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- International
- A Monitor Guide to Books
- of September 11
- Pulitzer prize winners 2003 • The Monitor's Annual Book Guide 2002

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wife to socialize. And despite being awarded the 1909 Nobel Prize in physics for his invention, Marconi didn't truly understand the underlying physics of his wireless system.

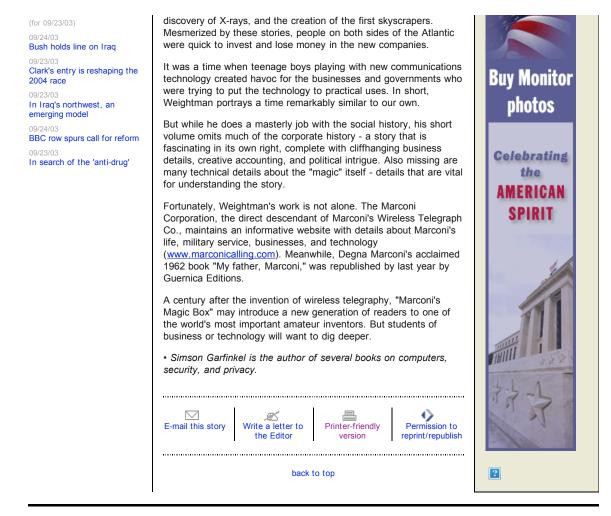
Fortunately, Marconi's lack of understanding wasn't a barrier: Shortly after his discovery, ocean liners equipped with spark-gap transmitters were able to send out distress messages from sea. Within a few years, thousands of passengers owed their lives to Marconi's invention.

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Like Marconi himself, "Signor Marconi's Magic Box" is serviceable, but limited in scope. Weightman does a magnificent job of painting a social history of technology in the late Victorian age. It was a time dominated by engineers and their inventions: In just a few years, the public had witnessed the dawn of electric lighting, the



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