

See How They Work

Computing, networking and the Internet demystified in three easy steps—books, that is

Ron White debunks the myth that you have to be a nerd to know what goes on under the hood of your PC. But then, demystification is what the author, who is senior editor at PC Computing, excels in. This fourth edition of *How Computers Work* has been thoroughly revised—it covers Pentium II and Pentium Pro

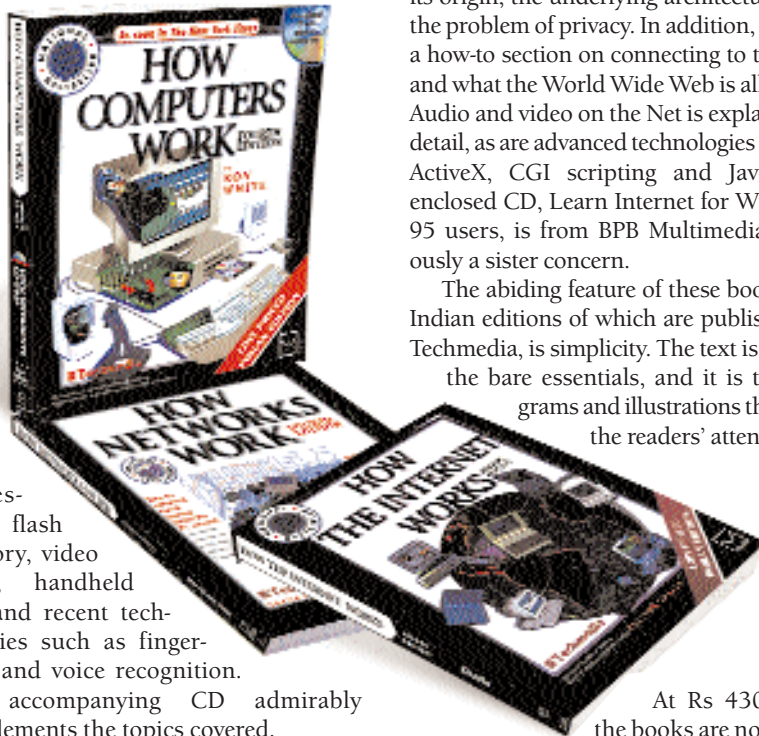
the need for one.

With computers and networks around, can the Internet be far behind? The third book in the series, *How the Internet Works*, is written by Preston Galla, long-time journalist with Ziff-Davis. The book covers the “revolutionary medium that is rewriting the script of human interaction” by looking at its origin, the underlying architecture, and the problem of privacy. In addition, there is a how-to section on connecting to the Net, and what the World Wide Web is all about. Audio and video on the Net is explained in detail, as are advanced technologies such as ActiveX, CGI scripting and Java. The enclosed CD, Learn Internet for Windows 95 users, is from BPB Multimedia—obviously a sister concern.

The abiding feature of these books, the Indian editions of which are published by Techmedia, is simplicity. The text is kept to the bare essentials, and it is the diagrams and illustrations that grab the readers’ attention.

processors, flash memory, video cards, handheld PCs and recent technologies such as fingerprint and voice recognition. The accompanying CD admirably complements the topics covered.

You don’t have to be a System Administrator to figure out the difference between a LAN and a VPN—just read *How Networks Work*. Communication is the keyword, and Frank Derfler and Les Freed take us on an intriguing visual journey down the ages, right from Samuel Morse’s primitive telegraph to the present-day PC network. The book details the convergence of the telephone and the PC, and gives in-depth information on Local Area Networks (LANs) and how they are linked together. Ample coverage is given to the latest trends in communication technology, especially with reference to the Internet. This book ships without a CD, but then, the topic doesn’t really justify



At Rs 430 each, the books are not exactly cheap, but you will find them worth the price. The glossy paper, the lavish use of colour and white space, the attention to detail, the emphasis on explaining things in plain English... all go towards making the *How It Works* series a real pleasure to read from cover to cover—or just dip into at random.

HARIKRISHNAN MENON

Rating: HHHH

How Computers Work
How Networks Work
How the Internet Works
Price: Rs 480 each
Publisher: Techmedia
Phone: 011-3254990 Fax: 011-3266427
Web site: www.techmediabooks.com

The Computer Revolution

At a time when computer book titles are becoming increasingly specialised, it sometimes pays to take a step back and enjoy the view. In *The Computer Revolution*, S. Venkatachalam, a Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science at IIT Mumbai, offers a broad and comprehensive sweep of computers and computing drawing from his experience as a teacher and policy maker. The book gives the reader a rare, yet much-needed Indian perspective on the world of computers.

The initial portion of the book deals with the development of computers in comprehensive detail, relating the historical and intellectual events leading to the first computer. Boolean arithmetic is introduced and so are the elements of analog electronics. Before the middle of the book is reached, the author has described how operating systems and programming languages function. The latter half of the book deals with newer technologies like the Internet, Java, multimedia, database management, and even advanced topics like artificial intelligence and image processing.

The book is aimed at both the novice as well as the veteran eager for new insights. What is particularly striking about *The Computer Revolution* is that it successfully spans the entire field of information technology in about 300 pages with a choice of topics that is both mature and masterful. In which computer book will you find information about the National Stock Exchange’s satellite network as well as about the efforts to develop Indian script word processing and code writing? Despite some presentation flaws (including an index that could have been more thorough), the book remains an important text for the keen Indian reader.

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Rating: HHH

The Computer Revolution
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