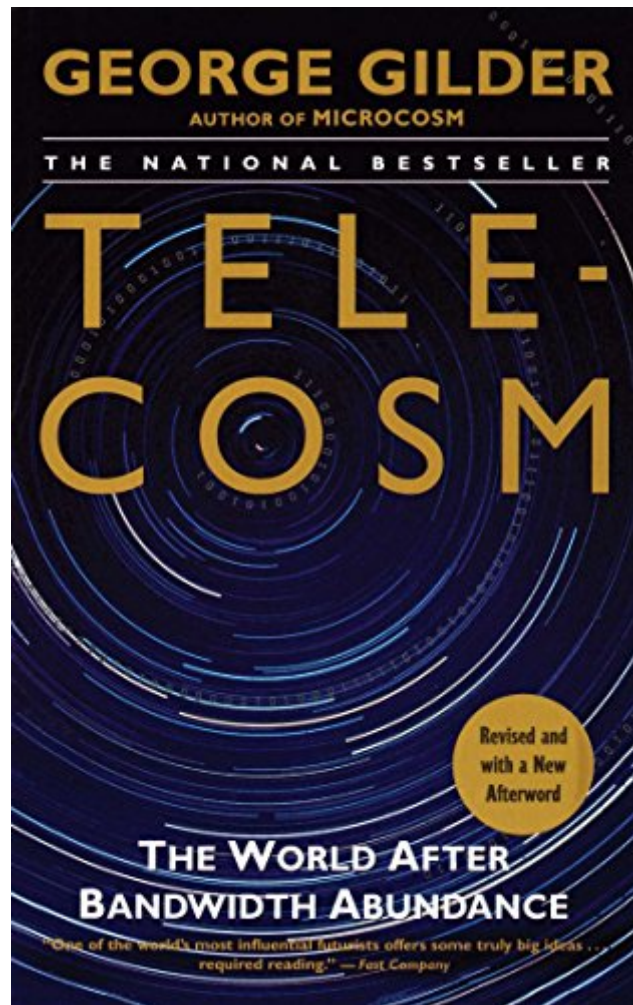


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Telecosm: How Infinite Bandwidth Will Revolutionize Our World



Synopsis

The computer age is over. After a cataclysmic global run of thirty years, it has given birth to the age of the telecosm -- the world enabled and defined by new communications technology. Chips and software will continue to make great contributions to our lives, but the action is elsewhere. To seek the key to great wealth and to understand the bewildering ways that high tech is restructuring our lives, look not to chip speed but to communication power, or bandwidth. Bandwidth is exploding, and its abundance is the most important social and economic fact of our time. George Gilder is one of the great technological visionaries, and "the man who put the 's' in 'telecosm'" (Telephony magazine). He is equally famous for understanding and predicting the nuts and bolts of complex technologies, and for putting it all together in a soaring view of why things change, and what it means for our daily lives. His track record of futurist predictions is one of the best, often proving to be right even when initially opposed by mighty corporations and governments. He foresaw the power of fiber and wireless optics, the decline of the telephone regime, and the explosion of handheld computers, among many trends. His list of favored companies outpaced even the soaring Nasdaq in 1999 by more than double. His long-awaited Telecosm is a bible of the new age of communications. Equal parts science story, business history, social analysis, and prediction, it is the one book you need to make sense of the titanic changes underway in our lives. Whether you surf the net constantly or not at all, whether you live on your cell phone or hate it for its invasion of private life, you need this book. It has been less than two decades since the introduction of the IBM personal computer, and yet the enormous changes wrought in our lives by the computer will pale beside the changes of the telecosm. Gilder explains why computers will "empty out," with their components migrating to the net; why hundreds of low-flying satellites will enable hand-held computers and communicators to become ubiquitous; why television will die; why newspapers and magazines will revive; why advertising will become less obnoxious; and why companies will never be able to waste your time again. Along the way you will meet the movers and shakers who have made the telecosm possible. From Charles Townes and Gordon Gould, who invented the laser, to the story of JDS Uniphase, "the Intel of the Telecosm," to the birthing of fiberless optics pioneer TeraBeam, here are the inventors and entrepreneurs who will be hailed as the next Edison or Gates. From hardware to software to chips to storage, here are the technologies that will soon be as basic as the air we breathe.

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Customer Reviews

Many people have a point of view about how the telecommunications technology and industry will evolve, but few fully understand the principles and assumptions behind their own perspective. Telecosm is a valuable summary of the science, engineering, and most influential companies that have been leading the changes in telecommunications potential. Those who have an advanced understanding of the science can skip those sections (Part One) and still have an enjoyable read. Those who want to know the human side of the engineering will find many rewarding stories (Part Two). The only people who will be disappointed will be those looking at his thoughts about investments (Part Four and Appendix B). First, it takes too long to bring out a book for the investment ideas to be any good by the time they appear. The market will have moved on. Second, this book is not enough in the futurist mode for us to find the important seedlings that will dominate the future. The companies discussed favorably in this book are visible and understood by most high technology investors already. Third, these ideas have been discussed for many years by Mr. Gilder in a variety of formats so they will only surprise people who are not familiar already with Mr. Gilder's nearly-ubiquitous prognostications. Mr. Gilder has several strengths as a technology guru that are

evident in Telecosm. First, he writes clearly, simply, and beautifully. No one else does it as well in this field. Second, he knows a lot of the people involved and can unveil the personalities and intellectual history in an engaging way, as a result. Third, he is a systems thinker, so he is adept at connecting one development to another in explaining his reasoning about why one thing or another has or will happen.

G. Gilder for many years had a reputation of the high-tech guru and the prophet of the "Internet Era". How justified is it? In fact he missed the Internet revolution altogether. Back in 1994, when the first Mosaic web browsers spread all over computer screens on campuses like a brush fire, he wrote and talked in his interviews and columns about the same things as now - increasing bandwidth, fiber optic lines, cable, interactive TV. Internet was occasionally mentioned in passing, Web - not at all. But isn't the Internet all about bandwidth and megabits per second? No, it would be like saying that the PC revolution of the early 80's was all about increasing number of transistors. Growing transistor count was one of the enabling driving forces. The revolution itself was radical shift in business models and organizational structures, huge leap in availability of computing power at the fingertips of much greater number of people. Similarly, the Internet revolution was not about more bits per second - it was a rapid and momentous transformation of the whole business of accessing and exchanging information by individuals and organizations all over the world. And G. Gilder largely missed it. To his credit, most of the other "gurus" missed it just as well. This is a pesky trait of true revolutions - to fool and confuse all pundits and pontificators gazing into their crystal balls. Mr. Gilder is also often cited for in-depth knowledge of scientific and technical aspects of the "telecosm". I have an impression this reputation comes mostly from journalists who themselves understand very little of these technical issues, or those who do understand but directly benefit from his relentless promotion of certain technology companies.

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