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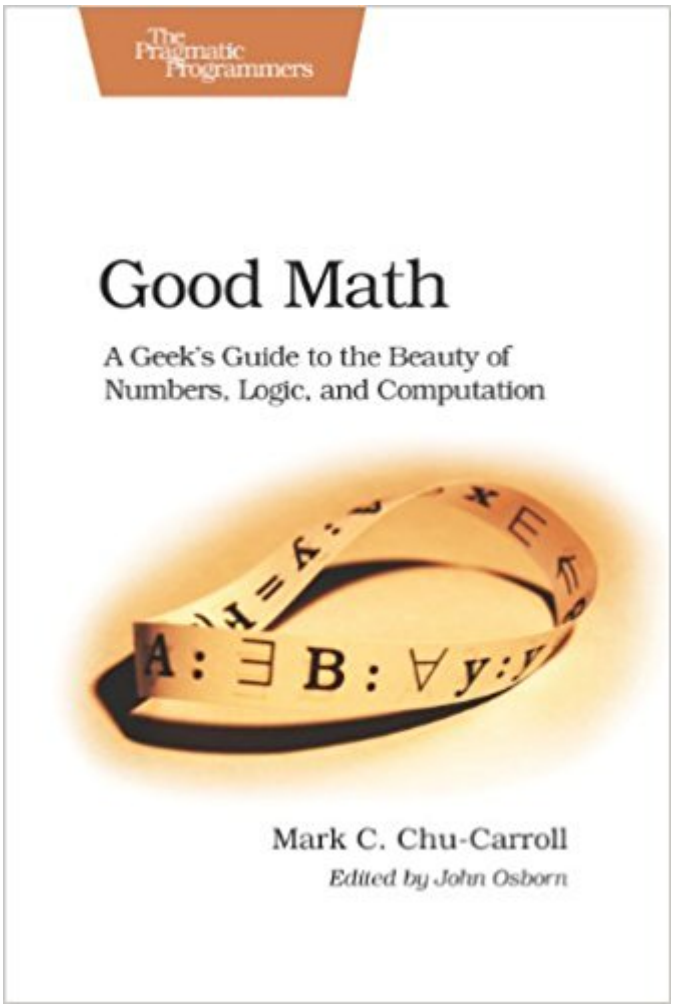
Good Math: A Geek's Guide To The Beauty Of Numbers, Logic, And Computation (Pragmatic Programmers)



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Synopsis

Mathematics is beautiful--and it can be fun and exciting as well as practical. Good Math is your guide to some of the most intriguing topics from two thousand years of mathematics: from Egyptian fractions to Turing machines; from the real meaning of numbers to proof trees, group symmetry, and mechanical computation. If you've ever wondered what lay beyond the proofs you struggled to complete in high school geometry, or what limits the capabilities of computer on your desk, this is the book for you.Why do Roman numerals persist? How do we know that some infinities are larger than others? And how can we know for certain a program will ever finish? In this fast-paced tour of modern and not-so-modern math, computer scientist Mark Chu-Carroll explores some of the greatest breakthroughs and disappointments of more than two thousand years of mathematical thought. There is joy and beauty in mathematics, and in more than two dozen essays drawn from his popular "Good Math" blog, you'll find concepts, proofs, and examples that are often surprising, counterintuitive, or just plain weird.Mark begins his journey with the basics of numbers, with an entertaining trip through the integers and the natural, rational, irrational, and transcendental numbers. The voyage continues with a look at some of the oddest numbers in mathematics, including zero, the golden ratio, imaginary numbers, Roman numerals, and Egyptian and continuing fractions. After a deep dive into modern logic, including an introduction to linear logic and the logic-savvy Prolog language, the trip concludes with a tour of modern set theory and the advances and paradoxes of modern mechanical computing.If your high school or college math courses left you grasping for the inner meaning behind the numbers, Mark's book will both entertain and enlighten you.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mark Chu-Carroll is a PhD computer scientist and professional software engineer. His professional interests include collaborative software development, programming languages and tools, and how to improve the daily lives of software developers. Aside from general geekery and blogging, he plays classical music on the clarinet, traditional Irish music on the wooden flute, and folds elaborate structures out of paper.

reviewers rightfully mention the computational background of this book. Unfortunately, the publishers are giving "canned" general science readership hype and background reviews (possibly to increase the readership base) on the usual pi, golden triangle, zero, i, e, etc. topics that make for pop sci math. This book is FAR BETTER (and a LOT different) than those! Publishers take note: you will sell MORE of this fine text by simply being honest and pointing out how different it really is by bringing in unique computational topics and examples.Sure, Mark covers a bit of background on historic (and even pop sci) math, and does the usual genuflection to pi, zero, e, i, etc. but then rapidly moves into computational math topics never covered in the pop sci books like group theory, transfinites, the halting problem, and many more, using computer math as both examples and primary chapters in some cases. Even where he covers the i/e/pi topics, he does so with very unique examples, including computation (I’m calling numerical analysis and graph theory computer math so I don’t scare away potential readers, because the author DOES NOT write or assume math above high school level. On the other hand, if you are in math, you’ll still love many of the building blocks here. I write DSLs for robotics and even with a Masters in applied math thoroughly enjoyed this book).Highly recommended, ironically FOR anyone with a general interest in very up to date math topics, due to the examples from IT. Knowing about the computer frame of reference can really enhance your enjoyment even as a general math fan, because Chu-Carroll uses examples, humor and very clear explanations even though many of the topics are new, relevant, up to date and unique.Library Picks reviews only for the benefit of shoppers and has nothing to do with , the authors, manufacturers or publishers of the items we review. We always buy the items we review for the sake of objectivity, and although we search for gems, are not shy about trashing an item if it’s a waste of time or money for shoppers. If the reviewer identifies herself, her job or her field, it is only

as a point of reference to help you gauge the background and any biases.

This is a good book, especially for its right selection of topics that are of great interest for computer scientists -and mathematicians obviously. The only reason I am giving it three stars is because the book contents is *plagued* with typos, errors and formatting inconsistencies. I wish I had written down them as I was reading it.

Solid intro to many concepts for the casual reader, with tips on further exploring the topics and bits of history mixed in. I haven't taken a math class in many years and had knowledge of a few of the topics via other studies, but this helped move things along conceptually and didn't feel like a dense or intimidating book as many math titles, even geared toward non-experts, often are.

I have not yet to complete this book, but the first 5 chapters are any indication I got my money's worth and way more with that. For once in my life, I felt connected with Mathematics. Love those chapters about the special numbers, zero, e, i, phi etc. Its a joy to read this book, and I am not even a mathematics aficionado. Its just a thinking/reading man's book to refresh and re-frame the mathematical conversation and the way of looking at numbers.

I liked the way the author presents each topic. His writing is lucid, and he seems to enjoy teaching as much as he enjoys mathematics. Even though I was familiar with most of the topics in the book, he managed to provide new insights. That by itself is worth more than the cost of the book.

It's a very complete book, from simple to very complex math.If you are or you want to be a programmer, this book is for you.Also it is oriented to the general public who can enjoy it in the same way.

There are some beautiful ideas in this book (the section on Euler's formula in particular I found to be sublime), but the first few chapters left me scratching my head. The concepts in the first couple of chapters still haven't made it truly into my comprehension yet, whereas those in later chapters enter much more readily. I mention it to avert the unwary reader from giving up too early, as I almost did and am glad I eventually did not.Also, it quotes Pi wrong about a third of the way through. It's one of those things you expect a math book to get right :)

Not well written.

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