



One Jump Ahead: Computer Perfection at Checkers

By Jonathan Schaeffer

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It's hard to believe that it's been over a decade since *One Jump Ahead: Challenging Human Supremacy at Checkers* was published. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to update and expand the book. The first edition ended on a sad note and that was reflected in the writing. It is now eleven years later and the project has come to a satisfying conclusion. Since its inception, the checkers project has consumed eighteen years of my life—twenty if you count the pre-CHINOOK and post-solving work. It's hard for me to believe that I actually stuck with it for that long. My wife, Steph, would probably have something witty to say about my obsessive behavior. Rereading the book after a decade was difficult for me. When I originally wrote *One Jump Ahead*, I vowed to be candid in my telling of the story. That meant being honest about what went right and what went wrong. I have been criticized for being hard on some of the characters. That may be so, but I hope everyone will agree that the person receiving the most criticism was, justifiably, me. I tried to be balanced in the storytelling, reflecting things as they really happened and not as some sanitized everyone-lived-happily-ever-after tale.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

The new edition of this extraordinary book depicts the creation of the world champion checkers computer program, Chinook. In only two years, Chinook had become a worthy opponent to the world champion, and within four years had defeated all the world's top human players. Jonathan Schaeffer, the originator and leader of the Chinook team, details the mistakes and technical problems made and the lessons learned in the continuous effort to improve Chinook's performance, revealing the human factor behind the program's design. The development of Chinook begins in 1988 as an innocent question asked over lunch and is followed to the final match against then world champion, Marion Tinsley, and ultimately to its recent triumph, solving checkers. Schaeffer's unwaveringly honest narrative features new anecdotes, updated material and technology descriptions, and additional photos and figures, providing an engrossing account of an obsessive quest to achieve perfection in computer checkers.

Jonathan Schaeffer is a professor of Computing Science at the University of Alberta. His research interests are in artificial intelligence, and he is well known for using games to demonstrate his ideas. He has achieved success building high-performance programs for chess, checkers and poker. Today, most of his research effort is devoted to addressing the challenging problems of the commercial games industry.

"In his unique voice, Jonathan Schaeffer describes the ups and downs of a research project where the ultimate goal is perfection. And Schaeffer is brutally honest about his failures to live up to this standard. When he finally succeeds at his eighteen-year quest, the reader can't help but share the emotions of the moment."

-- Murray S. Campbell, member of IBM's Deep Blue Supercomputer development team

About the Author

The scientists who developed Chinook rigorously proved that Chinook can never lose, i.e. computer checkers has been solved. Author Schaeffer detailed the process on the web site of the journal *Science* in July 2007, and the story has since been reported in the *Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Discover Magazine*, as well as on MSNBC and CNN, among others.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brandon Li:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As you may know that book is very important usually. The book One Jump Ahead: Computer Perfection at Checkers ended up being making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The reserve One Jump Ahead: Computer

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Raul Warren:

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Sean Mills:

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