



Geek Heresy: Rescuing Social Change from the Cult of Technology

By Kentaro Toyama

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After a decade designing technologies meant to address education, health, and global poverty, award-winning computer scientist Kentaro Toyama came to a difficult conclusion: Even in an age of amazing technology, social progress depends on human changes that gadgets can't deliver.

Computers in Bangalore are locked away in dusty cabinets because teachers don't know what to do with them. Mobile phone apps meant to spread hygiene practices in Africa fail to improve health. Executives in Silicon Valley evangelize novel technologies at work even as they send their children to Waldorf schools that ban electronics. And four decades of incredible innovation in America have done nothing to turn the tide of rising poverty and inequality. Why then do we keep hoping that technology will solve our greatest social ills?

In this incisive book, Toyama cures us of the manic rhetoric of digital utopians and reinvigorates us with a deeply people-centric view of social change. Contrasting the outlandish claims of tech zealots with stories of people like Patrick Awuah, a Microsoft millionaire who left his engineering job to open Ghana's first liberal arts university, and Tara Sreenivasa, a graduate of a remarkable South Indian school that takes impoverished children into the high-tech offices of Goldman Sachs and Mercedes-Benz, *Geek Heresy* is a heartwarming reminder that it's human wisdom, not machines, that move our world forward.

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Editorial Review

Review

"High-tech insider Kentaro Toyama's compulsively readable manifesto will change minds about all those new technological quick-fixes for poverty. From previous claims for radio and TV to today's claims for broadband, he convincingly shows that technological solutions are neither so new nor so quick. Technology does not solve problems; people do, Toyama reminds us. He balances his refreshing skepticism about technological utopias with inspiring faith in the motivation and creativity of human beings."

--**William Easterly, professor of economics, NYU, and author of *The Tyranny of Experts***

"Everyone from field staff and managers to researchers and funders will benefit from his unique perspective; geeks and non-geeks, alike. Finally, we have a book that can help temper our technology addiction with an approach guided by critical thought and practical application."--**Trina Gorman, Monitoring and**

Evaluation consultant

"If you find yourself even remotely optimistic about technology and development, you should read this book." -- **Chris Blattman, Associate Professor of Political Science & International and Public Affairs at Columbia University**

"It is notable... when a techie insider steps outside the tent to chastise his tribe at book length -- and has the gall to both criticize and dedicate the book to his former boss, Bill Gates." -- **Anand Giridharadas, The New York Times**

"Toyama lays down eloquently his bone of contention that technology merely amplifies the human condition." —***New Indian Express***

"Toyama's research reminds us that there are very few one-size-fits-all solutions. If technology is going to improve the lives of the world's poorest, it must be grounded in a deep understanding of human behavior and an appreciation for cultural differences." —**Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft and co-chair of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

"Read this book! With engaging stories and penetrating insight, Toyama reveals that even the most powerful technologies can't cure our social ills, and he inspires us toward a more deeply human kind of progress."—**Ben Mezrich, author of *Accidental Billionaires***

"Controversial yet inspiring...*Geek Heresy* is a must read for anyone who is passionate about social change...Everyone from field staff and managers to researchers and funders will benefit from his unique perspective; geeks and non-geeks, alike. Finally, we have a book that can help temper our technology addiction with an approach guided by critical thought and practical application."—***Global South Development Magazine***

Winner of the 2016 PROSE Award in Business, Finance & Management

"It is notable...when a techie insider steps outside the tent to chastise his tribe at book length — and has the gall to both criticize and dedicate the book to his former boss, Bill Gates. Kentaro Toyama, a computer

scientist who once ran a lab for Microsoft Research, seems determined to burn his bridge to the technology world with *Geek Heresy: Rescuing Social Change from the Cult of Technology*... The book takes a spike-studded tire iron to the efforts by technology entrepreneurs and their enablers to reimagine how we eat, learn, heal, govern and battle poverty.”—**Anand Giridharadas**, *New York Times*

“In this incisive book, Toyama cures us of the manic rhetoric of digital utopians and reinvigorates us with a deeply people-centric view of social change. ...*Geek Heresy* is a heartwarming reminder that it's human wisdom, not machines, that move our world forward.” —**National Geographic Online**

“Everyone working in any facet of education and educational nonprofits needs to read *Geek Heresy: Rescuing Social Change From the Cult of Technology*; put down whatever other books you're reading—you are reading, right?—and get a copy of this one.” —**Seliger & Associates**

From the Inside Flap

After a decade designing technologies meant to address education, health, and global poverty, award-winning computer scientist Kentaro Toyama came to a difficult conclusion: Even in an age of amazing technology, social progress depends on human changes that gadgets can't deliver.

Computers in Bangalore are locked away in dusty cabinets because teachers don't know what to do with them. Mobile phone apps to spread hygiene practices in Africa fail to improve health. Executives in Silicon Valley evangelize novel technologies at work even as they send their children to Waldorf schools that ban electronics. And, four decades of incredible innovation in America have done nothing to turn the tide of rising poverty and inequality. Why then do we keep hoping that technology will solve our greatest social ills?

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About the Author

Kentaro Toyama is W. K. Kellogg Associate Professor at University of Michigan's School of Information and a fellow of the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values at MIT. Until 2009, he was assistant managing director of Microsoft Research India, which he co-founded in 2005. At MSR India, he started the Technology for Emerging Markets research group, which conducts interdisciplinary research to understand how the world's poorer communities interact with electronic technology and to invent new ways for technology to support their socio-economic development. The award-winning group is known for projects such as MultiPoint, Text-Free User Interfaces, and Digital Green.

Toyama co-founded the IEEE/ACM International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD) to provide a global platform for rigorous academic research in this field. He is also co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Information Technologies and International Development*. Prior to his time in India, Toyama researched computer vision and multimedia at Microsoft Research in Redmond, WA, USA and Cambridge, UK, and taught mathematics at Ashesi University in Accra, Ghana. Toyama graduated from Yale with a PhD in Computer Science and from Harvard with a BS in Physics. He was born in Tokyo and raised in both Japan and the United States. He lives in Ann Arbor.

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Jennifer Darby:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite publication and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the guide entitled *Geek Heresy: Rescuing Social Change from the Cult of Technology*. Try to make the book *Geek Heresy: Rescuing Social Change from the Cult of Technology* as your pal. It means that it can being your friend when you experience alone and beside those of course make you smarter than before. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you personally. The book makes you far more confidence because you can know anything by the book. So , let's make new experience in addition to knowledge with this book.

Cora Morrell:

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