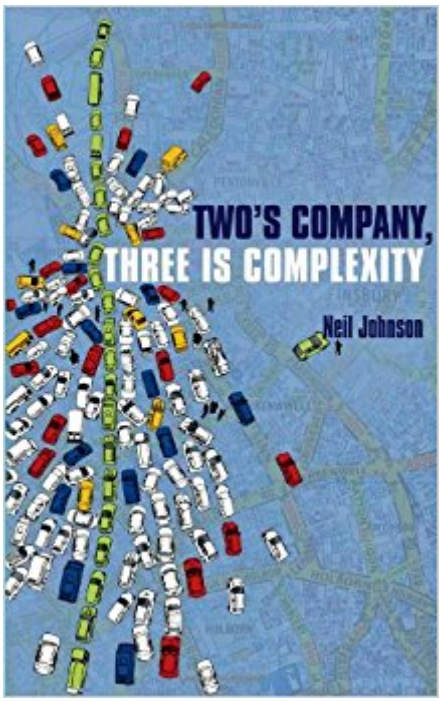
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Two's Company, Three Is Complexity



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Synopsis

What do traffic jams, stock market crashes, and wars have in common? They can all be explained by complexity, an unsolved puzzle which is the most important scientific development since general relativity, and considered by many to be the 'Science of Sciences'. In Two's Company, Three is Complexity, Neil Johnson draws on his experience as a leading researcher in the field to explore the surprising ways in which order eventually emerges from the interaction of all things. Relevant across the whole breadth of social studies and science from pubs to plants, Johnson utilizes a wealth of real-life examples as he leads us on a brilliantly entertaining romp through chaos, game theory, economics, and even jazz, ultimately proving that complexity lies at the very heart of the Universe itself. The sheer scope and interdisciplinary nature of the subject means that those with backgrounds in physics, biology, engineering, computer science, economics, sociology, politics, business, or mathematics will appreciate the book's relevance to, and illumination of, their own field of interest. Lucidly written, this is the first publication to deal with complexity as a self-contained subject in its own right, and will be an indispensable reference for anyone seeking to step back and understand how order always emerges from the patterns and processes of every day life.

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Customer Reviews

"A highly engaging and accessible introduction to complexity theory that will be of interest to a broad readership." -- Christophre Georges - Professor of Economics, Hamilton College"An excellent introduction to complexity -- a branch of science that every one of us in our time should be aware of." -- Pak Ming Hui - Professor of Physics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong"This is a

wonderful book, simultaneously deep and highly readable. It provides unexpected insights into a wild array of subjects ranging from jazz to traffic jams to war." -- Michael Spagat - Professor of Economics, Royal Holloway College, University of London’It’s lucidly explained, engagingly written and constantly surprising: complexity made simple!’ -- Philip Ball -- best-selling author of Critical Mass: How One Thing Leads to Another"Johnson’s book fills a long-overdue need for an engaging semipopular book about complexity science, one that is also strong on the underlying scientific and theoretical concepts." -- ChoiceIt’s lucidly explained, engagingly written and constantly surprising: complexity made simple! -- Philip Ball -- best-selling author of Critical Mass: How One Thing Leads to AnotherIt’s lucidly explained, engagingly written and constantly surprising: complexity made simple! -- Philip Ball best-selling author of Critical Mass: How One Thing Leads to AnotherThis is a wonderful book, simultaneously deep and highly readable. It provides unexpected insights into a wild array of subjects ranging from jazz to traffic jams to war. -- Michael Spagat - Professor of Economics, Royal Holloway College, University of London

Neil Johnson is Professor of Physics at Oxford University, where he is also co-director of CABDYN, an interdisciplinary research collaboration in Complexity and Complex Systems. He co-authored /Financial Market Complexity/ (OUP, 2003).

There seem to be an abundance of books that focus on simple questions like "why is the sky blue?" or "why don’t penguins get cold feet?", I have always found these types of books interesting, but ultimately the answers are of little relevance to my everyday life where I turn on the news and am confronted with falling stock markets, terrorist attacks and the spread of the latest computer virus. Why do things like these occur, can we understand them and what do they have in common?It is through answers to these questions and the explanations of everyday events that "two’s company, three is complexity" really shines. Using the science of Complexity Johnson explains the underlying causes behind many of the phenomena we see in the world around us. Phenomena like traffic jams, terrorism, stock markets, the common cold and the growth of cancer tumours. Before I read this book I had assumed these things were too difficult to understand (without a PhD), or that they just occurred at random. However Johnson largely succeeds in explaining these phenomena using intuition, diagrams and good analogies. To his credit equations are kept to a minimum so the book remains very readable. That said I think that the real strength of the book lies in its ability to draw parallels and links between these seemingly disparate systems. I started to realise that the growth of a Cancer tumour was perhaps not so different from the movement of traffic on city streets, or that

the price movements on international currency markets might be share many features with the spread of the common cold.In reading this book I had a large number of Ah-Ha moments and perhaps that is why it is ultimately so enjoyable. It was as if a light bulb would suddenly appeared over my head as I read the explanations.SummaryThis book is an engaging tour through the new science of complexity, told in an addictive manner. Do yourself a favour and next time you are going on a long flight, ditch the B grade in-flight movie and read this book instead. You will come out with a new appreciation of the way our world works and you will never look at a traffic jam in the same way again :)

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