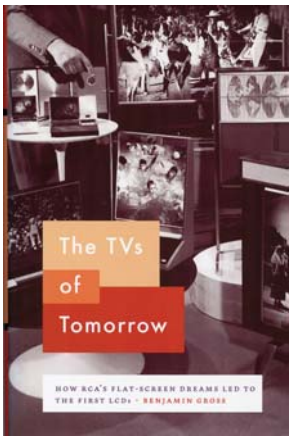
NEW BOOKS & MEDIA

The TVs of Tomorrow

How RCA's Flat-Screen Dreams Led to the First LCDs

Benjamin Gross
U. Chicago Press, 2018. $40.00



In 1968 scientists and engineers at RCA announced that they had created an electronic display that relied on liquid-crystal technology. Today LCDs are used in everything from bedside clocks to computer monitors and home televisions, but RCA shared in little of the financial glory from its invention. In *The TVs of Tomorrow*, historian of science Benjamin Gross uses laboratory notebooks and in-depth interviews with scientists at RCA to reconstruct the scientific path to the LCD. Gross also has a sharp eye for business history and explores the company's difficulties commercializing its new technology. The book will appeal to anyone interested in the intersection of scientific innovation and industrial research. —MB

Talk Nerdy

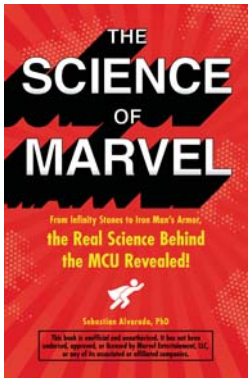
Cara Santa Maria, 2017–present

Decorated science journalist Cara Santa Maria just hit the 100-episode milestone of her weekly podcast *Talk Nerdy*. The show bills itself as "conversations with interesting people about interesting topics," and each episode features an in-depth interview with a scientist or science communicator. Recent guests have included geologist Lucy Jones, systems biologist Stacey Finley, and filmmaker and conservationist Byron Pace. Santa Maria, herself a PhD candidate, brings her own knowledge to the table but is skilled at letting her guests shine. Episodes are roughly an hour long and are available for download on iTunes and other podcast platforms. —MB

The Science of Marvel

From Infinity Stones to Iron Man's Armor, the Real Science Behind the MCU Revealed!

Sebastian Alvarado
Adams Media, 2019. $16.99 (paper)



Scientists haven't figured out how to give us mere mortals Captain America's strength or Spider-Man's spidey sense, but there's still plenty of physics, neuroscience, and biology to think about in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. In this short and engaging book, Sebastian Alvarado, a neuroscientist at Queens College, City University of New York, uses characters and plot points from the Marvel movies to spark discussions on scientific phenomena. Alien assassin Nebula inspires a section on cybernetic prosthetics, for example, and the showdown between *Black Panther*'s T'Challa and Killmonger gives Alvarado an opportunity to talk about nature versus nurture. Alvarado's love for the films is obvious on every page, but the book is not for those hoping for a lot of superheroes and very little science—at different points, Alvarado discusses de Broglie waves, the Schrödinger equation, flame emission spectroscopy, and protein tensile strength. —MB PT