

The Essential Cyberpunk Reading List #cyberpunk

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[Backup](#)



In 1984, I was the Computer Sciences Editor for *The Futurist* magazine. At the end of an editorial meeting, one of the other editors said to me: "Have you read *Neuromancer*?" [No] "OMG, you have to! It will change your life." I didn't pay much attention to his life-changing offer. In fact, I thought he'd said *Necromancer*, and assumed it was a sword and sorcery book (which didn't interest me all that much at the time). But I kept on hearing references to this *Neuromancer*, and a year later, I finally broke down and read it. He was right. It did, in fact, change my life, and the direction of my career.

After *Neuromancer*, I read the other Gibson *Sprawl* series (*Count Zero*, *Mona Lisa Overdrive*) as they came out, then Rudy Rucker's *Ware* tetralogy (*Software*, *Wetware*, *Freeware*, *Realware*), Bruce Sterling's novels (*Involution Ocean*, *The Artificial Kid*, *Schismatrix*), John Shirley's *City Come A-Walkin'*, Pat Cadigan's *Synners*, Greg Bear's *Blood Music*, Marc Laidlaw's *Dad's Nuke*, and countless others. I also worked backwards and read the authors who'd influenced the c-punks: P.K. Dick, William Burroughs, J.G. Ballard, Raymond Chandler, and Alfred Bester.

There are dozens of *essential* cyberpunk reading lists online. The [io9 list](https://io9.gizmodo.com/the-essential-cyberpunk-reading-list-1714180001) is a good one. Like any such list, there is lots of room to quibble about who's on or off the list, but it's a great place to start and it includes the second wave cyberpunk of the Aughts, including *Snow Crash*, *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*, *Accelerando*, and *Altered Carbon*, and essential cyberpunk graphic novels, like *Akira* and *Transmetropolitan*.

What would be on your essential cyberpunk reading list?

[Image from Warren Ellis and Darick Robertson's must-read *Transmetropolitan*.]

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