Grace Hopper

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A Hollywood biopic about the life of computer pioneer Grace Murray Hopper (1906–1992) would go like this: a young professor abandons the ivy-covered walls of academia to serve her country in the Navy after Pearl Harbor and finds herself on the front lines of the computer revolution. She works hard to succeed in the all-male computer industry, is almost brought down by personal problems but survives them, and ends her career as a celebrated elder stateswoman of computing, a heroine to thousands, hailed as the inventor of computer programming. Throughout Hopper's later years, the popular media told this simplified version of her life story. In Grace Hopper and the Invention of the Information Age, Kurt Beyer goes beyond the screenplay-ready myth to reveal a more authentic Hopper, a vibrant and complex woman whose career paralleled the meteoric trajectory of the postwar computer industry.

Hopper made herself "one of the boys" in Howard Aiken's wartime Computation Laboratory at Harvard, then moved on to the Eckert and Mauchly Computer Corporation. Both rebellious and collaborative, she was influential in male-dominated military and business organizations at a time when women were encouraged to devote themselves to housework and childbearing. Hopper's greatest technical achievement

was to create the tools that would allow humans to communicate with computers in terms other than ones and zeroes. This advance influenced all future programming and software design and laid the foundation for the development of user-friendly personal computers.

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目录:

Grace Hopper_下载链接1_

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