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Beta: Project Avatar
by A.M.D. Hays

TECHNOLOGY: FRIEND OR FOE?
-Exciting new thriller examines the limitless benefits
and dangers of attractive technology

You can use Smartphone applications to surf the Internet, get driving directions, transfer money, or catch up with friends. You can track almost anything from a parcel to an asteroid, even “cyber-stalk” people that you haven’t seen in years. Companies track our every move using cookies and the cellular network, and the military can disrupt a nuclear power plant with a virus and even bomb a foreign country without leaving home base. Technology blends effortlessly into our lives, providing information and tools we now take for granted. But what are the risks of our insatiable need for advancement in technology? Yes, we can use it to cure disease, keep in touch with people that we may never see in person, and to make our lives more convenient. But current events also shed light on the shadier side of technology: the NSA spying on us without our knowledge, website moguls invading privacy to promote sales, viruses designed to destroy public infrastructure, and the use of drones for non-military deployment. Automation is the way of the future—but at what cost for the citizen?

Author, A.M.D. Hays attempts to answer these sorts of questions in her new book *Beta: Project Avatar*. Coming from a career in technology, Hays explores the pros and cons of overdependence on technology. *Beta: Project Avatar* tells the story of a software program that would give soldiers access to vast information resources and military weapons using a friendly avatar interface. But when the avatar is accidentally released from the lab, it can no longer be contained—leading to some undesirable consequences for everyone involved.

“As technology becomes more sophisticated,” says Hays, “it can save our lives but it can also get us killed. In other words technology has advantages but we also have to understand its dangers. I know what it means to buy a Smartphone and start using it—this is incredibly

attractive technology, but at the same time it can be an extremely hazardous toy. *Beta: Project Avatar* addresses the same dilemma: technology that is extremely desirable, but at the same time is very dangerous.”

Major themes in the book include:

- The implications of automating warfare
- Questioning the likelihood of advanced military technology ending up in the wrong hands
- The dangers of blindly accepting new technologies
- The ethical question of whether or not to inform the public about government technologies in development
- How technology is likely to morph over the next few years
- The dangers of in-the-wild viruses and other "intelligent" software with the capacity to disrupt or destroy infrastructure and to indiscriminately harm humans

Publishers Weekly gave *Beta: Project Avatar* a starred review and called it a "stunning debut." It has also won a Bronze Medal at the 2013 Independent Publisher Awards.

“I wanted to explore the consequences of inventing extremely advanced military technology. Especially after current events surrounding Stuxnet, Edward Snowden and the ethical questions about drone warfare—I think these issues are becoming more and more relevant to our society.”

A.M.D. Hays has had a lifetime of experience in the technology industry. Following the recent advances in technology, she wrote her book as a commentary on the inherent dangers that come with it. She currently resides in Hawaii, where she is working on another Dee Lockwood (the main character in *Beta: Project Avatar*) book that she hopes to finish soon.

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Beta: Project Avatar can be purchased from www.Amazon.com, www.BarnesandNoble.com, and www.BookDepository.com and wholesale via Ingram.

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