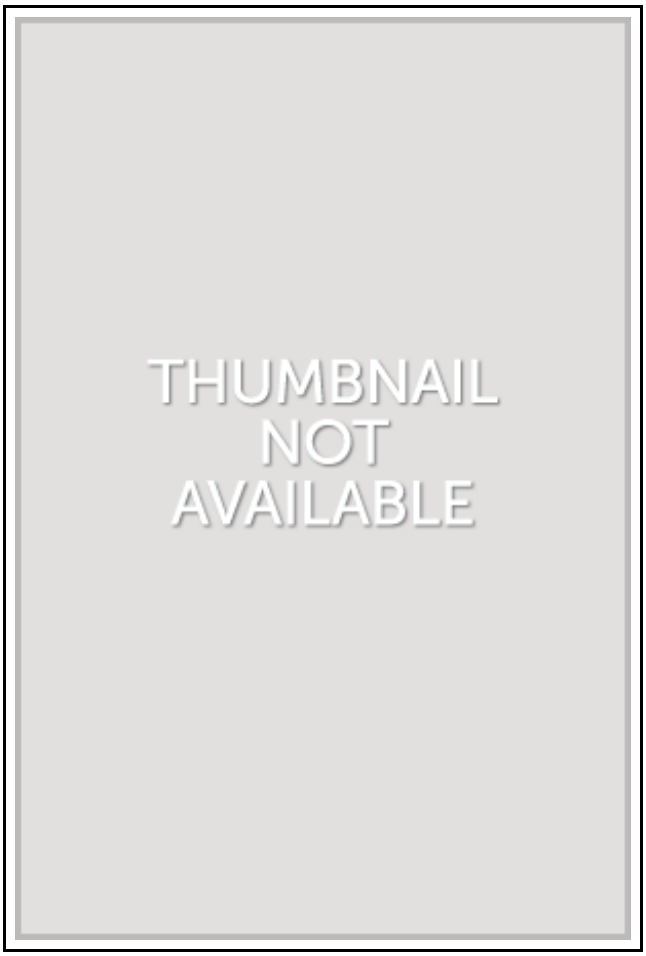
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Reviews

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HOW TO CATCH A ROBOT RAT: WHEN BIOLOGY INSPIRES INNOVATION (HARDBACK)

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MIT Press Ltd, United States, 2010. Hardback. Book Condition: New. New.. 231 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Humans have modeled their technology on nature for centuries. The inventor of paper was inspired by a wasp s nest; Brunelleschi demonstrated the principles of his famous dome with an egg; a Swiss company produced a wristwatch with an alarm modeled on the sound-producing capabilities of a cricket. Today, in the era of the new bionics, engineers aim to reproduce the speed and maneuverability of the red tuna in a submarine; cochlear implants send sound signals to the auditory nerve of a hearing-impaired person; and robots replicate a baby s cognitive development. How to Catch a Robot Rat examines past, present, and future attempts to apply the methods and systems found in nature to the design of objects and devices. The authors look at natural technology transfers : how the study of nature inspired technological breakthroughs--including the cricket-inspired watch; Velcro, which duplicates the prickly burrs of a burdock flower; and self-sharpening blades that are modeled on rats self-sharpening teeth. They examine autonomous robots that imitate animals and their behaviors--for example, the development of an unmanned microdrone that could fly like an albatross. And they describe hybrids of natural and artificial systems: neuroprostheses translating the thought of quadriplegics; and a nanorobot controlled by muscle cells. Some of the ideas described have outstripped technology s capacity to realize them; nature has had more than three billion years to perfect its designs, humankind not quite so long.

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