

Recommended Reading List: *Technology*

<https://www.grc.qld.gov.au/homepage/108/library-lovers-book-group-online>

Fiction

***This Fragile Earth* / Susannah Wise 2020**

What if the world stopped working? Not long from now, in a recognisable yet changed London, Signy and Matthew lead a dull, difficult life. They've only really stayed together for the sake of their six year old son, Jed. Then their phones stop working. They aren't able to pay for anything. Even the smart door to their flat won't open. Matthew assumes that this is just a momentary glitch but when the electricity and gas and water are cut off. It's clear that something is very wrong. London is no longer safe. People are going missing. Soldiers are on the streets. And amidst all this, Signy is determined to escape. She's going to take Jed out of the city to the small village where she grew up. She'll do whatever it takes, if it means her son is safe. But she has no idea what other people will do when the world finally breaks.

***Every Version of You* / Grace Chan 2022**

In late twenty-first century Australia, Tao-Yi and her partner Navin spend most of their time inside a hyper-immersive, hyper-consumerist virtual reality called Gaia. They log on, go to work, socialise, and even eat in this digital utopia. Meanwhile their aging bodies lie suspended in pods inside cramped apartments. Across the city, in the abandoned 'real' world, Tao-Yi's mother remains stubbornly offline, preferring instead to indulge in memories of her life in Malaysia. When a new technology is developed to permanently upload a human brain to Gaia, Tao-Yi must decide what is most important: a digital future, or an authentic past.

***Klara and the Sun* / Kazuo Ishiguro 2021**

This is the story of Klara, an Artificial Friend with outstanding observational qualities, who, from her place in the store, watches carefully the behaviour of those who come in to browse, and of those who pass in the street outside. She remains hopeful a customer will soon choose her, but when the possibility emerges that her circumstances may change for ever, Klara is warned not to invest too much in the promises of humans.

***Factory 19 : a novel* / Dennis Glover 2020**

Hobart, 2022: a city with a declining population, in the grip of a dark recession. A rusty ship sails into the harbour and begins to unload its cargo on the site of the once famous but now abandoned Gallery of Future Art, known to the world as GoFA. One day the city's residents are awoken by a high-pitched sound no one has heard for two generations: a factory whistle. GoFA's owner, world-famous billionaire Dundas Faussett, is creating his most ambitious installation yet. He's going to defeat technology's dominance over our lives by establishing a new Year Zero: 1948. Those whose jobs have been destroyed by Amazon and Uber and Airbnb are invited to fight back in the only way that can possibly succeed: by living as if the internet had never been invented. The hold of Bezos, Musk, Zuckerberg and their ilk starts to loosen as the revolutionary example of Factory 19 spreads. Can nostalgia really defeat the future? Can the little people win back the world? We are about to find out.

***I Hate the Internet* / Jarett Kobek 2016**

What if you told the truth and the whole world heard you? What if you lived in a country swamped with Internet outrage? What if you were a woman in a society that hated women? Set in the San Francisco of 2013, *I Hate the Internet* offers a hilarious portrayal of life amongst the victims of the digital boom. As billions of tweets fuel the city's gentrification and the human wreckage piles up, a group of friends suffers the consequences of being useless in a new world that despises the pointless and unprofitable.

***Invasion of Privacy : a novel / Christopher Reich* 2015**

Refusing to believe the official story behind her FBI agent husband's death, Mary Grant is pitted against a new generation of cutting-edge surveillance technology in America. Stonewalled by the FBI, Mary will be drawn into a deadly conspiracy that puts her in the crosshairs of the richest and most powerful men in America . . . and the newest and most terrifying surveillance system known to man.

***The Word Exchange / Alena Graedon* 2014**

In the not-so-distant future, the forecasted “death of print” has become a reality. Bookstores, libraries, newspapers, and magazines are things of the past, and we spend our time glued to handheld devices called Memes that not only keep us in constant communication but also have become so intuitive that they hail us cabs before we leave our offices, order takeout at the first growl of a hungry stomach, and even create a language in an online marketplace called the Word Exchange, where words are bought and sold.

Anana Johnson works with her father, Doug, at the North American Dictionary of the English Language (NADEL), where Doug works on the last edition that will ever be printed. Doug is a staunchly anti-Meme, anti-tech intellectual who fondly remembers the days when people used email to communicate—or even actually spoke to one another, for that matter. Doug disappears from the NADEL offices, leaving a single written clue: ALICE. It's a code word he devised to signal if he ever fell into harm's way.

Joined by Bart, her bookish NADEL colleague, Anana's search for Doug will take her into dark basements and subterranean passageways; the stacks and reading rooms of the Mercantile Library; and secret meetings of the underground resistance, the Diachronic Society. As Anana penetrates the mystery of her father's disappearance and a pandemic of decaying language called “word flu” spreads, *The Word Exchange* becomes a cautionary tale that is at once a technological thriller and a meditation on the high cultural costs of digital technology..

***Bleeding Edge / Thomas Pynchon* 2013**

It is 2001 in New York City and Maxine Tarnow is running a nice little fraud investigation business on the Upper West Side. When Maxine starts looking into the finances of a computer-security firm and its billionaire geek CEO, things begin rapidly to jam onto the subway and head downtown. She soon finds herself mixed up with a drug runner in an art deco motorboat, a professional nose obsessed with Hitler's aftershave, a neoliberal enforcer with footwear issues, plus elements of the Russian mob and various bloggers, hackers, code monkeys, and entrepreneurs, some of whom begin to show up mysteriously dead.

***Perfect People / Peter James* 2011**

Be careful what you wish for . . . John and Naomi are grieving the death of their four-year-old son from a rare genetic disorder. They desperately want another child, but they realize the odds of their next child contracting the same disease are high. Then they hear about geneticist Dr Leo Dettore. He has methods that can spare them the heartache of ever losing another child to any disease. At his clinic is where their nightmare begins. They should have realized something was wrong when they saw the list. Choices of eye colour, hair, sporting abilities. They can literally design their child. Now it's too late to turn back. Naomi is pregnant and already something is badly wrong . . . Mankind is facing its greatest challenge: obsolescence.

***The Fear Index / Robert Harris* 2011**

Dr Alex Hoffman is a legend. An American physicist once employed on the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland, he now uses a revolutionary and highly secret system of computer algorithms to trade on the world's financial markets. None of his rivals is sure how he does it, but somehow Hoffman's hedge fund, built around the standard measure of market volatility: the VIX or 'Fear Index', generates astonishing returns for his investors. Then, late one night, in his house beside Lake Geneva, an intruder disturbs Hoffman and his wife while they are asleep.

Non Fiction

Man-Made : How the Bias of the Past is Being Built into the Future / Tracey Spicer 2023

'Mum, I want a robot slave.' Broadcaster Tracey Spicer had an epiphany when her young son uttered these six words. Suddenly, her life's work fighting inequality seemed futile. What's the point in agitating to change the present, if bigotry is being embedded into our futures? And so began a quest to uncover who was responsible and hold them to account. Who is the ultimate villain? Big Tech, whose titans refuse to spend money to fix the problem? The world's politicians, who lack the will to legislate? Or should we all be walking into a hall of mirrors and taking a good, hard look at ourselves? This is a deeply researched, illuminating and gripping ride into an uncertain future, culminating in a resounding call to action that will shake the tech sector to its foundations.

Revealing Secrets : an Unofficial History of Australian Signals intelligence & the Advent of Cyber / John Blaxland & Clare Birgin 2023

This unofficial account of Australian Signals intelligence reveals the organisation's efforts to reveal the secrets of others. What is Australian signals intelligence? Why do we have a national signals intelligence agency and why are our three armed services involved? What do they all do and why is it controversial? And how significant are our ties with the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand, the formidable Five Eyes partnership? For a long time, much of the Australian Signals intelligence (or Sigint) story has been kept secret. *Revealing Secrets* unearths the fascinating story of the organisation that collects intelligence about foreign adversaries, and keeps our own national secrets safe, not forgetting the vital signals intelligence contribution of our three armed services. This book provides historical context, including how techniques used today for breaking codes draw on methods devised centuries earlier. It explains clearly what Sigint is, how it works and its connection with cyber. Security experts John Blaxland and Clare Birgin shine a light on the Australians whose efforts were for so long unknown and why they were so important to the country. They discuss the essential, and largely unheralded, contribution of women from before the Second World War to today. By lifting the veil on this hidden, frequently misunderstood, but absolutely integral part of Australian statecraft, *Revealing Secrets* deepens our understanding of the past, the present and what may lie ahead.

Deep Fakes and the Infocalypse / Nina Schick 2020

It will soon be impossible to tell what is real and what is fake. Recent advances in AI mean that by scanning images of a person (for example using Facebook), a powerful machine learning system can create new video images and place them in scenarios and situations which never actually happened. When combined with powerful voice AI, the results are utterly convincing. So-called 'Deep Fakes' are not only a real threat for democracy but they take the manipulation of voters to new levels. They will also affect ordinary people. This crisis of misinformation we are facing has been dubbed the 'Infocalypse'. Using her expertise from working in the field, Nina Schick reveals shocking examples of Deep Fakery and explains the dangerous political consequences of the Infocalypse, both in terms of national security and what it means for public trust in politics. She also unveils what it means for us as individuals, how Deep Fakes will be used to intimidate and to silence, for revenge and fraud, and how unprepared governments and tech companies are. As a political advisor to select technology firms, Schick tells us what we need to do to prepare and protect ourselves. Too often we build the cool technology and ignore what bad guys can do with it before we start playing catch-up. But when it comes to Deep Fakes, we urgently need to be on the front foot.

How to Fix the Future : staying human in the digital age / Andrew Keen 2018

In *How to Fix the Future*, Andrew Keen combines his experiences in Silicon Valley with extensive interviews and analysis to identify the strategies we need in order to tackle the huge challenges of this digital century, and shows how we have dealt with radical technological change in the past, especially after the Industrial Revolution. Travelling around the world, from India to Estonia, Germany to Singapore, he investigates the best (and worst) practices in five key areas - regulation, innovation, social responsibility, consumer choice and education - and concludes by examining whether we are seeing the beginning of the end of the America-centric digital world. Powerfully argued and deeply engaging, *How to Fix the Future* provides hope that the economic inequality, unemployment, erosion of privacy and individual alienation that the digital upheaval is causing may still be solvable, and that the future may yet become something that we can look forward to.

How I Met Your Father / Aminah Hart 2016

"A mother's unthinkable loss, an anonymous donor, a beloved baby and an unexpected love story"--Cover.

A heartwarming story of triumph after terrible tragedy, of finding love and happiness in a most unusual way - the extraordinary, back-to-front romance of IVF recipient Aminah Hart and her anonymous sperm donor, Scott Andersen.

Under the Microscope / Professor Earl Owen 2014

Under the Microscope is the story of an extraordinary man, his many life-changing inventions, and his exceptional life and special friendships. Born into a family of doctors on the paternal and maternal sides - with a birth defect that no one knew how to deal with, he was given a whopping dose of radiation, before anyone even knew what radiation treatment could do to a body, let alone a baby three days old. Earl Owen's medical parents, aunts and uncles failed to notice that as he grew he walked with a limp and had a very damaged leg. At eleven he endured a year of painful surgeries in an attempt to remedy his damaged bones. Whilst lying in bed in a dungeon room in a hospital over that year he decided he would grow up to be the best surgeon ever, one who would deal delicately and carefully with birth defects and would communicate with patients. Towards the end of that year he also started having daily piano lessons in that hospital and at age 20 had to decide whether to pursue a career as a concert pianist or a surgeon.

The Winter of our Disconnect : how three totally wired teenagers (and a mother who slept with her iPhone) pulled the plug on their technology and lived to tell the tale / Susan Maushart 2010

When journalist and commentator Susan Maushart first decided to pull the plug on all electronic media at home, she realised her children would have sooner volunteered to go without food, water or hair products. At ages 14, 15 and 18, her daughters and son didn't use media, they inhabited media. Just exactly as fish inhabit a pond. Gracefully. Unblinkingly. And utterly without consciousness or curiosity as to how they got there. Susan's experiment with her family was a major success and she found that having less to communicate with, her family is communicating more.

Books, Banks, Buttons, and Other Inventions From the Middle Ages / Chiara Frugoni 2003

The middle ages have often been depicted as a period in which life had few comforts. Diet and health were poor, learning was preserved only for the select few through the monasteries and even the nobility had to do without. Nonsense, says the great medieval scholar Chiara Frugoni, in this delightful examination of the many inventions we owe to the Middle Ages. This 'backward' period gave us printed books, spectacles, anaesthetics, pets, chequebooks, glazed windows, clocks, underwear, playing cards, the fireplace, universities and the wheelbarrow – inventions, items and ideas without which our lives would be poorer, more painful and definitely less healthy. What is revealed here is the unique character of the Middle Ages itself.