

Reviews for *How the Web Won*

“I doubt if anyone has had a greater impact on how people persuade, influence, and sell

online than Ken.” – *Drayton Bird*, Author of *Common Sense Direct and Digital Marketing*. Former Worldwide Creative Director and Vice Chairman, Ogilvy Direct

“God knows how many billions his alumni have made. Nobody anywhere has had such an impact. Read this book and understand before your competitors do.”

“Like getting a peek at the early side of the Big Bang...” – *Steve O’Keefe*, Author of *Publicity on the Internet*,

personally tutored Jeff Bezos on the fine points of how to sell books online

“For anyone curious how the web really came to be, *How the Web Won* provides an accurate, 360-degree view of the magic moment that will keep you engaged — and hoping for a sequel.”

“The man who built the bridge from offline to digital marketing...” – *Robert W. Bly*, Author, marketing

consultant, veteran copywriter

“No one has crossed the bridge from old-school direct response marketing to the new digital marketing world more successfully, completely, and authoritatively than Ken McCarthy. In fact, he did not just cross this bridge; Ken was one of its foremost architects and builders. Whether you are an old mail-order guy like me or a GenX/Y/Z marketer, you will love and learn from this book—sage advice and deep wisdom, as lived by the author for decades in the real world of business and commerce.”

“We are fortunate to have among us THE visionary pioneer who recognized what the World Wide Web really was and what it would become.” – *Dan Kennedy*, Consultant and author of the *No BS* business series (over 1 million copies sold)

“Fascinating, funny, and wildly entertaining.” – *Jonathan Mizel*, CEO, Cyberwave Media Inc., online business entrepreneur and thought leader since 1993

“A rare look at the decisions and events that shaped the internet into the commercial hub it is today...” – *Robert Skrob*, CEO, Membership Service, Inc. Author of *Retention Point* and *The Connector Effect*

“This book offers a rare look at the decisions and events that shaped the internet into the commercial hub it is today. The book stands apart by detailing the behind-the-scenes moments that drove innovation, highlighting how bold ideas and persistent efforts brought the web to life as a global marketplace.”

“An epic tale, well and conversationally told, offering deep-but-accessible insight into the evolution of our information superhighway.” – *The Chronogram Magazine, Anne Pyburn Craig*

“Fascinating and hard-hitting.” – Richard Koch,
Author of the million-copy bestseller *The 80/20 Principle*

“A stand-out read.” – BookLife (a division of Publishers Weekly)

“A stand-out read. McCarthy’s unique perspective and experience contributing to launching the World Wide Web brings decisive insight and authority to a lesser-known subject.

This slice of history hits at rarely discussed moments of ingenuity and invention, as McCarthy confronts myths about the web’s development, the evolution of its early equipment, and the funding sources that kickstarted its financial success... delivering remarkable accounts of a global phenomenon that transformed contemporary life.“

“5 out of 5 stars – If Michael Lewis and David Foster Wallace collaborated on a history of the Web’s formative years...” – Nick L. Verified Purchase, Reviewed in the United States on December 29, 2024

“On one level, it’s a detailed and comprehensive account of the critical formative years of the Web (1993-1995) by someone who not only was there, but at times helped drive the bus.

There is no other history on this subject like it. When you consider all the things that run on the Web – Amazon, Google, and the many social media platforms, and the myriad of Internet services we use every day – that alone would be significant.

On another level, the footnotes and end notes are a whole book unto themselves and contain a subversive narrative readers might be surprised to hear coming from an Internet business pioneer.

Finally, the book is a meditation on the role chance and naive striving play in the unfolding of history. It reveals the fragile roots of many developments, like the Web, that we incorrectly assume were “inevitable”, but in reality could easily have never happened.

The chapter on what the online world would be like had the Web not thrived and Bill Gates’ Microsoft Network won the online war (a war most people didn’t realize was being fought) is scarily plausible. You’ll never look at the Internet the same way after you read this book.”

“Easily one of the single greatest books about marketing I’ve ever read...” – **Ben Settle**, Author, Book and Newsletter Publisher

“While reading it I kept pausing to take notes and then email Ken personally to let him know my thoughts, taking my time to savor it chapter by chapter, and enjoying the process of how it elevated my own thinking on not just selling online but how to approach problem-solving, see opportunities where nobody else does, and using history to predict what could be coming down the pike.”

“I knew Ken was a pioneer, but I didn’t realize just how far ahead of everyone else he really was.” – **Ryan Healy**, Direct Response Copywriter

“Back in 1994, Ken McCarthy had a surprisingly prescient view of where the World Wide Web was headed. I mean, I knew he was a pioneer (I attended The System Seminar in 2003 when Gary Halbert spoke), but I didn’t realize just how far ahead of everyone else he really was.

This book (part history, part memoir) takes you back to the time of AOL and 14.4K dial-up Internet. It’s a wild trip down memory lane. Of course, there are many stories I didn’t know about, so I enjoyed filling the gaps in my knowledge.

In between the stories of the early days of the Web McCarthy drops some nuggets about marketing and advertising, a couple of which I marked and shared. For example, on page 68:

‘The fact of the matter is that many, many, many highly lucrative businesses and professions are deadly boring. Making money is not about you being entertained. It’s about making money, which at the end of the day is profitably providing a standardized product or service to the largest number of people possible at the highest profit margins possible. It’s creating a machine and then showing up every day to turn the wheel.’”

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