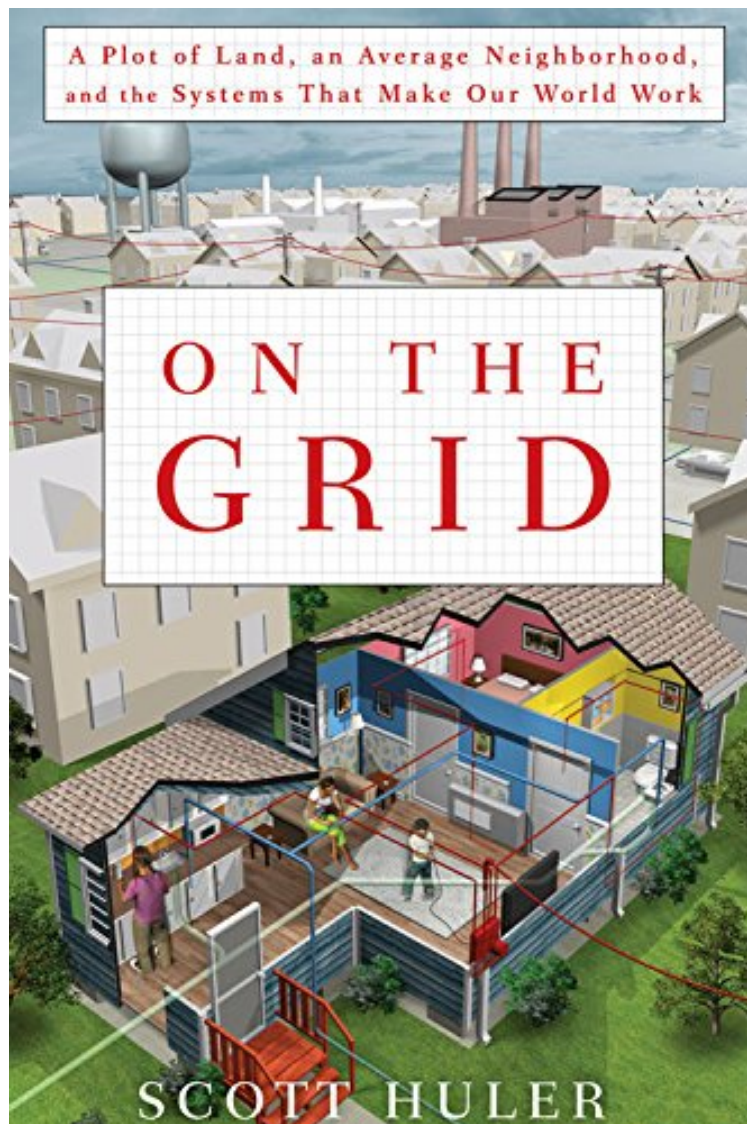


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# On the Grid: A Plot of Land, An Average Neighborhood, and the Systems that Make Our World Work

*Scott Huler*

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**Scott Huler : On the Grid: A Plot of Land, An Average Neighborhood, and the Systems that Make Our World Work** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On the Grid: A Plot of Land, An Average Neighborhood, and the Systems that Make Our World Work:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Loved it as a resident, leveraged it to understand national challenges By BK Having worked in critical infrastructure protection for years, "On The Grid" was a wonderful treat.

It's essentially a physiology course for a neighborhood -- how everything works, where everything comes from and where everything goes. While I'm a resident of Raleigh, it's not really a book about a particular town. It's a critical analysis of the economic, political, jurisdictional, bureaucratic and technical factors that physically connect us to our communities. Still larger, "On the Grid" provides a perspective of the challenges we face in our own nation and beyond. Since the book was written and the world population spiraled to 7 billion, how will we provide all those connections to that many people? How are basic services defined in each culture, and what is our capacity to deliver them? What started out as curiosity for that world beneath our feet for the author, turned into a journey exploring what it takes to provide us all the things we simply can turn on and off, and expect things to happen, appear, and disappear. Conversely, in thinking about these global issues, it's also important to think local. Like charity, the "systems that make our world work" start at home. It's an adventure you won't want to miss, and I highly recommend "On The Grid." Hope you enjoy it as much as I did -- and it piques your curiosity for what lies below as well.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good overview of the infrastructure we rely on  
By Andrew  
If you're looking to learn more about modern-day infrastructure, picking this book would not be a bad start. It's not going to go in-depth about every nook and cranny of the electrical grid but it gives a nice high level explanation of how everything fits together. I appreciated how the author started small (his front yard) in many instances and then worked his way up through the levels to explain the systems. Would have appreciated him stepping outside of Raleigh a little more to explain the infrastructure in other cities but regardless he seemed to do a lot of research and I enjoyed the book :)

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Surprisingly Interesting  
By kylerson  
Very interesting read. Had to read it for my MPA class, but probably one of the more interesting books I read for my program. Gives you a really good look at infrastructure. Quick read and full of interesting facts.

Turn on a switch and from the nearest bulb out pours light from...somewhere; turn on a faucet and water appears. Wires, pipes, and roads support the lives we lead, but the average person doesn't know where they go or even how they work. In *On the Grid*, Scott Huler takes the time to understand the systems that sustain our way of life, starting from his own quarter of an acre in North Carolina and traveling as far as ancient Rome. Each chapter follows one element of infrastructure back to its source. Huler visits power plants, watches new asphalt pavement being laid, and traces a drop of water backward from the faucet to the Gulf of Mexico. He reaches out to guides along the way, both the workers who operate these systems and the people who plan them. *On the Grid* brings infrastructure to life and details the ins and outs of our civilization with fascinating, back-to-basics information about the systems we all depend on.

From Publishers Weekly  
Inquisitive everyman Huler takes an obsessively detailed behind the scenes look at wires, water pipes, and other typically ignored but terribly important pathways that lie beneath our feet. He puts himself front-and-center for his subjects, watching the laying of asphalt in his own neighborhood, following a recycling truck to the facility, or dropping in on his local power plant. Investigations unfold via a pleasant, relatable approach based on the everyday experiences that Huler and his family have had ("I know from my son's delighted cries every morning that the recycling truck usually comes by before 10:00..."). The frequent adoption of a high-school science teacher tone ("The last thing you need to know about electricity...") becomes grating, but overall there's enough well-reported, thoughtfully observed analysis to satisfy inquisitive minds. Copyright © 2007 Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Terrific new book . . . a fascinating read."  
—Robin Young, host of NPR's *Here and Now*

"Scott Huler's fascinating account of his trips through the mesmerizingly crafted infrastructure that sustains our modern American lives gets us toward an understanding of a system that ought to be celebrated."  
—Robert Sullivan, author of *The Thoreau You Don't Know About*

Author SCOTT HULER is the author of six books including *Defining the Wind* and *No-Man's Lands*. Widely published in newspapers nationwide, he has also won awards for his work on NPR. He lives in Raleigh, NC.