien vending machines. They had cryptic switches, punch cards and pages of encoded output. But in 1975, a young engineering wizard named Steve Wozniak had an idea: What if you combined computer circuitry with a regular typewriter keyboard and a video screen? The result was the first true personal computer, the Apple I, a widely affordable machine that anyone could understand and figure out how to use. Wozniak's life-before and after Apple-is a "home-brew" mix of brilliant discovery and adventure, as an engineer, a concert promoter, a fifth-grade teacher, a philanthropist, and an irrepressible prankster. From the invention of the first personal computer to the rise of Apple as an industry giant, iWoz presents a no-holds-barred, rollicking, firsthand account of the humanist inventor who ignited the computer revolution. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Yesterday, I took a long look at the new book by Steve Wozniak, iWoz. Personally, I'm intrigued by the science-based creativity that led to early Apple products, and also the psychologically-savvy thinking that went into making computers user-friendly.The book will be interesting to a specialized audience. You need to be interested in the early history of personal computers (e.g., the legendary Homebrew Computer Club). You need to get a kick out of the amusing but sometimes unflattering lore that defined Apple's history and culture. You need to want to know about Wozniak's remarkably

innovative engineering as well as Apple's entrepreneurship. You have to dig the views and personality of a successful but unusual and reclusive countercultural person. It probably helps if you resonate with Wozniak's personal style, and dream about making innovative contributions somewhere, somehow.Some observations:1) When he claims to have "invented" the personal computer, he's not being too grandiose. He created some really beautiful early computers. The lore is that these contraptions were the first to have typewriter based keyboards; the first to be useable right out of the box; the first low-cost computers to have color, sound, hi-res graphics, and floppy disks. He developed software that changed industry standards. And to believe Wozniak is to believe that he was the origin of these ideas, surrounded by other creative geniuses like Jobs, Osborn, Marsh and others. Perhaps others shared in these innovations. But there's no doubt that Wozniak was one of the great "out of the box" thinkers of the Silicon Valley "revolution." In the book, Wozniak describes developing all of these things.

This is a wonderful story, extremely well told. The history of how Apple became Apple is a fairly familiar one by now but this book chronicles Steve Wozniak's personal journey from childhood up to the creation of the first PC, the founding of Apple, and beyond. In the first few chapters, you get a glimpse into Steve Wozniak's childhood fascination with technology and the people who taught him early on. Unlike many other biographies that list the dad as a primary influence, this book chronicles many humorous (and charming) stories of how Steve's father encouraged him in technology and more broadly, to think creatively and develop his own opinions. Later, you get a clear sense of how his thinking evolved as he continually pushed the edges of the technological envelope to see what was possible, all juxtaposed against the technology that was available at the time, until he and Mr. Jobs quit their day jobs to found Apple.I worried that this book would be too tech-y for me but it absolutely wasn't. I definitely learned some things about technology along the way - there are clever sidebars throughout the book which explain the technology that is being discussed. More than a technology book, this is a personal story - it is a warm and engaging narrative about one of the great geniuses of our time who invented something that we have trouble imagining life without! What's really great about the way the book is written is that you get a clear sense of what Steve was thinking throughout his childhood - what struck him as interesting and fun and strange and beautiful - and that's what makes this book such a pleasure to read.

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