

Review: Craig Venter's Life at the Speed of Light

In May 2010, a team of scientists announced that they had created synthetic life. The researchers had used four bottles of chemicals to build an entire bacterial genome from scratch, then transferred this artificial chromosome into a cell from another species of bacteria. Then, as lead researcher J. Craig Venter explains it, the team “booted up the chromosome.” The lab-made DNA promptly took charge of the cell, and the cell proved capable of replicating. It was, Venter says, the world’s “first synthetic organism.”

It was the splashiest announcement yet in the hyper-hyped discipline of synthetic biology. Now, in “Life at the Speed of Light,” Venter goes behind the breakthrough, exploring the biological advances that made his artificial critter possible and offering an insider’s view of one of science’s hottest new fields.

Read the full, original story: [‘Life at the Speed of Light: From Double Helix to Dawn of Digital Life’ by J. Craig Venter](#)