



# Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet

By Andrew Blum

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—Tom Vanderbilt, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Traffic*

In *Tubes*, Andrew Blum, a correspondent at *Wired* magazine, takes us on an engaging, utterly fascinating tour behind the scenes of our everyday lives and reveals the dark beating heart of the Internet itself. A remarkable journey through the brave new technological world we live in, *Tubes* is to the early twenty-first century what *Soul of a New Machine*—Tracy Kidder’s classic story of the creation of a new computer—was to the late twentieth.

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## **Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet** By Andrew Blum Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Review

“Fascinating and unique. . . . [A] captivating behind-the-scenes tour of how (and where) the Internet works. . . . [Blum] has a gift for breathing life into his subjects.” (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

“Every web site, every email, every instant message travels through real junctions in a real network of real cables. It’s all too awesome to behold. Andrew Blum’s fascinating book demystifies the earthly geography of this most ethereal terra incognita.” (Joshua Foer, bestselling author of *Moonwalking with Einstein*)

“*Tubes* is an absorbing tale of this new technology, as well as a wonderful account of the Internet’s growth and the people who made it possible.” (Science News)

“Clever, enterprising . . . *Tubes* uncovers an Internet that resembles nothing so much as a fantastic steam-punk version of itself.” (Boston Globe)

“Engaging. . . . Full of memorable images that make the internet’s complex architecture easier to comprehend. . . . Blum leaves readers pondering questions that would not have occurred to them before and better informed about an innovation most of us take for granted.” (The Guardian)

“A charming look at the physical infrastructure that underlies the Web.” (Scientific American)

“A satisfying postmodern quest. . . . The history, in particular, is one of the best and most memorable I have ever read.” (New Scientist)

“Blum paints a vivid picture of the Internet, and gives a sense that it is more than just the mysterious interstitial digital space between your computer and mine. It is, increasingly, the backbone that supports our daily life, and Mr. Blum is an able anatomist.” (New York Journal of Books)

“Quixotic and winning. . . . Valuable, comic. . . . [Blum has] a knack for bundling packets of data into memorable observations. What makes *Tubes* more than an unusual sort of travel book, is [Blum’s] sense of moral curiosity.” (New York Times)

“Ingeniously beguiling. . . . Blum is a smart, imaginative, evocative writer who embraces the task of making his readers feel the wonder represented by these unprepossessing objects.” (Laura Miller, Salon)

“An engaging reminder that, cyber-Utopianism aside, the internet is as much a thing of flesh and steel as any industrial-age lumber mill or factory. It is also an excellent introduction to the nuts and bolts of how exactly it all works.” (The Economist)

“A fascinating exploration of the physical nature of the Internet, and how the ‘network of networks’ came to be the way it is.” (Shelf Awareness)

“Engaging. . . . Blum is a natural storyteller.” (PopMatters)

“Enlightening. . . . A zippy history of a phenomenon that, as a society, captivates us, connects us, and vexes us.” (Guernica)

“With infectious wonder, Blum introduces us to the Internet’s geeky wizards and takes us on an amiably guided tour of the world they’ve created, a world of wires and routers through which most of us daily wander . . . but which few of us have ever really seen.” (Donovan Hohn, author of *Moby-Duck*)

“Compelling and profound. . . . For the first time, *Tubes* brings the ‘network of networks’ into stirring, and surprising, relief. You will never open an email in quite the same way again.” (Tom Vanderbilt, bestselling author of *Traffic*)

“A compelling story of an altogether new realm where the virtual world meets the physical.” (Paul Goldberger, author of *Why Architecture Matters*)

“At once funny, prosaic, sinister and wise . . . A beautifully written account of the true human cost of all our remote connectivity.” (Bella Bathurst, author of *The Lighthouse Stevensons*)

#### From the Back Cover

When your Internet cable leaves your living room, where does it go? Almost everything about our day-to-day lives—and the broader scheme of human culture—can be found on the Internet. But what is it physically? And where is it really? Our mental map of the network is as blank as the map of the ocean that Columbus carried on his first Atlantic voyage. The Internet, its material nuts and bolts, is an unexplored territory. Until now.

In *Tubes*, journalist Andrew Blum goes inside the Internet's physical infrastructure and flips on the lights, revealing an utterly fresh look at the online world we think we know. It is a shockingly tactile realm of unmarked compounds, populated by a special caste of engineer who pieces together our networks by hand; where glass fibers pulse with light and creaky telegraph buildings, tortuously rewired, become communication hubs once again. From the room in Los Angeles where the Internet first flickered to life to the caverns beneath Manhattan where new fiber-optic cable is buried; from the coast of Portugal, where a ten-thousand-mile undersea cable just two thumbs wide connects Europe and Africa, to the wilds of the Pacific Northwest, where Google, Microsoft, and Facebook have built monumental data centers—Blum chronicles the dramatic story of the Internet's development, explains how it all works, and takes the first-ever in-depth look inside its hidden monuments.

This is a book about real places on the map: their sounds and smells, their storied pasts, their physical details, and the people who live there. For all the talk of the "placelessness" of our digital age, the Internet is as fixed in real, physical spaces as the railroad or telephone. You can map it and touch it, and you can visit it. Is the Internet in fact "a series of tubes" as Ted Stevens, the late senator from Alaska, once famously described it? How can we know the Internet's possibilities if we don't know its parts?

Like Tracy Kidder's classic *The Soul of a New Machine* or Tom Vanderbilt's recent bestseller *Traffic*, *Tubes* combines on-the-ground reporting and lucid explanation into an engaging, mind-bending narrative to help us understand the physical world that underlies our digital lives.

#### About the Author

Andrew Blum is a journalist and author of *Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet*, the first book-length look behind the scenes of our digital lives, at the physical heart of the Internet itself. Before falling into the Internet's depths, Blum was writing about architecture, design, technology, urbanism, art, and travel—all subjects arising out of his interest in the relationship between place and technology. Since 1999, Blum's articles and essays have appeared in *Wired*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Business*

*Week, Metropolis, Popular Science, Gizmodo, The Atlantic, Architectural Record, and Slate*, among many other publications. He has degrees in literature from Amherst College and in human geography from the University of Toronto, and lives in his native New York City with his wife and daughter.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Doris Williams:**

Now a day individuals who Living in the era exactly where everything reachable by connect to the internet and the resources inside it can be true or not require people to be aware of each info they get. How a lot more to be smart in obtaining any information nowadays? Of course the correct answer is reading a book. Looking at a book can help persons out of this uncertainty Information especially this Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet book because book offers you rich information and knowledge. Of course the information in this book hundred pct guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

#### **Chris Robertson:**

This book untitled Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet to be one of several books which best seller in this year, that is because when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit into it. You will easily to buy this book in the book retail outlet or you can order it through online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, as you can read this book in your Cell phone. So there is no reason for you to past this guide from your list.

#### **Catherine Scott:**

People live in this new time of lifestyle always try to and must have the free time or they will get lot of stress from both everyday life and work. So , if we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not only a robot. Then we ask again, what kind of activity are there when the spare time coming to you of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then ever try this one, reading books. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, the actual book you have read will be Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet.

#### **Nicholas Riley:**

In this particular era which is the greater particular person or who has ability in doing something more are more precious than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple approach to have that. What you are related is just spending your time very little but quite enough to have a look at some books. One of many books in the top list in your reading list is Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet. This book and that is qualified as The Hungry Inclines can get you closer in turning into precious person. By looking way up and review this book you can get many advantages.

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