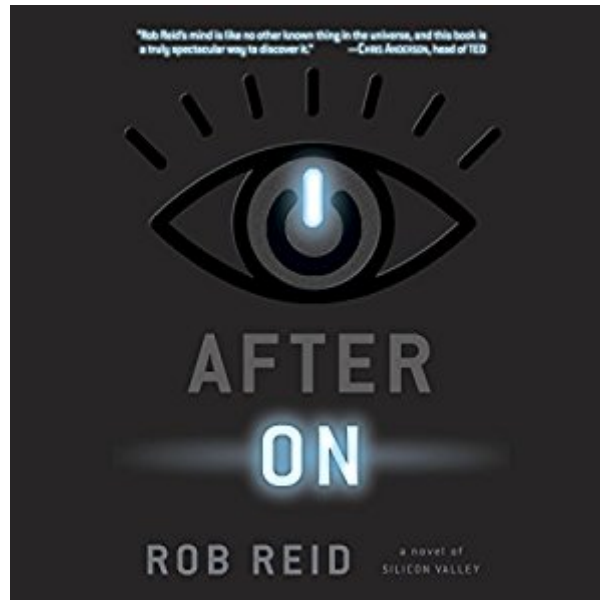




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After On: A Novel Of Silicon Valley



Synopsis

The definitive novel of today's Silicon Valley, *After On* flash-captures our cultural and technological moment with up-to-the-instant savvy. Matters of privacy and government intrusion, post-Tinder romance, nihilistic terrorism, artificial consciousness, synthetic biology, and much more are tackled with authority and brash playfulness by New York Times best-selling author Rob Reid. Meet Phluttr - a diabolically addictive new social network and a villainess, heroine, enemy, and/or bestie to millions. Phluttr has ingested every fact and message ever sent to, from, and about her innumerable users. Her capabilities astound her makers - and they don't even know the tenth of it. But what's the purpose of this stunning creation? Is it a front for something even darker and more powerful than the NSA? A bid to create a trillion-dollar market by becoming "The UberX of Sex"? Or a reckless experiment that could spawn the digital equivalent of a middle-school mean girl with enough charisma, dirt, and cunning to bend the entire planet to her will? Phluttr has it in her to become the greatest gossip, flirt, or matchmaker in history. Or she could cure cancer, bring back *Seinfeld*, then start a nuclear war. Whatever she does, it's not up to us. But a motley band of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and engineers might be able to influence her. *After On* achieves the literary singularity - fusing speculative satire and astonishing reality into a sharp-witted, ferociously believable, IMAX-wide view of our digital age. Narrated by Sean Kenin and January LaVoy, with: Felicia Day: NETGRRRL.COM Patrick Rothfuss: Special Field Operative Brock Hogan John Hodgman: Charles Henry Higgensworth III Tom Merritt: voice of The New York Times Jesse Cox: Whistle Blowings Blog Leo Laporte: voice of The San Francisco Chronicle

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After writing a book about attending business school, then one about the founders of the Internet, and then a sci-fi comedy; Rob Reid stays true to form by avoiding any form with his new book, *After On*. Reading a pre-release copy, I had no spoiler effect from book blurbs or reviews so I kept wondering - is it a thriller, a near future sci-fi, or maybe a horror novel? It turns out to be a bit of each, combined to create a great story while raising fundamental, and sometimes frightening, concerns about humanity's technological path. He mixes today's cutting edge tech with current social, legal and engineering directions and it can be unnerving. For people in the tech world, characters they know will frequently emerge. Or characters they think they know. Zuba is my favorite, resembling some of the brightest people I've ever met.

I'm trying to not identify too closely to some of the scum characters, but they are not really farfetched. And Pugwash lives! (Don't try to parse.) Finishing the story leaves you second-guessing all kinds of current research and services. Is this site's Terms of Service really acceptable at all? What choice have we? How far lost is our legal system? How irrelevant or just misguided is our government? Should we clamp down on tech now? How could we? How much of a crap shoot is our future really? Not food for thought, more like a banquet. The idea of a super AI has some very smart people alarmed. Stephen Hawking warned, "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race." Elon Musk mused that "we are summoning the demon." Read *After On* for an alternative scenario. Disclosure: Rob is a friend, I read an early copy, and I'm enjoying the final version.

I must start by apologizing to my wife. I kept waking her up by truly laughing out loud while reading *After On*. Reid has a brilliant way of creating funny situations while introducing the reader to a lot of what's next on the minds of futurists in technology and biology (and where those two meet). He wraps a story around Artificial Intelligence, Synthetic Biology and Quantum Computing that is fun, exciting and funny, and might just scare you as you think about our not too distant future.

These days we hear luminaries from Stephen Hawking to Elon Musk debate whether AI will become humanity's greatest achievement or final catastrophe. But no one has ever predicted the scenario that unfolds in *After On*. But once you read it, it dawns on you that it might just unfold this way -- in a

future full of brilliance, absurdity, pettiness, sex, and hilarity. You won't ever check Facebook with innocence again. And Facebook just found its next playbook.

Not to sound like city correspondent Stefan from SNL, but...This one's got everything. Hack VCs, well-meaning micro-VCs and angels, desperate startups, canny founders, the fatigued viewpoint of Dot-Bomb survivors, the new City kids. Some likable characters, some detestable ones, and some you like though you know you ought to hate them. All the hot tech areas and toys and zeitgeist. An emergent human-like AI from a smarmy social / hookup web service who models herself on 8th-grade cool-girl cliques. Spooks and an uber-uber shadow government entity called The Authority. Omni-surveillance. Everything bad (and good!) about social networking. A possibly existential arms race for super AI. High-end design types whose concerns are transcendently abstract and pretentious. Novel and credible scientific conjectures about several disparate fields, including a theory of consciousness and the multiple-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics vis-a-vis quantum computing. The Fermi Paradox. The Simulation Hypothesis. The Fine-Tuning Argument. Nuclear brinksmanship. Terrorist plots, bioterror. Pascal's Wager. Ethics. The word "artisanal." Throw Neal Stephenson (particularly early stuff) in a blender with Chuck Palahniuk, Doug Coupland, and Daniel Suarez. And William Hertling. Season to taste with the output of Breaking Smart, Next Big Future, a random sampling Hacker News. Sprinkle with Charlie Nox. Wave a vial of extract of *synsepalum dulcificum* (miraculin) over the glass like you would vermouth over a proper martini. Serve chilled over perfectly spherical dry ice cubes in a co-branded OkCupid and Singularity University martini glass. Greatness! All steeped in Valley and startup history, culture and sooo au contemps. Delivered in smart, witty, slightly snarky prose that's always fun and frequently funny. Lots of cultural critique mixed with good writing and a good story. Yes there's a bit of fan-service, but it's fan-everything and slightly hipster in its irony. I love this book. It bleeds relevance and humorous insight from every page, and has enough tech "meat" on its bones to satisfy. This isn't near-future; it's today. Or tomorrow. Next week at the latest. After On is now one of my new all-time favorites.

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