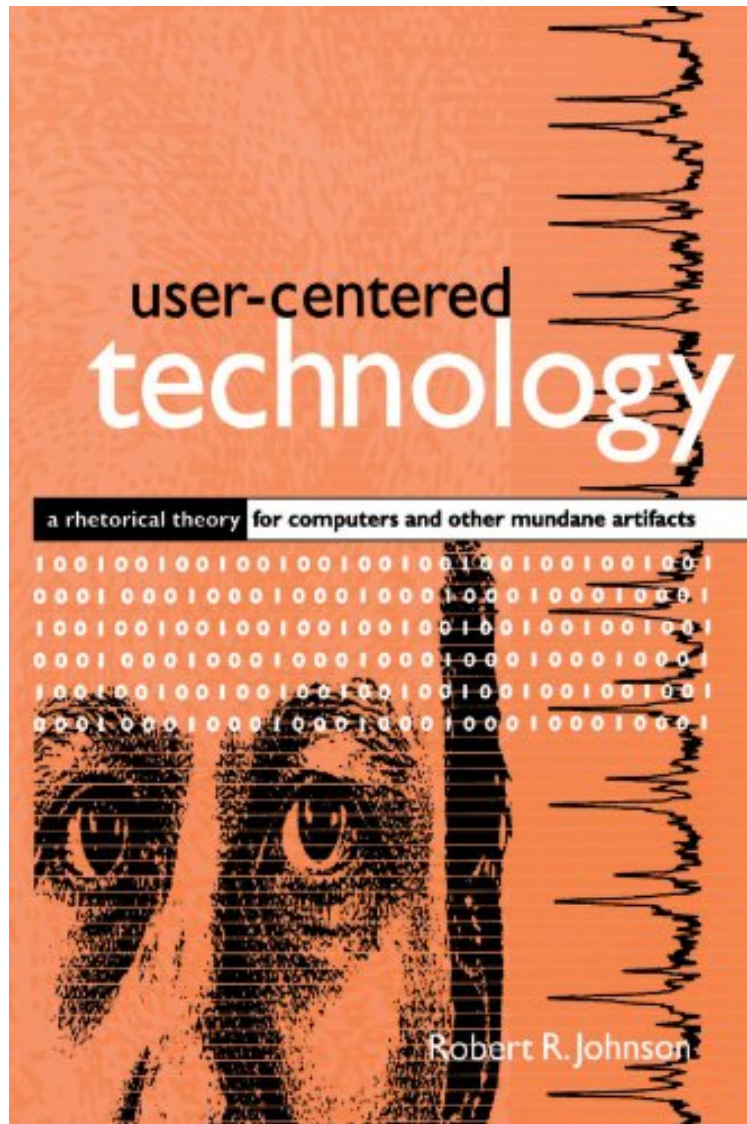


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User-Centered Technology (Sunny Series, Studies in Scientific Technical Communication) (Sunny Series, Studies in Scientific Technical Communication (Hardcover))

Robert R. Johnson

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Robert R. Johnson : User-Centered Technology (Sunny Series, Studies in Scientific Technical Communication) (Sunny Series, Studies in Scientific Technical Communication (Hardcover)) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised User-Centered Technology (Sunny Series, Studies in

Scientific Technical Communication) (Suny Series, Studies in Scientific Technical Communication (Hardcover)):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Foundational Must-Read for Any Technical Communication/Rhetoric Researcher
By Customer
This book, published in 1989, was (and still is) years ahead of its time. This incredibly accessible and concise book brings the field of technical communication back to the root of all problems in communication: lack of awareness, understanding, and awareness of the audience/user and their context of use. He reminds technical communicators of what should be their primary role as rhetorically minded, user-centered designers of information and technology. It is the most influential tech comm book I've read, and I will ensure it is one of the first books I assign to my future tech comm students.

Awarded "1998 Best Book" by the National Council of Teachers of English for Excellence in Technical and Scientific Communication. *User-Centered Technology* presents a theoretical model for examining technology through a user perspective. Johnson begins with a historical overview of the problem of technological use from the ancient Greeks to the present day - a problem seen most clearly in historical discussions of rhetoric theory. The central portion of the book elaborates on user-centered theory by defining three focal issues of the theory: user knowledge, human-technology interaction, and technological determinism. Working from an interdisciplinary perspective, Johnson uses rhetoric theory to present a definition of user knowledge; human factors engineering to illuminate the ideological presuppositions built into technology design; and history, philosophy, and sociology to explain technological determinism, possibly the greatest impediment to user-centered technology development in modern times. The latter part of the book applies user-centered theory in two contexts: the nonacademic sphere, where the writing and design of computer user documentation is discussed, and the academic sphere, through a discussion of how user-centered concepts might drive university technical communication and composition curricula.

I believe that this book is a unique contribution to the field. The argument, based upon insightful analyses of a variety of sources, is enlightened. Robert R. Johnson has clearly revealed that the vast bulk of relevant research on technology and use/learning has been dominated by either system-centered or text-centered views. In addition, he places the evolution of these views in their theoretical/historical contexts. That alone is enlightening. But his analysis of the user-centered view is also a significant contribution because it provides a foundation, a rationale, if you will, for certain disparate but promising developments in ongoing efforts to adapt technological innovations for wide-ranging use. Stephen Doheny-Farina, Clarkson University"
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About the Author
Robert R. Johnson is Professor of Rhetoric, Composition, and Technical Communication at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, MI. His newest book, *Romancing the Atom: Nuclear Infatuation from the Radium Girls to Fukushima*, was released by Praeger Press in August 2012. More on this new book can be found at .