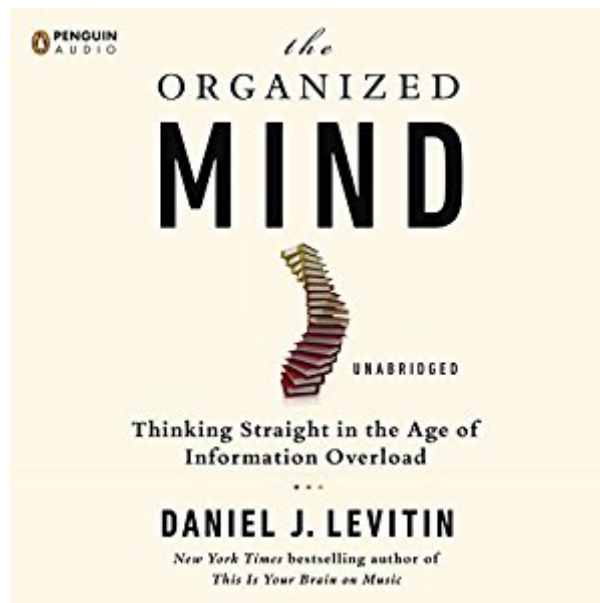




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# The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight In The Age Of Information Overload



## Synopsis

New York Times best-selling author and neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin shifts his keen insights from your brain on music to your brain in a sea of details. The information age is drowning us with an unprecedented deluge of data. At the same time, we're expected to make more - and faster - decisions about our lives than ever before. No wonder, then, that the average American reports frequently losing car keys or reading glasses, missing appointments, and feeling worn out by the effort required just to keep up. But somehow some people become quite accomplished at managing information flow. In *The Organized Mind*, Daniel J. Levitin, PhD, uses the latest brain science to demonstrate how those people excel - and how listeners can use their methods to regain a sense of mastery over the way they organize their homes, workplaces, and time. With lively, entertaining chapters on everything from the kitchen junk drawer to health care to executive office workflow, Levitin reveals how new research into the cognitive neuroscience of attention and memory can be applied to the challenges of our daily lives. *This Is Your Brain on Music* showed how to better play and appreciate music through an understanding of how the brain works. *The Organized Mind* shows how to navigate the churning flood of information in the 21st century with the same neuroscientific perspective.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Daniel Levitin's *ORGANIZED MIND* seeks to take the figurative junk drawer of our mind, explain how the mind works, and help us live more thought-out and productive lives. His knowledge comes from his own years of teaching and research and has been influenced by mind

pioneers such as Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. The end product is an awesome journey into the realms of our minds that enlighten and inspires action. This book is huge. At times Levitin may appear longwinded in his narrative but that's okay. Trust me. As he unravels the various layers of mental organization, he sidebars into various studies and interesting factoids. At first, you may think Levitin is being ironically unorganized, but later chapters tie it back together. Other times, Levitin may tuck in a brief statement that will cause you tunneling into Google for more information (though many notes for further study are linked at the rear of the book). Levitin differs himself from Kahneman's THINKING, FAST AND SLOW by saying there are four components in the human attentional system: mind wandering mode; central executive mode; attentional filter; and, attentional switch. What mostly comes into play are the first two components. I have some issue for the terminology "mind wandering mode"; I would have liked Levitin to expound more on mindfulness and what component it falls into. THE ORGANIZED MIND offers more explanation than step-by-step or bulleted technique. I appreciated this approach, feeling it strengthened the technique through knowledge of why it works. Levitin uses the ideas of offloading brain information through index cards, calendaring, contact sheets much like our mind uses random access memory versus chronological memory. Some of these techniques were explained in the books THE POWER OF FORGETTING and ESSENTIALISM, but not nearly in the depth of knowledge that Levitin offers. Category management is a huge topic throughout the book: reasonably so. It is one such tool that the recent FLUENT FOREVER book used in learning foreign languages. Levitin continues this insight into everything from organizing our homes to making life-dependent healthcare choices. Levitin combines it all together, showing how Highly Successful Persons (HSPs) are able to succeed by naturally using these strategies. I was pleased to see Levitin address the fundamental need for sleep, exercise, and exposing oneself to nature. These are not just "you should" statements, but as mentioned before, these are well-documented, scientifically-backed recommendations. There are also sections dealing with procrastination, crowdsourcing, the dangers of multi-tasking and teaching children safe web research, and much more. It all plays into more information than you'll want, but definitely will include any information you are trying to find or need. All-in-all, this is a great book that will make you think and learn better. Thanks to Dutton for sending this to me for review.

Levitin's topic is certainly a worthwhile one and he writes in an approachable style. I for one appreciated some of his references and personal stories. What's more, Levitin has done his homework. I'm all for citing the works of others, and Levitin extensively references the work of plenty of prominent researches writers. (More on that below.) At times, though, the book tends to wander. The Organized Mind doesn't read like a single text. It is part business book, part decision making book à la Thinking, Fast and Slow, part science/neurology book, and part self-help book. Sure, it's well written, but I would read twenty interesting pages on how the brain works only to get back to where he left off before. I was left wondering if less would have been more. That is, would a shorter but more focused book worked better? I suspect that the answer is yes. There's nothing wrong with The Organized Mind. It's enjoyable enough. I'd stop short of calling it a must-read, though. This goes double if you're caught up on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Daniel Kahneman, Daniel Gilbert, and Dan Ariely. Rating: 3.5/5 stars

I think there is a cynical trend in publishing that goes like this: (1) identify a topic that is a real problem (2) reference new scientific discoveries (3) drone on and on to make it into a book as that's the most effective monetization strategy. This book is a prime example. If you're looking for practical advice, look away. Levitin punishes you with a meandering and excruciatingly boring take on 'recent scientific discovers'. If you hang on and take your medicine, you're rewarded with the meagerest of unhelpful tips. For todo list management he suggests "you might want to try index cards!" On the practical stuff, I think Levitin would have you read David Allen, who he mentions in worshipful tones. On the science, while probably accurate, he's not worth reading. I wrote this review because I truly think it's a travesty that this is (currently) a #1 bestseller on . The species is sagging.

Really informative. If you want personal advice that isn't filled with buzzwords but is instead backed by scientific research and real world examples this book delivers. I always like it when a writer can deliver hard scientific information in an easily digestible way that doesn't water down the factual information or skimp on it's depth.

The catchphrase in the title which intrigued me to read the book. It was an informative read. Highly recommend it for those seeking organizational techniques in different structures and environments

I really enjoyed this book. There are so many great pearls and ideas embedded in it. It's more

academic than self improvement so that's something to keep in mind. The only reservation I had about this book was that it is way too detailed in certain areas, and he will go on and on about some idea/ topic and it can get a little tiresome. But overall I really enjoyed it from psych/evolutionary/cognitive point of view.

Have not yet finished reading the book, but am avidly devouring it. So clear, straightforward, simple - and learned. I have already started organizing my own life on the basis of what I am learning through this book. Seems in a way acquainted with Kahneman's Thinking fast and slow, like a very nice and helpful "friend" wanting to guide me/us along in this new and very complicated universe.

Great read. Much broader in content than I originally thought. It works it's way up from various ways that humanity has organized itself, to those organizational centers in the brain, and back down. Highly recommend it.

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