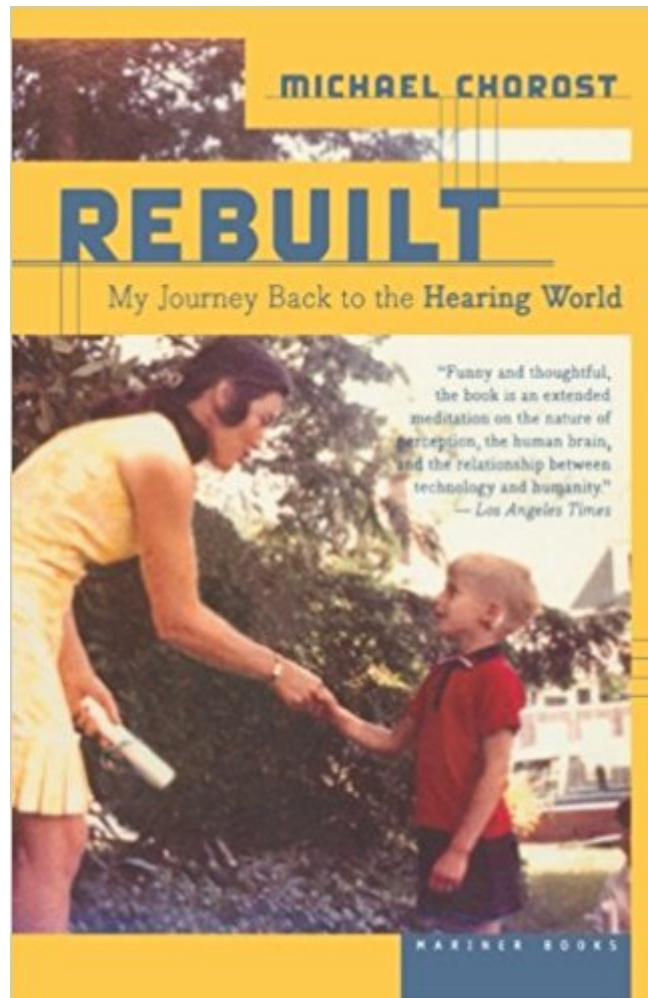




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Rebuilt: My Journey Back To The Hearing World



Synopsis

After Michael Chorost suddenly lost what was left of his hearing, he took the radical step of having a cochlear implant -- a tiny computer -- installed in his head. A technological marvel, the device not only restored to him the world of sound but also could be routinely upgraded with new software. Despite his initial fear of the technology's potentially dehumanizing effects, Chorost's implant allowed him to connect with others in surprising ways: as a cyborg, he learned about love, joined a writing group, and formed deeper friendships. More profoundly, his perception of the world around him was dramatically altered. Brimming with insight and written with charm and self-deprecating humor, *Rebuilt* unveils, in personal terms, the astounding possibilities of a new technological age.

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Customer Reviews

Chorost had been severely hearing impaired since birth when, one morning in 2001, his remaining hearing suddenly and inexplicably shut down. Fortunately for Chorost, cochlear implants have progressed to the point where people formerly isolated from everyday sounds can hear leaves rustle as they walk through them. A tiny device, the technological equivalent of a 286 computer, was surgically implanted behind the author's left ear. A magnetic headpiece sticks to his head over the implant, with a wire connected to a speech processor on his belt. As Chorost makes clear, his hearing wasn't restored; it was replaced. His body is now part "machine." The implant was only the first step of the author's learning to hear again, as his brain struggled to interpret the new electrical signals it was receiving. Chorost, who conducts research in educational technology, faced problems

with activities most people take for granted: talking on a cell phone or carrying on a conversation in a crowded room. He recounts with candor and humor his struggles with relationships, both casual and intimate. Readers will find much food for thought on the implications of medical technology and what constitutes our humanity in this beautifully written debut. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In Chorost's memoir about his hearing loss, he prefaces the operating-room experience and activation of a cochlear implant with a recollection of his childhood diagnosis in the late 1960s of a severe hearing deficit, probably caused by rubella fever. In 2001, Chorost abruptly went totally deaf. Portraying his recovery, Chorost imagines his body as the playing field pitting human against mechanical qualities, describing what it's like to be controlled by a computer. He relays his perception of the sound created by the cochlear implant, re-creates conversations and music, and tells how each software upgrade to the implant affected his experiences. His social interactions were also changed by the mechanical device, and he muses on his fortunes in navigating the dating scene. An artfully frank account, Chorost's story will vitally engage people interested in the increasingly prevalent surgical procedure. Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a very well-written book but it was very technical and dry in places. I still ordered my own copy of it since the subject matter is an important one for my family. I have a CI too and I don't consider myself to be a cyborg or part computer. I consider myself lucky and fortunate to be in a time where this is possible. I lost my hearing suddenly before we left for a trip out west to the Rockies at the age of 34 and a young mom of twin boys that were not even two yet. Scary? Oh you betcha. I got mine for a variety of reasons but mainly because I needed to hear. Like the author of this book, I had grown up wearing hearing aids. So getting the implant was a necessity for me and one that I am eternally grateful for. This book is very interesting in the aspect of technology and how cochlear implant works. This book would be perfect for my husband and dad to read since they love anything technical. But all the references to science fiction turned me off as well as his personal stories about his dating/sex life. I honestly don't care about that so that is why this is rated a three stars instead of a four. If they were trimmed out or modified, then this would be a four. I really do appreciate the section on how the Deaf Culture changed from the year of 2000 to 2004 (or something like that). I did watch the movie, "Sound and the Fury" and for the first time in my life, I

had a glimpse of what the Deaf Culture is about (not that I agree with it). This author went into more details (and got me to order more books on that subject) about something that has changed since I was a child. As a mother of a HOH child who may be a candidate for a CI, this book is helpful in sharing information that I may not get otherwise. This is an interesting book and a great introduction to cochlear implants and how it affects one man's life and how it affects society today. It is a good read and a helpful one. 4/28/08

I am days away from receiving my first Cochlear Implant and "Rebuilt" was on a list of books my audiologist recommended when I was first evaluated for receiving an implant. It has been an immense help, my fears and misgivings soothed, and I feel so much better prepared for this exciting journey back from the helplessness and frustration of losing my hearing. Much like Michael Chorost I was a fully functioning hearing adult for most of my life until a sudden loss in one ear and a rapid decline in the other left me unable to understand people in any acoustical situation or on the telephone and my world turned upside down. If you or anyone you know is in this situation this book will help you understand you or they are not alone and help is out there. Michael Chorost's personal journey from aided hearing to deafness and back as an adult is inspiring and told with humor and frankness. Although he received his first Cochlear Implant (CI) more than a decade ago and the technology has advanced since, the human aspects have not changed. The intense feelings when confronted with a sudden loss of hearing and verbal communication as an adult in the hearing world have not changed. Chorost's background in the humanities and computer technology were ideal preparations for him to write this book. The book is well researched, footnoted and has an extensive bibliography. Not only do you come to understand what a person might experience receiving a CI, Chorost tells the story of the wonderful technology that has made CI's the world's most successful prosthetic device and have coupled humans to machines like never before. For the first time ever a computer becomes directly linked to a human brain and controls the person's perceptions of sound energy in the environment around them; even the sounds created by the vibration of human vocal cords that communicate the words and meanings like "I love you." Especially those. Although the book ends with Chorost's happy return to the hearing world, his Cochlear Implant Journey and life have continued to unfold and blossom. He's become a sought after speaker and writer on technology and he even found love and marriage. You can follow him through his second implantation, called bilateral, the upgrades of the technology and his life through his website.

Mike Chorost tells a story of technology from the perspective of a person who is trying to understand

a very human loss - his hearing. He has a unique background for writing this book, because he is a technologist with a humanities background. His book is personal, yet it explains and explores the technology of hearing amplification along the way. When he gets into the more geeky issues around cyborg technologies, unlike some others writing about these issues he maintains the human social context and considers the real social and ethical ramifications, along with the literary contexts. He even sneaks in references to some of our favorite movie and TV characters, although he does misunderstand the Borg concept! Besides his ability to keep the technology issues within a human context, what makes this book particularly relevant and a good read is his allowing his personality to come through, with his foibles and shyness, his tendency to underestimate his own strengths as a seeker of meaning. A refreshing change in a biography! Chorost comes across as very likeable and genuine, and I found myself hoping for him to find not only his hearing, but also to find a girlfriend and a wholeness in his life. An all-around good read.

A great insight into the CI world, both in technical and human terms. I could've done without the sexuality "stuff," but overall it was a great book. As a fellow CI user, I learned far more about the technical inner workings; and as a person on a philosophy of hearing journey, we are on the same page.

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