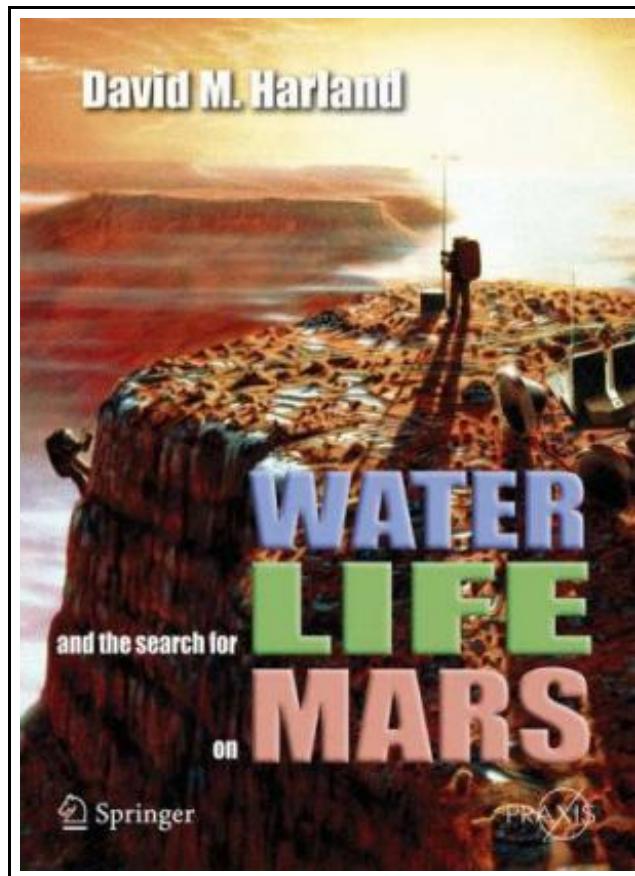


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Springer-Verlag New York Inc., United States, 2006. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 2005 ed.. 239 x 170 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. Mars has long been believed to have been cold, dead and dry for aeons, but there is now striking new proof that not only was Mars a relatively warm and wet place in geologically recent times, but that even today there are vast reserves of water frozen beneath the planet's surface. As well as casting fascinating new insights into Mars past, this discovery is also forcing a complete rethink about the mechanisms of global planetary change and the possibility that there is microbial life on Mars. David Harland considers the issue of life on Mars in parallel with the origin of life on Earth. At the time the Viking instruments were designed, it was thought that all terrestrial life ultimately derived its energy from sunlight, and that the earliest form of life was the cyanobacteria with chlorophyll for photosynthesis. It was assumed the same would be the case on Mars and that microbial life would be on or near the surface that the Vikings had sampled. No sooner were the results from the Viking instruments in, than it was discovered that there was an even older type of microbial life on Earth when, in 1977 black smokers were found in volcanically active parts of the ocean floor, at depths of several kilometres. Removed from sunlight, these archaea (literally, the old ones) live off the minerals released by the hydrothermal activity. Subsequently our view of life was further revised when extremophiles were discovered thriving in acidic, salty, alkaline, very hot, very cold and radiation soaked environments previously considered lethal. Although the Vikings had found no sign of organics, and the surface was...

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