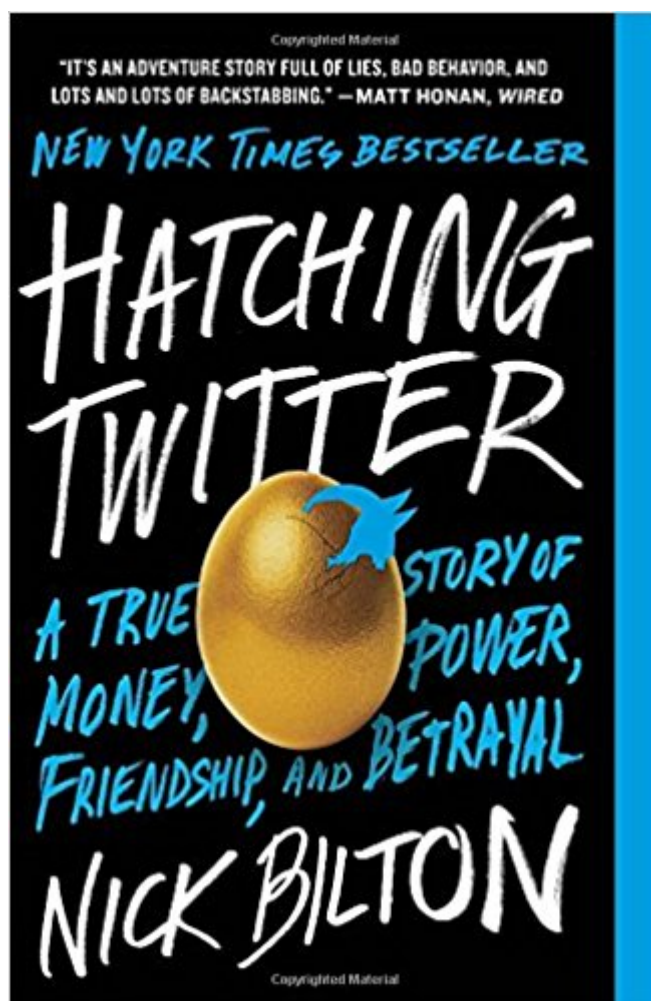




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Hatching Twitter: A True Story Of Money, Power, Friendship, And Betrayal



Synopsis

The dramatic, unlikely story behind the founding of Twitter, by New York Times bestselling author and Vanity Fair special correspondent The San Francisco-based technology company Twitter has become a powerful force in less than ten years. Today it's everything from a tool for fighting political oppression in the Middle East to a marketing must-have to the world's living room during live TV events to President Trump's preferred method of communication. It has hundreds of millions of active users all over the world. But few people know that it nearly fell to pieces early on. In this rousing history that reads like a novel, Hatching Twitter takes readers behind the scenes of Twitter's early exponential growth, following the four hackers—Ev Williams, Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, and Noah Glass, who created the cultural juggernaut practically by accident. It's a drama of betrayed friendships and high-stakes power struggles over money, influence, and control over a company that was growing faster than they could ever imagine. Drawing on hundreds of sources, documents, and internal e-mails, Bilton offers a rarely-seen glimpse of the inner workings of technology startups, venture capital, and Silicon Valley culture.

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Customer Reviews

An Best Book of the Month, November 2013: Spoiler alert: The subtitle sorta says it all. That is, Nick Bilton's Hatching Twitter delivers "A True Story of Money, Power, Friendship, and Betrayal," though not necessarily in that order. The book's four central players--Ev, Jack, Biz, and

Noah--conceived of Twitter while working on Odeo, an ultimately doomed attempt to revolutionize podcasting. As their little chick grew, the four men's personal and ideological differences led to a power struggle that eventually left them all on the sidelines as a former stand-up comedian took Twitter into the uncertain future. Writing with the pacing and veracity of detail of a true-crime book, Bilton makes use of a trove of source material--from internal Twitter e-mails to extensive interviews with and early tweets by the founders themselves--and the result is as exciting and fast-paced as it is topically relevant. If you're looking for a thoughtful rumination about Twitter as a revolutionary global communications platform, keep looking. If you're looking for a quick, well-written, thoroughly researched human drama, the story of an utterly dysfunctional foursome and the accelerated unraveling of their once brilliant partnership, this is your book. #HighlyRecommended. --Jason Kirk (@brasswax) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

“Fast-paced and perceptive.”--The New York Times Book Review “Exhaustively researched...extensively detailed...unexpectedly addictive.”--The Wall Street Journal “#Backstabbing, power struggles and profanity laid bare” “It is breathless storytelling”--The New York Times “Deeply reported and deliciously written.”--The Verge “A compelling read, more like espionage than a corporate history.”--Fortune Magazine “With a cinematic approach befitting its eclectic cast of characters, the perceptive read is rife with Byzantine-like intrigue, character clashes and broken dreams.”--USA Today “Nick Bilton’s impressively detailed fly-on-the-wall exposé of the micro-blogging site’s birth and evolution evokes all the titillating elements of a soap opera.”--Success Magazine

I'm Rabble, one of the people who helped start Odeo and i'm mentioned a bunch in the first couple chapters. This review might not be useful for evaluating the book as something to read, but i figured this might be a decent forum to provide a review. The story is very well told. It's a captivating read. It's very surreal to read about your friends and former co-workers in a book like this. Most of us live our lives only ourselves. Having this book is kind of like having a well researched MTV Rock Documentary about our work, friendships, and time in our lives. I think if you interview enough people, look at what happened in any situation, it's easy to put a spin and story on things. None of us know the details of everybody else's life. I wish there'd been more discussion about the technical and models we pulled from to build twitter. Where the ideas came from and how they were put together. It's very weird to see how much focus there is on people's drinking, clothing, hygiene, and

being broke. That we were pulling from txtmob, the unix finger command, carlton university's status update system, bike messenger dispatch, blogger, etc... that's not as sexy a story. That we considered how to look at transitions of mediums from desktop to web, from web to mobile, as a place to create new systems for communications in old ways, isn't as cool as intrigue amongst friends who ended up creating twitter. There's a lot of the people and not as much understanding twitter and it's context. The order of things as they happened and as they are told in the book isn't the same. This is ok, i think, mostly because the book is about telling the story of twitter's creation. It's no a strict chronology. Reordering things makes for a better story arc. There were a number of people not interviewed and i think their story was diminished. Some of us were talked about more because they fit a better story arc. One last thing, i'd say that Twitter's management problems were due to lack of ability to come together and make a decision, and not the anarchists refusing to follow rules and allow order.

Great book. Excellent writing. However I found two minor things that bothered me a little: 1. I would like for the author to be more comfortable when he talks about technology. For example, he says that Ruby on Rails is a programming language while it is a web framework. Ruby would be the language. This pattern repeats itself when he talks about the infrastructure, the scalability issues and such. I agree that this is not a technical book, but I do believe that those nuances should be accurate. 2. I felt like if the story was a bit biased against Jack Dorsey. I liked that the author really speaks about the ongoing conflicts, however, when similar situations arise, such as the firing of Jack and the firing of Ev, the author portrays them quite differently. The author gives the impression that while Ev's firing was caused by treason, Jack's firing was justified since he was not an adequate leader. However, a closer examination shows that both circumstances were indeed similar, with both being fired under backroom dealings and both being inadequate to take Twitter to its next stage. Still, overall I found this book well researched and written. Highly recommended.

This should be a movie. This story is just so fascinating on a human level. Also, in my humble opinion, the author in the end comes to a deeper grasp of the Twitter value proposition than the various CEOs and founders. I wonder if Twitter is losing terrain because it never really understood itself as well as this book does. The characters involved way out there, so authentic too, and many of them exceedingly sympathetic. It is also good to see that in this case the sweetest guy ends up with the biggest chunk of the company. This is far better story even than the Facebook story (which was a great story too).

Well-researched and sincere take on a fascinating story: the inception and development of Twitter. Bilton takes advantage of the abundant web material available about the early days of Twitter and also seems to have had extensive opportunity to do his own original interviews with the company's four founders Biz Stone, Noah Glass, Jack Dorsey, and Evan Williams. Bilton uses this material to study the unique character and personality of each of the four founders. This becomes key when you see how each founder's unique personal style leads to their conflicting visions for the future of Twitter. For example, Jack Dorsey saw Twitter as a status updating tool useful primarily for enabling users talk about themselves and what they were doing, while the more civic-minded Evan Williams saw it as information-gathering tool whose greatest potential was in describing the world and current events. Intriguingly, Bilton notes that that Evan Williams forbids his young children to use iPads, iPhones, or television, and encourages them to read physical books. Makes you think even the one of the important people in the tech world believes that Twitter and social media are just a waste of time. I also enjoyed learning about the "forgotten founder" Noah Glass, who was critical in starting the company but received very little attention for his contribution. On the downside, you get the feel that Bilton got a free pass to write an "authorized" version of the Twitter story that emphasized hype and glossed over flaws in Twitter as a platform and as a company. Still, it's an engrossing read.

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