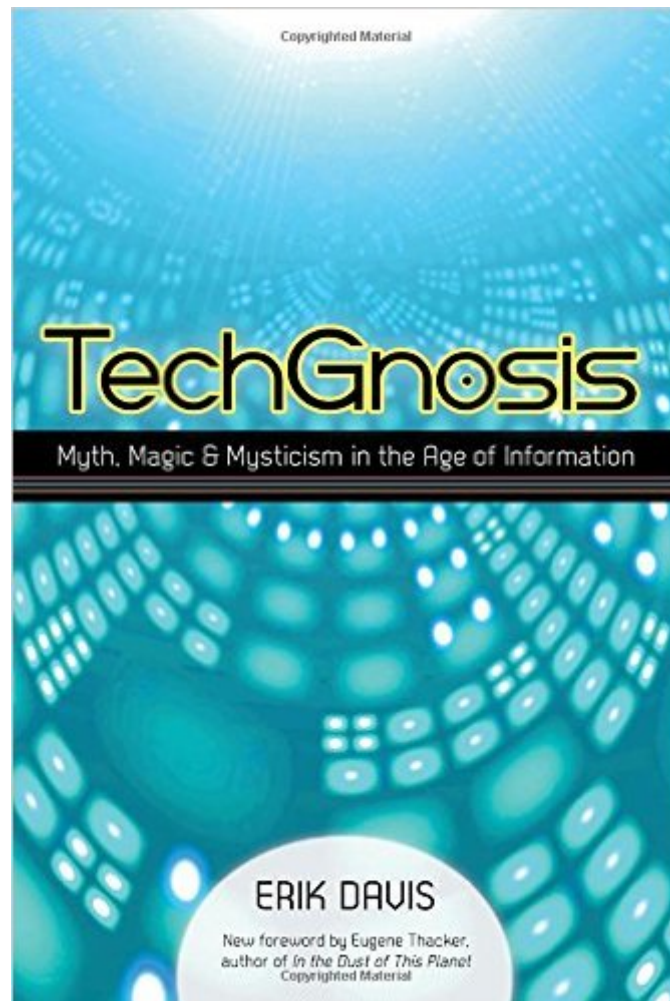


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TechGnosis: Myth, Magic, And Mysticism In The Age Of Information



Synopsis

How does our fascination with technology intersect with the religious imagination?

In *TechGnosis* "a cult classic now updated and reissued with a new afterword" Erik Davis argues that while the realms of the digital and the spiritual may seem worlds apart, esoteric and religious impulses have in fact always permeated (and sometimes inspired) technological communication. Davis uncovers startling connections between such seemingly disparate topics as electricity and alchemy; online roleplaying games and religious and occult practices; virtual reality and gnostic mythology; programming languages and Kabbalah. The final chapters address the apocalyptic dreams that haunt technology, providing vital historical context as well as new ways to think about a future defined by the mutant intermingling of mind and machine, nightmare and fantasy.

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Customer Reviews

Erik Davis has proposed that forms of communication shape social and individual consciousness of reality. IMHO, *Techgnosis* is worth another look now that social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) has spread so rampantly across our culture. The tracks of what we have followed tends now to define what is presented to us. In a nutshell, "Different forms of communication -- oracular performance, writing, print, television, email - shape social and individual consciousness along specific lines, creating unique networks of perceptions, experiences, and interpersonal possibilities that help shape the social construction of reality. From this it follows that when a culture's technical structure of communication mutates quickly and significantly, both social and individual "reality" are

in for a bit of a ride. ...The social imagination leaps into the breach, unleashing a torrent of speculation, at once cultural, metaphysical, technical, and financial. These speculations inevitably take on a utopian and feverish edge. ...However much we aspire to embody the rationalism of our machines, we cannot escape this feedback loop between *techne* [sic] and dream."Categorized under Technology, *Techgnosis* is rich with the name-dropping, "Spunk and Bite" style, and mystical leanings that may appeal to Grunge crowds, old New Agers, and intellectuals. Oh, and it is of interest to historians, communication and media technology students, information technologists, millennialists, conspiracy theorists, and religious seekers.Keep in mind this was originally written before the turn of 2000, even before the Wachowski brothers brought us *The Matrix*. I first read it in '98, when it helped me blaze a few new trails in my path. But there's plenty of thought here with staying power.

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