

Reviewer's Bookwatch: August 2013
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[Reviewer's Choice](#)

Privacy Wars
John D. Trudel
Trudel Group
<https://www.johntrudel.com/#pw>
9780983588634, \$14.95

Electronic or Internet privacy is the subject of local author John Trudel's latest novel, "Privacy Wars," his second piece following his debut effort last year, "God's House." Trudel's work is a true example of art imitating life. A retired electrical engineer and developing technology consultant, he draws from his real-life experiences working with the likes of Intel, Hewlett-Packard and IBM for his stories.

"I got to work with fascinating technology and interesting people from all over the world, and I kept thinking, 'I could put this in a novel,'" he said. "So whenever something weird would happen, I'd write it down and throw it in a file."

He's put that file to good use in the development of five total novels (his third - "Soft Target" - is due out next year). They're all what he calls "cybertech thrillers," his attempt at forging a new subgenre that combines real technology and history with elements of politics, suspense, espionage, adventure and even a touch of romance.

"What I do is I take real situations, real people, real technologies and real science, and I stretch them," he said.

As evidence that he's been successful in his goal, he turns to the back cover of "Privacy Wars," on which is printed recommendations from authors who specialize in a variety of genres, as well as Alex C. Johnson, who is actually not an author at all but a partner at a large, Portland-based patent law firm.

"As a high-technology patent lawyer, I see an accurate depiction of today's legal and political context, and a thriller driven by plausible extrapolations of current technology and science," Johnson wrote of the book.

All of Trudel's novels are set in the same world - a version of our own, set just a few years in the future. Like "Privacy Wars," much of the action is based in Oregon - although he is purposefully vague about specific places and cities.

And while his books share some characters, the protagonists are usually very different. For example, while "God's House" starred a rogue CIA operative, the main character of "Privacy Wars" is a scientist and teacher who finds himself falsely accused of serious crimes and beset by a number of powerful and sinister forces.

Trudel said he likes to leave his fictional world open-ended to give himself freedom in writing future books, as well as in possible crossovers to other mediums, like film and television.

"I like to keep my options open," he said.

Although he admitted the jump from technical, nonfiction writing - which he did often during his professional career - to novels has been difficult, he said local writing communities have helped him immensely.

"It's just a good environment here," he said. "It's very interesting, and a good place for a writer."