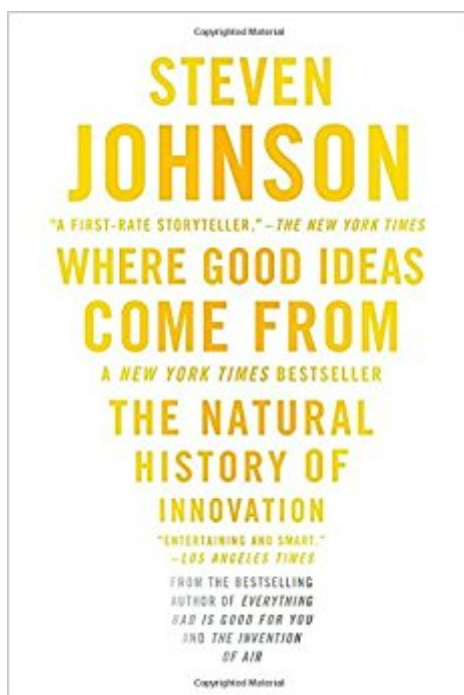## The book was found

Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History Of Innovation

Synopsis

The printing press, the pencil, the flush toilet, the battery--these are all great ideas. But where do they come from? What kind of environment breeds them? What sparks the flash of brilliance? How do we generate the breakthrough technologies that push forward our lives, our society, our culture? Steven Johnson's answers are revelatory as he identifies the seven key patterns behind genuine innovation, and traces them across time and disciplines. From Darwin and Freud to the halls of Google and Apple, Johnson investigates the innovation hubs throughout modern time and pulls out the approaches and commonalities that seem to appear at moments of originality.

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Customer Reviews

Johnson--writer, Web guru, and bestselling author of Everything Bad Is Good for You--delivers a sweeping look at innovation spanning nearly the whole of human history. What sparks our great ideas? Johnson breaks down the cultural, biological, and environmental fuel into seven broad "patterns," each packed with diverse, at times almost disjointed anecdotes that Johnson synthesizes into a recipe for success. A section on "slow hunches" captivates, taking readers from the FBI's work on 9/11 to Google's development of Google News. A section on error takes us through a litany of accidental innovations, including the one that eventually led to the invention of the computer. "Being right keeps you in place," Johnson reminds us. "eing wrong forces us to explore." It's eye-opening stuff--although it does require an investment from the reader. But as fans of the author's previous work know, an investment in Johnson pays off, and those who stick with the

author as he meanders through an occasional intellectual digression will come away enlightened and entertained, and with something perhaps even more useful--how to recognize the conditions that could spark their own creativity and innovation. Another mind-opening work from the author of Mind Wide Open. (Oct.) (c) Copyright Ã Â© PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The figure of the lone genius may captivate us, but we intuit that such geniusesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ creations donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t materialize in a vacuum. Johnson supported the intuition in his biography of eighteenth-century scientist Joseph Priestly (The Invention of Air, 2009) and here explores it from different angles using sets of anecdotes from science and art that underscore some social or informational interaction by an inventor or artist. Assuring readers that he is not engaged in Ã¢â ¬Å"intellectual tourism,Ã¢â ¬Â• Johnson recurs to the real-world effects of individuals and organizations operating in a fertile information environment. Citing the development of the Internet and its profusion of applications such as Twitter, the author ascribes its success to Ã¢â ¬Å"exaptationÃ¢â ¬Â• and Ã¢â ¬Å"stacked platforms.Ã¢â ¬Â• By which he means that curious people used extant stuff or ideas to produce a new bricolage and did so because of their immersion in open networks. With his own lively application of stories about DarwinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s theory of atolls, the failure to thwart 9/11, and musician Miles Davis, Johnson connects with readers promoting hunches and serendipity in themselves and their organizations. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I purchased this book after enjoying his earlier work so much, "How we Got To Now." And it did not disappoint. The earlier book gave me a greater appreciation for all the everyday stuff we take for granted (steel, glass, concrete, etc) and this one showed the power of cross-fertilization in solving problems. Printing was already being used but Gutenberg's idea of implementing the wine press used in Germany took it to another level.He is not shy in contrasting this shared knowledge with the "silo-building" of the FBI that continues to fail our country by isolating key information from other agencies like the CIA. I remember reading after 9/11 that the failures of sharing vital information of national security was to be fixed by the creation of Homeland Security. Then the bombing at the Boston Marathon occurs and the investigation shows "silo-building" was again in play between the the CIA and the FBI,At least the folks in the private sector understand the value of creative thinking.

Johnson relied too much on Darwinism to make his case. The entire book is repetitive. One can

almost imagine a long essay replacing the book.I rated Steven Johnson`s other book- How we got to here 5 star. But this one is disappointing.

He could have shortened this book by a third, while easily covering all the ideas. Some repetition was irritating. But there are a number of good points and lots of stories about people and developments I wasn't very familiar with, and I would definitely recommend the book.

Mr. Johnson, obviously has a great grasp of history and the innovative lessons we can learn from it. This book was a very practical help to anyone trying to cultivate innovation in their lives. I do feel that the principal lessons could have been communicated with more economy of chapters.

Steven Johnson is a genius. He is eloquent, thoughtful and just plain intelligent. I found this to be interesting and useful for my work (consulting and executive coaching). My only wish would be that he could be just a bit more concise.

There have been a number of interesting books in recent years on ideas, creativity, innovation and the forces that shape the progress of the human race, including The Rational Optimist by Matt Ridley and The Nature of Technology by W. Brian Arthur.This book, despite a title that sounds sort of warm and fuzzy, puts forth some interesting ideas about ideas, with quite a few meaty and entertaining anecdotes from wide ranging sources. Johnson relates the fascinating history of many interesting ideas such as the World Wide Web, GPS, YouTube, the pacemaker, the air conditioner, the triode, the theory of island formation, the printing press, the nature of neural connections, the method of transmission of cholera and many others.Johnson's definition of ideas is not limited to human ideas. He includes good ideas by chemical and biological actors through evolution in his definition.While this may seem unusual, it is completely consistent with Johnson's view of progress. He begins with the notion of the "adjacent possible", which is the set of possibilities enabled by taking one step beyond the current state of things. The notion is that most ideas are variants on things that already exist. It is accumulations of these variations that comprise progress. This is consistent with biologist Francois Jacob's notion of evolution as a tinkerer, rather than an engineer. Johnson notes that there are exceptions. But even in the case of of revolutionary theories, there are often preconditions which set the stage for Darwin and Wallace to both discover evolution, or Newton and Leibniz to both invent calculus.Following from this premise, what is needed to foster ideas is an environment which continually brings together existing concepts by being both

sufficiently dense and fluid to create fruitful new combinations. This is why a coral reef is a fertile ecosystem, urban environments are hotbeds of cultural progress and the Internet fosters advances of all kinds at an unprecedented rate.A couple of interesting examples of bringing together ideas from different areas are the application of the wine press to printing books by Gutenberg, and the application of the punch card, invented for mechanical looms, to data processing.Johnson discusses the commonplace book, a type of scrapbook used by John Locke, Francis Bacon, John Milton, Joseph Preistley, Erazmus Darwin and Charles Darwin to not only save interesting ideas from different sources, but index them so as to bring loosely connected entries together in the author's mind. Johnson has implemented his own modern day commonplace book using a software tool called DevonThink.The latter portion of the book is a discussion of individual vs network and market driven vs "open source" in the generation of inventions. He sees a historical shift over time from the individual, market driven inventor to the the networked, open source model of invention. In this argument, his is somewhat at odds with the views of Matt Ridley, whose Rational Optimist argues persuasively that trade and the market have always been the driving force behind progress and the evolution of ideas.His arguments are largely consistent with the thesis of Arthur's The Nature of Technology, also excellent. Arthur is somewhat more narrowly focused but also compelling in his case for incremental progress.Johnson also a large appendix which contains a chronicle of key innovations from 1400-2000 with a paragraph on each.The book is well written and insightful. Highly recommended.

Certainly, we cannot deny the "Adjacent Possible", "Liquid Networks", "Slow Hunch", "Serendipity", "Error", "Exaptation", and "Platforms" are cognitive situations of our everyday life when innovation can happen. Steven Johnson's book explain a lot of possibilities about innovation that lead our reasoning beyond the innovation "big numbers" of the economists! According to Schumpeter, the brilliant austrian economist of the 1930's, innovation is a multidisciplinar field of study that cannot be explained only by the economics science. The knowledge field that has, by far, much more to tell us about innovation is the Peter Drucker, Alfred Sloan, Igor Ansoff, and Michael Porter's "Business Administration". Whilst the economists just try to explain (looking to the past) innovation impacts on the economy with innovation indicators, such as "high-tech" products traded in a year, Drucker and the business scholars search for evidences to show why, when and how the companies innovate in the market. Johnson's book show us another possible side of the innovation phenomenon: that the innovation is not just a sociotechnical phenomenon, but a natural one (also in the biological sense). This new category of reasoning on innovation brings important consequences to the study of the

innovation ontology, showing that the innovation phenomenon is far more complex than we are used to think.

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