

**Part I**  
**Everything You Always Wanted to Know**  
**About the Evolution of Computerized**  
**Technology, But Were Afraid to Ask**

**Being a Brief Summary of the Use of Tools Among**  
**a Particular Line of Great Apes over the Course**  
**of the Last 65 Million Years**



Also Sprach Zarathustra, Jr.

## Introduction



You are here, looking there...

It's all a question of perspective.

What you observe may appear to be different, depending on your vantage point. Once, on the southern edge of the Arctic Ocean, I decided to walk to a distant point on the shore and choose a walking stick from the driftwood jumbled haphazardly across the beach. After a walk that was much longer than I'd predicted, I found myself approaching a pile of trees, each three or four times my height.

Your understanding of what you observe is distorted by your perspective. I'm not saying that's always a bad thing, just that it is a thing, an observable fact, and that we should be aware of it.

So, before we start to look at how computers and people interact, let's take a few pages to establish just where exactly where we are.

Humans are apes. Like other apes, we enjoy organizing things into categories. I believe that we do this so that we can pretend to understand them better than we really do. What's more, we believe that we really do it well. Consider the examples of the labels "night" and "day". They are clearly different and mutually exclusive, so those seem like very good labels... but where do you draw the line between one and the other?

The real world does not have such clearly defined, completely opposed qualities, so we find greater precision by adding the terms morning and evening in order to shade the borders. Still, it is our habit to try to define and label the artifacts of the world around us.

For example, we distinguish ourselves and our immediate ancestors from all of the other apes by labelling ourselves with the family name “Homo” or “Human”. We label our more distant ancestors for some minor distinction. One group of ancestors are labelled for their continent of origin (*A. africanis*) – even though other ancestors, both earlier and later, also came from Africa. Another group was named for being “handy” (*H. habilis*) – even though their great-grandparents also had very similar hands much, much further back.

In a fine display of ego over insight, we call ourselves the thinkers (*H. sapiens*). If you know any humans, you may have noticed that we are not actually great thinkers. We are pretty good at reacting to things, and we are very good at convincing ourselves that our reactions were actually the result of conscious and deliberate decision-making.

In fact, we are much better at jumping to conclusions and assuming we are right, than we are at thinking logically. That’s why the scientific method is such a big deal: it is a totally unintuitive way of thinking that has been developed and refined to be even more unintuitive, and, it is based on the idea that you should get as many people as possible to check your work.

The first section of this book is intended to provide an overview of how humans and technology got to be where they are today, just where that is, and how deliberately applying a little more scientific method to our everyday lives helps to improve our own world, and the world in general.