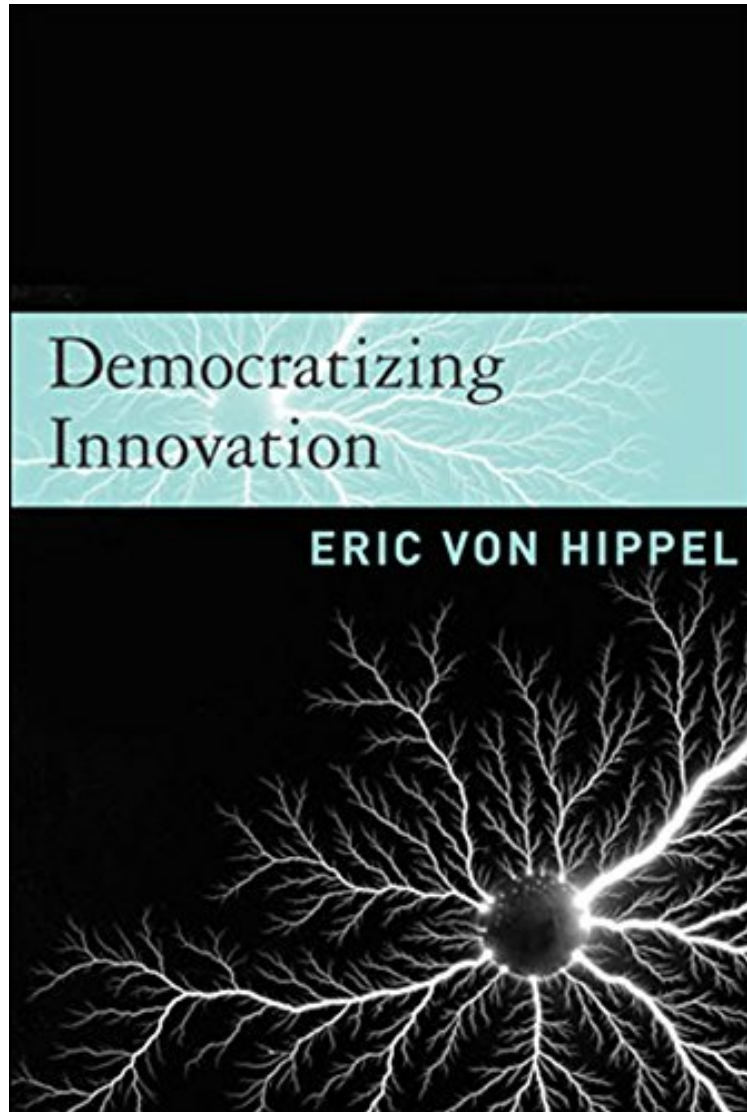


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Democratizing Innovation (MIT Press)

Eric von Hippel

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Eric von Hippel : Democratizing Innovation (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Democratizing Innovation (MIT Press):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Energetic Thesis, Immobile ExecutionBy Kevin L. NenstielThis book's first chapter justifies how "end users," which is you and I, have a moral and economic right to adapt commercial products for private use. Though conventional business wisdom demands innovation from "lead users," which is manufacturers, while end users consume, this ignores users' heterogeneous needs. Only writers and artists benefit from intellectual property controls; commerce is impeded. If the author stopped there, this would be an informative book.But instead of stopping at this satisfactorily instructive business philosophy, Eric von Hippel

vanishes into inscrutable swaths of higher math, static language, and slow-moving refutation that squanders his great early energy. His wordy later chapters aim to validate his introductory philosophy, replete with immobile prose translations of advanced calculus and protracted business terminology. After persuading me of his thesis, he proceeds to bore me into agreeing with the other side. Perhaps this book will energize business professors and patent attorneys to amend the received wisdom. But I can't imagine this book being very useful to people who actually manufacture anything or conduct business. Maybe I ought to utilize von Hippel's pro-innovation philosophy to write a book that actual business people and RD pioneers can apply to their own work. Because this stultifying, immobile discursion will only bore them into submission. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Paul S. Bethell I'm rating this on the basis of subjects I like, I haven't got to this one yet. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Needed more editing By Customer The concept behind this book is exciting. The first few chapters were well worth the read. Then it felt like a diet book where it is making the same point again and again to prove there is something behind the theory. What this book is: A good description as to how the customer/innovator symbiotic relationship propels innovation. What this book isn't: I just didn't need to be as long as it is. The point could have been made in 2/3s of the length. The repetition made it a far more academic book than the other writing style. This book is one of those where it is worth reading the first third to half and then the final chapter. It is worth reading, but not every page. Neil

Innovation is rapidly becoming democratized. Users, aided by improvements in computer and communications technology, increasingly can develop their own new products and services. These innovating users -- both individuals and firms -- often freely share their innovations with others, creating user-innovation communities and a rich intellectual commons. In *Democratizing Innovation*, Eric von Hippel looks closely at this emerging system of user-centered innovation. He explains why and when users find it profitable to develop new products and services for themselves, and why it often pays users to reveal their innovations freely for the use of all. The trend toward democratized innovation can be seen in software and information products -- most notably in the free and open-source software movement -- but also in physical products. Von Hippel's many examples of user innovation in action range from surgical equipment to surfboards to software security features. He shows that product and service development is concentrated among "lead users," who are ahead on marketplace trends and whose innovations are often commercially attractive. Von Hippel argues that manufacturers should redesign their innovation processes and that they should systematically seek out innovations developed by users. He points to businesses -- the custom semiconductor industry is one example -- that have learned to assist user-innovators by providing them with toolkits for developing new products. User innovation has a positive impact on social welfare, and von Hippel proposes that government policies, including RD subsidies and tax credits, should be realigned to eliminate biases against it. The goal of a democratized user-centered innovation system, says von Hippel, is well worth striving for. An electronic version of this book is available under a Creative Commons license.

Eric von Hippel has a penchant for identifying important aspects of technological innovation that run contrary to conventional wisdom and to the thrust of conventional scholarship. His work on the important role that users, rather than suppliers, play in the advance of technology casts the process in a new light. This book is an intellectual feast. (Richard R. Nelson, George Blumenthal Professor of International and Public Affairs, Business, and Law, Columbia University) In a concise 200 pages, von Hippel traces the empirical studies on user innovation, determining that between 10 and 40 percent of users engage in developing or modifying products. These 'lead users' are ahead of the curve and often create improvements that other users will want to share. (Harvard Business School Working Knowledge) Still, new patterns are emerging in some scattered yet suggestive areas of product design, studied by management expert, Eric von Hippel in *Democratizing Innovation*. 'Lead users' (the most zealous windsurfers who get new boards first and modify them, the most advanced builders experimenting with new materials like stressed-skin panels) often suggest or even create useful innovations that manufacturers adopt. (San Francisco Chronicle) The book puts its thesis well, with plenty of examples. (Financial (Australia)) The fruits of his labor are nicely summarized in *Democratizing Innovation*, a useful primer on what he calls 'user-centered innovation.' ... Despite its brevity, *Democratizing Innovation* is a heavyweight book, written with the lightness of touch you might expect from a regular contributor to the journal *Management Science*. But where innovation comes from and how value gets created are heavy questions for all companies in all industries. No innovation means no value added, and ultimately no profits. (The Financial Times) This is a book that should be required reading for every person in every automotive company who is involved in product development, be they marketers or engineers, manufacturers or managers. It is that important. (Automotive Design and Production) von Hippel has brought an important issue to the fore. (CIO Insight) Von Hippel presents a persuasive case for the benefits of encouraging lead users to innovate and a truly intriguing look at what they've contributed to the world so far. (BizEd) [von Hippel's] book looks at why users want customized products, why it is more advantageous for them rather than the manufacturer to make the changes, why they freely share their innovations with other, and the need for government to encourage user innovation by refining patent and intellectual protection legislation. It's a fascinating, little explored trend that he covers thoroughly. Although

his book is written in academic style, it offers lots of examples and provides an understanding of an important innovation in the world of innovation. (Globe and Mail)[von Hippel] shows that, in fields ranging from surgical instruments and software to kite surfing, customers often come up with new products or new ways of using old ones. Some companies encourage their customers to modify their merchandise. Others, however, do not: when a devoted user of Aibo, Sony's robot dog, wrote applications that would allow the Aibo to dance to music, Sony threatened the man with a lawsuit. (James Surowiecki New Yorker)The guru of customer-centered innovation blazes new ground in this masterpiece. He shows managers how to get the most out of a world where customers and communities pioneer new ideas and reconfigure what they buy. Other books tell you that co-creating innovations with customers is important -- Von Hippel tells you how to make it happen. (Philip Anderson, INSEAD Alumni Fund Professor of Entrepreneurship, and Director, International Centre for Entrepreneurship)Von Hippel provides us with a Rosetta Stone to innovation in the Internet age! He marshals a wide range of research findings to document and explain the major shift to user-centered innovation that is now well underway. He also shows managers and policymakers the most effective ways to adapt. (Nikolaus Franke, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration) Democratizing Innovation presents pathbreaking research to explain a major paradigm shift in innovation: users are displacing manufacturers to become the dominant force of innovation in many fields. I strongly recommend this brilliant, well-written book to researchers and managers who are passionate about the nature of successful innovation -- and how to achieve it! (Georg von Krogh, Director, Institute of Management, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland)About the AuthorEric von Hippel is Professor of Management of Innovation and Head of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Group at the MIT Sloan School of Management. He is the author of The Sources of Innovation.