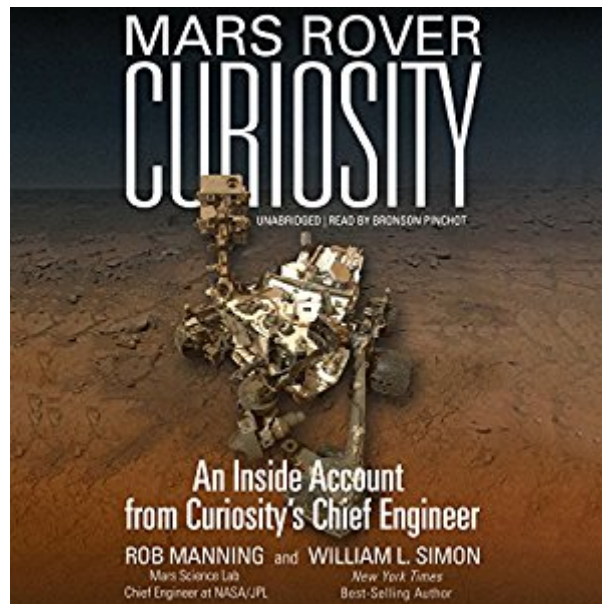


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Mars Rover Curiosity: An Inside Account From Curiosity's Chief Engineer



Synopsis

In the course of our enduring quest for knowledge about ourselves and our universe, we haven't found answers to one of our most fundamental questions: Does life exist anywhere else in the universe? Ten years and billions of dollars in the making, the Mars rover Curiosity is poised to answer this all-important question. Here, Rob Manning, the project's chief engineer, tells of bringing the groundbreaking spacecraft to life. Manning and his team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, tasked with designing a lander many times larger and more complex than any before, faced technical setbacks, fights over inadequate resources, and the challenges of leading an army of brilliant, passionate, and often frustrated experts. Manning's fascinating personal account - which includes information from his exclusive interviews with leading Curiosity scientists - is packed with tales of revolutionary feats of science, technology, and engineering. Listeners experience firsthand the disappointment at encountering persistent technical problems, the agony of near defeat, the sense of victory at finding innovative solutions to these problems, the sheer terror of staking careers and reputations on a lander that couldn't be tested on Earth, and the rush of triumph at its successful touchdown on Mars on August 5, 2012. This is the story of persistence, dedication, and unrelenting curiosity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A truly stunning depiction of what it takes to overcome the seeming impossible odds of conceiving, building, flying, and successfully landing a spacecraft on another planet. This one was all the more

impressive because it was much larger and vastly more complex than for any previous Mars mission. This first-person narrative captures a deep sense of the pressures, struggles, and setbacks involved, not just in terms of the science and engineering but also the uncertainties of funding and satisfying the higher-ups that it can really succeed. This a human story of man's struggle to overcome impossible odds. You won't be able to put it down.

As an enthusiastic practicing engineer I found this account fascinating. When first I learned about the sky crane I was alarmed at the complexity of the whole arrangement in a mission where every gram was precious and there was no chance of a second try. The book, written from an engineering perspective gave me the train of logic that generated the outcome. I became convinced! It's not much appreciated how much effort goes into a project like the Mars Lander. This book provides a clear insight into the sheer amount of hard work, hard thinking and hard discussion. The book outlined a number of other interesting engineering solutions and, most importantly, the logic and constraints that lead to them. An aside chapter on some of the aspects of a manned Mars landing showed clearly the vast magnitude of such an undertaking.

"Mars Rover Curiosity" is the real deal. Author Rob Manning was JPL's Chief Engineer on the program, and he tells it like it was and is. With excellent readability and page-turning immediacy, Dr. Manning recounts the trials and tribulations, successes and failures, joys and sorrows of NASA's effort to land a planetary rover on Mars using a seemingly crazy technique dubbed "sky crane." Curiosity was bigger, heavier, more complicated, more capable and more power-hungry than any other rover ever flown. Designing, building, testing, launching and operating it on a very tight schedule and within stringent funding constraints presented daunting challenges that sometimes brought the project to a virtual standstill. The stunning success of Curiosity's flawless touchdown on Mars on August 5, 2012, is a testament to the skill, dedication, ingenuity and hard work of the scientists, engineers and technicians who worked on it. This book is their story. It's all in here: planning and budgetary meetings; design reviews; trade studies; hardware and software development, testing and integration; launch and interplanetary cruise flight; the landing's "seven minutes of terror;" Martian surface operations, and even some of the science results. Dr. Manning does not concentrate on any one topic to the exclusion of the others. As an unrepentant techno-geek, I tend to most enjoy spaceflight books that are filled to bursting with arcane technical minutia, and I usually pay less attention to the budgetary, programmatic and managerial material. Not so in "Mars Rover Curiosity." I found it fascinating from cover to cover. Its level of detail satisfied

my geekiness, but should not be daunting to those readers not too familiar with the subject. For an exciting tale of planetary exploration as new as tomorrow's headlines, pick up a copy of "Mars Rover Curiosity." As I said, it's the real deal.

I read Adam Steltzner's book on the MSL program, but it was mostly about his career and NASA. I was hoping to get some good tech about the MSL program with this book. But this book too is mainly people and politics. There is some tech buried in it, but I got tired of hearing about the NASA bureaucracy and the never-ending scramble for funding. Some pics, but they are small low-res grayscale on cheap paper. I'd gladly pay more for a comprehensive explanation of the technology with lots of color pics, graphs, charts, etc.

What a cool book. I loved it! Well written, it does an excellent job of telling its story, which is a lot more interesting than I had first believed. What a lot of garbage these guys had to endure to get this machine built! BRAVO to them and to the author who brought us this tale. Recommended if you like science, tech, NASA, tales of government stupidity or just want to know how we got that little guy up there on Mars.

A very intriguing read about the story behind Curiosity. Manning does a fantastic job giving the reader an inside look at all of the dedication, not to mention the emotional highs and lows, that the team endured to get this amazing piece of technology to Mars. Great read from cover to cover.

if you like aerospace engineering, mars, descriptions of big projects from the inside, testing (even software testing), nasa, test results from a parachute in a high speed wind tunnel, learning about how to get a rover from space to the surface, and reading about how you can tell what is in rocks without touching them, then...you'll probably like this.

Thought it was very good, have not finished reading, but it's a great read. Definitely a worth while book to have, chose to get an ebook just because the library is so crowded, but whatever suits you...

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