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Randall Munroe on Making the Complicated Simple

Monday 2nd Oct, 7pm, Emmanuel Centre

'If you can't explain something simply, you don't understand it.' – Bill Gates

Is there a simple way of understanding the most complex scientific and technological discoveries? Is it possible to grasp without complicated technical jargon exactly how a smartphone works, for instance, or what drives a data centre or a particle collider?

We have never been surrounded by so much technology, yet have never understood so little what makes that technology work. To help unpack the inner workings of the innovations that underpin our tech age, Intelligence Squared are bringing together two of the world's best-loved science popularisers: **Randall Munroe**, the former NASA roboticist whose webcomic xkcd gets a billion hits a year, and uses clear visual illustrations to make scientific concepts accessible; and **Marcus du Sautoy**, the Oxford Professor for the Public Understanding of Science, who has won a large following through his bestselling books and TV programmes, which explain the elegance and complexity of mathematics. In conversation with broadcaster **Dr Xand van Tulleken**, they will lift the lid on the technology we love and the cutting edge of scientific research today.

Join Munroe and du Sautoy on October 2nd for a far-reaching exploration of the technology that drives our everyday lives, and have your chance to put your questions to two of the sharpest minds in science.

Praise for Randall Munroe

'A brilliant concept… If you know Munroe's previous work, it will come as no surprise that parts of Thing Explainer are laugh-out-loud funny… filled with cool basic knowledge about how the world works. Randall Munroe is the perfect guy to take on a project like this.' – Bill Gates

Speakers

Randall Munroe
Creator of webcomic xkcd and former NASA roboticist. He has been nominated for three Hugo Awards (the top prize in the sci-fi and tech world) and won 'Best Graphic Story' in 2014. Wired magazine chose xkcd as a key influence of the last 20 years, alongside Steve Jobs and online dating. The International Astronomical Union recently named an asteroid after him; asteroid 4942 Munroe is big enough to cause a mass extinction if it ever hits a planet like Earth.
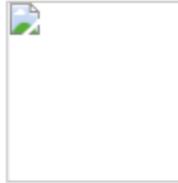
Marcus du Sautoy
One of the country's best known science broadcasters. He is Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, where he holds the prestigious Simonyi Chair for the Public Understanding of Science. He has presented numerous programmes on television and radio, including the internationally acclaimed BBC series The Story of Maths. His bestselling books include *The Music of the Primes*, *The Number Mysteries* and, most recently, *What We Cannot Know: From Consciousness to the Cosmos, the Cutting Edge of Science Explained*.

Chair

Dr Xand van Tulleken
Medical doctor and broadcaster who has presented numerous shows for the BBC and Channel 4, often alongside his twin brother Chris. Their 2014 BBC1 Horizon programme on the Sugar V Fat debate opened up a major health debate. Xand has also fronted Blow Your Mind, Secret Life of Twins and Medicine Men Gone Wild, and his book *How to Lose Weight Well*, which

'xkcd is nerd royalty, the alpha dork, there's no geek more widely cited and loved. Anyone from the blinkered literati world of publishing who doesn't know this should be sacked and blamed for the tragic, avoidable decline of their industry.' – Ben Goldacre, author of *Bad Science*

accompanied the TV series, went straight to the top of the Amazon book charts.

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