

"Part field guide and part critique ... a reliable point of departure for navigating this contentious new terrain."

— *New Scientist*



# BIOPUNK

Solving Biotech's Biggest Problems  
in Kitchens and Garages

by  
**MARCUS WOHLSEN**



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## Biopunk: Solving Biotech's Biggest Problems in Kitchens and Garages



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Expenses Gates recently told Wired that if he were a teenager today, he would be hacking biology. "If you need to change the globe in some big way," he says, "that is where you should start-biological molecules." The most disruptive force on earth resides in DNA. Champions of synthetic biology believe that turning genetic code into Lego-like blocks to build never-before-seen organisms could solve the thorniest challenges in medicine, energy, and environmental security. Biotech companies and educational researchers are just beginning to unlock the potential of piecing collectively lifestyle from scratch. The "biohacking" movement, right now in its early, heady days, aims to unleash an outbreak of genetically modified innovation by making the various tools and techniques of biotechnology available to everyone. They have confidence in the power of people with usage of DNA to solve the world's biggest complications. But because the hackers who cracked open the potential of the personal computer and the web proved, the most groundbreaking discoveries often emerge from out-of-the-way places, forged by amazing outsiders with few assets besides boundless energy and great tips. Borrowing their idealism from the worlds of open-source software, artisinal food, Internet startups, and the Peace Corps, biopunks are devoted advocates for open-sourcing the basic code of life. In Biopunk, Marcus Wohlsen chronicles a growing community of DIY researchers working beyond your walls of companies and universities who are committed to democratizing DNA what sort of Internet did info. You'll meet a new variety of hackers who aren't scared to get their hands wet, from business owners who try to bring DNA-based medical equipment to the poorest of the poor to a curious tinkerer who believes a tub of yogurt and a jellyfish gene could protect the world's food supply. These biohackers consist of: -A duo who started a tumor drug company in their kitchen -A group who built an open-source DNA copier -A woman who created a genetic test in her apartment for a deadly disease that experienced stricken her family Combined with the potential of citizen science to bring about disruptive transformation, Wohlsen explores the dangers of DIY bioterrorism, the possibility of genetic engineering experiments eliminated awry, and whether the ability to design existence from scratch on a laptop might come earlier than we think.



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