

Arizona State University released a free sci-fi anthology about the future of solar power

Over the last couple of years, organizations and companies have begun to look at science fiction in ways that go beyond mere entertainment, with writers and thinkers pointing out that genre stories can be used as a practical tool to imagine optimistic futures. One such organization is Arizona State University, which recently released an anthology that imagined the future of solar power.

The Weight of Light: A Collection of Solar Futures is about “exploring human futures powered by solar energy,” and is part of a broader publishing program from the University’s Center for Science and the Imagination, which has released similar anthologies about optimistic futures in space and climate change since 2011. *The Weight of Light* is free to download in ePub, HTML, , and Mobi formats from the Center’s site.

Image: Arizona State University

In the introduction, editor Joey Eschrich says that the book was “inspired by a simple question: what would a world powered entirely by solar energy look like?” With that question in mind, the Center hosted a narrative hackaton in April 2018, and brought together authors, artists and various experts to “create technically grounded, inspiring visions of a future shaped by a transition to clean, plentiful solar energy.”

After the event, each team continued to work on their respective projects, ultimately resulting in the anthology, which features stories from a variety of science fiction

authors – Brenda Cooper, Andrew Dana Hudson, Cat Rambo, and Corey S. Pressman. The four stories imagine how everything from large cities to small, rural communities might deal with solar power in the future, and are accompanied by artwork and a pair of essays that drills down into the design of the world that the authors depicted.

Collectively, the stories are a good example of this style of applied science fiction, which takes a complicated or technical subject and distills the basics into a format that allows the casual reader to enjoy and relate to. At the very least, it's a neat book to check out during your weekend.

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