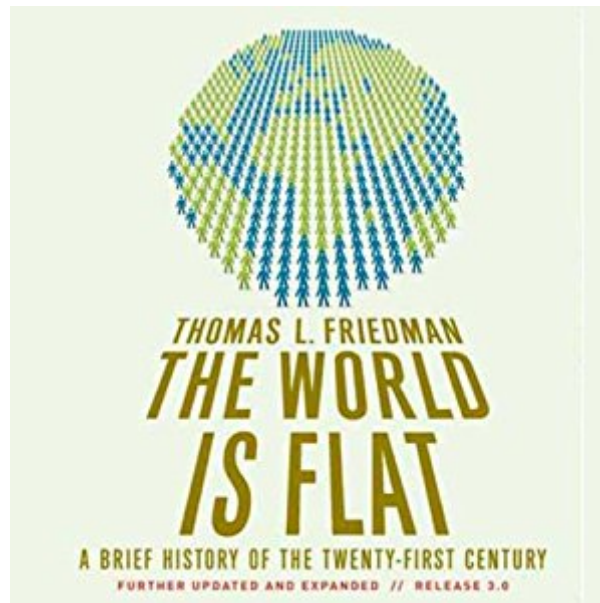




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The World Is Flat: Further Updated And Expanded



Synopsis

When scholars write the history of the world twenty years from now, what will they say was the most crucial development in the first few years of the twenty-first century? The attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11 and the Iraq war? Or the convergence of technology and events that allowed India, China, and so many other countries to become part of the global supply chain for services and manufacturing, creating an explosion of wealth in the middle classes of the world's two biggest nations? And with this "flattening" of the globe, has the world gotten too small and too fast for human beings and their political systems to adjust in a stable manner?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I haven't even finished the book yet and i'm already regretting not having come across it sooner. This is something that should be required reading in high school, at the least. The book is well written, and the story flows in a nice way (so far at least) that keeps the reader interested. Unless you are some backwards Luddite then I would almost be willing to guarantee that this book will help you to understand the world as it is evolving to be, quite aside from how many people may have seen it coming, or even wanted it to be.

Well before I read this book I was a firm believer that outsourcing offered no benefits to the US, and it was simply taking jobs away. This book provided me with overwhelming evidence that outsourcing does have a negative effect in the short term, or long term only if you try to be resistant to the idea

and that outsourcing should be seen as the a oportunity for to improve ourself as a country. But the problem lies in that fact that many US workers have simply become accustomed to the same jobs not wanting to improve or change and expect that the world would do the same. Outsourcing and globalization are coming and nothing and nobody will be able to stop it, resistance to change might delay it, but will not stop it, because it drivin by the ambition of human wanting a better life.

In reading "The World is Flat" I tripped across a whole field of knowledge that I had never considered before, that was hidden in plain sight- the mechanisms by which the world-wide web and the internet have knit the world's economies ever more closely together. I learned about business processes, and about unfolding opprotunities and challenges for developing and developed country governments, businesses and individuals. The guy's a journalist, and therefore prone to over-generalization I'm sure, but Friedman is a clear and articulate writer, fun to read, and he makes complex ideas accessible to the average intelligent person. Not to mention, Friedman's analysis is built around an extensive series of interviews with people in the government and private sectors. They are mostly elites. I guess you get that kind of access when you're a famous columnist for the New York Times, but me, I'm a teacher and this is probably the closest I'll ever get to hearing how things look to these people from their own particular vantage points. Fun. On the other hand, through the last quarter or so of the book Friedman analyzes the ways in which the high tech revolution has empowered groups like al Qaeda. He's never convincing here, but one thread of reasoning is particularly discouraging. That is, how do extremists generate popular support? Friedman argues that because communication is now broad and instantaneous, it makes the job of the demagogue all the easier. He's probably right about that- look at the violence surrounding the publicity for that Youtube video insulting the Prophet. friedman then spend a lot of ink analyzing the dysfuntion of many Muslim societies, and Arab societies in particular. That generates a lot of fodder for al Qaeda et al. The problem for me is that, if there's dysfuntion on our side of the relationship with the Muslim world, you wouldn't know much about it from this book (or much of Friedman's work). For example, while he does briefly mention our unqualified support for Israel, he never cites the invasion of Iraq as a catalyst for anger. Huh? This book was written in 2005. Hard to explain that. Peaceful relations will be hard to develop as long as we are not willing to take responsibility for our own short-comings. Unfortunately, not much sign of that here. Despite that, get the book, and do what I did. Enjoy 400 pages of great reading and then put the book down for something else.

Reading this book is like looking at the writing on the walls of a college washroom stall. While it

offers plenty nuggets of wisdom and brilliant ideas, it is difficult to enjoy it on a continuous basis due to a poor structure and a lack of focus. I think the content of the book would have been better consumed in the format of a documentary film since the strength is really on interviews and first hand impressions rather than research and supporting data. The author offers interesting views from conversations with people at the frontline of globalization and his own experience travelling around the world. As a result, it describes well using examples and anecdotes how the shift in geopolitics and advancements in technology is creating a level playground for developed and developing countries. Considering the time it was first published, it is a thought provoking piece. There are allegations and insinuations made here and there about republicans and George W. Bush, but that is not a big issue to me though I do not necessarily agree with his views. IMHO, the arrangement of the chapters undermines some key messages it tries to deliver. For example, the author has several valuable and important points in the last chapters ("the unflat world"), but by the time I got there I was already too fatigued to take it in. In addition, some chapters not related to the core arguments could have been edited down or taken out (e.g. the section about distraction in an information age). Overall I recommend reading it if you can borrow it. I would recommend reading the first four chapters then skip to chapter 15-17.

For a long time now, I have often wondered why the best economies of the West have developed rigour mortis with record debt levels, rising unemployment, loss of jobs offshore and falling living standards. For many of us, this economic jigsaw has been impossible to solve.. "The World Is Flat" is a book that cuts away all the gobbledegook of crafty politicians and oblique talking economists. Friedman gives a crystal clear explanation of why China and India have commenced a meteoric rise to the top of world's economic summit.. At the same time, he lays out the guilt sheet of how the once mega economies of America and Europe have failed. The big question to be answered in the future is will America and Europe sit up and take stock before the tsunami of the Indian and Chinese economies swamp them. Friedman's book is a great read-realistic and very unsettling for Western economies. Maurice

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