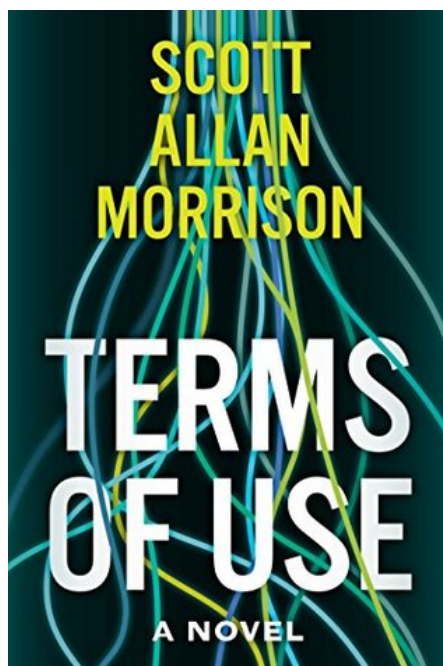




Terms of Use

Scott Allan Morrison

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Circles is the most popular social network in the world: vast, ubiquitous, and constantly evolving. Days before expanding into China, Circles suffers a devastating cyberattack—and a key executive is brutally murdered.

As he fights to save the company he helped build, top engineer Sergio Mansour uncovers evidence of a massive conspiracy that turns the power of Circles against its users. But as Sergio investigates, someone is watching his every move—someone ruthless enough to brand him a criminal and set a vicious hit man on his trail.

Desperate to clear his name, Sergio turns to Malina Olson, a beautiful and headstrong doctor who has an agenda of her own. Now, he and Malina must survive long enough to expose the truth in a world without hiding places, where a single keystroke can shift the global balance of power.

Terms of Use Details

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Author : Scott Allan Morrison

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Genre : Fiction, Thriller, Mystery

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From Reader Review Terms of Use for online ebook

AudioBookReviewer says

My original Terms of Use audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.

Circles is the most popular social network in the world. People are drawn to it, not just for the interaction, but because most of their daily lives have some link to it. But when the network is suddenly and professionally hacked, things are suddenly not as good as they seemed.

The narration was done by David Colacci and he does a bang-up job. They really picked a wonderful narrator that fits the work perfectly. The “tone” of the book seemed to work perfectly with Colacci’s narration style and the two really worked off of each other. The quality was what I’ve come to expect from Brilliance audio nothing less than perfect.

Sometimes books take a few minutes for me to get into them. Others take a couple chapters, and some I just have a hard time ever understanding what the author was trying to get to. This book grabbed me from the onset. Granted I work in tech and a lot of what he was writing about I see on a daily basis—but just the overall feel of the book really grabbed me.

The mix of technology and action really makes this the perfect technothriller. There were parts where the action was fast-paced and brutal, then there were parts explaining social bots that were highly technical without being boring. It was really a perfect mix of these two genres.

Overall, I’m sad that I put this book off for so long (only a month or so). I really enjoyed it and found myself staying up to find out what happened next. The length was perfect, it wasn’t too long where it felt like it was dragging out, or too short where the author left me begging for me — it was just right. The proverbial three little pigs moment.

I will definitely be looking forward to books to come from Morrison.

Audiobook was provided for review by the publisher.

Kirsten Castinado says

Good read

I’ll admit, this is the first book I’ve read in a long time. I’m not much of a reader, but I’m trying to make more time for reading. I decided to start with this book because I recently learned about Amazon giving early access to prime members. This book in particular caught my attention because of its thrilling nature and I thought it could keep me entertained. I was not disappointed.

At first I wasn’t sure if I liked it or not, possibly due to interruptions I had encountered, but after reading the first quarter of it I was hooked. I read it in two days (because I forced myself to go to sleep and finish it the next day) and I thought it was very well written and extremely suspenseful.

I definitely recommend it to anyone looking for a good thrill.

Sharon says

Thomas & Mercer and NetGalley provided me with an electronic copy of this book, in exchange for an honest review.

Terms of Use is about a new social media platform called Circles, one which suffers a devastating cyber attack just days before a major expansion. When the dust settles, a conspiracy threatens the life and safety of Sergio Mansour, the creator of Circles. On the run for his freedom, Sergio has to expose the truth, but he has to stay alive long enough to do it.

Terms of Use suffers, in my opinion, with an identity crisis. It is not really a thriller, a political novel, nor it is a technology/science fiction novel. The technological aspects are described in too much detail for my taste, while the thriller aspects are not detailed enough. Although I do not mind if a book has partisan politics, this aspect might alienate certain readers. The multiple viewpoints were distracting and I found my attention waning for a good portion of this book. Terms of Use just was not a book of my liking, but readers who like to read about technology in a thriller novel might enjoy it.

Bill Krieger says

Did not finish. This is supposed to be a smart, hi-tech thriller. The plot is TV movie dumb, not smart. I groaned when a hitman suddenly shows up and starts shooting nerds at a social media company. (groan again) I got halfway through as our heroes evaded the FBI in a crack hotel full of prostitutes in LA by jumping out a window with sheets they tied together. Um, yeah. Done.

Terms of Use isn't a 1-star train wreck, but it isn't worth reading.
2 bill-stars. Not a good read.

Joel says

I received this book for free from Kindle First through Amazon Prime.

The best part about this book was the characters. From the protagonists to the antagonists to characters with little purpose, they all felt real. Their motives and personalities were reinforced well without having to be constantly reminded of who they are. The interactions between them and the emotions they felt also helped the characters feel more realistic.

As for the story itself, it is about an employee at a company in Silicon Valley who appears to have stumbled onto a conspiracy. I haven't read many books in the thriller/mystery/conspiracy genres, so I cannot really compare it to those. That said, I thought the plot was good enough to keep me interested. The action parts were done well, and the overall mystery was pretty good, in my opinion. One thing I didn't like was that the book tried to force suspense at early points. A few chapters would develop well and then have a couple sentences at the end that clearly had something to do with the plot, but they had no context at the time. It may have been trying to pique readers' curiosity to build excitement, but the effect was lost when the plot

points would not be revisited for chapters.

Overall, I found the book to be a fun read. For a book about a tech company, the author described the technology well enough that it appeared futuristic without being confusing to the readers. Some parts of the writing style bothered me, and there were parts of the book that I did not find necessary, but I would still recommend giving this book a chance. It was a good first book for this author, and I look forward to seeing more of his works.

Sydney says

I am disappointed in this book and probably not for the same reasons as most would guess. The story was intriguing, and that's why I chose this out of the many Kindle First options for December. It also seemed pretty similar to *The Short Drop*, which was a Kindle Unlimited option that I quite enjoyed. The two shared a political plotline, which was interesting to me. They are newly published so the political backdrop is probably influenced by the impending election year. What I liked about *The Short Drop* was that it did not get partisan. Yes, the potential candidate was a sleazy bastard, but it didn't cloud your judgment or experience with the novel by screaming left or right ideals throughout the story. It played its part in the story and stayed out of the way. And then you have *Terms of Use*, which started out much like *The Short Drop*, until it decided to portray the Republican presidential candidate as a corrupt and murderous rapist, without giving the Democratic candidate any appearances whatsoever. It wasn't subtle at all. Normally, I can deal with this sort of thing and not care; however, this book was condemning political propaganda via social networking and socialbots, all the while making itself a piece of political propaganda in its own rite. I was really buying into the story, outlandish as it was, until the story became extremely partisan. Then I lost all interest and respect. Better luck next time.

Qwill / The Qwillery says

Terms of Use is the debut novel by Scott Allan Morrison. It is a cyber/technothriller featuring 50+ year-old Sergio Mansour, an IT engineer at Circles (think Facebook on steroids). He's been with Circles from the start helping to build the worldwide social network that is about to expand into China. He now works in research for Circles and is just about to announce that he's found the ultimate way to protect privacy.

Sergio is an unlikely hero, but he's incredibly resourceful and highly intelligent. Things suddenly start to go badly at Circles - a huge cyberattack and then the murder of his friend/co-worker from Circles. Sergio is framed as a terrorist who is possibly involved in the murder, runs and ends up on the doorstep of Malina Olson. He's had one date with her so I was surprised that he ran to her and even more surprised that she agreed to help him.

Sergio is a very likable and relatable character. His background is interesting and his computer skills are top notch. It is a great deal of fun to watch Sergio try to figure out what is going on with Circles and why he is being framed and by whom. His ability to think ahead and figure things out is just keeping him and Malina safe. Malina Olson is an intelligent woman who I spent much of the novel wondering about. Why was she helping Sergio? Is she also going to act against him? Why does her behavior make no sense? Fortunately the reason is eventually made apparent and it is not at all what I suspected.

There is enough tech in *Terms of Use* to add layer upon layer of believability without being overwhelming if

you are not computer savvy. The secondary characters are well-developed and there are some really scary bad actors who are out to kill Sergio, Malina and anyone who gets in their way.

Terms of Use is a both a cautionary tale regarding tech used against its users and a fun and exciting read. It is crisply written, fast-paced and thrilling. You may never look at social networks the same way again and will definitely be checking your privacy settings.

Wayne Sutton says

Where do I begin? First off, the positives. From a literary standpoint, I think that the topic is relevant, current, and thought provoking. However, as a person who loves to write essays, we should always remember to stick to the thesis. This book had many theses and many different directions it could take. But I'm gonna keep it basic so I don't eat my own words.

As far as what can and will go wrong with the internet and social media, I agree with a lot of the points that come up in this book. A lot of things that happen are a bit far fetched at times, but not impossible. So people should always monitor their online "lives" and be aware of what they are posting. Nothing is ever really private in cyberspace. This story makes you wonder how people can be influenced by the internet and how "realistic" one's online "life" can take over real life. The book does a good job of covering that.

Now to the negatives, I like the thriller aspect of this book, however I think the author tried to be too suspenseful. It was like every 3-5 pages something crazy happened. As I'm thinking "why not call the police?" As far as using social media to influence votes and "rig" elections, I could see where that could play in, but that topic alone could have been its own novel. The other "Lifetime" aspects of this story I could have also done without. But it's clear that this author was going for entertainment, and some people need the "extra special effects" to keep them interested. So I'm sure other readers enjoyed that, I just thought it cluttered what could have been a great piece of literature. If Morrison would have focused on the potential dangers of using the internet.

All in all, it was a nice little book to read. It was a freebie from Kindle, so you I usually don't set my expectations too high. But it's not bad, it's just a bit much and a bit too dramatic. Also I chose this book amongst others because of the reviews. But now I need to be leery of them because the reviewers either could have been Socialbots (my new word I learned from this book) or friends of the author pimping his book. I was excited by the reviews and after reading this, a bit disappointed. But, you can't win them all.

Gene Jones says

A Tantalizing technical Thriller

A wonderful plot, good thriller. However, I was most impressed with the accurate technical details. Reading it reminded me of my first experience with Jurassic Park.

As a programmer, finding good technical writing is almost impossible. The book lays out a dystopian future with a very real sounding Facebook look-a-like. It lays out a future tangibly connected to our zeitgeist. The warning is so convincing that during this election season, the back of my mind will be thinking about it. Who watches the admins?

David says

An interesting premise, but poorly executed.

Sally says

I am the queen of 3 star reviews lately. I have mixed feelings about this book. It was a good book overall, but I did have a few issues. It was suspenseful, fast paced and realistic. The social media aspects are things that could and probably do happen with today's technology. It makes you wonder how secure all of our social media and online privacy settings really are. There is a lot of technical jargon that had me skimming a bit to get past it. It was written so I could understand it, but this is a very technical based book that can be overwhelming. The main characters are interesting, but sometimes it felt forced between the main two characters. There are a lot of secondary characters to keep up with as well. The end felt a bit rushed and endings are a big deal to me. I think if you like technical and suspenseful books that are fast paced that you will enjoy this book.

Catherine Read says

Holy Cow! What an AMAZING book! Published in 2015, this is an eerie foreshadowing of what just happened in this presidential election.

In Scott Allan Morrison's version, the bad guys are Chinese instead of Russian. The social media platform involved in trying to influence the election is a fictitious company called Circles that closely resembles Facebook.

This is an absolute PAGE TURNER! Morrison knows his way around Silicon Valley tech culture and demonstrates it here very convincingly. There's a lot of behavioral psychology involved in the plot that mirrors the psychology tech companies use to drive the expansion of social media usage.

Our protagonist, Circles software developer Sergio Mansour, is a good guy with an interesting backstory. He ends up drawn into a complicated mystery with deadly consequences at the same time he meets an attractive ER doctor name Malina Olson. She becomes the book's conscious - bringing up issues of privacy, safety and how much people have given up to big companies who sell their information for profit.

The key word here is "convincing." There was a lot of research done to get the details right. The dialogue and description are well done and the characters believable. This is a fast paced story with international intrigue, narrow escapes, plot twists and surprises right up to the last page.

This is a book that is best read while the debate over possible Russian influence of our recent US Presidential election is still top of mind. It's a thrilling ride!

John says

This book is OK, perhaps average or a little below average for books I've read. Morrison keeps things moving in a lively manner although some of the events seem a bit improbable to me. I thought the ending was kind of corny, but it was sweet and leaves the reader with a happy feeling. The good guys win, the bad guys lose, and the wicked Republican gets what's coming to him. If you are looking for great literature, this book isn't it, but it will fill an otherwise empty afternoon if you don't have anything better to do.

Full disclosure; I got this book free from the Kindle First program on Amazon. I wavered between giving it 2 or 3 stars. As you can see, I settled on 2, but 3 wouldn't be too unreasonable. I just couldn't bring myself to say "I liked it", which a 3 indicates. If I had known from the beginning how the second half of the book would be, I probably would have passed on it.

Tina says

Incredible book on the possibilities of technology

I gave this book 4 stars taking away one star simply because I reserve 5 stars for books that are just knock my socks off good!

This book is good and suspenseful the story pulls you in and the character development is very well written and thought out.

The intricacies of writing code for social networking sites is way over my head, but I have definitely imagined many of the crimes occurring that happen in this book.

Great book.

Brian's Book Blog says

Check out this and all my reviews at Brian's Book Blog

The scariest part... is that it could happen

Welcome to a vision of the future that has roots in now. Actually, this isn't really the future. Circles is the biggest and the best social media platform on the Internet. People log in all day long because they are tied to it in ways that keep them coming back for more. And Circles is trying to keep them there even longer. Suddenly, Circles is hacked and hacked professionally. They didn't even realize what was going on until it was too late. One of the main people in the innermost part of Circles (called Labs) is then brutally murdered that night. Once Sergio begins to look into what was happening he quickly goes into a rabbit hole like scenario where every turn could cost him his life.

Narration for Terms of Use was done by David Colacci and he absolutely kills it (pardon my pun). Colacci has one of those voices that allows him to talk about a brutal murder scene one minute, and the next explain details about a social bot problem on the Circles network. The quality was perfect, just like every other Brilliance Audio recording that I've ever had the pleasure of listening to.

Well, this book grabbed me by my ankles and pulled me under quick. It just launched me into a world that I'm semi-familiar with (the tech world) and then threw me under a bus when they started revealing some of

the back-plot of the story. If you wanted to know what a technothriller was—this is a wonderful example. Taking the techno part is the inner workings of Circles. It's explained in a way that I think that anyone could understand, but not left too vague so that those that are "in the know" felt tickled as well. The triller part was dead on. You've got dead bodies, car chases, gun-fights, hostage situations, and more. What more could one ask for?

Overall, I'm sad that I put this book off for so long (only a month or so). I really enjoyed it and found myself staying up to find out what happened next. The length was perfect, it wasn't too long where it felt like it was dragging out, or too short where the author left me begging for me — it was just right. The proverbial three little pigs moment.

I will definitely be looking forward to books to come from Morrison.
