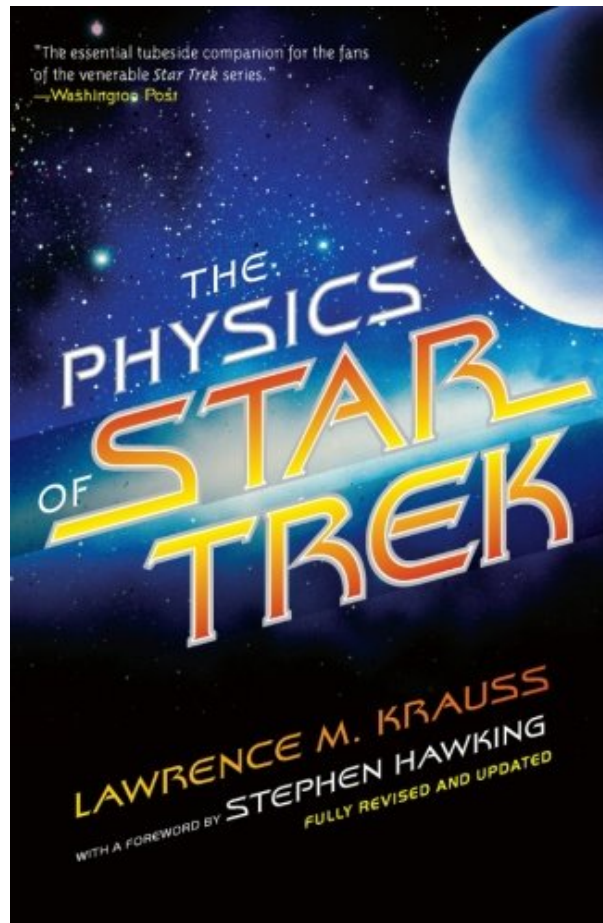
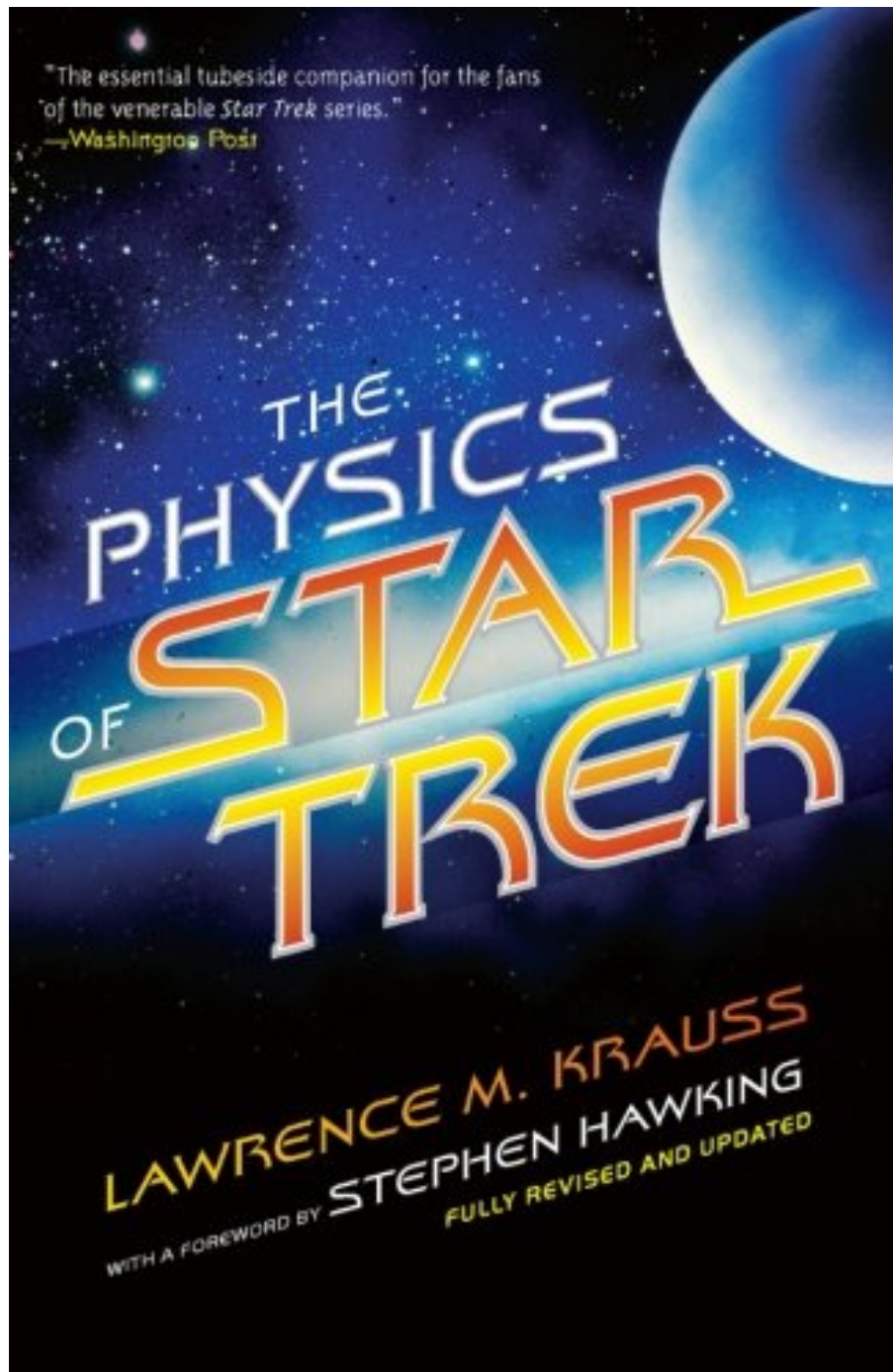


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From Library Journal

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immense difficulties facing the actual development of various Star Trek technologies, particularly with the prohibitive energy requirement to power starships near or past the speed of light and the rather shocking operations necessary for transporters and replicators. For general readers.

Patrick Dunn, East Tennessee State Univ. Lib., Johnson City

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What warps when you're traveling at warp speed? What is the difference between a wormhole and a black hole? Are time loops really possible, and can I kill my grandmother before I am born? Anyone who has ever wondered "could this really happen?" will gain useful insights into the Star Trek universe (and, incidentally, the real world of physics) in this charming and accessible guide. Lawrence M. Krauss boldly goes where Star Trek has gone-and beyond. From Newton to Hawking, from Einstein to Feynman, from Kirk to Picard, Krauss leads readers on a voyage to the world of physics as we now know it and as it might one day be.

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- Released on: 2007-07-10
- Original language: English
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Most helpful customer reviews

67 of 71 people found the following review helpful.

How Physicists Think About Star Trek Movies and Series

By Donald Mitchell

Did you know that many of the world's best physicists like to watch Star Trek, and then discuss what's right and wrong about the science displayed? Well, apparently they do.

Drawing on contacts within the scientific community and on-line bulletin boards, Professor Krauss has written a sprightly review of what physicists think about when they see these shows. He translates these observations into simple concepts that the average reader should be able to follow, assuming an interest in Star Trek or science.

As a non-scientist, I had always assumed that 70 percent of the "science" on a Star Trek show was just so much imagination. The reason I thought that was because I could see so many obvious errors (seeing phaser light in space, hearing sounds in space, effects occurring too soon on the space ship, holograms acting like they were made of matter, and permanent worm holes) based on what little I knew. Was I ever surprised to find out that these obvious errors were the bulk of all the errors in the shows!

Apparently the writers have been working closely with scientifically knowledgeable people to keep what is covered reasonably possible . . . along with some poetic license.

The physics of cosmology are fascinating, but I can quickly get lost in matching quantum mechanics to general relativity and so forth. I was also pleasantly surprised to see that I could follow the arguments much better when they used a familiar Star Trek episode as a reference. Like the child who learns math when it involves counting his or her own money, I can learn physics more easily when it relates to Star Trek. Very nice!

The book takes a look at the common Star Trek features like warp drive, transporters, replicators, phasers, sensors, subspace communications, and tractor beams. You also get special looks at less common features like multiple universes and special forms of radiation.

You can read this book from several perspectives as a result: (1) to appreciate what's happening in an episode; (2) to learn some science; (3) to think about where Star Trek could become real and where it is less likely to become so; and (4) what problems have to be solved in order for Star Trek technology to develop. I found the last perspective to be the most interesting. Professor Krauss's speculations about how rapidly technology might develop and what could be done with it were most fascinating.

Where the book fell down a little was in being quite strong in stating that certain "laws" of physics would never be changed. If we go back in 100 year increments, we find that a lot of earlier "laws" are later somewhat amended if not totally changed. That may happen in the future as well, as we learn more. Professor Krauss is a little too confident in many places that there is nothing else to learn. Most modern technology would look like Star Trek science fiction to someone living in 1700, despite being based on sound scientific principles not understood then.

After you finish enjoying this interesting book, think about what questions no one is trying to solve. Why

not? What benefits would occur if they were solved? How could curiosity be stimulated about these questions?

Ask and answer important questions in interesting ways to make faster progress!

35 of 38 people found the following review helpful.

Fun and enlightening

By Rick Hunter

As both a Star Trek (old series) fan and popular science reader, I was greatly intrigued to see Lawrence Krauss' *The Physics of Star Trek* at my local bookstore. Often disappointed by past efforts to connect to the bandwagon of popular culture, I was delighted at how learned, clear, yet sprightly Krauss' short book was. In the first part, Krauss attempts nothing less than an explanation of Newtonian physics, general and special relativity, and other physics concepts to explain warp drives, tractor beams, wormholes, and other Star Trek staples that -- under the laws of physics as we now understand them -- are probably impossible. Subsequent chapters address and deconstruct the transporter beam, warp drive, etc. The clarity and humor of Krauss' writing is just wonderful. Perhaps the most amusing chapter is the last, in which Krauss lists his "top ten" Star Trek scientific bloopers -- events, plot devices, and the like that just could not occur. Because he is a trekker, Krauss does not treat these foibles with contempt or ridicule; as a scientist and writer, he ably outlines those errors.

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

Not too shabby...

By A Customer

As I looked through my local bookstore for an interesting read, I could not help but notice this interesting title in the Physics science section. Being a sporadic viewer of Star Trek myself, I picked it up for a closer look. As I read the first section of the book, I realized that it was more than blatant critique on scientific errors. Rather, it was an interesting view of future possibilities and also impossibilities in the field of science. In this book, Krauss explores the existence of things such as wormholes, black holes, and existence of other intelligent life in space. Krauss is also relentless in his discussion of Einstein and other renowned Physicists. He often writes about highly esoteric subject matter, but on the whole this book is well rounded and a relatively interesting read. However, keep in mind that one must have an interest in science, specifically fields such as quantum mechanics and relativity.

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