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We Have No Idea: A Guide To The Unknown Universe



Synopsis

Prepare to learn everything we still don't know about our strange, mostly mysterious universe. PHD Comics creator Jorge Cham and particle physicist Daniel Whiteson have teamed up to spelunk through the enormous gaps in our cosmological knowledge, armed with their entertaining and lucid explanations of science. In *We Have No Idea*, they explore the biggest unknowns in the universe, why these things are still mysteries, and what a lot of smart people are doing to figure out the answers (or at least ask the right questions). While they're at it, they helpfully demystify many complicated things we do know about, from quarks and neutrinos to gravitational waves and exploding black holes. With equal doses of humor and delight, they invite us to see the universe as a vast expanse of mostly uncharted territory that's still ours to explore. This entertaining science primer is the perfect book for anyone who's curious about all the big questions physicists are still trying to answer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We Have No Idea: A Guide to the Unknown offers a funny and informative romp through the mysteries of cosmology. Each chapter cleverly addresses a key cosmological question, such as whether or not there are higher than three dimensions, what are the missing pieces of the universe's material, and why gravitation is so much weaker than the other forces. Jorge Cham (of PHD Comics) supplies an abundance of hilarious illustrations, each highlighting the absurdity of these cosmic riddles. The science and wit are both sophisticated, relying on a savvy reader to distinguish

between truth (as strange as it seems) and the completely ludicrous, such as unicorns roasting marshmallows in another dimension. The book is trippy at times, but so are some of the bizarre ramifications of contemporary physics. If you like your science sprinkled with heaps of sarcastic, far-out, weird humor, it is the perfect book. A truly fun, delightful read!-Paul Halpern, author of *The Quantum Labyrinth: How Richard Feynman and John Wheeler Revolutionized Time and Reality*

A charming, and humorous book about the many unanswered questions in physics. The humor and cartoons, which liven up the book, were corny but in a good way. The questions are profound. Many may be not only unanswered, but perhaps unanswerable.

Even if you have a good grasp of what we, as a species, know and not know about our Universe, from the texture of space to the limits of the universe, "We Have No Idea" is an essential compilation of the current status quo of our knowledge, yet accessible to the less scientific-minded reader. It will allow you to more easily understand and place all the amazing discoveries science allows us to learn every day!

I began reading "We Have No Idea" as an antidote to a popular exposition on the big bang that's so expansive about what we know that you easily think we are about to know everything. It's a very entertaining read with drawings and jokes by Jorge Cham keeping it light and text by a particle physicist, Daniel Whiteson. I found it also gets expansive in the opposite direction since Whiteson gets into "why" questions that shouldn't be a subject for physical investigation. Such questions bring up notions of goals or purpose which introduces teleology. It still makes for a good read.

For those who consider that we have all the answers, this book will come as a bit of a shock. Not only do we not have all the answers, we don't even begin to have the right questions. This is great!! We have so much to learn we haven't even scratched the surface. We don't even understand what constitutes 95% of our known universe!!! What exciting times ahead!!!!

Many things contribute to the wonder of this book. The type face, humor (especially in footnotes), the authors' attitude. This all combines to a deep book that has reasonably understandable presentations of some of the toughest scientific concepts.

While the illustrations are fun, some of the information is off by so many orders of magnitude it makes it hard to take it seriously. This is most significant in the section of high energy particles from space. It compares the energy of cosmic rays to a slow moving bus hitting every square meter of the earth each second. This is comparing a 1Tev Particle, to a bus. Lets say our bus was moving at 100cm/s, or a 1/4 of a mile an hour. That bus would still have more than 25 Joules of Kinetic energy. This is off by a factor of 250000000 from what the book is talking about. The accompanying illustration of massive number of buses falling onto earth is just lunatic. These basic math mistakes are repeated in the book elsewhere. There is also a serious misunderstanding of the explanation of special relativity when it comes to acceleration.

Halfway through. And awesome. Even if my brain hurts. Great job, guys.

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