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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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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. MacKenzie listed one error, which didn't seem especially awful or material to me, and then referred only vaguely to "way too many inaccuracies". Without a more explicit list of mistakes it is hard to know what to make of that.

Breaking news: a new 372 page book has some errors! Since Mr. Stone did not have access to Jeff Bezos for this book, but had to rely on previous interviews and the accounts of others, it would be surprising if there weren't a few mistakes regarding his thought processes. As part of my agreement to be interviewed for this book, I was allowed to read a draft of the chapter which covered the time I was there, and I offered a number of corrections, some of which Mr. Stone was able to verify and incorporate. To the extent I am quoted, my quotes are, while not complete, fair and in context. I don't love or agree with everything that Mr. Stone wrote about me -- especially his broader conclusions regarding the circumstances of my departure from the company -- but I do think it was fair and reasonable. I am aware of at least one other interviewee who was also given a chance to check over the chapter in which his story was discussed. I obviously can't know this, but I suspect that if Mr. Stone had been granted access to Jeff Bezos, that he would have extended a similar courtesy. I have a pretty high degree of confidence that Mr. Stone made a significant effort, and did what was in his power, to make the book accurate. The irony is, of course, that by reviewing the book as MacKenzie Bezos did, she has brought an immense amount more attention to it -- there are dozens of articles referring to her review via Google News this morning -- and its sales rank has shot up considerably. The book is not a fawning hagiography, but it is also hardly a completely negative account either. It describes not only 's ultra-hardball business practices, but the better aspects of their services and products as well. To the extent of my knowledge it is a pretty realistic

account, though necessarily incomplete. Of course Mr. Stone has his own point of view, and of course he does what nearly all biographers do, which is to impute thoughts and emotions to the people he writes about. It would be mighty dull reading without that, but I think readers are generally smart enough to understand that when they read biographies, especially unauthorized biographies, the author has to recreate some kind of persona to make the subject appear life-like. That doesn't make it fiction. This was written as a business book for a popular audience anyway, not as an academic treatise, so expecting every "Bezos thought..." to be footnoted, or couched in hypothetical language, is not realistic. Especially in comparison to the sad collection of awful books that have been written on this subject, this one is much more detailed, more interesting, and a lot more deeply reported. Sure, there is plenty more that could be written about, and maybe someday somebody will. If and when that happens, I can only hope it is also "unauthorized" and not sanitized by a corporate PR department, and that some real investigative journalism is done, like Mr. Stone did here.

I was looking for a biography of Jeff Bezos and *The Everything Store* is about almost exclusively. The book reveals what a complex entity is and how tremendously impressive Jeff Bezos is, and that's useful but there may be a little too much detail, and I'd like something more on how Bezos' style has meshed with the presumably independent Washington Post. Also, I've been wondering about the competition between Bezos and Musk in the area of space ships. Perhaps the book was written before much could be said about either of those two topics. It's interesting to know that Bezos, like Musk and Jobs, all very successful, were pretty rough on those who worked for them and don't seem to have suffered for it.

I thought the book was good in the sense that I understood now what was doing all those years that had me scratching my head. It gives a glimpse of Bezos as a person. However, when I read the book, I felt it lacked a certain amount of detail, a certain amount of intimacy. It gives a peek in the life of Jeff Bezos and left me wanting a bit more. I wish one day Jeff would do a proper biography. He's an interesting guy. After reading this book, I'm rooting for him to succeed. I actually find myself using Amazon more and more after reading the book.

The secret to his success is that it is customer focused, almost to a fault. In other words, Jeff Bezos has sacrificed everything to give customers the lowest price. Along the way he has beguiled America like a snake charmer; customers and investors have crawled into bed with him despite the

fact that is not the most profitable company. Take nothing away from him; has he transformed how items are sold on the Internet Yet, the way that Jeff Bezos achieved his success reminds me of a quote by Einstein, "It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity."

This was a really good read that details the start of and how Jeff Bezos had an amazing vision to create the Everything Store. There are a lot of details about the company and its forays into many different businesses. So interesting that Bezos has a fascination with space much like Elon Musk. I learned a great deal about the company and important facts such as why they call the distribution centers FCs. Very good read and I would recommend if you are trying to learn more about .

Even handed history of the raise of . I am a long time user of , having first used the service when it only sold books, even then, it differentiated itself due to customer service. I am also a Apple fan, however in recent months found that in streaming services, is much superior in both selection and interface over Apple TV, (using prime service). The book increased my admiration Jeff Bezos but I know that I would not want to work for him.

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