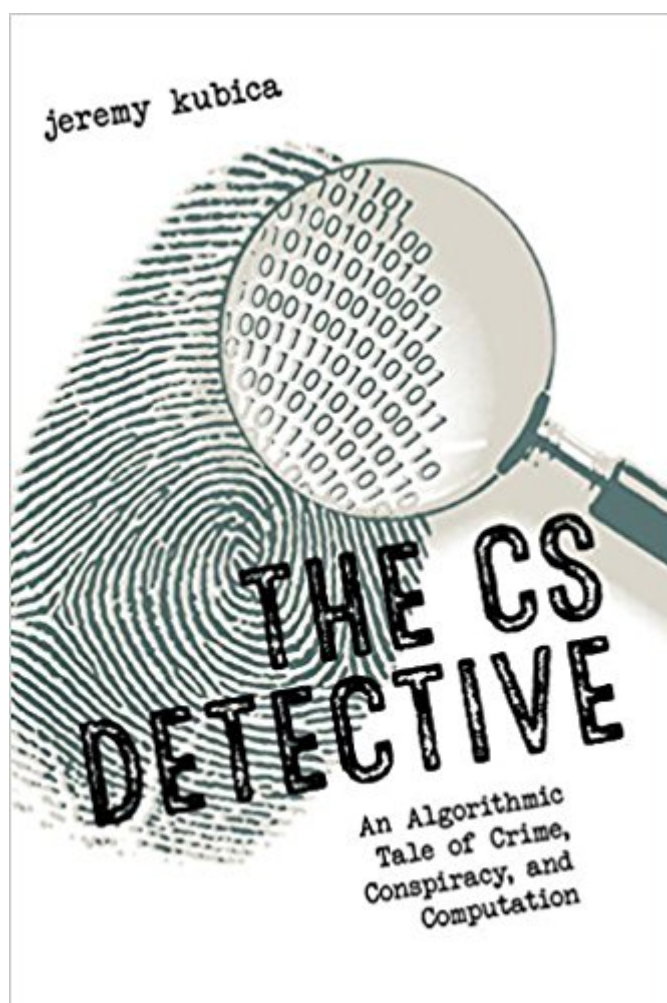


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The CS Detective: An Algorithmic Tale Of Crime, Conspiracy, And Computation



Synopsis

Meet Frank Runtime. Disgraced ex-detective. Hard-boiled private eye. Search expert. When a robbery hits police headquarters, it's up to Frank Runtime and his extensive search skills to catch the culprits. In this detective story, you'll learn how to use algorithmic tools to solve the case. Runtime scours smugglers' boats with binary search, tails spies with a search tree, escapes a prison with depth-first search, and picks locks with priority queues. Joined by know-it-all rookie Officer Notation and inept tag-along Socks, he follows a series of leads in a best-first search that unravels a deep conspiracy. Each chapter introduces a thrilling twist matched with a new algorithmic concept, ending with a technical recap. Perfect for computer science students and amateur sleuths alike, The CS Detective adds an entertaining twist to learning algorithms. Follow Frank's mission and learn:

- The algorithms behind best-first and depth-first search, iterative deepening, parallelizing, binary search, and more
- Basic computational concepts like strings, arrays, stacks, and queues
- How to adapt search algorithms to unusual data structures
- The most efficient algorithms to use in a given situation, and when to apply common-sense heuristic methods

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jeremy Kubica is a principal engineer at Google working on machine learning and algorithms. He has a PhD in robotics from Carnegie Mellon University and a BS in computer science from Cornell University. Kubica is the author of the popular Computational Fairy Tales blog.

Helping my 11 year old son learn some basic algorithms with this book. He is getting into it.

Great book with great brainy themes. Can't wait to read it to our youngest. :-)

This was a fun, light read. PI Runtime's adventures in a mixed fantasy/film noir world are clever and work well with the data structures and algorithms they detail. I found the problem set ups very engaging and the explanations crystal (ball) clear. The world was a fun place where people of Boolean descent know right from wrong, and pickled eel regulations lead to perfect data structures. That said, I wasn't too into the actual mystery. It seemed a little too obvious because it relied on the silliness of the world, so nothing was subtle. A good mystery needs something the reader can familiarize themselves with and draw them in. All said, I enjoyed the algorithms and writing style enough to read it all. I think this sort of book would be even better as a series of mini-mysteries a la Sherlock Holmes, and I look forward to a sequel like this.

“The CS Detective” is a fun book for learning about algorithms and performance. It's not language specific and it is easy to read. The book uses a story to tie together the algorithms. The story is about a detective who needs to find out who stole documents. It's actually a good story. The analogies while introducing the algorithms are very well thought out. I like the actual maze for back tracking and the array cart for transporting animals. There are fun references sprinkled throughout like the Brazen Booleans who want to guess that type of answers they give? And the Port of USB. There were also some references that are nice for parents reading this with a child (Intro to Turtle Graphics). The detective meets some fun characters like a wizard. While I knew most of what was in the book, I hadn't learned (or had forgotten) about iterative deepening so I learned something new. I read this book so I could recommend it to teenagers starting out with algorithms. It definitely fit the bill. I think adults would enjoy it as well. It's like Head First who is fun to read and easy to retain the info. Then there's the interest to go read a harder book. The first half of this book is provided online by the publisher so you can decide for yourself if you like the style. Disclosure: I received a review copy of this book from the publisher for reviewing it on behalf of CodeRanch.

My 2 oldest daughters (12 and 10) love Jeremy's first two books, and promptly devoured this one as well. They couldn't put it down, and have both already re-read it a couple times. They're entertained; I don't know how much they're picking up of the algorithmic content, but as long as they associate it

with something that's fun and not boring/difficult, that's enough for me.

I still have not managed to read much of the book. It is truly strange.

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