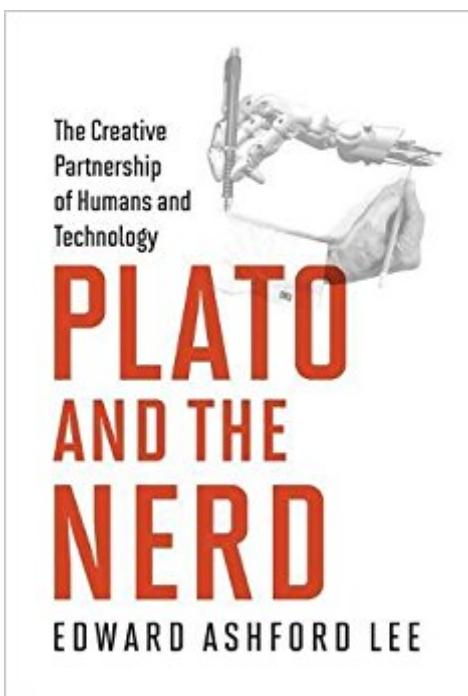The book was found

Plato And The Nerd: The Creative Partnership Of Humans And Technology (MIT Press)

Synopsis

In this book, Edward Ashford Lee makes a bold claim: that the creators of digital technology have an unsurpassed medium for creativity. Technology has advanced to the point where progress seems limited not by physical constraints but the human imagination. Writing for both literate technologists and numerate humanists, Lee makes a case for engineering -- creating technology -- as a deeply intellectual and fundamentally creative process. Explaining why digital technology has been so transformative and so liberating, Lee argues that the real power of technology stems from its partnership with humans. Lee explores the ways that engineers use models and abstraction to build inventive artificial worlds and to give us things that we never dreamed of -- for example, the ability to carry in our pockets everything humans have ever published. But he also attempts to counter the runaway enthusiasm of some technology boosters who claim everything in the physical world is a computation -- that even such complex phenomena as human cognition are software operating on digital data. Lee argues that the evidence for this is weak, and the likelihood that nature has limited itself to processes that conform to today's notion of digital computation is remote.Lee goes on to argue that artificial intelligence's goal of reproducing human cognitive functions in computers vastly underestimates the potential of computers. In his view, technology is coevolving with humans. It augments our cognitive and physical capabilities while we nurture, develop, and propagate the technology itself. Complementarity is more likely than competition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lee's book is a brilliant articulation of the unique and increasingly important role technology plays in the evolution of mankind. He offers a deeply optimistic perspective with clarity and intellectual rigor without ever losing accessibility. (Janos Sztipanovits, E. Bronson Ingram Distinguished Professor of Engineering, Vanderbilt University)Edward Ashford Lee has written a wise and witty book that is truly delightful to read, arguing beautifully for the deep connection between human cognition and technology. (Schahram Dustdar, Professor of Computer Science, TU Wien, Austria)In every decent bookstore, you find shelves full of volumes written by top mathematicians, physicists, and biologists explaining the state of the art in their field and its impact on the human condition. This book is important because it is high time for computer scientists and engineers to do the same. (Thomas A. Henzinger, President, IST Austria)

Edward Ashford Lee is Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences at the University of California, Berkeley, where he has taught and researched digital technology and computer science for more than thirty years. He was born and grew up in Puerto Rico and studied at Yale, MIT, and Berkeley. He has coauthored several textbooks on topics including digital communication, signal processing, embedded systems, and software modeling. This is his first book for a general audience.

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