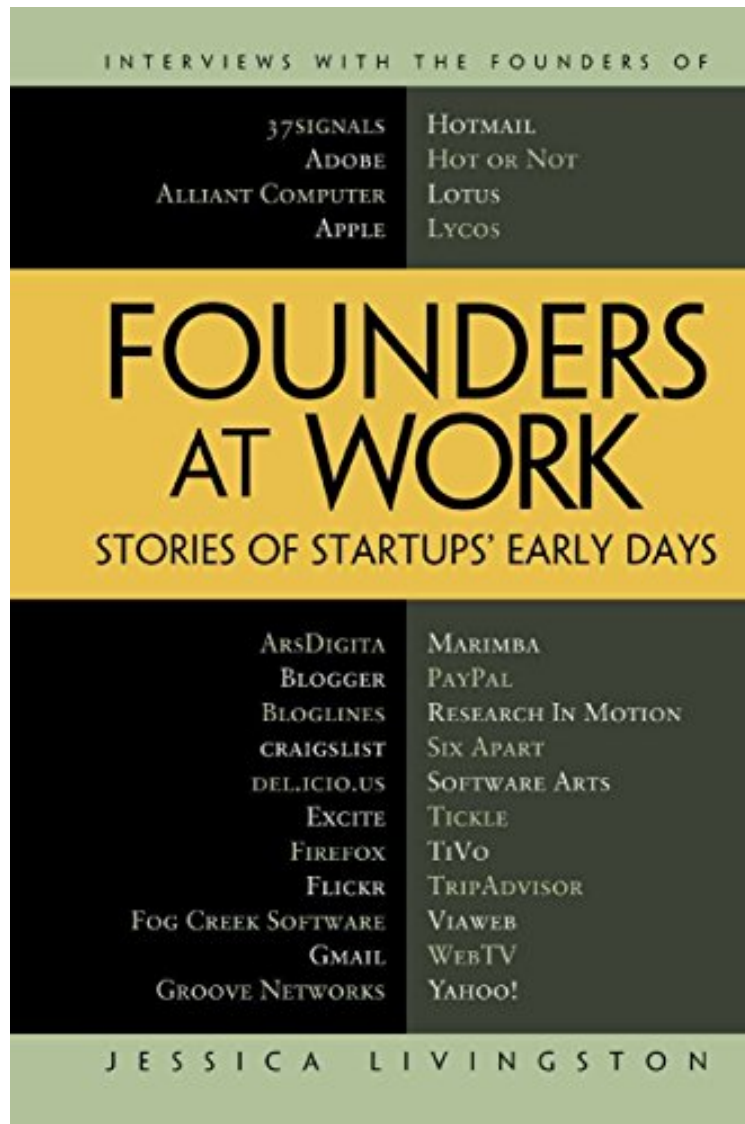


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## Founders at Work: Stories of Startups' Early Days

Jessica Livingston

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**Jessica Livingston : Founders at Work: Stories of Startups' Early Days** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Founders at Work: Stories of Startups' Early Days:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. ExcellentBy GraybeardThis is a wonderful collection of interviews of company founders and co-founders. Kudos to the author for asking good questions and kudos to the interviewees for their candid, fascinating, detailed answers. What surprised me most was how down-to-earth and normal most of these successful people were. Only a couple of them seemed full of themselves. The rest, surprisingly, were just the opposite. Their stories about their startup days provided insights into their values, motivations, aspirations, points of view, work ethic; as well as their worries, fears, doubts, and concerns; plus their approach to making tough decisions

and a recognition of their personal limitations and flaws. Their interview responses are full of insights into their decisions about business development, product development, product management, pricing, promotion, distribution, customer service, technical support, accounting, finance, hiring and technology choices; and dealing with venture capitalists, business partners and actual or potential competitors. The interviews also provide a lot of insights into technology trends and market trends during the time that the founders' companies were starting up. Here are the companies whose founders were interviewed, in the order they appear in the book: PayPal, Hotmail, Apple, Excite, Software Arts, Lotus Development, Iris Associates, Groove Networks, Pyra Labs (Blogger.com), Yahoo, Research in Motion, Marimba, Gmail, WebTV, TiVo, Viaweb, del.icio.us, ONELIST, Bloglines, Craigslist, Flickr, WAIS, InternetArchive, Alexa, Adobe Systems, Open Systems, Hummer Winblad, 37signals, ArsDigita, Fog Creek Software, TripAdvisor, HOT or NOT, Tickle, Firefox, Six Apart, Lycos, Aliant Computer Systems, Shareholder.com. This book is perfect for anyone interested in entrepreneurship, technology startups, technology companies in general, and business books in general. I've read the book once already and now I'm in the middle of reading it a second time. I wish there were an audio version of it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Truly a must read for every tech entrepreneur. By Zeeshan Zia. Amazing set of interviews. I loved that one can find some founder in every possible circumstance interviewed in here. Also loved that almost every advice one founder gives is negated by another founder in some other chapter! Take away message for me: there are very few rules when it comes to founding a tech startup. Just be yourself, and toss the proverbial coin.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great content but kindle edition leaves much to be desired. By Christopher R. Field. I bought the kindle edition of this book and I found it to be a terrible reading experience. Quote often it seemed like pieces of sentences were missing and occasionally when going from one page to another I would see the text of two lines superimposed on each other. I don't have a kindle so I used the android kindle app and kindle for the PC and both left much to be desired. Also I hated that if I flipped a few pages ahead that it would reset the location. Overall I would not recommend the e-book edition, the quality is horrendous. Also now that I see the prices, I paid more for the terrible kindle edition than the hardcover edition goes for. Anyway I would never recommend paying more for an e-book than a print book because you have less rights than with the print book. Also for a book like this I think there is value to being able to flip through it really quickly while the kindle interface is best for flipping through page by page. That being said, the quality of the book was great. It was full of all sorts of insights and experiences. They can all be summarized as don't give up, watch out for VC's but don't write them off, listen to your customers, be willing to change, make sure the initial founding team works together well, etc... But just listening the values does not do it justice. You really have to read the experiences. The book is full of all sorts of insights too, not just about entrepreneurship but also about the individual companies. For example I was really impressed about PayPal and the fraud stuff they did and how valuable that was. I just never knew. Overall I think the book was very well put together. Although some of the founders liked to talk a lot more than others and it droned on and on. But others were brief and insightful. I would definitely recommend this. If I bought the print edition I suspect I would be giving it 5 stars. But really the kindle experience is probably worth 0 stars. But the content is so good that I figure 4 stars is fair. Since at this time I see hardcover editions for \$5 or \$6 new I would say go grab one of those now!!! The book is definitely inspirational.

Now available in paperback with a new preface and interview with Jessica Livingston about Y Combinator!

Founders at Work: Stories of Startups' Early Days is a collection of interviews with founders of famous technology companies about what happened in the very earliest days. These people are celebrities now. What was it like when they were just a couple friends with an idea? Founders like Steve Wozniak (Apple), Caterina Fake (Flickr), Mitch Kapor (Lotus), Max Levchin (PayPal), and Sabeer Bhatia (Hotmail) tell you in their own words about their surprising and often very funny discoveries as they learned how to build a company. Where did they get the ideas that made them rich? How did they convince investors to back them? What went wrong, and how did they recover? Nearly all technical people have thought of one day starting or working for a startup. For them, this book is the closest you can come to being a fly on the wall at a successful startup, to learn how it's done. But ultimately these interviews are required reading for anyone who wants to understand business, because startups are business reduced to its essence. The reason their founders become rich is that startups do what businesses do—create value—more intensively than almost any other part of the economy. How? What are the secrets that make successful startups so insanely productive? Read this book, and let the founders themselves tell you.

About the Author Jessica Livingston is a founding partner at Y Combinator, a seed-stage venture firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Mountain View, California. She was previously vice president of marketing at investment bank Adams Harkness. In addition to her work with startups at Y Combinator, she organizes Startup School ([www.StartupSchool.org](http://www.StartupSchool.org)). She has a bachelor's degree in English from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.