



On Intelligence

By Jeff Hawkins, Sandra Blakeslee



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From the inventor of the PalmPilot comes a new and compelling theory of intelligence, brain function, and the future of intelligent machines

Jeff Hawkins, the man who created the PalmPilot, Treo smart phone, and other handheld devices, has reshaped our relationship to computers. Now he stands ready to revolutionize both neuroscience and computing in one stroke, with a new understanding of intelligence itself.

Hawkins develops a powerful theory of how the human brain works, explaining why computers are not intelligent and how, based on this new theory, we can finally build intelligent machines.

The brain is not a computer, but a memory system that stores experiences in a way that reflects the true structure of the world, remembering sequences of events and their nested relationships and making predictions based on those memories. It is this memory-prediction system that forms the basis of intelligence, perception, creativity, and even consciousness.

In an engaging style that will captivate audiences from the merely curious to the professional scientist, Hawkins shows how a clear understanding of how the brain works will make it possible for us to build intelligent machines, in silicon, that will exceed our human ability in surprising ways.

Written with acclaimed science writer Sandra Blakeslee, *On Intelligence* promises to completely transfigure the possibilities of the technology age. It is a landmark book in its scope and clarity.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*On Intelligence* will have a big impact; everyone should read it. In the same way that Erwin Schrödinger's 1943 classic *What is Life?* made how molecules store genetic information then the big problem for biology, *On Intelligence* lays out the framework for understanding the brain."

--James D. Watson, president, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and Nobel laureate in Physiology

"Brilliant and imbued with startling clarity. *On Intelligence* is the most important book in neuroscience, psychology, and artificial intelligence in a generation."

--Malcolm Young, neurobiologist and provost, University of Newcastle

"Read this book. Burn all the others. It is original, inventive, and thoughtful, from one of the world's foremost thinkers. Jeff Hawkins will change the way the world thinks about intelligence and the prospect of intelligent machines."

-- John Doerr, partner, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers

About the Author

Jeff Hawkins is one of the most successful and highly regarded computer architects and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. He founded Palm Computing and Handspring, and created the Redwood Neuroscience Institute to promote research on memory and cognition. Also a member of the scientific board of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories, he lives in northern California.

Sandra Blakeslee has been writing about science and medicine for *The New York Times* for more than thirty years and is the co-author of *Phantoms in the Brain* by V. S. Ramachandran and of Judith Wallerstein's bestselling books on psychology and marriage. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

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From *On Intelligence*:

Let me show why computing is not intelligence. Consider the task of catching a ball. Someone throws a ball to you, you see it traveling towards you, and in less than a second you snatch it out of the air. This doesn't seem too difficult-until you try to program a robot arm to do the same. As many a graduate student has found out the hard way, it seems nearly impossible. When engineers or computer scientists try to solve this problem, they first try to calculate the flight of the ball to determine where it will be when it reaches the arm. This calculation requires solving a set of equations of the type you learn in high school physics. Next, all the joints of a robotic arm have to be adjusted in concert to move the hand into the proper position. This whole operation has to be repeated multiple times, for as the ball approaches, the robot gets better information about its location and trajectory. If the robot waits to start moving until it knows exactly where the ball will land it will be too late to catch it. A computer requires millions of steps to solve the numerous mathematical equations to catch the ball. And although it's imaginable that a computer might be programmed to successfully solve this problem, the brain solves it in a different, faster, more intelligent way.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Harrison:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open as well as read a book titled On Intelligence? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have other opinion?

Staci Eager:

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Farah McCune:

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Thomas Williamson:

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