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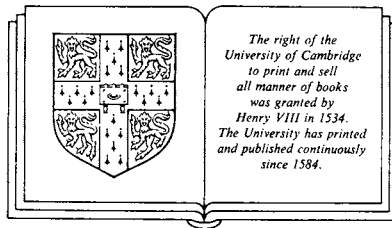
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Computer simulation in brain science

Edited by

RODNEY M. J. COTTERILL

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge

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Melbourne Sydney

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Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1988

First published 1988

British Library cataloguing in publication data

Computer simulation in brain science.

1. Brain 2. Computer simulation

I. Cotterill, Rodney M. J.

612'.82'0724 QP376

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Computer simulation in brain science.

Includes index.

1. Brain—Mathematical models. 2. Neural circuitry—
mathematical models. 3. Computer simulation.

I. Cotterill, Rodney, 1933– .[DNLM: 1. Brain—physiology.

2. Computer simulation. WL 300 C738]

QP376.C634 1988 612'82'0724 87-22430

ISBN 0 521 34179 5

Transferred to digital printing 2003

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PREFACE

There has recently been a marked increase in research activity regarding the structural and function of the brain. Much of this has been generated by the more general advances in biology, particularly at the molecular and microscopic levels, but it is probably fair to say that the stimulation has been due at least as much to recent advances in computer simulation. To accept this view does not mean that one is equating the brain to an electronic computer, of course; far from it, those involved in brain research have long since come to appreciate the considerable differences between the cerebral cortex and traditional computational hardware. But the computer is nevertheless a useful device in brain science, because it permits one to simulate processes which are difficult to monitor experimentally, and perhaps impossible to handle by theoretical analysis.

The articles in this book are written records of talks presented at a meeting held at the Gentofte Hotel, Copenhagen, during the three days August 20–22, 1986. They have been arranged in an order that places more general aspects of the subject towards the beginning, preceding those applications to specific facets of brain science which make up the balance of the book. The final chapters are devoted to a number of ramifications, including the design of experiments, communication and control.

The meeting could not have been held without the financial support generously donated by the Augustinus Foundation, the Carlsberg Foundation, the Mads Clausen (Danfoss) Foundation, the Danish Natural Science Research Council, the Hartmann Foundation, IBM, the Otto Mønsted Foundation, NORDITA, the NOVO Foundation, and SAS. It is a pleasure to thank these philanthropic bodies, on behalf of all those involved in the enterprise.

Thanks are also due to John Clark and Uwe an der Heiden, for their moral support, in general, and specifically for their help in arranging the programme for the three days of tightly packed sessions.

It is also a pleasure to acknowledge our indebtedness to Carolyn Hallinger, the conference secretary, and to Ove Broo Sørensen and Flemming Kragh for their support with a host of technical matters.

Rodney Cotterill