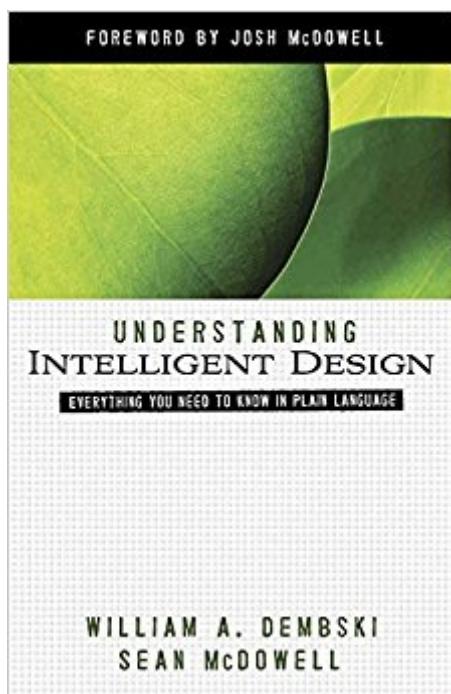


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# Understanding Intelligent Design: Everything You Need To Know In Plain Language (ConversantLife.com,®)



## Synopsis

This compact guide lays out the basics of Intelligent Design, popularly known as ID. William Dembski, the dean of the intelligent-design movement, and Sean McDowell especially target readers whose understanding may have been confused by educational bias and one-sided arguments and attacks. Commonsense and no-nonsense, with pointed examples, the authors explain the central theories of ID, showing why the presence of information and meaningful complexity require the involvement of intelligence why ID adheres to the scientific method and is a valid field of scientific inquiry why scientific evidence increasingly conflicts with evolutionary theories how both evolutionary theory and ID have religious/philosophical underpinnings, and why this causes so much controversy how both systems of thought have radical implications for our culture and what readers can do about it. Clarifying crucial issues, this key resource gives nonspecialists a solid grasp of one of today's foundational religious-scientific-cultural concepts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In my book *Godless*, I showed that Darwinism is the hoax of the century and, consequently, the core of the religion of liberalism. Like John the Baptist, Darwin foretold one of the key tenets of the left's worldview: that humans are accidental descendants of earthworms, not the unique creations of an all-powerful God. Liberals respond to critics of their religion like Cotton Mather to Salem's *Witches*. With this book, two more witches present themselves for burning: Sean McDowell, whose gift is communicating with young people, and Bill

Dembski, often called the Isaac Newton of intelligent design. I think Dembski is more like the Dick Butkus of intelligent design. His record for tackling Darwiniacs is unmatched. This book gives young people all the ammo they need to take on Darwinism and understand the only viable scientific alternative to Darwinism: intelligent design. Every high school student in America needs a copy of Understanding Intelligent Design. Ann Coulter, author of Godless: The Church of Liberalism "This book is long overdue! Finally, an understandable, engaging, and well-written introduction to intelligent design. Understanding Intelligent Design is the best book of its type." J.P. Moreland, distinguished professor of philosophy, Biola University, author of Kingdom Triangle "Bill and Sean have written a superb book that I wish I had when I was in high school! It would have spared me decades of believing in Darwinism! This book presents a crystal-clear overview of the most important and exciting development in science in our lifetime—the growing recognition that life and the cosmos reveal clear scientific evidence for design by a Mind." Michael Egnor, professor and vice-chairman, department of neurosurgery, State University of New York at Stony Brook, featured in Ben Stein's movie *Expelled* "Written especially for young people, this is a lucid presentation of the philosophical and scientific factors that contribute to the debate about origins. It is a must-read for Christian teenagers!" Caroline Crocker, executive director, IDEA Center, featured in Ben Stein's movie *Expelled* "Understanding Intelligent Design provides a magnificent introductory explanation of the most significant intellectual controversy of our time. I highly recommend it." Phillip E. Johnson, author of *Darwin on Trial* "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not one bit simpler." So runs a quote often attributed to Einstein. Using clear and easily read prose, Dembski and McDowell do exactly this in painting a powerful and wonderfully coherent case for intelligent design. Robert J. Marks II, distinguished professor of electrical and computer engineering, Baylor University, featured in Ben Stein's movie *Expelled* "Intelligent design is often rejected, but rarely understood, especially by those who incessantly tell the rest of us to keep an open mind." This is an age when sophisticated academics do not flinch at requiring public school students to watch *sex* education demonstrations that involve bananas and condoms. Yet these same intellectuals insist that our children be shielded from any literature that may cast doubts on materialism. This is why ID advocates would face less resistance in our more cerebral venues if someone somewhere would just label it as pornography. But, alas, that has not happened. So, you'll just have to discover by your lonesome self what gets Richard Dawkins, "the Darwinian bulldog," all worked up about.

panties in a bunch. Start by reading this book and learning something. If you wind up disagreeing with portions of it or even the whole thing, that's okay, for many of us (me included) have issues with and questions about ID as well. But some of us are far more suspicious of the thought police that want to protect you from this new boogeyman.

Francis J. Beckwith, professor of philosophy and church-state studies, Baylor University "I once asked a juvenile felon why he chose a life of crime. His response was chilling: 'Joel, if this is all there is, why not?'

Understanding Intelligent Design takes a great first step toward correcting such attitudes. Our schools indoctrinate young people into thinking that they are nothing more than products of time plus chance plus natural selection. ID, by contrast, shows that purpose must be added to this equation. This automatically gives young people a meaning to their existence, something to live for and something to seek after. For anyone who is struggling to understand our place in the cosmos or knows a young person who is, give them Understanding Intelligent Design.

Joel Borofsky, worldview blogger

William A. Dembski, PhD, speaks worldwide on intelligent design and is frequently featured in newspaper articles and on radio and TV shows, among them ABC's *Nightline* and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. A mathematician, philosopher, and research professor, Dembski has published widely and is the author/editor of more than a dozen books, including *The Design Inference* and *No Free Lunch*. He lives in Texas. Sean McDowell is an educator and a popular speaker at schools, churches, and conferences nationwide. He is author of *Ethix: Being Bold in a Whatever World*, coauthor of *77 FAQs About God and the Bible*, *Experience Your Bible*, and *Understanding Intelligent Design*, and general editor of *Apologetics for a New Generation* and *The Apologetics Study Bible for Students*. He is currently pursuing a PhD in apologetics and worldview studies. Sean's website, [www.seanmcdowell.org](http://www.seanmcdowell.org), offers his blog, many articles and videos, and much additional curriculum.

As wh@ I suppose people would call a specialist in this subject ; I was DELIGHTED by this book. Bill Dembski manages to put across his arguments without endless technical jargon but managed to give us the detail that we need to understand him. A superb book written by one of the best brains around these days. Not to be missed if you are interested in the subject and are prepared to learn the facts.

I read Dembski's Intelligent Design years ago when it first came out, and found it stunning. The second course, Understanding Intelligent Design, wonderfully refreshing as well. Like a really nice dinner and a fine wine. McDowell makes it easy to interface with high-flight concepts!

The authors provide a very respectable case for why they believe what they do. Though I should note that a text that examines both sides with acuity and fairness has yet to come.

Excellent book for Christian apologetics or for anyone with questions about the origin of our universe

5 stars

Thank you William Dembski and Sean McDowell for taking a complex subject and putting it into terms a layperson can understand. For the longest time I thought Darwinian Evolution was it because this is what I was taught growing up. As a student of apologetics this was an area I struggled with the most trying to bridge the gap between philosophy and science. This book is a great intro into intelligent design which will allow you to tackle more in depth books by Dembski/McDowell and their peers.

Although I find Intelligent-Design (ID) arguments inadequate (but not nearly as much as Darwinian ones), I would be unjustified in denying the book 5 stars, for its earnest pursuit of truth in the subjects, notwithstanding abusive attacks by opponents. Let me first get off the chest my main dissatisfaction with the book. It needlessly mixes in Christian dogma while its other arguments may be persuasive to many non-Christians, and disturbing me most is (p.183) the quotation from the Catholic Encyclopedia that man "has himself brought about the evil from which he suffers by transgressing the law of God...". Did the Holocaust victims transgress that law, or did their persecutors, following the law of Darwin? Since speaking of Darwin, I might focus on a chief issue doubly discrediting him, the "slight modifications" he contends occur randomly in, and lead to survival of, organisms. Such slight modification compared to the lack of it hardly effects the survival of one group and not the other. There must obviously be a substantial enough difference to lead to that result. But more to the point is his allegation that an organism's form is functional in both stages of the modification. Often quoted (p.138) is his: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications,

my theory would absolutely break down."This is one instance where ID falls short. Its "irreducible complexity" (p.140) makes a strong case that such slight modification is insufficient for an organ to be functional in both stages. This is, however, not conclusively demonstrated, Darwinists continually arguing, though equally not demonstrating, that an organ can have a function in each stage. The trouble is concentration on an organ, like the eye, or other part of the whole, as if that part belonged at some stage to another whole. The slight modification is to occur to the organism considered as whole; so whereas it may be conceivable that before such modification the eye for one functioned appropriately in another organism, it evidently did not in the same one. It is clear without more research that absence of a functioning component of an organ in the same organism causes some disability.ID's also introduced "specified complexity" (p.104) likewise lacks reliability. By it "Complexity...ensures that the object in question is not so simple that it can be readily explained by chance", and "Specificity...ensures that the object exhibits the type of pattern that could signal intelligence". "Pattern" is vague here. It is exemplified (p.106) by "ice crystals, but such a design would be embedded in the laws of nature". It may be asked whether ID would not belong to laws of nature as well; regardless, as an example of a qualifying pattern is given the combination that opens a lock and "is therefore both complex and specified, and thus exhibits design" (p.107). The combination, however, could be said to display a purpose rather than pattern.Purpose, or goal, is indeed what ID looks for in the formation of organs spoken of above by Darwin, as noted by the authors regarding computer programs (p.109): "The specified complexity was there all along, having been inserted by the programmer to achieve the program's goal". Whether the formation of organisms is "directed", "guided", "purposeful", or not is what the great dispute is about. From purpose is then made something of a leap to intelligence, and God.It has been my effort in reviews here and in other work (On Proof for the Existence of God, and Other Reflective Inquiries) to show that the search for purpose in the organism's form overlooks a much simpler observation, of a phenomenon too familiar to be thought of, namely the behavior itself that distinguishes all live organisms: its "directedness" toward the "goal" of preservation. This purpose controls all of life, including the living's formation and adaptation, requiring no further searches in this respect.

**INTELLIGENT DESIGN WELL DONE**It is a clear and complete presentation that anyone desiring to know about "intelligent design" should read.Robert Thomas

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