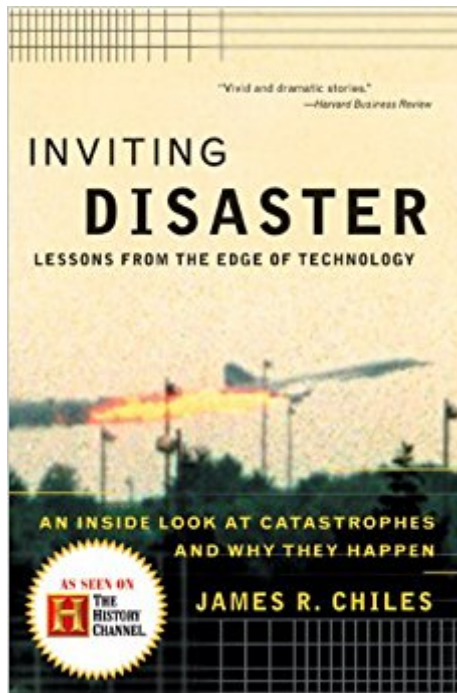




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Inviting Disaster: Lessons From The Edge Of Technology



Synopsis

Combining captivating storytelling with eye-opening findings, *Inviting Disaster* delves inside some of history's worst catastrophes in order to show how increasingly "smart" systems leave us wide open to human tragedy. Weaving a dramatic narrative that explains how breakdowns in these systems result in such disasters as the chain reaction crash of the Air France Concorde to the meltdown at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station, Chiles vividly demonstrates how the battle between man and machine may be escalating beyond manageable limits -- and why we all have a stake in its outcome. Included in this edition is a special introduction providing a behind-the-scenes look at the World Trade Center catastrophe. Combining firsthand accounts of employees' escapes with an in-depth look at the structural reasons behind the towers' collapse, Chiles addresses the question, Were the towers "two tall heroes" or structures with a fatal flaw?

Book Information

File Size: 1252 KB

Print Length: 338 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins e-books (July 8, 2008)

Publication Date: April 30, 2008

Sold by:Â HarperCollins Publishers

Language: English

ASIN: B0018ND83Y

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #303,076 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #24

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Customer Reviews

I have read many books and articles about the problems of technology that range from

gee-whiz-techno-cheerleader to back-to-the stone-age Luddite. Recently, I have become so familiar with the problems of urban sprawl or nuclear waste that I simply turn to the last thin chapter for the author's solution to the problem and the solution is always vague...such as "grassroots activism" or "better regulation and oversight". It's very rare to find an author that is willing to touch practical solutions to technological problems with a ten foot pole...it's more fun to scare people about disasters past, present, and future...it sells books! James Chiles doesn't want to just feed our goulish interest in things that blow-up and crash, he's interested in dissecting each disaster for a cause or in many cases the set of sequences that lead to a catastrophic failure and prescribing steps to prevent future disasters. He presents the reader with case after case of preventable disasters and finds common threads of causative factors. Chiles believes that we are living on an expanding "frontier" of technology. He believes that in order to survive in this always new environment we need to be ever vigilant. Chiles has assigned the name "Homo Machina" to the Human beings who will be best adapted to existence on the technology frontier. This book would be most usefull to engineers, but it is written for a general audience that would be interested in behind-the-scenes explanations for many historical and recent headline-grabbers. I find this book refreshing in it's candor about the course of Technology.

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