Melanie Mitchell

Award-winning Author, *Artificial Intelligence: A Guide for Thinking Humans*
Professor, Santa Fe Institute

A leading voice on AI and complex systems
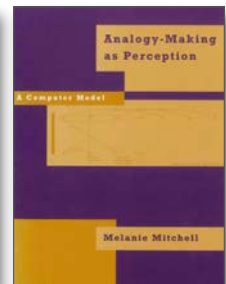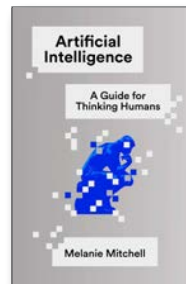
Biography

Melanie Mitchell is a leading voice in the artificial intelligence space. She is an award-winning author and a Santa Fe Institute professor whose current research focuses on conceptual abstraction, analogy-making, and visual recognition in artificial intelligence systems.

Her book *Artificial Intelligence: A Guide for Thinking Humans* takes readers on a journey through the turbulent history of AI and into the successes of the modern era. She separates the hype from the realities of the technology, addressing concerns such as whether it's actually intelligent and if it has the capacity to one day surpass us. Flavored with Mitchell's humor and personal observations, the book is an indispensable guide to understanding artificial intelligence. It was shortlisted for the 2023 Cosmos Prize for Scientific Writing and in 2024 was named one of "5 Best Books About Artificial Intelligence" by the *New York Times*. The paper affectionately dubbed it "the Honda Civic of A.I. books" for its simplicity and elegance in addressing the most important questions about artificial intelligence.

Topics & Books

Artificial Intelligence
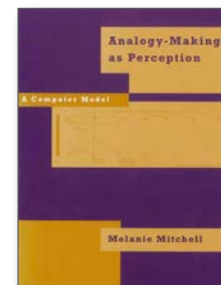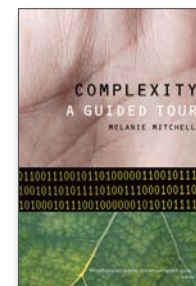*Technology*

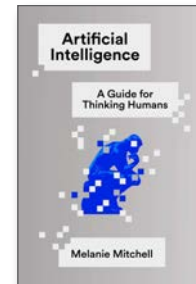**more** ▸

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Melanie's first general audience book, *Complexity: A Guided Tour*, is an introduction to the sciences of complexity, an interdisciplinary set of efforts that seek to explain how large-scale complex, organized, and adaptive behavior can emerge from simple interactions among myriad individuals. It won the Phi Beta Kappa Science Book Award and was #3 on Amazon's 10 Best Science Books the year it was published.

Professor Mitchell founded Santa Fe Institute's Complexity Explorer platform which offers online courses and other educational resources related to the field of complex systems. Her online course, "Introduction to Complexity", has been taken by over 25,000 students and was named one of Class Central's "Best Free Online Courses of All Time." She is also a prominent researcher of genetic algorithms and the author of a highly cited textbook, *An Introduction to Genetic Algorithms*.

Melanie is renowned for her teaching and writing on science and technology. Her essays and reviews in the fields of artificial intelligence, cognitive science, and complex systems have appeared in the *New York Times, Science Magazine, New Scientist*, and *Technological Review*. She is the recipient of the Senior Scientific Award from the Complex Systems Society, the Distinguished Cognitive Scientist Award from UC Merced, and the Herbert A. Simon Award of the International Conference on Complex Systems.

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