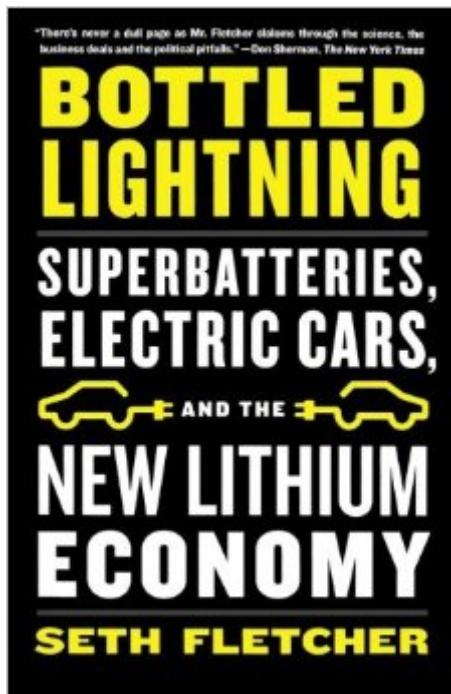


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# Bottled Lightning: Superbatteries, Electric Cars, And The New Lithium Economy



## Synopsis

Lithium batteries may hold the key to an environmentally sustainable, oil-independent future. From electric cars to a "smart" power grid that can actually store electricity, letting us harness the powers of the sun and the wind and use them when we need them, lithium—a metal half as dense as water, found primarily in some of the most uninhabitable places on earth—has the potential to set us on a path toward a low-carbon energy economy. In *Bottled Lightning*, Seth Fletcher takes us on a fascinating journey, from the salt flats of Bolivia to the labs of MIT and Stanford, from the turmoil at GM to cutting-edge lithium-ion battery start-ups, introducing us to the key players and ideas in an industry with the power to reshape the world. Lithium is the thread that ties together many crucial stories of our time: the environmental movement; the American auto industry, staking its revival on the electrification of cars and trucks; the struggle between first-world countries in need of natural resources and the impoverished countries where those resources are found; and the overwhelming popularity of the portable, Internet-connected gadgets that are changing the way we communicate. With nearly limitless possibilities, the promise of lithium offers new hope to a foundering American economy desperately searching for a green-tech boom to revive it.

## Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Hill and Wang; Reprint edition (May 8, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0809030640

ISBN-13: 978-0809030644

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,072,372 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #208 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Automotive #215 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Energy Production & Extraction > Electric #314 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Energy Production & Extraction > Alternative & Renewable

## Customer Reviews

Anyone who wants to really understand the "electric car" situation in this country needs to read this book. It has the detail in lively prose that really illuminates the very complex nature of the "lithium battery". Having praised this book, I'm sure the author would agree that within a couple of years it

will be a work of history. I'm not sure if it covers the Fisker debacle; this technology and the business story are unfolding rapidly. Nevertheless, Seth Fletcher has demonstrated great skill as a popularizer of science, and I'm looking forward to more from him.

Read this book to gain an understanding of one of the key technologies that is making the transition away from fossil fuels feasible, higher performance batteries. Fletcher is a senior editor for Popular Science magazine, and his story is delivered at that level of scientific sophistication, accurate but accessible. There is reason for optimism here. Lithium based batteries have the capability to store and deliver energy sufficient and at a low enough cost to make practical a range of devices, from smartphones to electric cars, that just weren't possible with earlier battery chemistries just a decade or so ago. This is good news delivered in an enjoyable book.

Seth turned me on to Western Lithium early last year in this very insightful book. Yes, we did go through some ups and downs, but I think WLC will emerge victorious. Especially in light of Feb 24 news re: strategic partners. After a bit I may have to go back and re-read for other possible entrants and movers, but for now it's worth it for the read. Well futurized (tortured, no?) and well written. I'll presume Seth held on to his WLC investment, too. I'd send him 10% of our eventual profits but I lost his address...

I found Seth Fletcher's *Bottled Lightning* by accident at the local public library, and I'm delighted that I had the opportunity to read it. Fletcher details the history of batteries, right up to the time of the book's publication. Although the focus is on electric vehicles, the history of electrical storage is one of the strongest points of the book. Interestingly, this history includes all sorts of political, business, and legal intrigues going back into the nineteenth century. With this background, it is easy to see why it continues today. Traditional hybrid vehicles receive little coverage in *Bottled Lightning* (e.g. the Honda Insight is mentioned on just one page), but that is because the vehicular focus is on the Chevrolet Volt. That fact is both a strength and a weakness of the book. I was hoping to learn a little more about other electric vehicles, and some of the more esoteric material about the various lithium-based compounds that have been the basis of lawsuit upon lawsuit got a tad dry; however, overall *Bottled Lightning* is a great history lesson and sets for the stage for what should be an interesting future for alternative fuel vehicles.

great book touches on the new alternative thinking which all the big players are now a part of . bob

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