

**DIGITAL**  
**AT** Snapshots from the  
first thirty-five years  
**WORK**

**Edited by**  
**Jamie Parker Pearson**

**digital**

Digital Press

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## Preface

This is a book about many people, written by many people.

When we discussed the idea of a book about Digital, it seemed that the best and most honest way to show what working at Digital was like would be to let people tell their own stories, in their own words.

This is not a formal history, a systematic account, or a comprehensive analysis. Elements of analysis are here, and the raw material of history. Words and remembrances provide insight into Digital's culture and help to explain how it became the company it is today. We conducted more than three hundred interviews for this book. Some people were close at hand, still working at Digital. Others were several careers away. All, regardless of their roles, knew personally what it is to work at Digital. We gathered far more material than we could possibly use, and found that many people remembered different things, differently. Yet they all talked about the same things, many having shared common experiences. We hope it presents a candid picture of Digital's working environment.

In developing what may be considered the first volume, we felt there were some separate areas of the story worth researching: the roots of the company, the development of the style of interactive computing, the initial contact with customers and the early days of sales and service, how we have manufactured over the years, our engineering philosophy, and how the company is organized and how it operates.

At the beginning of each part of the book is an illustrated section, providing a visual history of the product and business milestones of the period. Part I covers the period from the 1950s through the introduction of Digital's first computer, the PDP-1, in 1960. Part II spans the growth years, from the mid-1960s through the late 1980s, introducing the PDP-11 and the VAX family of systems. Part III looks at the development and internal use of Digital's family of networking products, linking the use of the network to the dynamic operating environment.

I am grateful to many people who supported this effort. It has offered me a rare opportunity to look closely at Digital. In particular, I would like to thank Ken Olsen, Win Hindle, and John Sims. For their roles as advisors and sounding boards, I would like to acknowledge Henry Crouse, Russ Doane, Gary Eichhorn, Jim Fleming, Peter Jancourtz, Ann Jenkins, Ted Johnson, Peter Kaufmann, Dallas Kirk, Bob Kucharavy, Randy Levine, Linda Lindgren, Al Mullin, Richard Seltzer, Geoff Shingles, Tom Siekman, and Ron Smart, who reviewed drafts and ideas, offering insight and advice.

The collective creativity of the team who produced this effort was extraordinary. For the writing, I would like to acknowledge the late Bob Hofmann, Bob Lindgren, Bob Lynch, and Patrick Pierce, who weaved together many people's words and provided the chapters. Patti Polisar and Patrick Murphy were careful and ruthless editors. Janice Moore and Laraine Armenti collaborated on the design, providing an elegant format for the words and pictures. Mark Sniffen handled print production, keeping us honest with our budget. Two students from WPI, Ken Spark and Aran Anderson, provided the glossary, a valuable source for readers. Digital Press provided editorial advice and publishing experience.

Through the efforts of many people who generously shared in this telling emerges a mosaic of hundreds of points of view. I would like to thank all concerned. By knowing the past, we gain an understanding of the present, and a basis for moving into the future.

— Jamie Parker Pearson  
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