



The Hacker Ethic: A Radical Approach to the Philosophy of Business

Pekka Himanen, Linus Torvalds

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You may be a hacker and not even know it. Being a hacker has nothing to do with cyberterrorism, and it doesn't even necessarily relate to the open-source movement. Being a hacker has more to do with your underlying assumptions about stress, time management, work, and play. It's about harmonizing the rhythms of your creative work with the rhythms of the rest of your life so that they amplify each other. It is a fundamentally new work ethic that is revolutionizing the way business is being done around the world.

Without hackers there would be no universal access to e-mail, no Internet, no World Wide Web, but the hacker ethic has spread far beyond the world of computers. It is a mind-set, a philosophy, based on the values of play, passion, sharing, and creativity, that has the potential to enhance every individual's and company's productivity and competitiveness. Now there is a greater need than ever for entrepreneurial versatility of the sort that has made hackers the most important innovators of our day. Pekka Himanen shows how we all can make use of this ongoing transformation in the way we approach our working lives.

The Hacker Ethic: A Radical Approach to the Philosophy of Business Details

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From Reader Review The Hacker Ethic: A Radical Approach to the Philosophy of Business for online ebook

Chris Vogt says

The Hacker Ethic is a thought provoking dialogue on hacker ethics and philosophy as written by Pekka Himanen, a Finnish philosopher who incorporates Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and social science research in his description of hackers. Includes a prologue by Linus Torvolds, the software engineer behind the principal development of the popular free operating system Linux, and an epilogue by Manuel Castells, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute at the Open University of Catalonia in Barcelona, Spain.

Owen says

Had some alright content, but not nearly enough to justify its size - I feel like it would have been way better if it had been an essay. And it could easily have fitted into an essay if you stripped it down to the parts that are actually on its topic. Most of it seemed to be completely irrelevant stuff padding the book out. I kept expecting it to be tied back into the topic, but it never was. The authors lack of understanding of technology was quite noticeable too. The way he keeps talking about the internet as "self-modifying hypertext" was particularly bad.

Javier Novoa Cataño says

Me quedo con esto:

From the hacker viewpoint, leisure-centeredness may be just as undesirable as work-centeredness. Hackers want to do something significant: they want to create. While they avoid work that does not give rise to an opportunity for creativity, they also consider leisure as such insufficient as an ideal state. A Sunday spent in apathetic leisure can be as insufferable as a Friday.

Hackers do not feel that leisure time is automatically any more meaningful than work time. The desirability of both depends on how they are realized. From the point of view of a meaningful life, the entire work/leisure duality must be abandoned. As long as we are living our work or our leisure, we are not even truly living. Meaning cannot be found in work or leisure but has to arise out of the nature of the activity itself. Out of passion. Social value. Creativity.

Ricardo Roman says

La ética del hacker y el espíritu de la era de la información, es una excelente visión de cómo se está creando valor profesional, social y de negocios a partir de internet. Recuperando en sentido original del término "hacker" como inventores apasionados (y no como "cracker" que son los delincuentes informáticos) describe el espíritu, los valores, las habilidades y el mundo de los innovadores en la red. Elementos claves en la era wikipédica o Long Tail, como la pasión, la colaboración, el compartir, la incorporación en redes, la

gratuidad, son característicos de esta fauna que se amplía, trasciende e integra al mundo "analógico". Para responsables de promover la innovación y el emprendimiento, debiera ser obligada ocasión de exploración del nuevo mundo que emerge de la red, de oportunidades de socialización, invención y de negocios.

Una oportunidad de superar la brecha tecnológica, generacional y cultural.

Edición en español: **La ética del hacker y el espíritu de la era de la información**

Scott says

Book started w/ an interesting overview of the Protestant Ethic and how that evolved into today's society. But later on the book turned into more of a motivational self help which was not expected.

Sweemeng Ng says

So many way the author is wrong, not a good book for talking about how hacker works

Alexander says

Discussion on Hacker Ethics in comparison with the Protestant or Work Ethics.

Michael Hirsch says

A good read about the "Hacker ethic". That's Hacker as in problem solver, not as in "cracker"--someone who breaks into computers.

The book is one person's, though a deep thinking person's, view of how the hacker ethic fits in to modern society. His view is that the protestant ethic of valuing hard work for the sake of it is passe (I don't know how to make the accent on the e). The new value is working hard at something because it is fun and meaningful.

I strongly agree with that basic premise, though he goes a bit further into examining and explaining things at at some point I stopped believing it, but maybe I just never thought that much about it.

I recommend this if you like to meta-think things.

David Thompson says

A classic

Genndy says

Wow, this book sucks so hard and is a complete fraud. It has a shameless selling title that suggests that you'll learn something about lives and mindsets of professional hackers. That is not the case at all. This book is not about hackers at all, for it proposes the definition that suggests that any person who is expert in some field of human activities, passionate and anti capitalist - is in fact a hacker. Complete fraud, shameless false advertising! You literally learn more about the life in fucking convents than about computer hackers in this piece of garbage! Literally! And the writing style is soulcrushingly boring, unimaginative, subjective and the overall product is a universally useless book.

William Rood says

While I vehemently dispute the prolog's Linus's Law, as just so much clap trap, most of the remaining book was an interesting dive into a modern form of philosophy. The author grabbed me with the historical mangling of our perceptions of heaven and hell by the Protestant work ethic, had me hanging on every word in the sections of how Capitalism and the Post Industrial world has actually evolved to be MORE work by the individual, and how passion about type of work is deemphasized while the soulless concept of being passionate about working is elevated. The third part, about nethics, netiquette, and how to open source our educational system was less interesting, as I feel changes like that, changes that can at best be described as utopian day dreams, and at worst as antiestablishment.

My major take away was the sheer impact of the Protestant work ethic on our global entire society. Changing the very meaning of secular and religious observances of Friday vs Saturday. Actually reshaping the interpretation of what awaits us in Heaven, going from a peaceful place while Hell was toil and turmoil, to Heaven engaging us in work to keep us occupied through eternity. Uplifting and elevating work simply as a means of worship rather than actually producing anything of value, and forcing us to not be introspective, but rather value our relationship to our job over almost all else.

I have personally lived my life following a handful of the seven hacker values described within the book, and lately have prioritized what makes me passionate, and what allows me to be the most creative. I took solace in the fact that there are others out there, across all disciplines, that share these values as well. Good book. Good read. Skip the epilog :0

Mike says

Finally, a book that embraces my kind of work ethic as something other than "disorganized laziness". A great read that goes quickly and offers some interesting ideas on how the ethics of the hacker world could make the world a better place for everyone.

Preston Lee says

Small note: definitely read the forward by Linus Torvalds.

Sigma says

I enjoyed the forward and beginning of the book, and there were some interesting points about ethics and historical comparisons with old protestant ideas of work ethic and its influences, but when the author started discussing technology, politics, and economics it became clear that he had no idea what he was talking about. The second half of the book derailed completely and is at best incoherent nonsense.

If this book had been shorter and focused solely on hacker ethics and where it came from then I could have liked it.

Scribe says

Picked this up from the library rather randomly, and read it in 3 days - very thought provoking, especially because even though it's written 10 years ago, so much of what it grapples with is still - or even more - relevant today. While Egypt was flaring up, it was fascinating to read about how the Internet was used in the 1999 Kosovo crisis.

But for me the first 2 parts - on money as motivation, and our attitude towards work - were the most riveting. The "Hacker Ethic" is still clearly alive today, and much more evident in areas other than technical realms. How this ethic integrates (or not) with more traditional structures of work and life is a topic in need of some big answers. This book didn't offer much in the way of solution, but did do a great job in setting out the reasons and contexts for a lot of the divides in attitude around today.

Good read if you're into any of the media and information literature - especially as the main text is bookended nicely by Linus Torvalds at the start, and Manuel Castells at the end.
