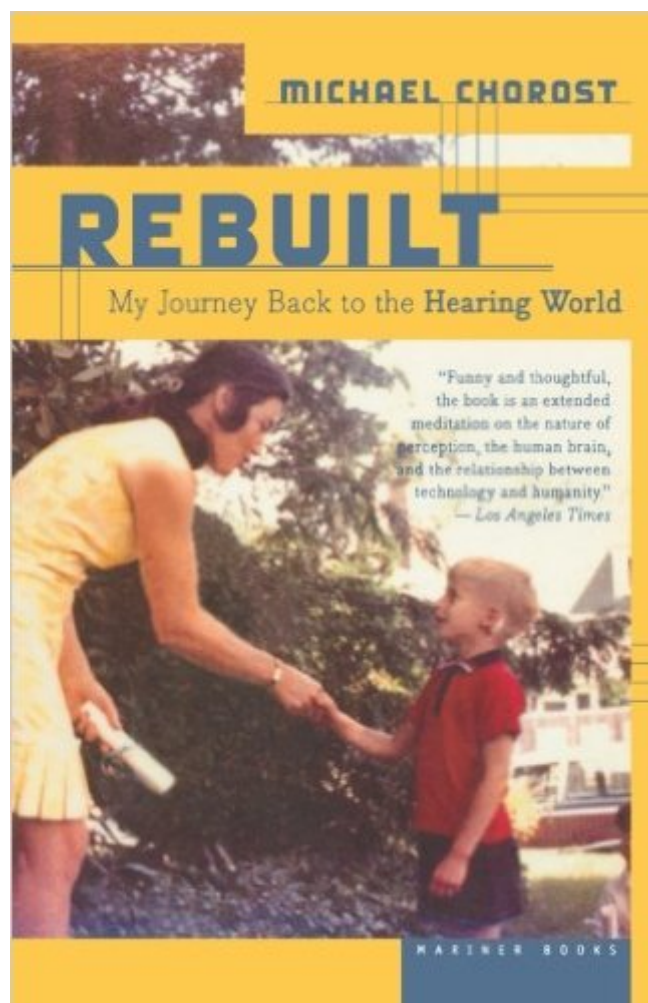


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# Rebuilt: My Journey Back To The Hearing World



## 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Cyborgs are familiar figures in science fiction. The term was coined in 1960 meaning "cybernetic organism", a living being who was a fusion of biological and computer parts. If you think we might eventually have cyborgs in the future, you are wrong; cyborgs walk among us now, and one has written an autobiography. In *\_Rebuilt: How Becoming Part Computer Made Me More Human\_* (Houghton Mifflin), Michael Chorost has described how an implanted computer has taken over his hearing and brought him better back to the world. It is a strange story; in one sense, it isn't unique because thousands of cochlear implants are in use now, but Chorost has a lifetime of deafness, a longstanding interest in computers, a background in literature, and a fine sense of humor that bring the story forward in a unique way. Chorost had had impaired hearing since childhood, and it gave

out entirely in 2001 when he was 36 years old. Because it was a problem within his inner ear and his auditory nerves themselves were intact, he was a candidate to get a cochlear implant. It is not a simple amplifier like a hearing aid is, but a direct stimulator of the nerves that go from the cochlea to the brain. He was distressed when it finally was turned on. "Everything sounds awful," he reports. There was a roaring sound, and everything else was muddy and incomprehensible. It got much better, and in strange ways that raise fascinating questions about sensation. For instance, the electrode array cannot stimulate the cochlea in the way it was used to, and there is a problem of frequency mismatch. A user perceives that the entire auditory spectrum is shifted into high; that was one reason that Chorost couldn't, that first day, tell a woman's voice from a man's. His own voice sounded too high, too.

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