

## Acknowledgments

I am most grateful to the organizations who have supported me while this book gestated: the Royal Society and Darwin College who gave me a fantastic research fellowship in the early years; the University of Cambridge; the Keck Centre at the University of California in San Francisco, where I spent a productive sabbatical; and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, whose support gave me the freedom to break out of the Escher staircase that book-writing had become.

My work has depended on the generosity of free software authors. I wrote the book in  $\text{\LaTeX} 2_{\epsilon}$ . Three cheers for Donald Knuth and Leslie Lamport! Our computers run the GNU/Linux operating system. I use `emacs`, `perl`, and `gnuplot` every day. Thank you Richard Stallman, thank you Linus Torvalds, thank you everyone.

Many readers, too numerous to name here, have given feedback on the book, and to them all I extend my sincere acknowledgments. I especially wish to thank all the students and colleagues at Cambridge University who have attended my lectures on information theory and machine learning over the last nine years.

The members of the Inference research group have given immense support, and I thank them all for their generosity and patience over the last ten years: Mark Gibbs, Michelle Povinelli, Simon Wilson, Coryn Bailer-Jones, Matthew Davey, Katriona Macphee, James Miskin, David Ward, Edward Ratzner, Seb Wills, John Barry, John Winn, Phil Cowans, Hanna Wallach, Matthew Garrett, and especially Sanjoy Mahajan. Thank you too to Graeme Mitchison, Mike Cates, and Davin Yap.

Finally I would like to express my debt to my personal heroes, the mentors from whom I have learned so much: Yaser Abu-Mostafa, Andrew Blake, John Bridle, Peter Cheeseman, Steve Gull, Geoff Hinton, John Hopfield, Steve Luttrell, Robert MacKay, Bob McEliece, Radford Neal, Roger Sewell, and John Skilling.

---

## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to the campaign against the arms trade.

[www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

Peace cannot be kept by force.  
It can only be achieved through understanding.  
– *Albert Einstein*

---