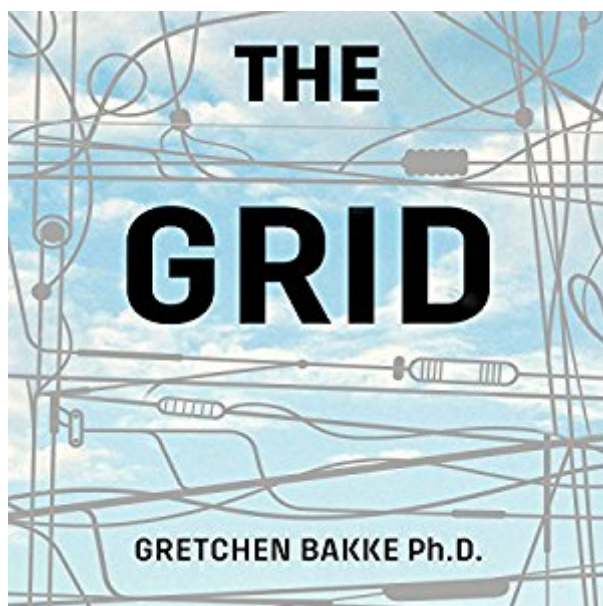


The book was found

# The Grid: The Fraying Wires Between Americans And Our Energy Future



## Synopsis

The grid is an accident of history and of culture, in no way intrinsic to how we produce, deliver and consume electrical power. Yet this is the system the United States ended up with, a jerry-built structure now so rickety and near collapse that a strong wind or a hot day can bring it to a grinding halt. The grid is now under threat from a new source: renewable and variable energy, which puts stress on its logics as much as its components. In an entertaining, perceptive and deeply researched fashion, cultural anthropologist Gretchen Bakke uses the history of an increasingly outdated infrastructure to show how the United States has gone from seemingly infinite technological prowess to a land of structural instability. She brings humor and a bright eye to contemporary solutions and to the often surprising ways in which these succeed or fail. And the consequences of failure are significant. Our national electrical grid grew during an era when monopoly, centralisation and standardisation meant strength. Yet as we've increasingly become a nation that caters to local needs, and as a plethora of new renewable energy sources comes online, our massive system is dangerously out of step. Charting the history of our electrical grid, Bakke helps us see what we all take for granted, shows it as central to our culture and identity as a people and reveals it to be the linchpin in our aspirations for a clean-energy future.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 11 hours and 8 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios for Bloomsbury

Audible.com Release Date: September 8, 2016

Language: English

ASIN: B01I5SY176

Best Sellers Rank: #2 in Books > Science & Math > Physics > Electromagnetism > Electricity #3 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Energy Production & Extraction > Electric #4 in Books > Business & Money > Processes & Infrastructure > Infrastructure

## Customer Reviews

Review of Bakke's "The grid" by Paul F. Ross Gretchen Bakke presents a very interesting, very readable look at the history of electric power in the United States from Thomas Edison until now in order to assist us, the readers, in understanding and helping shape the still uncertain details

affecting the future of electric power. The ubiquity of electric power in human affairs is certain. Just how that power will be provided, its fuel sources, and its \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Bakke, Gretchen "The grid: The fraying wires between Americans and our energy future" 2016, Bloomsbury, New York NY, xxx + 353

pages \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ distribution methods are far from certain although they have been finding their unguided way to the present throughout the last century. The stunning contribution of Bakke, not an electrical engineer, is that she has the freedom to see what history, new technology, new uses, social expectations, and legal and economic structures have done to shape what we have and determine what we will have in the future. The 22 July 2016 issue of Science arrived in my US mailbox, I saw Cymene Howe's review of Bakke's book (p 355), and I went to my computer immediately to order the book from .com. Edison, in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, invented and put in place direct current generators of electric power and distributed that power over local grids (to customers less than a mile from the generator) to produce light in electric light bulbs, also his invention.

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