



# The Engine of Complexity: Evolution as Computation (NONE)

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## The Engine of Complexity: Evolution as Computation (NONE) By John

The concepts of evolution and complexity theory have become part of the intellectual ether permeating the life sciences, the social and behavioral sciences, and more recently, management science and economics. In this new title, John Mayfield elegantly synthesizes core concepts from across disciplines to offer a new approach to understanding how evolution works and how complex organisms, structures, organizations, and social orders can and do arise based on information theory and computational science.

This is a big picture book intended for the intellectually adventuresome. While not deeply technical or mathematical in style, the text challenges readers and rewards them with a nuanced understanding of evolution and complexity that offers consistent, durable, and coherent explanations for major aspects of our life experiences. Numerous examples throughout the book illustrate evolution and complexity formation in action and highlight the core function of computation lying at the heart of the book.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

*The Engine of Complexity* is a well-written and erudite book of great importance. It promises to be the best single introduction to the informational concept of evolution, all while being clear and easy to read.

(Geoffrey M. Hodgson, University of Hertfordshire)

Wide ranging, ambitious, and clearly written, John E. Mayfield's *The Engine of Complexity* shows how information flowing down the ages in genes, thoughts, and words, guided only by the invisible hand of selection, has built everything from beetles and human brains to steam engines, space shuttles, and iPads. It will open your eyes to a different way of seeing the world.

(Mark Pagel, University of Reading, author of *Wired for Culture: Origins of the Human Social Mind*)

John E. Mayfield succeeds beautifully in making computational and biological concepts understandable to the non-expert reader. He suggests we are about to see a sea-change in our thinking with respect to how we view evolution in our society; he may be right, and his book is good reading to ready yourself for this potential change.

(Alan G. Atherly, Iowa State University)

An extraordinarily ambitious and broad volume.

(Chris Adami *Quarterly Review of Biology*)

#### About the Author

John E. Mayfield is professor emeritus of genetics, development, and cell biology at Iowa State University. He has also taught at the California Institute of Technology, Carnegie-Mellon University, and Harvard University Biological Laboratories. His research focuses on the development of a generalized theory of evolution that relates naturally and easily to fundamental mathematical and physical principles.

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