

## Turings Cathedral The Origins Of The Digital Universe

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George Dyson's fascinating account of the early years of computers: Turing's Cathedral is the story behind how the PC, ipod, smartphone and almost every aspect of modern life came into being. In 1945 a small group of brilliant engineers and mathematicians gathered at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, determined to build a computer that would make Alan Turing's theory of a 'universal machine' reality.

**Turing's Cathedral: The Origins of the Digital Universe ...**

In Turing's Cathedral, George Dyson vividly re-creates the intense experimentation, incredible mathematical insight and pure creative genius

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that led to the dawn of the digital universe, uncovering a wealth of new material to bring a human story of extraordinary men and women and their ideas to life. From the lowliest iPhone app to Google's sprawling metazoan codes, we now live in a world of self-replicating numbers and self-reproducing machines whose origins go back to a 5-kilobyte matrix ...

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Documents the innovations of a group of eccentric geniuses who developed computer code in the mid-20th century as part of mathematician Alan Turing's theoretical universal machine idea, exploring how their ideas led to such developments as digital television, modern genetics and the hydrogen bomb.

“It is possible to invent a single machine which can be used to compute any computable sequence,” twenty-four-year-old Alan Turing announced in 1936. In Turing’s Cathedral, George Dyson focuses on a small group of men and women, led by John von Neumann at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, who built one of the first computers to realize Alan Turing’s vision of a Universal Machine. Their work would break the distinction between numbers that mean things and numbers that do things—and our universe would never be the same. Using five kilobytes of memory (the amount allocated to displaying the cursor on a computer desktop of today), they achieved unprecedented success in both weather prediction and nuclear weapons design, while tackling, in their spare time, problems ranging from the evolution of viruses to the evolution of stars. Dyson’s account, both historic and prophetic, sheds important new light on how the digital universe exploded in the aftermath of World War II. The proliferation of both codes and machines was paralleled by two historic developments: the decoding of self-replicating sequences in biology and the invention of the hydrogen bomb. It’s no coincidence that the most destructive and the most constructive of human inventions appeared at exactly the same time. How did code take over the world? In retracing how Alan Turing’s one-dimensional model became John von Neumann’s two-dimensional implementation, Turing’s Cathedral offers a series of provocative suggestions as to where the digital universe, now fully three-dimensional, may be heading next.

How did computers take over the world? In late 1945, a small group of brilliant engineers and mathematicians gathered at the newly created Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Their ostensible goal was to build a computer which would be instrumental in the US government's race to create a hydrogen bomb. The mathematicians themselves, however, saw their project as the realization of Alan Turing's theoretical 'universal machine.' In Turing's Cathedral, George Dyson vividly re-creates the intense experimentation, incredible mathematical insight and pure creative genius that led to the dawn of the digital universe, uncovering a wealth of new material to bring a human story of extraordinary men and women and their ideas to life. From the lowliest iPhone app to Google's sprawling metazoan codes, we now live in a world of self-replicating numbers and self-reproducing machines whose origins go back to a 5-kilobyte matrix that still holds clues as to what may lie ahead.

Presents the history of the invention of computers, describing the collaboration of John von Neumann and his colleagues as they worked together to create the first computer, an event which led to the hydrogen bomb and the birth of the digital age.

Named one of WIRED’s “The Best Pop Culture That Got Us Through 2020” In Analogia, technology historian George Dyson presents a startling look back at the analog age and life before the digital revolution—and an unsettling vision of what comes next. In 1716, the philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz spent eight days taking the cure with Peter the Great at Bad Pyrmont in Saxony, trying to persuade the tsar to launch a voyage of discovery from Russia to America and to adopt digital computing as the foundation for a remaking of life on earth. In two classic books, Darwin Among the Machines and Turing’s Cathedral, George Dyson chronicled the realization

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of the second of Leibniz's visions. In *Analogia*, his pathbreaking new book, he brings the story full circle, starting with the Russian American expedition of 1741 and ending with the beyond-digital revolution that will complete the transformation of the world. Dyson enlists a startling cast of characters, from the time of Catherine the Great to the age of machine intelligence, and draws heavily on his own experiences at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, and onward to the rain forest of the Northwest Coast. We are, Dyson reveals, entering a new epoch in human history, one driven by a generation of machines whose powers are no longer under programmable control. Includes black-and-white illustrations

Does Silicon Valley deserve all the credit for digital creativity and social media? Joy Rankin questions this triumphalism by revisiting a pre-PC time when schools were not the last stop for mature consumer technologies but flourishing sites of innovative collaboration—when users taught computers and visionaries dreamed of networked access for all.

John von Neumann was a Jewish refugee from Hungary — considered a “genius” like fellow Hungarians Leo Szilard, Eugene Wigner and Edward Teller — who played key roles developing the A-bomb at Los Alamos during World War II. As a mathematician at Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Study (where Einstein was also a professor), von Neumann was a leader in the development of early computers. Later, he developed the new field of game theory in economics and became a top nuclear arms policy adviser to the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. “I always thought [von Neumann’s] brain indicated that he belonged to a new species, an evolution beyond man. Macrae shows us in a lively way how this brain was nurtured and then left its great imprint on the world.” — Hans A. Bethe, Cornell University “The book makes for utterly captivating reading. Von Neumann was, of course, one of this century’s geniuses, and it is surprising that we have had to wait so long... for a fully fleshed and sympathetic biography of the man. But now, happily, we have one. Macrae nicely delineates the cultural, familial, and educational environment from which von Neumann sprang and sketches the mathematical and scientific environment in which he flourished. It’s no small task to render a genius like von Neumann in ordinary language, yet Macrae manages the trick, providing more than a glimpse of what von Neumann accomplished intellectually without expecting the reader to have a Ph.D. in mathematics. Beyond that, he captures von Neumann’s qualities of temperament, mind, and personality, including his effortless wit and humor. And [Macrae] frames and accounts for von Neumann’s politics in ways that even critics of them, among whom I include myself, will find provocative and illuminating.” — Daniel J. Kevles, California Institute of Technology “A lively portrait of the hugely consequential nonmathematician-physicist-et al., whose genius has left an enduring impress on our thought, technology, society, and culture. A double salute to Steve White, who started this grand book designed for us avid, nonmathematical readers, and to Norman Macrae, who brought it to a triumphant conclusion.” — Robert K. Merton, Columbia University “The first full-scale biography of this polymath, who was born Jewish in Hungary in 1903 and died Roman Catholic in the United States at the age of 53. And Mr. Macrae has some great stories to tell... Mr. Macrae’s biography has rescued a lot of good science gossip from probable extinction, and has introduced many of us to the life story of a man we ought to know better.” — Ed Regis, *The New York Times* “A nice and fascinating picture of a genius who was active in so many domains.” —Zentralblatt MATH “Biographer Macrae takes a ‘viewspaperman’ approach which stresses the context and personalities associated with von Neumann’s remarkable life, rather than attempting to give a detailed scholarly analysis of von Neumann’s papers. The resulting book is a highly entertaining account that is difficult to put down.” — *Journal of Mathematical Psychology* “A full and intimate biography of ‘the man who

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consciously and deliberately set mankind moving along the road that led us into the Age of Computers.” — Freeman Dyson, Princeton, NJ “It is good to have a biography of one of the most important mathematicians of the twentieth century, even if it is a biography that focuses much more on the man than on the mathematics.” — Fernando Q. Gouvêa, Mathematical Association of America “Based on much research, his own and that of others (especially of Stephen White), Macrae has written a valuable biography of this remarkable genius of our century, without the opacity of technical (mathematical) dimensions that are part of the hero’s intellectual contributions to humanity. Interesting, informative, illuminating, and insightful.” — Choice Review “Macrae paints a highly readable, humanizing portrait of a man whose legacy still influences and shapes modern science and knowledge.” — Resonance, Journal of Science Education “In this affectionate, humanizing biography, former Economist editor Macrae limns a prescient pragmatist who actively fought against fascism and who advocated a policy of nuclear deterrence because he foresaw that Stalin’s Soviet Union would rapidly acquire the bomb and develop rocketry... Macrae makes [von Neumann’s] contributions accessible to the lay reader, and also discusses von Neumann’s relationships with two long-suffering wives, his political differences with Einstein and the cancer that killed him.” — Publishers Weekly “Macrae’s life of the great mathematician shows dramatically what proper care and feeding can do for an unusually capacious mind.” — John Wilkes, Los Angeles Times

'Full of historical anecdotes . . . but this is much more than a history book. [George Dyson] weaves his threads together for a purpose. Using voices of the past and present, he describes a fresh and sometimes startling viewpoint of the emerging relationship between nature and machines. From vignettes about Olaf Stapledon, George Boole, John von Neumann, and Samuel Butler, a larger story develops in which the twin processes of intelligence and evolution are inseparably intertwined' Danny Hillis, Wired

A brilliant combination of history and personal recollections documents the incredible story of a wild idea--a spacecraft powered by hydrogen bombs--and brings to life an episode in U.S. scientific research that brought together a vast array of brilliant physicists, including the author's father, who participated in the vision of a renowned theoretician, during the political and cultural backdrop of the Cold War. Reprint. 12,500 first printing.

Marina Whitman is the daughter and only child of John von Neumann, one of the five Hungarian scientific geniuses dubbed “the Martians” by their colleagues, a figure often hailed as the greatest mathematician of the 20th century and even as the greatest scientist after Einstein. He was a key figure in the Manhattan project; the inventor of game theory; the pioneer developer of the modern stored-program electronic computer; and, right up until his death, an adviser to the top echelons of the American military establishment. Whitman’s memoir is the story of how the cosmopolitan environment in which she was immersed, the demanding expectations of her parents, and her own struggles to emerge from the shadow of a larger-than-life parent shaped her life and work. Starting as, in her words, “a trailing spouse,” she rose to become a noted academic during the 1960s and '70s, casting her teaching and writing in the framework of globalization before the word had been invented. She was the first woman ever to serve on the President’s Council of Economic Advisers and participated actively in U.S. efforts to reshape the international monetary and financial system during the early 1970s. She pioneered the role of women on the boards of leading multinational corporations, and became the highest-ranking female executive in the American auto industry in the 1980s, serving not only as GM’s vice president and chief economist but also as its Cassandra while the firm persisted along a path that led eventually to its

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