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[REVIEW]

A credible job of covering the high-tech waterfront

A new book aims to tell managers what they need to know about tech

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"**The Essential Guide to Business Internet Technology**"
By Gail Honda and Kipp Martin, Prentice Hall PTR, 439 pages, $34.99

By John Agsalud
Special to the Star-Bulletin

To the uninitiated, the technology is a different universe -- strange, unknowable and filled with cryptic acronyms such as SIMD, SOAP, RMI, RDRAM, GIGAFLOPS.

Undecipherable or not, technology is something that business owners need to understand. Whether you're the chief executive officer of a publicly traded company on Bishop Street or a mom and pop fender shop in Kakaako, you're miles ahead of the competition if you recognize how technology fits into your business.

This 439-page tome is dedicated to managers who are not technologists but nonetheless

need and want to understand technology. Sure you can leave your buying decisions to the chief information officer or your spouse, but in order to make a really informed decision, it's critical to know the basic components of your technology -- hardware, software and the Internet. As the book points out, the demise of the dot-com era doesn't at all diminish the importance of the Web.

Authors Gail Honda and Kipp Martin do a credible job of covering the waterfront by providing a comprehensive overview of just about every relevant aspect of information technology including security, Web content development, enterprise application software, Internet business architecture, managing Web content and database applications.

Both authors have Hawaii connections and high-tech credentials.

Honda, a Fulbright scholar and Punahou graduate, has been on the faculties of the University of Chicago and the University of Hawaii.

Martin is professor of operations research and computing technology at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business and teaches Internet business to MBA students and executives in Europe and the United States.

Honda and Martin are also the founders of **Global Optima,** a local company that helps business professionals with little to no technical experience learn about and use technology.

In my estimation, the most valuable sections of the book to Hawaii readers were "Rethinking Internet Models" and "Marketing on the Internet." They should be made mandatory reading for every local business owner.

Given our isolation from the mainland and dependence on marketing, the Internet will become even more crucial to the evolution of business in our state.

Although we need to understand the nuances of doing business over the Net, it's hard to find objective information about e-business. After all, what Web development company doesn't want to sell you a new e-commerce Web site and what public relations firm doesn't want to "help you" set up a campaign.

Here Honda and Martin shine by providing the reader with an unbiased discourse on various Internet business models such as retailing, auctions, content and portals. They also examine which Internet business models work and which don't work.

Just as importantly they provide guidance in online marketing. In "The Essential Guide To Business Internet Technology," PR guru Regis McKenna writes "more and more it's the

CEO who's becoming the chief marketer ... I don't think we can tell the difference anymore between a corporate strategy and a marketing strategy. That's just vanished."

If we are to believe McKenna, who launched promotional campaigns for some of the most famous companies in the Valley, Hawaii managers must start taking a much greater responsibility for this function.

At the very minimum they must fully understand the basics of building a successful brand on the Net and fully comprehend the strategies of online marketing and the implications of spamming your clients, banner ads and developing content.

The only caveat I have about this book is that if anything it offers too much in the way of detail. I think the authors went into too much depth when it comes to technology -- at least for the average manager. My advice would be, if you feel like you've lost track of the section because it's too technical, you're probably right, and it's probably okay to skip the rest of the section.

Still too much information is preferable than too little and I do recommend this book as a technology primer. It's great place to begin understanding how tech fits into your business and why it's important it is to hire the best people you can possibly afford.

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