# Liars and Outliers: Enabling the Trust that Society Needs to Thrive

*By Bruce Schneier*

**Liars and Outliers: Enabling the Trust that Society Needs to Thrive** By Bruce Schneier

**How does society function when you can't trust everyone?**

When we think about trust, we naturally think about personal relationships or bank vaults. That's too narrow. Trust is much broader, and much more important. Nothing in society works without trust. It's the foundation of communities, commerce, democracy—everything.

In this insightful and entertaining book, Schneier weaves together ideas from across the social and biological sciences to explain how society induces trust. He shows how trust works and fails in social settings, communities, organizations, countries, and the world.

In today's hyper-connected society, understanding the mechanisms of trust is as important as understanding electricity was a century ago. Issues of trust and security are critical to solving problems as diverse as corporate responsibility, global warming, and our moribund political system. After reading Liars and Outliers, you'll think about social problems, large and small, differently.

**AUTHOR BIO**

**BRUCE SCHNEIER** is an internationally renowned security technologist who studies the human side of security. He is the author of eleven books; and hundreds of articles, essays, and academic papers. He has testified before Congress, is a frequent guest on television and radio, and is regularly quoted in the press.

"The closest thing the security industry has to a rock star."
—*The Register*

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"A rich, insightfully fresh take on what security really means!"
—DAVID ROPEIK, Author of How Risky is it, Really?

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"Liars and Outliers offers a major contribution to the understandability of these issues, and has the potential to help readers cope with the ever-increasing risks to which we are being exposed. It is well written and delightful to read."
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"Whether it's banks versus robbers, Hollywood versus downloaders, or even the Iranian secret police against democracy activists, security is often a dynamic struggle between a majority who want to impose their will, and a minority who want to push the boundaries. *Liars and Outliers* will change how you think about conflict, our security, and even who we are."
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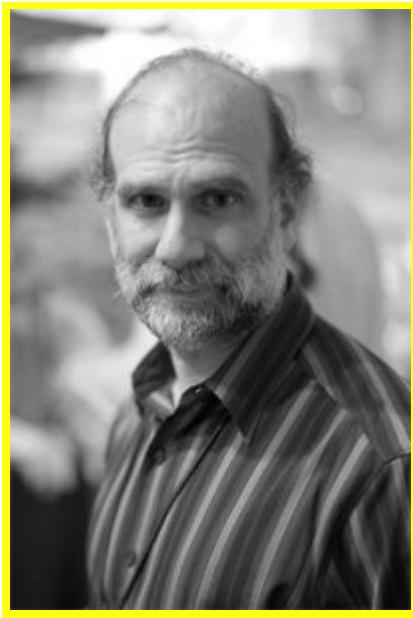
## Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**Q&A with Bruce Schneier, Author of *Liars and Outliers***



Bruce Schneier, Author

**In your book, *Liars and Outliers*, you write, "Trust and cooperation are the first problems we had to solve before we could become a social species--but in the 21st century, they have become the most important problems we need to solve again." What do you mean by trust?**
That is the right question to ask, since there are many different definitions of trust floating around. The trust I am writing about isn't personal, it's societal. By my definition, when we trust a person, an institution, or a system, we trust they will behave as we expect them to. It's more consistency or predictability than intimacy. And if you think about it, this is exactly the sort of trust our complex society runs on. I trust airline pilots, hotel clerks, ATMs, restaurant kitchens, and the company that built the computer I'm writing these answers on.

**What makes people trustworthy?**
That's the key question the book tackles. Most people are naturally trustworthy, but some are not. There are hotel clerks who will steal your credit card information. There are ATMs that have been hacked by criminals. Some restaurant kitchens serve tainted food. There was even an airline pilot who deliberately crashed his Boeing 767 into the Atlantic Ocean in 1999. Given that there are people who are naturally inclined to be untrustworthy, how does society keep their damage to a minimum? We use what I call societal pressures: morals and reputation are two, laws are another, and security systems are a fourth. Basically, it's all coercion. We coerce people into behaving in a trustworthy manner because society will fall apart if they don't.

**You introduce the idea of defectors--those who don't follow "the rules." What are defectors?**
One of the central metaphors of the book is the Prisoner's Dilemma, which sets up the conflict between the

interests of a group and the interests of individuals within the group. Cooperating--or acting in a trustworthy manner--sometimes means putting group interest ahead of individual interest. Defecting means acting in one's self-interest as opposed to the group interest. To put it in concrete terms: we are collectively better off if no one steals, but I am individually better off if I steal other people's stuff. But if everyone did that, society would collapse. So we need societal pressures to induce cooperation--to prevent people from stealing.

There are two basic types of defectors. In this example, the first are people who know stealing is wrong, but steal anyway. The second are people who believe that, in some circumstances, stealing is right. Think of Robin Hood, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor. Or Jean Valjean from *Les Miserables*, who stole to feed his starving family.

**Why are some defectors good for society?**
Cooperators are people who follow the formal or informal rules of society. Defectors are people who, for whatever reason, break the rules. That definition says nothing about the absolute morality of the society or its rules. When society is in the wrong, it's defectors who are in the vanguard for change. So it was defectors who helped escaped slaves in the antebellum American South. It's defectors who are agitating to overthrow repressive regimes in the Middle East. And it's defectors who are fueling the Occupy Wall Street movement. Without defectors, society stagnates.

**What major news stories of the past decade were triggered by failed trust? How can we prevent these failures in the future?**
The story I had in most in mind while writing the book was the global financial crisis of a few years ago, where a handful of people cheated the system to their own advantage. Those were particularly newsworthy defectors; but if you start looking, you can see defectors and the effects of their defection everywhere: in corrupt politicians, special interests subverting the tax system, file sharers downloading music and movies without paying for them, and so on. The key characteristic is a situation where the group interest is in opposition to someone's self-interest, and people have been permitted to follow their own self-interest to the greater harm of the group.

**What makes *Liars and Outliers* so relevant in today's society?**
As our systems--whether social systems like Facebook or political systems like Congress--get more complex, the destructive potential of defectors becomes greater. To use another term from the book, the scope of defection increases with more technology. This means that the societal pressures we traditionally put in place to limit defections no longer work, and we need to rethink security. It's easy to see this in terms of terrorism: one of the reasons terrorists are so scary today is that they can do more damage to society than the terrorists of 20 years ago could--and future technological developments will make the terrorists of 20 years from now scarier still.

**What do you hope readers will take away from reading *Liars and Outliers*?**
I can do no better than quote from the first chapter: "This book represents my attempt to develop a full-fledged theory of coercion and how it enables compliance and trust within groups. My goal is to rephrase some of those questions and provide a new framework for analysis. I offer new perspectives, and a broader spectrum of what's possible. Perspectives frame thinking, and sometimes asking new questions is the catalyst to greater understanding. It's my hope that this book can give people an illuminating new framework with which to help understand the world."

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Review

"One of the best books I've read this year is by a security technologist, Bruce Schneier. In Liars and Outliers, he sets out to investigate how trust works in society and in business, how it is betrayed and the degree to which technology changes all of that, for the better or the worse. Schneier absolutely understands how profoundly trust oils the wheels of business and of daily life." (Margaret Heffernan, *CBS MoneyWatch*)

"This book will appeal not only to customers interested in computer security but also on the idea of security and trust as a whole in society." (*The Bookseller*, 16th December 2011)

"This book should be read by anyone in a leadership role, whether they're in the corporate or political sphere... an easy read and the ideas and thoughts are profound." (*Naked Security*, February 2012)

"By concentrating on the human angle and packing the book with real world examples he has successfully stretched its appeal outside that of the security specialist to the more general reader." (*E & T Magazine*, March 2012)


Review

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—**JERRY KANG**, Professor of Law, UCLA

"By keeping the social dimension of trust and security in the center of his analysis, Schneier breaks new ground with an approach that both theoretically grounded and practically applicable."
—**JONATHAN ZITTRAIN**, Professor of Law and Computer Science, Harvard University and author of *The Future of the Internet—And How to Stop It*

"Eye opening. Bruce Schneier provides a perspective you need to understand today's world."
—**STEVEN A. LEBLANC**, Director of Collections, Harvard University and author of *Constant Battles: Why We Fight*

"An outstanding investigation of the importance of trust in holding society together and promoting progress. *Liars and Outliers* provides valuable new insights into security and economics."
—**ANDREW ODLYZKO**, Professor, School of Mathematics, University of Minnesota

"What Schneier has to say about trust—and betrayal—lays a groundwork for greater understanding of human institutions. This is an essential exploration as society grows in size and complexity."
—**JIM HARPER**, Director of Information Policy Studies, CATO Institute and author of *Identity Crisis: How Identification is Overused and Misunderstood*

"Society runs on trust. *Liars and Outliers* explains the trust gaps we must fill to help society run even better."
—**M. ERIC JOHNSON**, Director, Glassmeyer/McNamee Center for Digital Strategies, Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College

"An intellectually exhilarating and compulsively readable analysis of the subtle dialectic between cooperation and defection in human society. Intellectually rigorous and yet written in a lively, conversational style, *Liars and Outliers* will change the way you see the world."
—**DAVID LIVINGSTONE SMITH**, author of *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others*

"Schneier tackles trust head on, bringing all his intellect and a huge amount of research to bear. The best thing about this book, though, is that it's great fun to read."
—**ANDREW MCAFEE**, Principal Research Scientist, MIT Center for Digital Business and co-author of *Race Against the Machine*

"Bruce Schneier is our leading expert in security. But his book is about much more than reducing risk. It is a fascinating, thought-provoking treatise about humanity and society and how we interact in the game called life."
—**JEFF JARVIS**, author of *Public Parts: How Sharing in the Digital Age Improves the Way We Work and Live*

"Both accessible and thought provoking, *Liars and Outliers* invites readers to move beyond fears and anxieties about security in modern life to understand the role of everyday people in creating a healthy society. This is a must-read!"
—**DANAH BOYD**, Research Assistant Professor in Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University

"Trust is the sine qua non of the networked age and trust is predicated on security. Bruce Schneier's expansive and readable work is rich with insights that can help us make our shrinking world a better one."
—**DON TAPSCOTT**, co-author of *Macrowikinomics: Rebooting Business and the World*

"An engaging and wide-ranging rumination on what makes society click. Highly recommended."
—**JOHN MUELLER**, author of *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them*

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**Paula Royce:**

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**Richard Broderick:**

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**Bruce Mull:**

This Liars and Outliers: Enabling the Trust that Society Needs to Thrive is great guide for you because the content which is full of information for you who also always deal with world and have to make decision every minute. This particular book reveal it information accurately using great manage word or we can state no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only provides straight forward sentences but challenging core information with splendid delivering sentences. Having Liars and Outliers: Enabling the Trust that Society Needs to Thrive in your hand like keeping the world in your arm, data in it is not ridiculous one. We can say that no guide that offer you world in ten or fifteen second right but this guide already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hey there Mr. and Mrs. hectic do you still doubt which?

**Valerie Smith:**

The book untitled Liars and Outliers: Enabling the Trust that Society Needs to Thrive contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains her idea with easy method. The language is very simple to implement all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read that. The book was authored by famous author. The author gives you in the new era of literary works. It is possible to read this book because you can please read on your smart phone, or product, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can start their official web-site and order it. Have a nice go through.

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