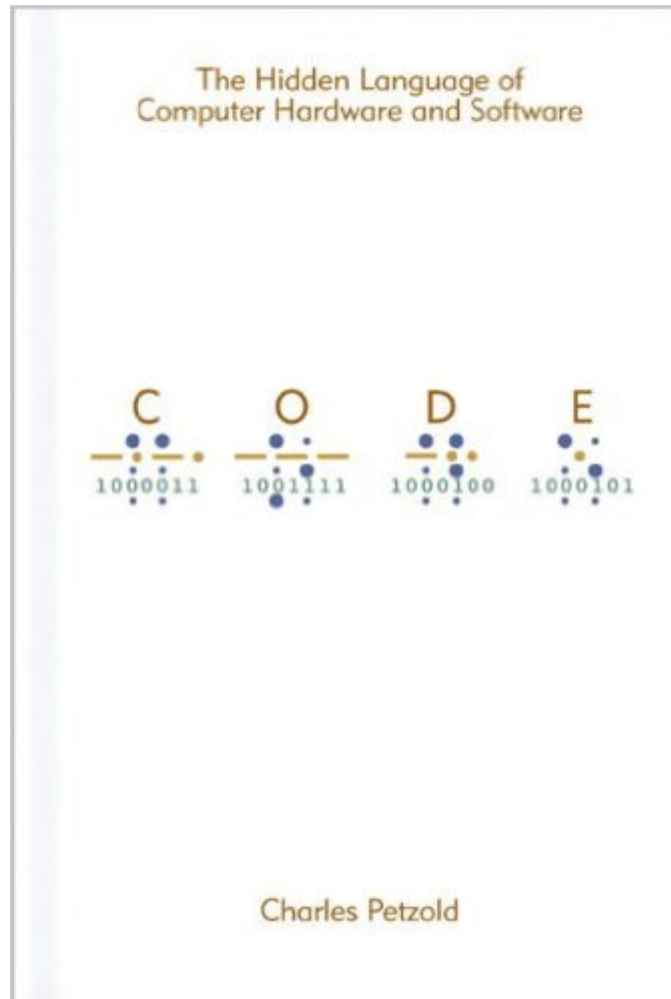


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# Code: The Hidden Language Of Computer Hardware And Software



## Synopsis

What do flashlights, the British invasion, black cats, and seesaws have to do with computers? In CODE, they show us the ingenious ways we manipulate language and invent new means of communicating with each other. And through CODE, we see how this ingenuity and our very human compulsion to communicate have driven the technological innovations of the past two centuries. Using everyday objects and familiar language systems such as Braille and Morse code, author Charles Petzold weaves an illuminating narrative for anyone who's ever wondered about the secret inner life of computers and other smart machines. It's a cleverly illustrated and eminently comprehensible story—and along the way, you'll discover you've gained a real context for understanding today's world of PCs, digital media, and the Internet. No matter what your level of technical savvy, CODE will charm you—and perhaps even awaken the technophile within.

## Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Microsoft Press; 1 edition (October 21, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0735611319

ISBN-13: 978-0735611313

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (347 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

I think that this is the best book that I have read all year. In some sense this is the book that I have been looking for for twenty-five years--the book that will enable me to understand how a computer does what it does. And--given the centrality of computers in our age--it has been a long wait. But now it is over. Charles Petzold (1999), Code: The Hidden Language of Computer Hardware and Software does a much better job than anything else I have ever seen in explaining computers--what they really are, and how they really work. Have you ever wondered just how your computers really

work? I mean, really, really work. Not as in "an electrical signal from memory tells the processor the number to be added," but what the electrical signal is, and how it accomplishes the magic of switching on the circuits that add while switching off the other circuits that would do other things with the number. I have. I have wondered this a lot over the past decades. Yet somehow over the past several decades my hunger for an explanation has never been properly met. I have listened to people explain how two switches wired in series are an "AND"--only if both switches are closed will the lightbulb light. I have listened to people explain how IP is a packet-based communications protocol and TCP is a connection-based protocol yet the connection-based protocol can ride on top of the packet-based protocol. Somehow these explanations did not satisfy. One seemed like answering "how does a car work?" by telling how in the presence of oxygen carbon-hydrogen bonds are broken and carbon dioxide and water are created. The other seemed like answering "how does a car work" by telling how if you step on the accelerator the car moves forward.

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