



Connectome: How the Brain's Wiring Makes Us Who We Are

By Sebastian Seung



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Every person is unique, but science has struggled to pinpoint where, precisely, that uniqueness resides. Our genome may determine our eye color and even aspects of our character. But our friendships, failures, and passions also shape who we are. The question is: how?

Sebastian Seung is at the forefront of a revolution in neuroscience. He believes that our identity lies not in our genes, but in the connections between our brain cells—our particular wiring. Seung and a dedicated group of researchers are leading the effort to map these connections, neuron by neuron, synapse by synapse. It's a monumental effort, but if they succeed, they will uncover the basis of personality, identity, intelligence, memory, and perhaps disorders such as autism and schizophrenia.

Connectome is a mind-bending adventure story that presents a daring scientific and technological vision for understanding what makes us who we are, both as individuals and as a species.

"Accessible, witty, imminently logical and at times poetic, *Connectome* establishes Seung as an important new researcher, philosopher and popularizer of brain science. It puts him on par with cosmology's Brian Greene and the late Carl Sagan."—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*



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Editorial Review

Review

Wall Street Journal's 10 Best Nonfiction Books of 2012

Amazon's Top 100 Editor's Picks for 2012

Publishers Weekly Top Ten in Science for Spring 2012

"The best lay book on brain science I've ever read."

— *Wall Street Journal* by **Daniel Levitin**, Professor, McGill University; author of *This Is Your Brain on Music and The World in Six Songs*.

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— Cleveland Plain Dealer

- "Seung argues intelligently and powerfully that the self lies in the totality of the brain's wiring."
- *Nature* by **Christof Koch**, Professor, California Institute of Technology; Chief Scientific Officer, Allen Institute for Brain Science; author of Quest for Consciousness and Consciousness: Confessions of a Romantic Reductionist
- "With the first-person flavour of James Watson's Double Helix—an account of how DNA's structure was discovered—Connectome gives a sense of the excitement on the cutting edge of neuroscience."
- **NewScientist** by **Terry Sejnowski**, Professor and Director, Computational Neurobiology Lab, Salk Institute; Investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute; Member, National Academy of Sciences and National Academy of Engineering USA.
- "An elegant primer on what's known about how the brain is organized and how it grows, wires its neurons, perceives its environment, modifies or repairs itself, and stores information. Seung is a clear, lively writer who chooses vivid examples."

— Washington Post

"Sebastian Seung scales the heights of neuroscience and casts his brilliant eye around, describing the landscape of its past and boldly envisioning a future when we may understand our own brains and thus ourselves."

-Kenneth Blum, Executive Director, Center for Brain Science, Harvard University

"Sebastian Seung can do it all. He's widely recognized as a superb physicist, a whiz with computers, and a path-breaking neuroscientist. Connectome shows that he's also a terrific writer, as inspiring as he is clear and

good humored."

- —Steven Strogatz, Cornell University, author of Sync: the Emerging Science of Spontaneous Order
- "In Connectome, Sebastian Seung reminds us that the human brain has contemplated itself for centuries. This is an important book, full of refreshingly new science and engaging history, about the essential quest to understand ourselves."
- -Phillip A. Sharp, MIT, 1993 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine
- "A landmark work, gorgeously written. No other researcher has traveled as deeply into the brain forest and emerged to share its secrets."
- —David Eagleman, author of Incognito and Sum
- "Connectomics is emerging as a crucial and exhilarating field of study. Sebastian Seung takes you by the hand and shows you why. Connectome is a page turner—a book that should be read by anyone who lays claim to be thinking about the nature of life."
- —Michael Gazzaniga, University of California at Santa Barbara and author of *Human and The Ethical Brain*

Review

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From the Inside Flap

The bold and thrilling quest to finally understand the brain

We know that each of us is unique, but science has struggled to pinpoint where, precisely, our uniqueness resides. Is it in our genes? The structure of our brains? Our genome may determine our eye color and even aspects of our personality. But our friendships, failures, and passions also shape who we are. The question is: how?

Sebastian Seung, a dynamic professor at MIT, is on a quest to discover the biological basis of identity. He believes it lies in the pattern of connections between the brain's neurons, which change slowly over time as we learn and grow. The connectome, as it's called, is where our genetic inheritance intersects with our life experience. It's where nature meets nurture.

Seung introduces us to the dedicated researchers who are mapping the brain's connections, neuron by neuron, synapse by synapse. It is a monumental undertaking—the scientific equivalent of climbing Mount Everest—but if they succeed, it could reveal the basis of personality, intelligence, memory, and perhaps even mental disorders. Many scientists speculate that people with anorexia, autism, and schizophrenia are "wired differently," but nobody knows for sure. The brain's wiring has never been seen clearly.

In sparklingly clear prose, Seung reveals the amazing technological advances that will soon help us map connectomes. He also examines the evidence that these maps will someday allow humans to "upload" their minds into computers, achieving a kind of immortality.

Connectome is a mind-bending adventure story, told with great passion and authority. It presents a daring scientific and technological vision for at last understanding what makes us who we are. Welcome to the future of neuroscience.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Carrie Porter:

What do you ponder on book? It is just for students as they are still students or it for all people in the world, the particular best subject for that? Simply you can be answered for that question above. Every person has various personality and hobby per other. Don't to be pressured someone or something that they don't wish do that. You must know how great and also important the book Connectome: How the Brain's Wiring Makes Us Who We Are. All type of book can you see on many sources. You can look for the internet methods or other social media.

Kendrick Mills:

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Kim Adams:

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Della Francis:

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