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The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos And The Age Of



Synopsis

Audie Award Finalist, Business/Educational, 2014
The definitive story of .com, one of the most successful companies in the world, and of its driven, brilliant founder, Jeff Bezos. .com started off delivering books through the mail. But its visionary founder, Jeff Bezos, wasn't content with being a bookseller. He wanted to become the everything store, offering limitless selection and seductive convenience at disruptively low prices. To do so, he developed a corporate culture of relentless ambition and secrecy that's never been cracked. Until now. Brad Stone enjoyed unprecedented access to current and former employees and Bezos family members, giving listeners the first in-depth, fly-on-the-wall account of life at . Compared to tech's other elite innovators - Jobs, Gates, Zuckerberg - Bezos is a private man. But he stands out for his restless pursuit of new markets, leading into risky new ventures like the Kindle and cloud computing, and transforming retail in the same way Henry Ford revolutionized manufacturing. The Everything Store will be the revealing, definitive biography of the company that placed one of the first and largest bets on the Internet and forever changed the way we shop and read.

Book Information

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Research #4 in Books > Computers & Technology > Business Technology #4 in Books >

Business & Money > Marketing & Sales > Marketing > Web Marketing

Customer Reviews

I wasn't really planning on reviewing this book, because I was mentioned in it several times and it didn't seem appropriate. But several other people who were also mentioned in the book have already posted reviews, and in fact, MacKenzie Bezos, in her well known 1-star review, suggested that other "characters" might "step out of books" and "speak for themselves". I was at for the first 5

years of its existence, so I also have firsthand experience of those times at the company, and I have been a fairly close observer since I left. By and large I found Mr. Stone's treatment of that which I know firsthand to be accurate -- at least as accurate as it is possible to be at this great a remove, and with no contemporaneous documentation of the early chaotic days or access to certain of the principals. Relying on people's memories of nearly twenty-year-old events is of necessity somewhat perilous. Of course there are a few minor errors here and there, but I don't have firsthand knowledge of important mistakes much less anything that appears to be intentionally misleading. But there are a few minor glitches. In my case, I can testify that I did not, in fact, have a bushy beard at age 17 when I worked at the Whole Earth Truck Store & Catalog in Menlo Park. It was a publisher and seller of books and other things, not a lending library. It was in a storefront and was no longer a mobile service operating out of a truck by the time I worked there (p. 32). But I do not think this is a reason to disregard the entire book; it's just some not terribly relevant detail the author got a bit wrong in a way that doesn't change the story materially.

In the first chapter, the book sets the stage for Bezos's decision to leave his job and build an Internet bookstore. "At the time Bezos was thinking about what to do next, he had recently finished the novel *Remains of the Day*, by Kazuo Ishiguro, about a butler who wistfully recalls his personal and professional choices during a career in service in wartime Great Britain. So looking back on life's important junctures was on Bezos's mind when he came up with what he calls "the regret-minimization framework" to decide the next step to take at this juncture in his career. It's a good beginning, and it weaves in nicely with what's to come. But it's not true. Jeff didn't read *Remains of the Day* until a year after he started. If this were an isolated example, it might not matter, but it's not. Everywhere I can fact check from personal knowledge, I find way too many inaccuracies, and unfortunately that casts doubt over every episode in the book. Like two other reviewers here, Jonathan Leblang and Rick Dalzell, I have firsthand knowledge of many of the events. I worked for Jeff at D. E. Shaw, I was there when he wrote the business plan, and I worked with him and many others represented in the converted garage, the basement warehouse closet, the barbecue-scented offices, the Christmas-rush distribution centers, and the door-desk filled conference rooms in the early years of Amazon's history. Jeff and I have been married for 20 years. While numerous factual inaccuracies are certainly troubling in a book being promoted to readers as a meticulously researched definitive history, they are not the biggest problem here.

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