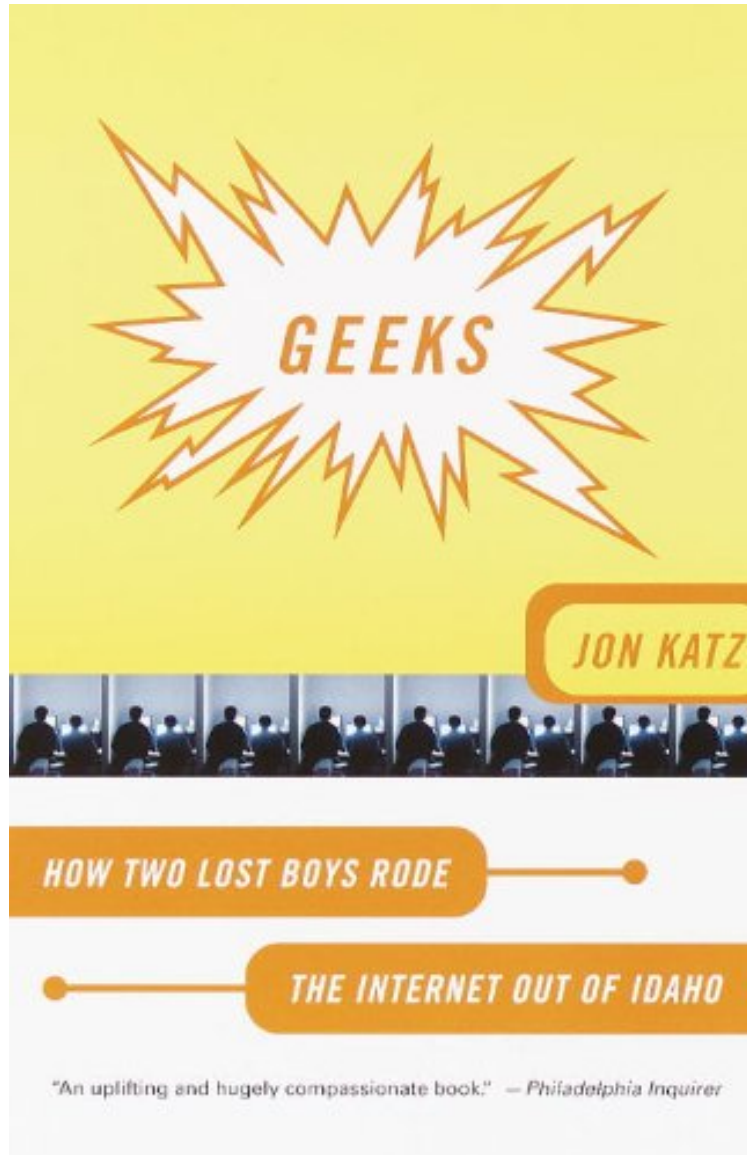


[FREE] Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho

Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho

Jon Katz

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Jon Katz : Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho:

31 of 32 people found the following review helpful. Read This BookBy Michael B. de LeeuwSome reviewers have argued that "Geeks" is simply about two disenfranchised kids and that their geek-ness is only incidental to the story. I couldn't disagree more. The story of Jesse and Eric, while profoundly moving, is only illustrative of the larger

movement about which Katz is writing. Geeks are in the ascendance in our culture -- despite the fact that that culture looks down upon them and makes many of their lives nearly unbearable. That is the interesting central theme of the book. Their exile from the mainstream world has helped spur their technological savvy, which the rest of the world now needs to survive. It is the ultimate revenge of the nerds. "Geeks" describes the nascent changing of the guard that can be seen everywhere (with differing results): in the bellies of American corporations; in American high schools; in the Dow Jones; at the University of Chicago; and in journalism. Usually, one can only write intelligently about such an event after it has long past; Katz is writing about it now. Thanks. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great geek book By DejeruI purchased this book while attending college, majoring in the computer field and used it in an essay report. It's a good read about two young fellows who are passionate about computers and the Internet. I think this book would be good for high school and early college students to get some history of the Internet. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good Book for techs By TheXbowGamer Good book for people who like techy stuff like computers and video games. Though not for young kids because their are PG13 swearing in it.

Jesse and Eric were geeks: suspicious of authority figures, proud of their status as outsiders, fervent in their belief in the positive power of technology. High school had been an unbearable experience and their small-town Idaho families had been torn apart by hard times. On the fringe of society, they had almost no social lives and little to look forward to. They spent every spare cent on their computers and every spare moment on-line. Nobody ever spoke of them, much less for them. But then they met Jon Katz, a roving journalist who suggested that, in the age of geek impresario Bill Gates, Jesse and Eric had marketable skills that could get them out of Idaho and pave the way to a better life. So they bravely set out to conquer Chicago geek style. Told with Katz's trademark charm and sparkle, *Geeks* is a humorous, moving tale of triumph over adversity and self-acceptance that delivers two irresistible heroes for the digital age and reveals the very human face of technology.

.com Teenage hackers Jesse Dailey and Eric Twilegar are the heroes of *Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho*, a thoughtful, affecting pop ethnography--and heroes is exactly what Jon Katz wants you to see them as. To the rest of the world, themselves included, they are geeks, which is a complicated thing to be these days. With the rise of the networked economy, the world and its wealth have become increasingly dependent on the expertise of Star Wars-loving, cola-swilling propellerheads everywhere. Yet at the same time, the typical geek--especially the typical adolescent geek--remains a consummate outsider, with passions for technological arcana that are both alienating and empowering. Katz, a writer for both *Rolling Stone* and the profoundly geeky Web site *Slashdot.org*, does a fine job of mapping this ambiguous new state of affairs (the Geek Ascendancy, he calls it). But the book's heart and soul is the well-told tale of Jesse and Eric's adventurous flight from lonely, dead-end lives in Idaho Mormon country to brighter possibilities in Chicago. Katz argues that this great escape couldn't have happened without the networks (both social and technological) that are the lifeblood of '90s geekdom, but he doesn't let his celebratory argument get in the way of the story. Although he's a tireless advocate for geeks (the last chapters retrace his impassioned advocacy for brooding teenage weirdos in the face of post-Columbine media attacks), he presents their culture warts and all, with its tendencies toward social awkwardness and arrogance recognizably intact. He doesn't demand your sympathy for his heroes and their world--but he wins it anyway, by bringing them vividly and honestly to life. --Julian Dibbell From *Publishers Weekly* While promoting his book *Virtuous Reality*, journalist Katz was introduced to the world of "geeks," those smart, technically savvy misfits who are ostracized by their high school peers. Katz wrote in his column on the *slashdot.org* Web site about the isolation, exclusion and maltreatment--from dirty looks to brutal beatings--such kids routinely face. Tens of thousands of anguished e-mails confirmed his story. One of the e-mailers was Jesse Dailey, a working-class 19-year-old trapped in rural Idaho, where he and his friend Eric Twilegar fixed computers for a living, and hacked and surfed the Web, convinced that they were losers and outcasts. Katz, also a writer for *Wired* and *Rolling Stone*, traveled to Idaho to meet the pair, intending to chronicle their lives. He wound up encouraging and sometimes assisting Jesse and Eric as they tried to improve their lives by moving to Chicago, where they sought better jobs and even considered applying to college. Sometimes intensely earnest, Katz cuts back and forth between Jesse and Eric's story and more general discussions of the geeks' condition. Over the course of the book, Jesse and Eric come to represent geeks' collective weaknesses and strengths. While the bulk of the book has broad social and educational implications (concerning the fate of bright kids who don't come from socially and educationally privileged backgrounds), it is a highly personal tale: Katz takes us inside the lives of these two young men, shows us their sense of isolation, their complete absorption in the cyberworld, their distrust of authority and institutions, and their attempts to negotiate an often hostile society. He breaks through the stereotype and humanizes this outcast group of young people. (Feb.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *School Library Journal* YA-Katz sets out to explain geek culture by tracing the life stories of two 19 year olds from Caldwell, ID. The young men had no money, no family support, but they did have a riveting passion for computers. A year after graduating from high school, they were desperately seeking relief from their dead-end jobs. By chance, the author received a moving e-mail message from one of them and traveled to Idaho to meet them. This meeting is the start of the boys' journey and is the book's

beginning. Early on, readers realize that the biggest roadblock to their success was the educational system and the intolerance of others toward those not following the traditional direction of society. Students will identify with the situation. Many will see themselves in much of this book and realize that they can survive-and flourish-in real life. Geeks is well written, thought provoking, and attitude changing. Readers may not agree with all of Katz's sermonizing, but they will agree that America needs ideas like his to serve as a catalyst for change and progress. Above all, Geeks will bring about much needed thinking and dialogue about the experience of going to high school and the price people have paid and are paying for being different. Students will enjoy Katz's argument that even if society does not acknowledge their varying needs, geeks will ultimately ascend.Linda A. Vretos, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Alexandria, VA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.