



The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility

By Stewart Brand

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Using the designing and building of the *Clock of the Long Now* as a framework, this is a book about the practical use of long time perspective: how to get it, how to use it, how to keep it in and out of sight. Here are the central questions it inspires: How do we make long-term thinking automatic and common instead of difficult and rare? Discipline in thought allows freedom. One needs the space and reliability to predict continuity to have the confidence not to be afraid of revolutions. Taking the time to think of the future is more essential now than ever, as culture accelerates beyond its ability to be measured. Probable things are vastly outnumbered by countless near-impossible eventualities. Reality is statistically forced to be extraordinary; fiction is not allowed this freedom. This is a potent book that combines the chronicling of fantastic technology with equally visionary philosophical inquiry.

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The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility By Stewart Brand Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The image of our planet on the cover of Brand's Whole Earth Catalog communicated a powerful symbol of the big picture. Brand's new, mind-stretching book challenges readers to get outside themselves and combat the short-term irresponsible thinking that has led to environmental destruction and social chaos. Brand also eloquently urges us to distill and preserve knowledge. Though we seem to live in an age of information overload (each new U.S. president leaves behind more papers than all the previous ones combined), Brand contends that we actually inhabit an age of rapid information loss. Because of changing storage media, as one researcher has quipped, "digital information lasts foreverAor five years, whichever comes first." Time capsules don't solve the problem, for 70% of them are lost almost immediately after being sealed. Brand envisages two monuments that will incorporate the long view into our common consciousness. The first is a giant, exquisitely slow clock. It would be big enough to walk around in, and it would display the year, positions of the sun and moon, generations and millennia. The second is the "Ten-Thousand Year Library," a vast underground labyrinth of books. Here we'd preserve enormous amounts of knowledge from history and other long-perspective disciplines. These ideas deserve more than 15 minutes of fame. Quotable quotes, plentiful paradoxes and humane values make this a book to be savored and discussedAslowly. (June) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Touted as "the least recognized most influential thinker in America," Brand, creator of The Whole Earth Catalog, wears that mantle with aplomb in his latest offering. He takes on civilization's "pathologically short attention span" with a proposal to encourage us all to assume long-term responsibility for the continuation of the human species. How to do this? By creating both a myth and a mechanism with which to counter our short focus these days, which Brand names as the core of the problem. He spends the remainder of this rumination clarifying that thought and outlining the details of the myth and mechanism that he suggests as a catalyst: a clock that ticks once a year, bongs once a century, and cuckoos but once a millennium. The Clock of the Long Now is both fascinating and, yes, maybe just a bit revolutionary and is most likely to find a suitable home in academic and larger public libraries with readers who are fervent in the desire to see us go on. [See also Brand's "Escaping the Digital Age," LJ 2/1/99, p. 46-48.AEd.]AGeoff Rotunno, "Valley Voice" Newspaper, Goleta, C.

-AGeoff Rotunno, "Valley Voice" Newspaper, Goleta, CA

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Review

Zen master Taisen Deshimaru said that time is not a line, but a series of now-points. Stewart Brand challenges us to rethink the way we conceive of those now-points.

Brand cofounded Global Business Network, founded and edited the Whole Earth Catalog and has written several well received articles and books. His involvements in the Well and the Electronic Frontier Foundation are legendary, as is the company he keeps: Computer designer Danny Hillis, avant-garde musician Brian Eno, Institute of the Future spokesman Paul Saffo, *Release 1.0* creator Esther Dyson and Lotus founder Mitch Kapor are all involved in Brand's Long Now Foundation.

The book's chapters are disconnected explorations of the book's subtitle: *Time and Responsibility*. Brand borrows the Greek definition of two kinds of time. Kairos, opportunity or the propitious moment, is the time of cleverness. Chronos, eternal or ongoing time, is the time of wisdom. The Long Now Foundation seeks to promote slower, better thinking of the chronos variety.

Brand argues that our kairotic lives have grown increasingly complex and hurried in this century. In the amped-up rush of "Internet time," we often fail to consider anything beyond the immediate now and think of the present in terms of today, this week, this product cycle. Brand would like to extend our thinking to the next 10,000 years, and he even adopts a new calendaring convention, in which 1999 becomes 01999. The Long Now Foundation is building a physical clock (a prototype is pictured in the book) to reflect a measure of the 10,000-year now. This clock-library is meant to be a cultural institution, but details of the mechanical clock are sketchy at best. Brand never describes exactly what the clock will be; rather, he suggests what form such a mechanical clock could take and theorizes about the societal improvements such a device could inspire. Included in his broad wish list: time capsules, digital archives, letters to the future.

Beyond these vague hypotheticals, Brand practices what he preaches. He says he doesn't want a short-term revolution but rather infinite responsibility, which requires serious reflection and careful planning. He invites readers to contribute their own clock ideas at www.longnow.org.

Thinking in terms of a 10,000-year now may pay off. Brand recounts how the Swedish Navy received a letter from the country's forestry department in 01980, informing the bureaucrats that the lumber they requested to build ships was ready. Apparently in 01829 the Swedish Parliament anticipated a future shortage of lumber, and, recognizing that it would take 150 years for oaks to mature, set about with long-range plans to deliver the wood. Although the Navy doesn't need many wooden ships these days, the new forests are good for the environment.

Of course, Brand is not alone in suggesting that we need to think about the future. But his call for sustained endeavor, long-term introspection and cultural dialogue is thought-provoking, even if his scattered musings aren't united by a common thread.

While the book's philosophical tone might not be the stuff best-sellers are made of, *The Clock of the Long Now* convincingly articulates the necessity of thinking about time in a new way and the importance of patience. After all, you can always improve things as long as you're prepared to wait.

– Diane Anderson Lehrer

Other New Titles of Interest

Howard Aiken: Portrait of a Computer Pioneer

By I. Bernard Cohen (MIT Press, \$35)

An examination of the life of the Harvard professor who created the IBM Automatic Sequence Controlled Calculator in 1944 – and helped launch the computer age. -- *From The Industry Standard*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joan Stauffer:

Book is to be different per grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As you may know that book is very important for us. The book *The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility* seemed to be making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The reserve *The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility* is not only giving you much more new information but also to get your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your own personal spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship while using book *The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility*. You never really feel lose out for everything in the event you read some books.

Ronald Fowler:

You are able to spend your free time to see this book this book. This *The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility* is simple to deliver you can read it in the area, in the beach, train in addition to soon. If you did not possess much space to bring the particular printed book, you can buy the particular e-book. It is make you better to read it. You can save often the book in your smart phone. Thus there are a lot of benefits that you will get when you buy this book.

Darrell Guess:

Is it you actually who having spare time after that spend it whole day through watching television programs or just lying on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This *The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility* can be the reply, oh how comes? It's a book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your spare time by reading in this completely new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

Lindsay Washington:

Reading a reserve make you to get more knowledge from this. You can take knowledge and information originating from a book. Book is composed or printed or descriptive from each source this filled update of news. In this modern era like now, many ways to get information are available for you. From media social just like newspaper, magazines, science guide, encyclopedia, reference book, novel and comic. You can add your knowledge by that book. Are you hip to spend your spare time to open your book? Or just in search of the *The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility* when you required it?

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