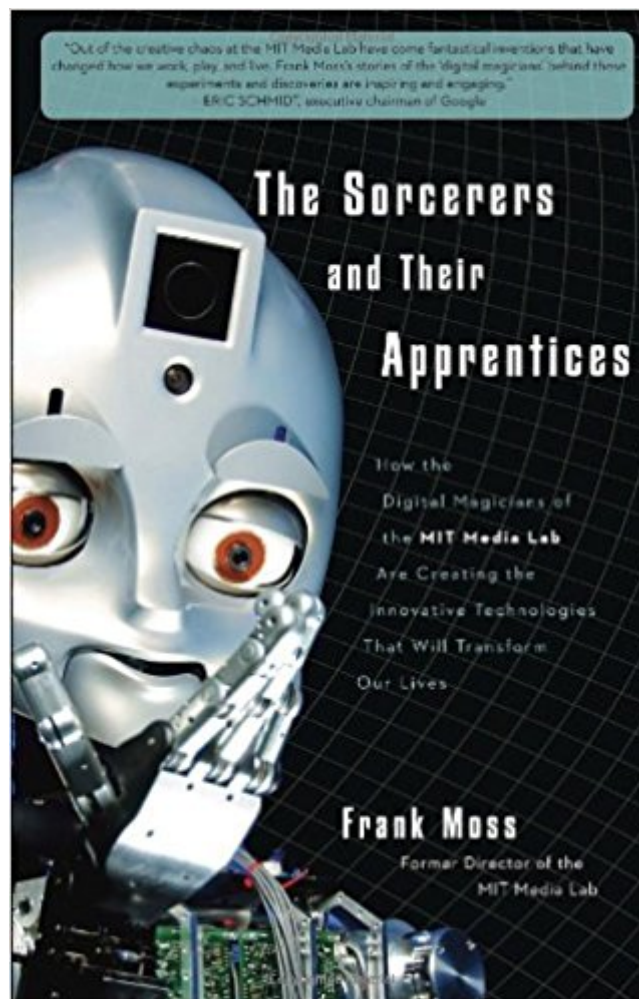


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The Sorcerers And Their Apprentices: How The Digital Magicians Of The MIT Media Lab Are Creating The Innovative Technologies That Will Transform Our Lives





Synopsis

If you've ever read a book on an e-reader, unleashed your inner rock star playing Guitar Hero, built a robot with LEGO Mindstorms, or ridden in a vehicle with child-safe air bags, then you've experienced first hand just a few of the astounding innovations that have come out of the Media Lab over the past 25 years. But that's old hat for today's researchers, who are creating technologies that will have a much deeper impact on the quality of people's lives over the next quarter century. In this exhilarating tour of the Media Lab's inner sanctums, we'll meet the professors and their students - the Sorcerers and their Apprentices - and witness first hand the creative magic behind inventions such as: * Nexi, a mobile humanoid robot with such sophisticated social skills she can serve as a helpful and understanding companion for the sick and elderly. * CityCar, a foldable, stackable, electric vehicle of the future that will redefine personal transportation in cities and revolutionize urban life. * Sixth Sense, a compact wearable device that transforms any surface - wall, tabletop or even your hand - into a touch screen computer. * PowerFoot, a lifelike robotic prosthesis that enables amputees to walk as naturally as if it were a real biological limb. Through inspiring stories of people who are using Media Lab innovations to confront personal challenges - like a man with cerebral palsy who is unable to hum a tune or pick up an instrument yet is using an ingenious music composition system to unleash his "inner Mozart", and a woman with a rare life-threatening condition who co-invented a revolutionary web service that enables patients to participate in the search for their own cures - we'll see how the Media Lab is empowering us all with the tools to take control of our health, wealth, and happiness. Along the way, Moss reveals the highly unorthodox approach to creativity and invention that makes all this possible, explaining how the Media Lab cultivates an open and boundary-less environment where researchers from a broad array of disciplines - from musicians to neuroscientists to visual artists to computer engineers - have the freedom to follow their passions and take bold risks unthinkable elsewhere. The Sorcerers and Their Apprentices can serve as a blueprint for how to fix our broken innovation ecosystem and bring about the kind of radical change required to meet the challenges of the 21st century. It is a must-read for anyone striving to be more innovative as an individual, as a businessperson, or as a member of society. Also includes 16 pages of color photos highlighting some of the lab's most visually stunning inventions - and the people who make them possible.

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Customer Reviews

"Out of the creative chaos at the MIT Media Lab have come fantastical inventions that have changed how we work, play, and live. Frank Moss's stories of the digital magicians behind these experiments and discoveries are inspiring and engaging."

•Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman, Google "MIT Media Lab has been inventing the future for more than 25 years. Frank Moss explains how - and the lessons can help you be more creative - and your organization be more innovative."

•Steve Case, Co-founder of AOL, Chairman of the Startup America Partnership, and co-chair of the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship "This book will be a delight for anyone who cares about innovation. For more than twenty-five years, the MIT Media Lab has been inventing the future and humanizing technology. Weaving fascinating tales with insightful concepts, Frank Moss tells us how. He shows the way to harness passion and break down the walls between disciplines in order to unleash creativity in fields ranging from robotics to music to the making of mechanical limbs."

•Walter Isaacson, CEO and president, The Aspen Institute, former chairman and CEO of CNN, and bestselling author of Einstein: His Life and Universe "Anyone who wants to succeed - be it in technology art, or business - needs to follow the unique multi-disciplinary approach described in this book. Our future depends on innovation. This book provides the inspiration and motivation we need to change the world, one page at a time."

•Chad Hurley, Co-Founder & former CEO, YouTube. "As a CIO, I understand the challenges of managing brilliant and creative people. Frank Moss' insightful case studies from the Media Lab provide a roadmap for leaders who want to accelerate innovation. There is no better example of a

culture that inspires and enables invention." — Dr. John Halamka, Chief Information Officer, Harvard Medical School and The Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

"The stories begin about the gadgets for which the MIT Media Lab is well known, but then they turn human, as Frank Moss introduces us to the professors and students flourishing in the Lab's unique innovation ecology. SORCERERS ends too soon, leaving you curious, excited, and determined to know more about the MIT Media Lab's unique approach to inventing and innovation. This book is timely for America, right now looking to innovate on innovation, to winning the future."

— Bob Metcalfe, Ethernet Inventor, formulator of Metcalfe's Law, and Professor of Innovation at UTexas Austin

"Our world is changing at an exponential rate. Billion dollar industries are folding overnight and Billion dollar start-ups are seemingly coming out of no-where. Small teams empowered by technology can now do what was once only possible by large corporations and governments. Frank Moss's book shares countless examples of inspired creativity and fearless innovation. This is a must-read book for anyone who wants to change their company, industry or the world."

— Peter H. Diamandis, MD, MS, Chairman/CEO, X PRIZE Foundation, Chairman/Vice-Chancellor, Singularity University

"On every page, this essential book underlines the importance of the human - both in the individuals who make the Lab tick, and the people who are directly affected by the creative brilliance of the Lab's minds and the practical outcome of their work. Moss expertly threads the multiple strands of the Media Lab story - its innovative past, present and most importantly it's future - and demonstrates how it has continued to be one of the most unorthodox and influential brain trusts in the world." - Alex McDowell, Royal Designer for Industry, production designer of Minority Report and Fight Club

"The Sorcerers and Their Apprentices is in essence a tour through the Media Lab... and the reader can almost hear Mr. Moss leading the visitor through the glass-walled building with an infectious enthusiasm for the stories of its occupants and contents, much of which exists in the form of the models and prototypes for which the lab is famous" - The Wall Street Journal

FRANK MOSS served as director of the MIT Media Lab from 2006-2011, and is currently Professor of the Practice and head of the New Media Medicine group there. After earning a BSE from Princeton and PhD in aeronautics and astronautics from MIT, he held positions at IBM, Apollo Computer, Lotus Development and was CEO and chairman of Tivoli Systems, which he took public in 1995 and merged with IBM a year later. He is a co-founder of many companies, including Stellar Computer, Bowstreet, Infinity Pharmaceuticals and his latest startup venture, Bluefin Labs.

As a scientist and writer on human performance, I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. For those interested in the field of robotics, human augmentation, and everything in between, there are a couple of things that really make this book a top recommendation:1) The author discusses what can be a polarizing and overhyped topic with reserve and thoughtfulness. Way too many writers in this genre are either trying to scare the bejesus out of you by painting a "science run amok" picture of the near future, or they become so over-awed by the promises of such technology, they oversell where we are today and how such advances will likely change our world. I think Moss does a great job of presenting a fairly accurate view of what this technology can and can't do, now and in the future. And because the book is about the Media Lab itself, he's not tempted into comparisons with other researchers in the field that frankly don't serve anyone.2) The book doesn't just limit itself to "then we did this, then we did that" descriptions. It contains powerful ideas that will change the way you think about this field of science. One example: many people get uncomfortable with augmentation technology when it is applied to healthy individuals as opposed to those who are sick. So if you want to help Alzheimer's patients with their memory, most people are enthusiastically supportive. But if you develop a pill that helps otherwise "normal" individuals improve their memory, a lot more people get squeamish. What Moss and the researchers at the Media Lab suggest is to view it from the perspective that "we are all disabled sometimes." So you are fixing disabilities in both cases, but those disabilities are much more severe in one case than the other.3) The book is truly well written and I'm surprised by reviews that suggest otherwise. As a writer, I appreciate details of what the building looked like, the personal background on Professor Herr and why he's so passionate about prosthetics, and so forth. Those details aren't necessary to appreciate the research being done at MIT's Media Lab, but they make the work so much more enjoyable. In fact, the book is so well written, I wondered at times if it was professionally ghost-written, as I rarely see such readable work from my fellow scientists (sorry, but true). If you like Gladwell's style of telling story after story to illustrate various points, you'll probably like this book as well. Overall, I heartily recommend this balanced and insightful book for anyone interested in where the fields of robotics, human/machine interface, and human augmentation are going. You'll learn a lot and enjoy the read.

The book itself is one of the good examples how one should write popular books on technology- it is full of stories and personalities some of whom I know personally. Very lively and thorough description of famous Media Lab anti-disciplinary approach. It is very interesting to read it now to see that how many inventions in ML are actually false promises. Product which Synthia works now is far

far simpler than these research projects she did in MIT, Cory works on new projects and no news on Autom at all. Where are Citycars? It is just a good reminder- inventions and innovations are very different things

The stories of the people at the Media lab who work to make their dreams happen on the edges of discovery can push us all to do more, to imagine a better world and to connect in ways that are new and fresh. The Media Lab and its scouts, tinkerers, and explorers are a part of one of the purest, most free and and most hope filled research communities possible, with results that will eventually affect us all.

Ever since its inception in the mid-1980s, MIT Media Labs has produced some of our most revolutionary and breakthrough inventions, including "Scratch," which has introduced to millions of children the wonders and joy of computer programming. In this well-written and well-organized book, former director of MIT Media Labs, Frank Moss takes us on a tour of the people and the thinking that have made MIT Media Labs an inventor's heaven.

I did my informatics training in Boston in the 1990s and I was fortunate to spend time on the MIT campus. This book reinforces my impression of this amazing organization. I am looking into many of the ideas in this book for my family and colleagues. Todd Rowland MD

Frank Moss takes us on a tour of the amazing MIT Media Lab by telling a dozen stories about different projects happening there under his tenure. While rich in detail, he never really gets to the root of the magic and why it is happening. Nevertheless the stories are fun and inspiring.

This is an excellent companion to Stewart Brand's The Media Lab book first published in 1987. About 25 years later, Frank Moss takes the reader on a tour of MIT's Media Lab, bringing to light the myriad of ideas, inventions, and out of the box creations, that make this place so magical.

A great book! It tells some incredible stories in such an easy way to understand. I recommend it! For sure!

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