



Business @ the Speed of Thought: Succeeding in the Digital Economy

By Bill Gates

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In his new book, Microsoft chairman and CEO Bill Gates discusses how technology can help run businesses better today and how it will transform the nature of business in the near future. Gates stresses the need for managers to view technology not as overhead but as a strategic asset, and offers detailed examples from Microsoft, GM, Dell, and many other successful companies. Companion Web site.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

So where do you want to go tomorrow? That's the question Bill Gates tries to answer in *Business @ the Speed of Thought*. Gates offers a 12-step program for companies wanting to do business in the next millennium. The book's premise: Thanks to technology, the speed of business is accelerating at an ever-increasing rate, and to survive, it must develop an infrastructure--a "digital nervous system"--that allows for the unfettered movement of information inside a company. Gates writes that "The most meaningful way to differentiate your company from your competition ... is to do an outstanding job with information. *How you gather, manage, and use information will determine whether you win or lose.*"

The book is peppered with examples of companies that have already successfully engineered information networks to manage inventory, sales, and customer relationships better. The examples run from Coca-Cola's ability to download sales data from vending machines to Microsoft's own internal practices, such as its reliance on e-mail for company-wide communication and the conversion of most paper processes to digital ones (an assertion that seems somewhat at odds with the now-infamous "by hand on sheets of paper" method of tracking profits that was revealed during Microsoft's antitrust trial).

While Gates breaks no new ground--dozens of authors have been writing about competing on a digital playing field for some time, among them Carl Shapiro and Hal Varian in *Information Rules* and Patricia Seybold in *Customers.com*--businesses that want a wakeup call may find this book a ringer. With excerpts in *Time* magazine, a dedicated Web site, and an all-out media assault, Microsoft is working hard to push *Business @ the Speed of Thought* into the national dialogue, and for many it will be difficult to see the book as anything but a finely tuned marketing campaign for the forthcoming versions of Windows NT and MS Office. Nevertheless, as Gates has shown time and time again, him, Microsoft, and perhaps even this book you may ignore at your own peril. --Harry C. Edwards

From [Booklist](#)

There's a companion Web site , and the back cover carries the message that Gates is donating his share of proceeds to charity. See also Clark's *Netscape Time*, p.1450. *Bonnie Smothers*

About the Author

BILL GATES is the chairman and chief executive officer at Microsoft Corporation. His vision and commitment regarding personal computing have been central to the success of Microsoft and in the advancement of software technology. He lives with his wife, Melinda, and daughter, Jennifer, in the Seattle area.

COLLINS HEMINGWAY is director of executive communications at Microsoft Corporation. He had been involved with Microsoft's systems products since 1987 and from 1994 to 1996 was director of international and partner marketing for the Personal and Business Systems Division.

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Raymond Blalock:

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Lyle Morales:

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