

News

The Particle at the End of the Universe & Colliding Particles

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Abstract

This news is adapted from viXra log (<http://blog.vixra.org>) and reports a review of Sean Carroll's book "The Particle at the End of the Universe" and a shot film series about "Colliding Particles" featuring role played by bloggers.

Key Words: Higgs discovery, Sean Carroll, Colliding Particles.

December 3, 2012: [The Particle at the End of the Universe](#)

Somebody kindly offered me a review copy of Sean's book in the comments so to encourage others to do likewise I shall offer my opinion of "The Particle at the End of the Universe: The Hunt for the Higgs and the Discovery of a New World" by Sean Carroll.

The book I got was actually a virtual one which has the advantage of being searchable so the first thing I did was check to see if I got a mention. Apparently this blog (or rather its comments) turns out to be the place where the 125 GeV rumour first arrived on the internet. It is not what I would have chosen to be mentioned for but it's better than nothing I suppose.

After a year of Higgs madness that swamped the media there will be plenty of people wanting to read more about it, so Sean has done well to get this book out in time for Xmas with the full story (so far). There is an obvious list of questions about the boson that people would like to ask and Sean conveniently answers them all chapter by chapter. Sean has been answering these kinds of questions on blogs and usenet before blogs for a long time, so he is pretty good at it, but explaining what the Higgs boson is and does in general terms is notoriously difficult. Sean does his best with a mixture of analogies and more direct explanations. Whether he succeeds would have to be judged by someone who does not already know the answers but I think it would be hard to do much better than this book.

There were two chapters that I found especially interesting. The first was about the thorny question of the Nobel Prize for the Higgs. I compiled a list of contributions to the Higgs prediction a while back, but Sean goes one better by fleshing it out with the full story. It is very balanced and will be essential reading for the Nobel committee next year, but they will have to find their own solution to who gets the prize.

There is another side to the story of the Higgs discovery that sets it apart from previous discoveries in physics. It happened in the age of the blogs and social media. Sean is well placed to talk about the impact this had and his chapter about nit is the second one I liked a lot.

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So overall it is a very good book. Enjoy.

December 7, 2012: [Colliding Particles](#)

You may be familiar with the series "[colliding Particles](#)" of short films by Mike Paterson about the search for the Higgs boson covered from some unusual angles. After a break he is back adding some more. Number 10 is about the role played by bloggers (the good parts): <http://www.collidingparticles.com/>



If you have not already seen them take a look through the earlier ones. There are lots of very good explanations.

References

1. <http://blog.vixra.org/2012/12/03/the-particle-at-the-end-of-the-universe-review/>
2. <http://blog.vixra.org/2012/12/07/colliding-particles/>