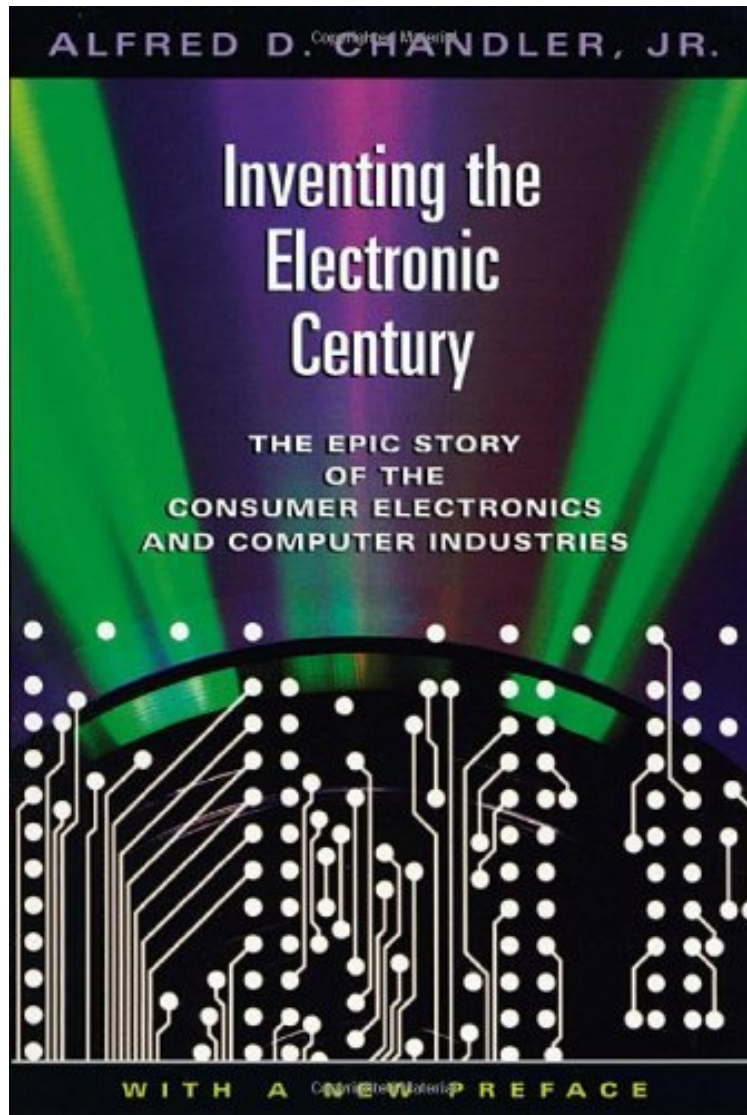


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Inventing the Electronic Century: The Epic Story of the Consumer Electronics and Computer Industries, With a New Preface (Harvard studies in business history ;)

Alfred D. Chandler Jr.

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Alfred D. Chandler Jr. : Inventing the Electronic Century: The Epic Story of the Consumer Electronics and Computer Industries, With a New Preface (Harvard studies in business history ;) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inventing the Electronic Century: The Epic Story of the Consumer Electronics and Computer Industries, With a New Preface (Harvard studies in business history ;):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excelent bookBy Eugenio VillarA detailed description of how the innovation from a bunch of companies developed electronics. The book ends with a surprising conclusion. Although electronics evolved during the XX century, its impact will be fully seen in the XXist, the electronics century1 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The brilliant strategy of the Japanese Companies...By Jose Ernesto PassosAlfred Chandler has organized the factual information of the key companies in the Consumer Electronics and Computer Industries during the second half of the XX century. The title of my review is a suggestion of another appropriate subtitle of this book.The subject is very complex, specially if we look at the technology involved. My major comment is: the author has a limited technical knowledge and this has limited the depth of his analyses, comments and conclusions. This does not invalidate the major conclusions that he has presented in this book.I think that it would be interesting to expand the story told in this book by studying/describing the evolution of the whole environment around these industries, including the engineering schools and research institutes that supply the brains to develop all the technology involved.The history of the electronics industry carry an important lesson, about concentration of skills and economic power in only one company (RCA). It was a good thing, while RCA was leading, but when it started to make major strategic mistakes it brought down the whole American Industry. The Japanese Industry used several companies to compete against American and European Companies, this created a whole environment, that included engineering schools, research facilities, several different companies where one could make a career and different ideas being tested and pursued at the same time. When you look at the capacity of inovation and development of new technologies of the japanese companies and their environment they were a lot more competitive. They created a competitive environment so agressive in Japan that western rivals were later decimated by them.The way American companies have managed the development of technologies should be better understood than is explored in this book. There is a pattern to be investigated, for it was in America that several technologies started, but there is a problem in the way this headstart is kept. Examples to be looked into: IBM dominance in computers, Xerox dominance in copiers, RCA in television (well discussed in this book). I think that is missing a description of who were the major brains and decision makers that lead those companies throughout this fast paced period. I would suggest that if we look at who are the persons making the decisions we would find important answers to the success of the Japanese. Example: what is the power and influence of the teams developing a new technology or products, what is the academic and technical background of the top managers in those companies, how do they handled investment decisions regarding product development, what is the philosophy pursued by them ...The lesson hidden in the history of the electronics industry is very important, when we look at the industrial policy in America in other industries, like Automobiles, where there is only two American Manufacturers, it is easy to see why Japanese companies are doing much better, they are following the same type of competitive organization in this industry... Ford and GM are going in the same direction of RCA... This will raise a very important question, in what industries does America plans to remain competitive in the future??? This will determine the long term stability of the American Democracy.One may have some points to criticize in this book, but the history told in this book should be better understood and deserves attention.One aspect related to the industries studied that should be brought to attention is the availability of information about the japanese industry due to the language barrier.2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. overstates Japanese achievementsBy W BoudvilleAs a new century starts, Chandler gives a summary of how consumer electronics and computing grew in the last century and indeed shaped many of the trends in the latter half. He starts by pointing out that consumer electronics is older than modern computing. It was the radio industry of the 20s and 30s. Which propelled Motorola and others to prominence.After World War 2 arose electronic computers. As opposed to earlier electromechanical gizmos. Chandler goes over the crucial inventions - the transistor, integrated circuit and microprocessor. And how decades of Moore's Law have driven these industries into everyday life.But sections of his book are jarring. These concern the growth of the Japanese electronics and computer companies. They purport to show how these companies grew to dominance in various market sectors, like memory. There is a distinct tone that they outdid their US counterparts, with deeper strategy and Japanese government assistance. While this book is printed in 2005, the tone completely neglects the 16 year stagnation in the Japanese economy. Including their technology companies.The book gives a few pages to describing Korean and Taiwanese companies, up to around 2000. There is no update to 2004-5. Which would say that the Koreans (Samsung) have grown hugely in memory. Certainly more so than the Japanese. Yes, in the 80s, Japan forced most US companies out of memory. But memory has proven to be a very fickle boom and bust market. Low profit margins over time. Chandler sees the Japanese "takeover" of memory as evidence of good planning and national industrial policy. But if anything, it is evidence of the contrary.While in consumer electronics, Samsung has also grown far stronger than Sony or Hitachi or ...In the important area of microprocessors, there is little emphasis that the US has not lost ground to Japan. If anything, it is Japan that has done so, with respect to other countries.The sections of the text that describe Japan have the feel of books written in the 80s, warning of a coming Japanese industrial supremacy. Never happened.

Consumer electronics and computers redefined life and work in the twentieth century. In *Inventing the Electronic Century*, Pulitzer Prize-winning business historian Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. traces their origins and worldwide

development. From electronics prime mover RCA in the 1920s to Sony and Matsushita's dramatic rise in the 1970s; from IBM's dominance in computer technology in the 1950s to Microsoft's stunning example of the creation of competitive advantage, this masterful analysis is essential reading for every manager and student of technology.

Thought provoking. Chandler develops the history of the consumer electronics and computer industries with the questioning attitude of a teacher: always searching for the lessons behind the story. (Andrew S. Grove, Chairman of the Board, Intel) Offers a rich cast of characters and companies, compelling stories, and deep understanding of economic forces. (Hal Varian, School of Information Management and Systems, University of California, Berkeley) About the Author Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., was Isidor Straus Professor of Business History at Harvard Business School.