



## **Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Cyberspace**

*Douglas Rushkoff*

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The digital age will always be marked by the spirit of its first emergence, and the tension from the very first between corporate high-tech and the appropriation of information technologies by the counter-culture.

Cyberia is an ideas-led, exuberant documentary written in 1994 about the converging strands of this new era, the empowerments of cyber-technology and the emergent hacker and cyber milieu.

## **Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Cyberspace Details**

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Author : Douglas Rushkoff

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## From Reader Review Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Cyberspace for online ebook

### Jack Oughton says

Techno utopianism from a mid 90s POV (well, it was written in the mid 90s)

At that point the internet (more often referred to as 'cyberspace') was heralded as a vehicle for the evolution of human consciousness). The ravers, psychedelics word and hippies were going to use it as a means to raise human consciousness, and as a non chemical means to help us all access the spiritual. But as we all know, in 2016 its all cat videos, Harambe memes and Donald Trump shitposting.

Actually, I say that, but I suppose psychonauts have their own well defined space on the internet. As ever, Douglas' writing is still engaging... so I guess this has aged in a good way.

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### Cow says

So wonderfully dated.

About half this book is excellent, but somewhere around chapter 12 I started wanting to yell at Rushkoff. It didn't help that, for the rest of the book, the focus was entirely uninteresting, either to me or 1993-nostalgia-Cow; a world I want to run around and play in, but the camera keeps focusing on all the wrong, uninteresting things.

Also, there were several places where 15 seconds of research would have made it a lot less jarring (the "shee"? really?). EDIT: I just remembered the other one that really bugged me: when he says acid house music came from "an island, Ibetha, off the coast of Spain". Really? Not one editor (you had one, yes?) has heard of Ibiza? Basic fact-checking, augh. (It's pronounced kind of like Ibetha, but still. The copy-editor in me was all OH WHAT NOW?).

But overall, a pretty good time-capsule of the moment from 20 years ago.

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### Bezaubernd says

interesting topic but the guy can't write, smh

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### Jason Meinig says

Excellent book.. Very prescient, as it covers the earliest years of the internet, but also a lot more. It tells the story of what REALLY became of the counter-culture movements of the 60's as the tools of protest and rebellion became more technologically centered, and the book really spells out the 'battle' that is being waged between the power structure and hackers, and exposes some of the idealistic (and not-so) idealistic motives

of the latter. This is a book I should have read 20 years ago when it was published as I have, during that time, become interested in many of the topics presented. Highly recommended to anyone interested in where technology might be headed, or, in the early days of the internet.

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### **Brian says**

There was a time before the age of Google buses, PRISM, and brogrammers, when digital culture meant psychedelics, house music and reconstructed paganism. Douglas Rushkoff managed to snap a picture at the very crest of that wave, capturing the philosophies, personalities and chemistries that made it a moment of such boundless optimism. Now, twenty years later, that optimism may have gathered a somewhat sad patina to it. But Rushkoff's prose is as crisp as ever, and his insights are probably even more valuable to the crises of our day. Anyone who thinks the internet should be more than a giant lifestyles magazine that spies on you would do well to read this book. Cyberia reflects how our most creative minds once thought it could be done, and points to how we might still make good on that promise.

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### **Kyle Fnord says**

Utter brainsex. How does one tap into the very nature of their own minds cohesive qualities. What is reality? Rushkoff does us all a favour and bridges the gap between cyberspace, drugs, media, tribalism, society as a whole and asks in a very succinct voyage, how do we become the masters of Cyberia?

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### **Kurtzprzezce says**

McKenna never cease to amaze me. How someone can be able to produce so much bullshit in one lifetime. I cannot count how many facepalms it took to get through his quotes. Cyberia is quite well written, but zippies are so full of shit. Rushkoff did a fine job describing cultural phenomena and some people mindset, but he could be a little bit more critical. In it's present form the book seems to endorse New Age too much for my taste.

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### **Josh says**

Given how much has changed about the internet since this book was published most all of the information is out of date, and little if any of the predictions Rushkoff made came true. However, there is still a lot of interesting people groups talked about in this book.

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### **Afrodoti says**

Amazing book! In my opinion THE manifesto of cybersculture.  
Mixes technology with philosophy, religion, drugs, rpg games and art.

Very interesting style of writing. Mixes facts and reality with fiction.

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### **Yannis says**

A remarkable book about the early internet ("cyberspace") culture. What it lacks in narrative quality (although it's very readable for non fiction, since it follows the researcher, his interviews etc) it gives us in information about that era.

Throughout the book we see most of the founders of the cultures being into frugs, whether chemical or musical. They thought the internet was a web of minds and that being drugged helped us get into that web, become One. Once united, humanity would move into a new era of prosperity, happiness etc. Some of them give prophecies of such an age and the dates they give have already passed. Instead we all now what the internet has become and also how the real world has become. Sounds like they were too optimistic but on the other hand we didn't get a dystopia either.

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### **keys says**

great book, as when reading anything about the internet more than five years after it was published i was worried that it would be irrelevant but most of the information especially rushkoffs point of view was still very interesting information.

also having just read 'theecstasy club' only a few months ago it is very obvious he wrote that based on the research that he did for this book. most of the characters from ecstasy club can be found in cyberia, or elements of them. some seem to be copied completely. many of the situations he talks about are also used in the ecstasy club. i would recommend reading this if you enjoyed the ecstasy club.

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### **Joshua Sorkin says**

This book was the primary reason that I moved to Northern California, hoping to make a new life as a hippie cyberpunk, so in that way I have to credit it with changing my life.

Lots of early-90s idealism here, and the whole thing feels a lot like a book-length *Rolling Stone* article about some hot new counterculture trend.

When I first read it, the interplay of anecdote and cultural critique was really attractive to me; the narratives made all these media hackers and psychonauts seem real and worth meeting and collaborating with. Re-reads have not been kind; the technology references and conception of the Internet as a whole are increasingly dated, the promise of fully immersive virtual reality as some sort of singularity moment in human consciousness is as much vaporware now as it was then, and the stories are...kind of fake. You get the feeling that Rushkoff is either putting some fancy embroidery on some relatively mundane experiences, or that he's just making it up whole-cloth, or that some pranksters were pulling the wool over his eyes.

Perhaps I am a bit jaded after 20-odd years in Cyberia, typing this review into an information system that's instantly accessible by millions of people all over the world! Just imagine what kind of global harmony that will create, when data flows unstoppably through servers to carry liberation to the minds of...

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### **Jonathan Wichmann says**

I read this when I was 12 or 13 and it blew my mind and changed my life. My curiosity about hackers is what drew me to it, but it introduced me to the insights from the psychedelic revolution, the magic of chaos theory and fractals, and ideas about paganism, and even including a glowing description of roleplaying games. The core message I remember was that our beliefs, concepts, and inner programming are incredibly powerful in shaping our lives and the way we see the world. It led me into even more mind-blowing books about LSD, including Timothy Leary's. I definitely remember being skeptical about the glowing endorsement of ecstasy and rave culture, though, even though love and oneness with a whole crowd did sound nice! The encouragement to explore inner realms of imagination and unusual states of consciousness was amazing and liberating. At any rate, I'm giving it five stars based on my memory of it, though I feel like I'd better re-read it.

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### **Brandur says**

An interesting history of the early Internet and culture of psychedelics (if a tad disjointed at times). It also had some good information on how these early cultures related to the Bay Area specifically, and talked about some of the early (and long since extinct) cyber clubs in SOMA. I would've liked to see even more information on that.

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### **Myrna says**

Hay tiempos que nos emociona haber vivido, aunque haya sido en versión austera y provinciana. Si eres sobreviviente del "PLUR" este libro será un back in time obligatorio... Y de paso querrás ponerte a escuchar un poco de acid House solo por los buenos tiempos.

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