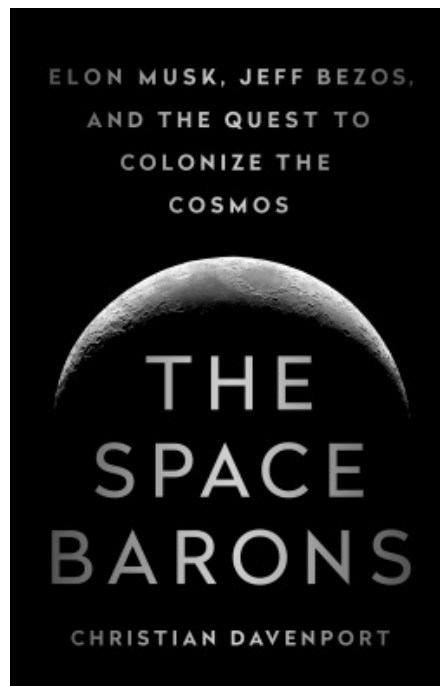




The Space Barons: Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and the Quest to Colonize the Cosmos

Christian Davenport

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The historic quest to rekindle the human exploration and colonization of space led by two rivals and their vast fortunes, egos, and visions of space as the next entrepreneurial frontier

The Space Barons is the story of a group of billionaire entrepreneurs who are pouring their fortunes into the epic resurrection of the American space program. Nearly a half-century after Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, these Space Barons-most notably Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, along with Richard Branson and Paul Allen-are using Silicon Valley-style innovation to dramatically lower the cost of space travel, and send humans even further than NASA has gone. These entrepreneurs have founded some of the biggest brands in the world-Amazon, Microsoft, Virgin, Tesla, PayPal-and upended industry after industry. Now they are pursuing the biggest disruption of all: space.

Based on years of reporting and exclusive interviews with all four billionaires, this authoritative account is a dramatic tale of risk and high adventure, the birth of a new Space Age, fueled by some of the world's richest men as they struggle to end governments' monopoly on the cosmos. *The Space Barons* is also a story of rivalry-hard-charging startups warring with established contractors, and the personal clashes of the leaders of this new space movement, particularly Musk and Bezos, as they aim for the moon and Mars and beyond.

The Space Barons: Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and the Quest to Colonize the Cosmos Details

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From Reader Review The Space Barons: Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and the Quest to Colonize the Cosmos for online ebook

Scottsdale Public Library says

As a kid, did you ever say to yourself, “Someday, I’m going to Mars.” Well, hello, we’re almost there and it’s not on the public’s dime as people used to complain about, it’s on Elon Musk’s many dimes and Jeff Bezo’s and other future-thinking minds. “The Space Barons...” should wake all of us up and get us all back on track to not only thinking about what we could do if something serious did happen to our planet Earth, but to doing something about it now. Musk and Bezo as children made for interesting reading. This is one book you won’t want to put down until it’s finished.

-Anna Q.L.

Francis Tapon says

My wife is from Cameroon so she thrilled that the first creature that America sent into orbit was from Cameroon.

The creature was named Enos. He was a chimp from Cameroon. He flew aboard the Mercury-Atlas 5 on November 29, 1961. Enos logged three hours and 21 minutes in space. He paved the way for the first American orbital flight just three months later.

I’m a fan of space exploration and astronomy. I’m a even bigger fan of the privatization of spaceflight so I’ve been following the news fairly closely.

Still, just like I didn’t know about Enos the chimp, Christian Davenport’s upcoming book, Space Barons: Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, and the Quest to Colonize the Cosmos, delivers plenty of facts that I didn’t know about.

If you’ve been meticulously following the headlines, then I suppose there’s little new in Davenport’s book. Test yourself.

Did you know that . . .

. . . Jeff Bezos nearly died in a helicopter crash?

. . . the big aerospace giants (e.g., Boeing) called SpaceX an “ankle biter” and that Elon Musk would basically call Blue Origin the same thing years later?

. . . Bezos and Musk are rocket geeks but that Richard Branson knows little about them?

. . . Paul Allen loves space exploration but is terrified of the risk of losing a human life?

. . . Bezos is the turtle and Musk is the hare?

Soviet space feats

Although it's not mentioned in the book, I recently learned that Americans were NOT the first to land something on the moon. The Soviets were. They landed Luna 2 on the moon's surface a stunning 10 years before Apollo 11 (the first humans to land on the moon).

It's just more proof how we glorify our own country. I wonder if you grew up in Russia, you'd hear nonstop about Luna 2 but almost nothing about Apollo 11.

Yes, it's more impressive to land humans on the moon and return to them safely to Earth than to crash an object into the moon, but we still ought to acknowledge the Soviet accomplishment and not ignore it.

Fortunately, Americans do talk about Sputnik and Yuri Gagarin. Still, that's just the tip of the Soviet Space Program's iceberg. To quote Wikipedia:

[The Soviets were] responsible for a number of pioneering accomplishments in space flight including the first intercontinental ballistic missile (R-7), first satellite (Sputnik 1), first animal in Earth orbit (the dog Laika on Sputnik 2), first human in space and Earth orbit (cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin on Vostok 1), first woman in space and Earth orbit (cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova on Vostok 6), first spacewalk (cosmonaut Alexey Leonov on Voskhod 2), first Moon impact (Luna 2), first image of the far side of the moon (Luna 3) and unmanned lunar soft landing (Luna 9), first space rover (Lunokhod 1), first sample of lunar soil automatically extracted and brought to Earth (Luna 16), and first space station (Salyut 1). Further notable records included the first interplanetary probes: Venera 1 and Mars 1 to fly by Venus and Mars, respectively, Venera 3 and Mars 2 to impact the respective planet surface, and Venera 7 and Mars 3 to make soft landings on these planets.

So let's stop thinking that Americans were the only space pioneers.

Sadly, Space Barons continues this sad tradition of ignoring the pioneering accomplishments of the Russians. For example, it doesn't even mention MirCorp, which sent the first space tourist (and wannabe space baron), Dennis Tito, to the International Space Station.

Instead, Space Barons focuses mostly on Bezos and Musk since the biggest space barons today. The book discusses Paul Allen, Richard Branson, and Peter Diamandis.

Since Elon Musk and SpaceX are such great marketers, you've probably heard a lot about them and seen some of their videos. What I like about Space Barons is that it delves into the mysterious Blue Origin. I just wish Davenport's interview with Bezos was a bit more revealing than it was.

Fortunately, Blue Origin has come out of the closet and has shown off some amazing feats. Check out these two videos.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSDHM...>

This second video really could use narration/music and an altimeter, but it's still stunning.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZJgh...>

Blue Origin claims that they land at 1 mile per hour, but that landing certainly doesn't look that soft. It looks at least 5 miles per hour, if not 10. Regardless, Skywalker Manniquin survived.

Space Barons does not mention several companies that plan to mine asteroids. That's a pity. Perhaps Davenport believes that other companies are too small and/or their leaders aren't true "barons" yet.

Despite these shortcomings, I loved reading Space Barons. It's one of those rare books that I devoured. I read a book a week. This is one that was hard to put down. It's one of my favorite books that I read in 2017.

Unfortunately, you won't be able to read it until April 17, 2018, which is when the book is made available to the public.

The main downside of the book is that by 2020 it will be out of date since progress in space is happening

quickly. So pre-order it today and read it once you get it.

Verdict: 9/10 stars

Gary Moreau says

This book is a thorough and professional review of the current state of space flight in the US. As the cover promises, it's a tale filled with the current rock stars of capitalism: Musk, Bezos, Branson, et al. And a few names that have made history but aren't quite as familiar: Burt Rutan, Mike Melvill, and a host of others.

It's a book of tales, not technology, and that's great for most readers. And the stories and subplots are magnificent and glorious; just what you'd expect from men who have already achieved wealth and fame and now have the time and resources to feed the soulful flames that burn within. These are men not content to sit by the pool, but whose inner curiosity, in its immense proportions, define who they are.

The book is well researched and easy to read. I definitely came away with a much fuller portrait of Musk and Bezos (a study in contrast, for sure), in particular, and while it would be impossible for any author not to have an opinion about the players, Davenport is a pro and works hard to simply tell their stories and not show his own cards.

I only have two issues with the book. The first is common to all discussion involving the tech industry. There is a lot of effort expended differentiating between the commercial space industry (Musk & Bezos), the government (NASA), and the "contractors" (Boeing, LMT, & the military-industrial complex). The commercial companies (particularly SpaceX) are, of course, the quixotic "everyman," the feisty, never-sleeps underdog who refuses to give in to convention and who is obsessed with saving money and making time. In that narrative, NASA and the contractors are old, overweight, slow, expensive, and risk-averse.

It's the now familiar Silicon Valley (the figurative SV) narrative and it's starting to sound a bit over-hyped and dated. Narrative is a function of perspective. Replacing the obscenely expensive latch previously used on the nose cone by the grumpy old men with the one used on the stall doors in the bathroom sounds ingenious; until it fails and we discover that the latch was expensive for a reason. It's not the wrong idea, mind you. But the distinction between genius and rash judgment can be a subtle one that is only apparent with hindsight.

Which brings me to the second concern. There is an underlying implication that NASA and the contractors all get their money from the taxpayers but the "commercial" companies do not. The "astropreneurs", in other words, have skin in the game and according to the SV narrative, that is the essence of genius and value. And that, too, is true to a point.

But all of this delightful technology ultimately comes from the American people. All of the engineers, whichever entity they work for, were all educated in large part with taxpayer funds, they drive on taxpayer-funded roads, they enjoy the protection of taxpayer-funded defense, etc. It's not that the entrepreneurial perspective is false, but it is often over-stated for the world we live in. Whether we accept it or not, we now live in a collective society; made all the more collective by technology.

And on a related note, of course, there is a libertarian message from the tech entrepreneurs – regulation will kill the industry and the opportunity that is space. Again the narrative is classic tech libertarianism. But space doesn't exist in isolation any more than tech ultimately does. If a commercial rocket plunges into a populated area, the fact is that the government/taxpayer will be expected to come to the rescue.

I am as anguished by the US lack of commitment to space as any of the people in the book. I was a teenager when Armstrong walked on the moon and I remember it vividly. It was liberating for every man, woman, and child on the planet in a way almost nothing since has been, although the fall of the Berlin Wall came close. But we were able to do it, in part, because we responded to President Kennedy's bold challenge as a nation. It was a collective effort.

I think the space entrepreneurs covered in this book are remarkable men and women. They represent a core element of the American spirit. But at the heart of that same spirit is another American ideal; "It is amazing what can be accomplished if we don't worry who gets the credit for it."

Todd McGlinchey says

Great read of some major influences of our day and their fascination for space exploration. It opens your mind to what these pioneers are going to accomplish and the challenges they've already gone through to pave the way for future space exploration and dare I say....space colonization.

Nikki "The Crazie Betty" V. says

I requested this book from Netgalley for a few different reasons. The number one reason being that I'm slightly obsessed with humanity's scientific journey to attempt to get us in to space. My husband has heard me say more than once that, given the opportunity, I would gladly upend my life and go live on Mars to assist in terraforming. I've just always been interested in space, and space exploration and ultimately am a little resentful of the fact that I will most likely never get to see what's beyond our Earth with my own eyes. I wanted to know what future generations have to look forward to with regard to space travel, and how we're going to get there. I'm also a huge fan of Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, so part of me requesting this was a little bit of fangirling.

Ultimately this ended up being an exceptionally interesting read about the engineering, politics, social-economics, and costs involved with getting us into space as a long-term solution for habitation and reparation to our Earth. Both of these men are scary smart and I truly believe that if anyone is going to get us into space, it's going to be these 2. They've both had huge battles to get to where they are, whether it be using their own personal money to fund their space projects, fighting NASA for the right to do so, or suing the government for asinine contractual requirements and pressures.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in what our current space program looks like, and how the commercialization of space flight is ultimately going to be what gets us off our blue planet.

Received via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Chris Via says

The latest iPhone is great, but the real buzz in science and technology is the plight to colonize Mars. Perhaps still too far-fetched for some, the race to be the first commercial shuttle between Earth and Mars is a very

real and burgeoning enterprise, with unthinkable funds being expended (and sometimes exploded) along the way. Recent movies and books such as *Interstellar* (2014), *The Martian* (2011; 2014), and *The Terranauts* (2016) have begun to imbue collective popular consciousness with the rather old space ambitions, but it is often hard to separate fact from fiction when they are so tightly coupled. This is where Christian Davenport's forthcoming book, *The Space Barons: Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and the Quest to Colonize the Cosmos*, fills a rapidly widening void. A reporter for the Washington Post, Davenport has extensive material and history from which to work, and a reporter's knack for stating facts and extracting the perfect array of material to tell the story.

Read full review: <http://www.chrisviabookreviews.com/20...>

Ian says

Over the last decade I've occasionally seen news items relating to Space X or Virgin Galactic, but hadn't paid them too much attention. I'm more engaged with the subject now, having read this remarkable story of how a group of billionaire business rivals - each working separately - created start-up space technology companies that have added a new dimension to the space industry. The book predominantly features the pugnacious Elon Musk, the flamboyant Richard Branson, and quiet man Jeff Bezos. Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen is another who features.

As boys they were all mesmerised by space exploration, and as adults each has used their enormous wealth to pursue that dream. As the author points out, they were also driven by a feeling that NASA, that once-visionary organisation, had become ossified and risk averse. In the 1970s everyone imagined there would be people living in moon bases by the 21st century.

Throughout the book the author uses the fable of The Hare and the Tortoise to illustrate the differing approaches of Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos. Two years ago Elon Musk announced his audacious plan to take humans to Mars by 2025. In contrast Bezos prefers to talk only "when he has something to talk about." They are a real contrast. For the moment though, the hare still seems to be holding the lead.

The book seems to have been well-researched and doesn't wander off its chosen subject. It's also pitched at a suitable level for the general reader. One of the messages I picked up was how much truth remains in the old cliché, "Space is Hard."

If I have a criticism, it's that I didn't find the early part a particularly quick read. Overall though I enjoyed it. After finishing I actually went onto Facebook and followed the pages for Space X, Blue Origin, and Virgin Galactic. A book that gets me to do that has to rate pretty highly.

Dee Arr says

The full title of this book, *The Space Barons: Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and the Quest to Colonize the Cosmos*, emphasizes the battle between two of the main figures in the book. While I understand the name-dropping can potentially help in selling more copies, I feel it is important to mention others featured in the book: Paul Allen (Microsoft co-founder), Burt Rutan (not a "Baron," but important for his role), and Sir Richard Branson (Virgin Group).

I chose to read this book because of my previous interest in space exploration/colonization, which unfortunately did not extend much further than what NASA had accomplished. While I was aware of three of the names involved (Bezos, Musk, and Branson), I did not know who had accomplished what. Author Christian Davenport's book helped to fill in my knowledge gaps. I questioned whether the book would be on the dry side, but the author's storytelling style soon proved me wrong.

Mr. Davenport lists an extensive number of sources he employed to write the book, along with interviews with the people directly involved in this new space race involving individuals and companies. The end result is an inside look at the dreams and fears along with the failures and successes of each entrepreneur. All possess the ultimate goal of enabling mankind to be able to safely travel in space, yet each also has variations of what he believes can be possible. The author not only details what has happened, he outlines the future plans of each company.

I didn't find this to be a quick read, as there was much to absorb. That said, I found the book to be engaging, and I didn't feel the urge to speed-read through the content. Mr. Davenport presents the information as if it were a book-length feature article. Extremely informative for anyone wishing to learn what has been going on with the space program over the last twenty years. Four stars.

My thanks to NetGalley and Perseus Books (Public Affairs) for an advance copy of this book (Publish Date: April 17, 2018).

James Giammona says

Good interviews with Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, Richard Branson and Paul Allen. I hadn't known many of the Bezos stories (he almost died in a helicopter crash while scouting West Texas property!) and Blue Origin history or the Virgin Galactic history. I knew most of the Musk history from Vance's book. Worth reading!

Missy says

Space Barons failed to capture my interest in the long run. The initial chapters about Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos weren't well organized, but they had enough interesting bits that I kept coming back to the book. When Burt Rutan's story was introduced, however, the author lost me.

Mr. Davenport followed the same pattern too many times: tell a bit of a story, introduce a new character, swing back in time to fill in some history of the character, then proceed in the main story on to the next character. Much about the failed progress of NASA was repeated again and again.

This is an interesting topic, but it needs to be organized differently.

I read an advanced readers copy provided by NetGalley.

#Space Barons #NetGalley

Yukari Watanabe says

It's a comprehensive book about new space business created by billionaires. Davenport understands the passion of these billionaires, and that made this nonfiction enjoyable to read. Before I write a review for Newsweek Japan, I'm reading a similar new book, "Rocket Billionaires" to compare with this book.

Kristiana says

Space barons is a good compiling of the separate space ventures and companies currently in the business. It has a narrow focus, which is wise. I have not yet tired of hearing of spacex's success, ingenuity, can do spirit or Elon musk's biting charm and brazenness. Davenport's approach fills in the gaps for me on what is going on in the different companies and how they came to be.

I can't imagine this is a satisfying read for someone who is already up to speed on the industry and excited about its future.

It's an entry level overview of where we've been.

It is venerable toward the history of space travel and the men who have been there, but it's more a compilation of facts, providing few unique insights or critiques. Perhaps that wasn't the point of the book. I enjoyed it, it's an engaging quick read

Alvin says

A fun read, but uneven. Lots of neat stories, mostly about Musk, but also Bezos, Richard Branson, and Paul Allen--all of whom have created space companies. Felt like a compilation of Sunday reader pieces. For me not enough context to history. While easy to read, it did have more of a journalistic dash...hastily written and prepared feel.

Mal Warwick says

Not long ago, I reviewed Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future by Ashlee Vance, and The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon by Brad Stone. Both books are well done. They're the product of professional journalists who are good at what they do. But neither book comes close to Christian Davenport's superb new book, The Space Barons: Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and the Quest to Colonize the Cosmos, in offering insight into the personality of these two extraordinary men who are the central characters in his book.

Illuminating personal details

The personal details about the lives of Musk and Bezos are abundant and highly revealing. For example, here is Davenport with an anecdote from the early life of Elon Musk: "He had such concentration that as a toddler in Montessori school, his teachers would have to pick him up—in his chair—to keep him moving from task to task." And this about Bezos: "His girlfriend from high school had once told an interviewer that Bezos had founded Amazon in order to make enough money to start a space company." Davenport notes that Bezos "conceded that there 'is some truth to that.'"

The pivotal role of four private space companies

Davenport's subject in The Space Barons is the pivotal role of four billionaires and the private space companies they've started in the emergence of the rejuvenated space industry. All four men envision lowering the cost of space travel and making it more accessible—and Davenport makes clear that they have taken great strides toward this goal. Although Musk and Bezos occupy center stage, Paul Allen (cofounder of

Microsoft) and Richard Branson (the Virgin companies) also play large roles. Davenport tells the tale with great assurance in prose that is always lively and engaging. He interviewed all four of his subjects and many of their associates (and critics) as well. This is the remarkable story of four self-made billionaires whose great wealth and passion allowed them to pioneer space technology that NASA had grown too old and bureaucratic to develop itself. If humankind ever succeeds in populating the solar system, historians may conclude that the determination and resources of these men were largely responsible.

Four distinctive personalities

Musk, Bezos, Allen, and Branson are very different from one another, though each is undoubtedly brilliant in his own way, and at least three of the four are science fiction fans. Musk is the youngest of the lot—he was born in 1971—and by far the brashest and most impulsive. His company, SpaceX, has made the biggest splash to date and has generated by far the most revenue, but Musk has a bad habit of setting impossible deadlines for what he envisions as the principal goal of his efforts: building a city of one million people on Mars. He has also gotten his way at times only by suing NASA and the Pentagon. By contrast, Bezos and his company, Blue Origin, have been the tortoise to SpaceX's hare ("Slow is smooth and smooth is fast" as compared to "Head down. Plow through the line.") Bezos' highly secretive company has consistently been wary of publicizing its achievements.

Both Musk and Bezos (born in 1964) envision traveling into space on their own rockets. Allen and Branson, who are older—born in 1953 and 1950, respectively—do not contemplate the trip to Mars that Musk hopes to take. Allen's part in the emergence of the new industry was for a time very limited by his fear that lives might be lost in the process; later, however, he staked out a unique project of his own: building a spaceplane larger than any airplane ever built. Branson, who is even more flamboyant than Musk, is all showman and marketer. His contribution was initially to promote the work of aircraft designer Burt Rutan, assuming the controlling interest in Rutan's company in place of Allen and only later getting into the business of building rockets, as Musk and Bezos have been doing for nearly two decades.

Differing views of humanity's future in space

Elon Musk is single-mindedly focused on building a large city on Mars. Jeff Bezos does not share this focus. "There's all kinds of interesting stuff you can do around the solar system," he told Davenport, "but the thing that's going to move the needle for humanity the most is mining near-Earth objects and building manufacturing infrastructure in place . . . That's the big thing." Given the obstacles to living on the surface of Mars that I have learned through other reading, I tend to agree with Bezos.

About the author

Christian Davenport is a reporter for the Washington Post, which is owned by Jeff Bezos. He acknowledges that it is "somewhat awkward writing a book about someone who could have you fired." However, his editor, Marty Baron, "has made it clear that [the Post] covers Jeff's companies as it would any other" and encouraged him to write the book. The Space Barons is Davenport's second.

Nick says

This is a really fascinating look into the world of the space industry. The author focuses on four main companies that started in the US in the early 2000s, which I found to be very interesting. While SpaceX has acquired a lot of fame in the past few years, I was surprised by how far back it went and how long it took to get to this point. The author also helped shine a light on some lesser-known companies like Blue Origin.

Although the US-Russia space race ended, competition in the space industry has not ceased and is bringing many benefits that will have long-term value.
