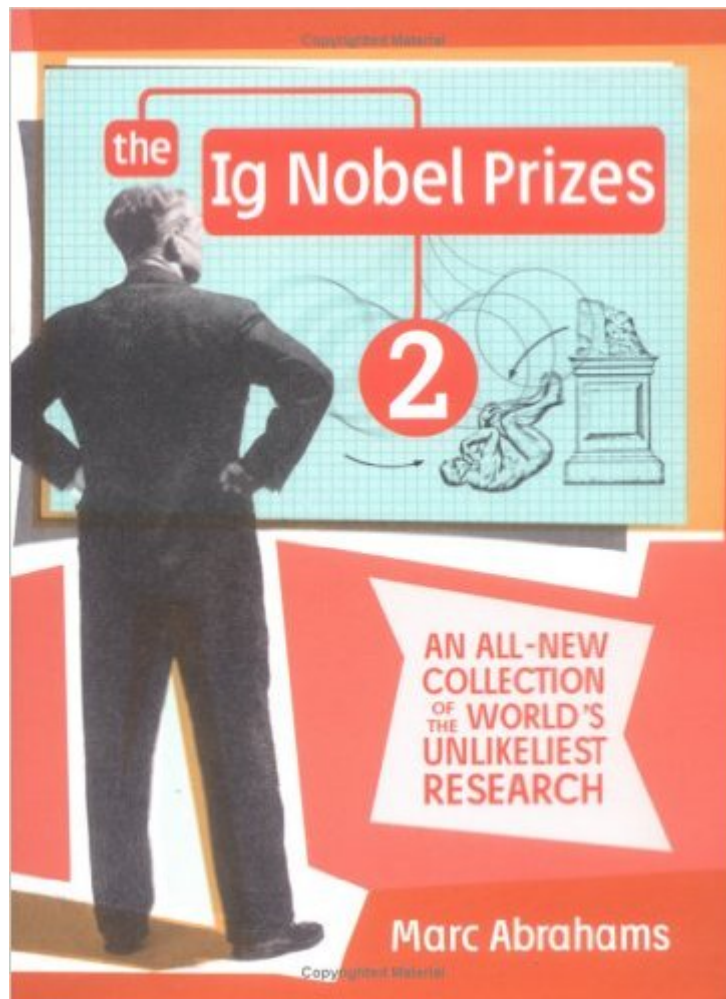


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The Ig Nobel Prizes 2: An All-New Collection Of The World's Unlikeliest Research



Synopsis

The hilarious second installment of the popular humor series honoring the world's most improbable actual research. The first volume of The Ig Nobel Prizes was celebrated as a "brainy bacchanalian" (USA Today) and "so funny you couldn't make it up" (The Washington Post). Now, the "guru of scientific satire" (Publishers Weekly), Marc Abrahams, returns with The Ig Nobel Prizes 2, a fresh compendium of all-new unbelievable-but-true accomplishments in the sciences, arts, and humanities. Born from the annual Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony at Harvard University, The Ig Nobel Prizes 2 demonstrates the incredible lengths to which people will go in the pursuit of knowledge. Winners of this prestigious award include: -The scientists who discovered that chickens prefer beautiful humans -The Norwegian research team that documented the impact of wearing wet underwear in the cold -The entire nation of Liechtenstein, which rents itself out for weddings, bar mitzvahs, or other gatherings. Featuring anecdotes from the 2004 Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony and a zany collection of all new achievements, The Ig Nobel Prizes 2 is perfect for anyone who first wants to laugh and then wants to think.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book brings together two areas of human endeavor that don't normally go together: science and humor. The Ig Nobel Awards (actually held every year at Harvard University) honor those achievements which "cannot or should not be reproduced." Did you know that elevator music may help prevent the common cold? Companies like Enron, Global Crossing, Tyco, Waste Management

and WorldCom shared an award for adapting the mathematical concept of imaginary numbers for use in the business world. A man from Lithuania created an amusement park called Stalin World. To save money, the British Royal Navy has barred trainees at its top gunnery school from firing live shells and ordered them to shout "bang." It has been determined that, biochemically, romantic love may be indistinguishable from severe obsessive-compulsive disorder. A college professor from Pennsylvania fed prozac to clams (at the cellular level, clams and humans show remarkable nervous system similarities), resulting in a whole lot of reproducing going on. A man from France is the only winner of two Ig Nobels, for demonstrating that water has a memory, and that the information can be transmitted over the phone and the Internet. Then there are the "classics," like the scientific investigation of why toast often falls on the buttered side; an Australian man who patented the wheel, and the Australian Patent Office who granted it; a man from Arizona who invented software that detects when a cat is walking across your keyboard; the Southern Baptist Church of Alabama for their county-by-county estimate of how many Alabama citizens will go to hell if they don't repent; the sociology of Canadian donut shops, and the optimal way to dunk a biscuit.

Back at the height of the Dot-Com boom, just before George Bush became president, billions of dollars were spent to attract viewers to specific web sites. Since everyone was encouraged to stampede to specific sites, Larry and Sergey decided to do just the opposite; they invented a web site to make it easier for people to look elsewhere. Thus Google was born. It's what this book is all about: People who think different. Granted, Google isn't mentioned. Instead, it's a fun romp through the delightful imaginations of people who didn't come close to inventing Google, or much of anything else that might be of use to someone, somewhere, sometime for some unimaginable reason. Like Google, Ig Noble Prizes are based on a simple criteria; they must make people THINK (that used to be the one-word slogan of IBM). Unlike Google, it must also make people laugh. In other words, Ig Noble honors apparently impractical new ideas on the basis that curiosity, originality and investigation are truly the basis of the human spirit. Consider, for example, the virtually spiceless NuMex Primavera jalapeno chile pepper, developed by Professor Paul Bosland at the Chile Pepper Institute of New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. New Mexico is famous for its Hatch chiles, which are flaming hot; so a "cool chile" may strike some as tasteless. Not true; the Primavera has lots of taste, just none of the usual hot spice. The goal is to gradually introduce people to chiles until they become addicted (it's a health food, after all) and everafter eat lots of New Mexico chiles. This "wacky" idea may improve livelihoods for thousands of New Mexicans in the agricultural business, which is one of the goals of a land grant state college.

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