

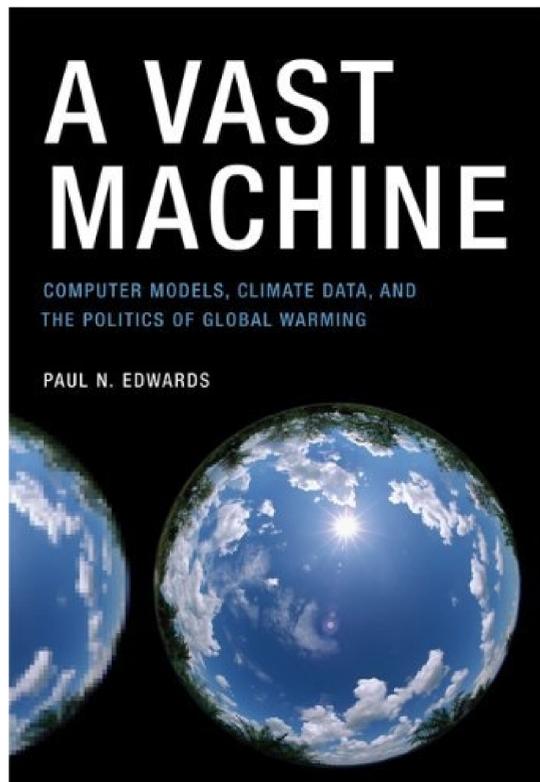
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A Vast Machine



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Let me say this clear and loud: Paul N. Edwards is not a climate realist, his faith into the integrity and innocence of politically correct climate science and IPCC working is not troubled by Climategate or Himalayagate, because this book was finished in 2009, before these eye-opening events came to light. Nevertheless it is in my opinion a very good book, even if quite a couple of statements make me wince.

P.N. Edwards writes a refreshingly good style, and shows the professionalism of an extremely well documented author. His book is about climate models and climate data, and the politics of global warming. Three ideas appear everywhere in this book:

1. data friction, i.e. available data are incomplete, uncertain, and hinder investigations like mechanical friction hinders the smooth running of an engine.

2. infrastructural inversion, i.e. you have to put the data gathering infrastructures upside down, to get information how data are gathered, and how there might be faults or shortcomings in that process. The admirable work of Anthony Watt's www.surfacestations.org project falls into that category (even if Edwards does not hold this enterprise in very high esteem)

3. modelling (both data and climate). This is the recurrent leitmotif: without models there are no data, and only models can make data global. Edwards uses the concept of "model" in a very broad sense. Take for instance the MSU data from a satellite. Without wringing these data through several (mathematical) procedures, I won't get values for tropospheric temperature. As today nearly all data will go through one or more of these procedures, Edwards has a point. But he stretches it a bit too far in my opinion, as he uses that point to silence all these who do not 100% buy into the **global climate models**. Also being models, there is in my opinion a big difference between both, a difference Edwards knowingly minimizes.

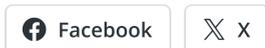
Edwards writes a vast story, beginning in the 19th century and ending 2009, of the development of weather and climate models, out from physical basics (like conservation of mass and momentum) and data collection. There is an awesome wealth of interesting details in this story, but you never will be told the difference between scenario and prediction (Edwards takes GCM outputs flatly as predictions, the best we can rely upon to take political decisions).

At the end of the book, he takes a look at the blogosphere and names the McIntire/Mc.Kitrick battle against the hockey stick, minimizing the stubborn resistance of the HS-team to make their data (and methods) available for scrutiny.

There are some critical reflections on consensus climatology, but as said above, it is a pity that the great tsunami of the Climategate email scandal happened after the book was finished.

Edwards is not a coward, and he lays his cards open quite at the beginning, writing "*Yes I think climate change is real, and I think it's the biggest threat the world faces now...*". I do not buy into the last part of this sentence, but must honestly confess that I really liked this outstanding book, and will if time permits read it a second time.

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