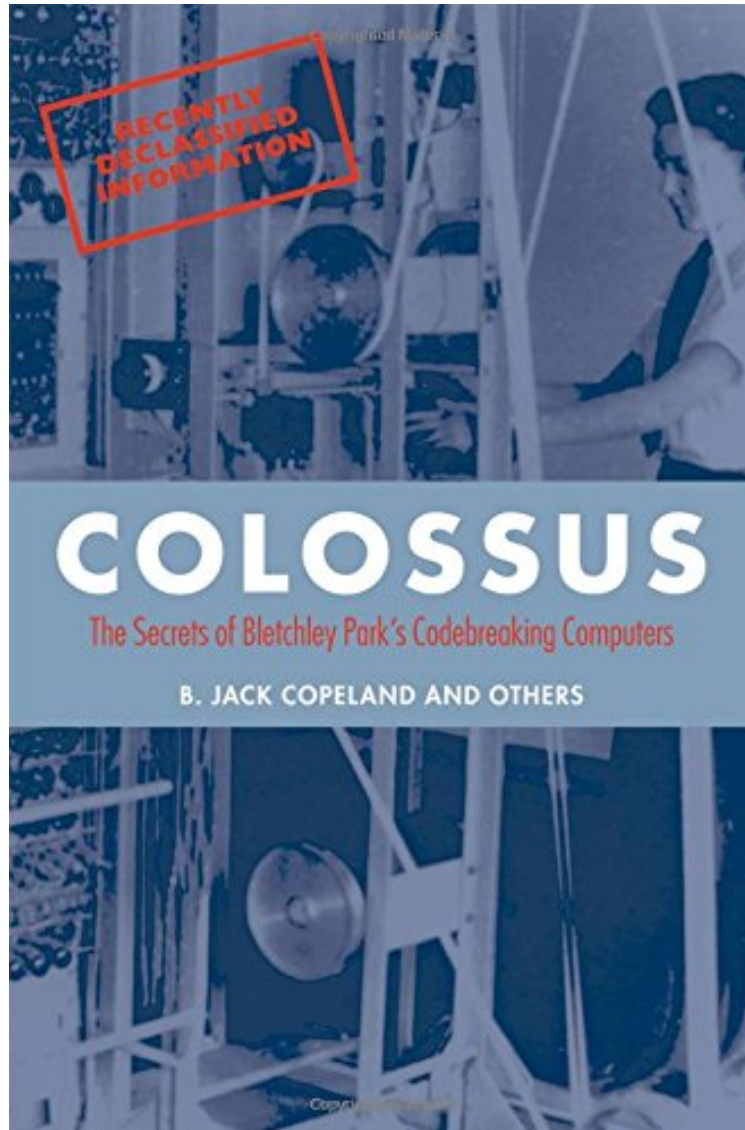


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## Colossus: The secrets of Bletchley Park's code-breaking computers

*B. Jack Copeland*

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#953526 in Books imusti 2010-04-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 5.90 x 1.50 x 9.10l, 1.65 #File Name: 0199578141480 pagesOxford University Press USA | File size: 20.Mb

**B. Jack Copeland : Colossus: The secrets of Bletchley Park's code-breaking computers** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Colossus: The secrets of Bletchley Park's code-breaking computers:

32 of 32 people found the following review helpful. Kindle EditionBy Carl M. FloydFascinating story! However, be advised that the Kindle version neglects to include the more than 50 photographs of the print edition. This is a serious omission and detracts greatly from the history. I will have to visit the library. Had I known this, I would have

purchased the paperback. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I rarely feel reverence and admiration in reading history -- here you get both along with the data. By Bell Curve. Many years ago I had read Brown's "Bodyguard of Lies." Since that time I've been intrigued by anything related to the subject matter of technology, science (and trickery) in WWII. I was engrossed by RV Jones' "Most Secret War" and many writings about Enigma. "Colossus" is a welcome addition to this collection and easily one of the best. Author excels at communicating many technical passages at a level appropriate to readers who are not expert in codes and computers. Having recently retired from a career spent in the field of computers, I was particularly intrigued at his lucid description of the evolution from early physical machine components (relays) through high speed electronic advances (valves/vacuum tubes). There's a particularly clever chapter explaining Colossus via component-by-component analogy to modern personal computers. On a personal level I can only commend in my heart those who made such monumental but unsung contributions to victory in a horrible war (yes, redundant). Although my intent here is to praise the book, I do have one MAJOR gripe, specifically with the Kindle Version. There is a listing of photos but neither the listing nor the various citations to photos throughout the book have a hyperlink to allow the reader to jump to the cited photo then back to the text. Furthermore the index contains neither "page" nor "location" numbers. I'm about half-way through the book and still have not found any of the scores of photos referenced. I assumed they might be clustered in the middle or end as used to be common in printed books. If so, I haven't yet found any. And if I eventually do find them, they will have lost much of their value by reason of viewing out of context. And I'm going to be a little po'd if I get to the end of the book and find the photos have been left out altogether. Any other readers out there care to pass along a Kindle location for them so I can view them as needed in context? 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A valuable collection of essays. By Metallurgist. This book contains 38 essays that cover all aspects of the British efforts to decipher messages sent on the German Lorenz machine during WWII. To help do so, they developed one of the first computers (the first depending upon how one defines a computer), Colossus. The essays range from personal reminiscences of life at Bletchly Park, where this work was done, to discussions of the design and building of Colossus and to appendices that get into considerable detail regarding the details of how the messages were deciphered. I enjoyed the book and it greatly improved my understanding of this aspect of the work at Bletchley Park. I recommend it to anyone interested in history, especially the history of WWII and especially to those interested in codes and ciphers. My only complaint, and it was not enough to reduce my overall 5-star rating, was that being a collection of essays there was some repetition of material and a lack of smooth narrative flow. However, this is the best book on the subject of the German Lorenz machine, the methods to defeat it and the building of Colossus that I have found. I feel that it struck a good balance between highly technical information and interesting information about the human side of the work at Bletchley Park and at Dollis Hills, the British Post Office Research Station where Colossus was designed and built. Some of the essays were challenging as they got into considerable detail about the Lorenz system and the mathematics behind the methods used to defeat it, but even if a reader skims over this material they will still find a lot to interest them. That the Lorenz machine was able to be broken is a testament to the ingenuity of the men who did it, most of whom never got the recognition that they deserved. This book rectifies this omission as it highlights the efforts of men like Bill Tutte, Tony Flowers and scores of others.

The American ENIAC is customarily regarded as the first electronic computer. In this fascinating volume, Jack Copeland rewrites the history of computer science, arguing that in reality Colossus--the giant computer built in Bletchley Park by the British secret service during World War II--predates ENIAC by two years. Until very recently, much about the Colossus machine was shrouded in secrecy, largely because the code-breaking algorithms employed during World War II remained in use by the British security services until a short time ago. Copeland has brought together memoirs of veterans of Bletchley Park--the top-secret headquarters of Britain's secret service--and others who draw on the wealth of declassified information to illuminate the crucial role Colossus played during World War II. A must read for anyone curious about code-breaking or World War II espionage, Colossus offers a fascinating insider's account of the world's first giant computer, the great-great-grandfather of the massive computers used today by the CIA and the National Security Agency.

Listed in SciTech Book News "Reading Colossus, a book about the world's first fully electronic computer that was built during the Second World War to crack the codes of high-level Nazi communications, is like reading a suspenseful spy story! It is entertaining to read and at the same time one learns a lot about the history of cryptography and code breaking secrets, decryption and related technologies. Historical pictures along with many interesting charts make the book indispensable to anyone who reviews or writes about the history of computer technology."--Human-Computer Interaction International News About the Author Jack Copeland is a Reader in Philosophy and Director of the Turing Project at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. A contributor to Scientific American, his books include Turing's Machines, Artificial Intelligence, and The Essential Turing.