
Max S. Bennett

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Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=6eNaCEEAAAAJ>

EDUCATION

MS, Computer Science, *Columbia University*, 2026. GPA: 4.18 / 4.0

BA, Economics and Mathematics, *Washington University in St. Louis*, 2012, *Summa Cum Laude*.
Distinction in Economics. Deans list all eligible terms. GPA: 3.90 / 4.0

PUBLICATIONS

Total citations: 146

H-index: 5

Books

- **“A Brief History of Intelligence: Evolution, AI, and The Five Breakthroughs That Made Our Brains.”**

Max S. Bennett. *Mariner*, 2023.

Translated to 10+ languages. Cited in 51 peer reviewed papers as of December 2025.

Select endorsements:

- **Richard Sutton**: “I’ve studied intelligence all my long life, yet still I feel I learned important things about intelligence by reading this book. Thank you, Max Bennett”
- **Nando de Freitas** (VP of AI at Microsoft AI, Senior AI director at DeepMind, professor of Computer Science at Oxford): “By far the best non-technical Natural and Artificial Intelligence book anyone could read. This comprehensive, well-researched, crisply clear, sharply focused and illuminating book is a thing of beauty. It is the book I wish I had when I started my AI career 30 years ago”
- **Dileep George** (DeepMind, cofounder of Vicarious AI, Stanford PhD in Computer Science): “If you are interested in understanding brains or in building human-like general AI, you should read this book.”
- **Daniel Kahneman** (Winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics): “I found this book amazing. I read it through quickly because it was so interesting, then turned around and read much of it again.”
- **Karl Friston** (University College London, #1 most-cited neuroscientist in the world): “This book discloses everything you always wanted to know about the brain (but were afraid to ask). It is an incredible resource. The synthesis works perfectly. Its coherence obscures the almost encyclopedic reach of this treatment.”

Preprints

- **“Tell Me What To Learn: Generalizing Neural Memory to be Controllable in Natural Language.”**

Max S. Bennett, Tom Zollo, Rich Zemel. *ArXiv preprint*.

Expected posting to ArXiv in January 2026; plan to submit to ICML 2026.

Peer reviewed papers

- **“Five Breakthroughs: A First Approximation of Brain Evolution From Early Bilaterians to Humans.”**
Max S. Bennett. *Frontiers in Neuroanatomy*, 2021. doi:10.3389/fnana.2021.693346
- **“What Behavioral Abilities Emerged at Key Milestones in Human Brain Evolution? 13 Hypotheses on the 600-Million-Year Phylogenetic History of Human Intelligence.”**
Max S. Bennett. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2021. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.685853
- **“The Thalamus as a Blackboard for Perception and Planning.”**
Robert Worden, Max S. Bennett, Vlad Neacsu. *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience*, 2021. doi:10.3389/fnbeh.2021.633872
- **“An Attempt at a Unified Theory of the Neocortical Microcircuit in Sensory Cortex.”**
Max S. Bennett. *Frontiers in Neural Circuits*, 2020. doi:10.3389/fncir.2020.00040

SELECT INVITED ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- **Invited keynote presentation:** “The Five ‘Breakthroughs’ in The 600-Million-Year Evolution of Human Intelligence,” *Computational and Systems Neuroscience (Cosyne)*. Montreal 2024
 - Cosyne is regarded as the most prestigious computational neuroscience academic conference in the world. Draws over 1,000 researchers annually.
- **Invited oral presentation:** “How NeuroAI Can Benefit From Evolutionary Neuroscience,” *From Neuroscience to Artificially Intelligence Systems (NAISys)*. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, 2024
- **Invited oral presentation:** “The Evolution of Human Intelligence: Why It Matters and What it Teaches Us About Ourselves, Neuroscience, and AI ,” *Goldlab Symposium*. University of Colorado – Boulder, 2024

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Co-Founder & Chief Product Officer, Bluecore

2013–2021; 2024–Present

- Led technical strategy for large-scale machine learning systems used by thousands of ecommerce companies.

- Designed and evaluated over 20 production ML models, including recommender systems, user-affinity and intent models, and predictive classifiers operating across billions of events.
- Set modeling direction by assessing feasibility, robustness, and tradeoffs between model complexity and operational reliability.
- Oversaw deployment of ML products used by ~25% of the largest U.S. ecommerce companies (including Nike, Under Armour, and CVS).
- Grew company from founding to ~400 employees and ~\$80M annual revenue; raised \$225M in venture capital.
- Company awards: Deloitte 2019 Technology Fast 500 (#77/500), Inc 500 Fastest Growing Companies in US 2018 (#241/500), Fortune 60 Best Places To Work in NYC 2019 (#17/60), Glassdoor Best Places To Work in US 2018 (#41/50).

Co-Founder & CEO, Alby AI

2022–2024

- Built an AI agent platform enabling large enterprises to deploy production conversational AI agents.
- Designed RAG-based pipelines and agent architectures used in real-world customer interactions.
- Alby-built agents have been used by over 25 million consumers across multiple Fortune 500 companies, including Wayfair and QVC.
- Company acquired by Bluecore in 2024 for \$25M.

Board Member, Thousand Brains Project

2025–Present

- One of six board members for the Thousand Brains Project, an organization focused on reverse-engineering neocortical intelligence.
- Participate in strategic discussions on research direction at the intersection of neuroscience and artificial intelligence.
- Organization funded primarily by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

ML RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Collaboration with Rich Zemel and Tom Zollo on controllable neural memory and continual learning in transformer-based language models.
- Designed and implemented novel neural memory mechanisms; built custom training and evaluation pipelines in PyTorch.
- Results in preparation for ICML 2026 submission; preprint forthcoming on arXiv.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Programming: Python, C#

- ML & Scientific Computing: PyTorch, Torchmetrics, Matplotlib.
- AI: Transformers, agent frameworks, continual learning, neural memory, RAG.
- Systems: Distributed training and inference with DDP.
- Tools: Git, DVC, Weights & Biases, Hugging Face.

AWARDS & HONORS

- John M Olin Prize For Excellence in Economics. *Washington University in St. Louis*. (2012)
- Omicron Delta Epsilon Economics Honors Society. *Washington University in St. Louis*. (2012)
- Forbes 30 under 30. *Forbes Magazine*. (2017)

PATENTS

- **“Smart campaign with autopilot features”**
Estes, B., Tunnell, A., Papa, S., Bennett, M., Hou, J., Fraioli, F., Chau, C., Shah, B., Karam, Z., s.
United States Patent No. 11847671B2, Dec 19, 2023. Assigned to Bluecore, Inc.
- **“Automatic frequency capping.”**
Knodel, G., Collet, S., Huang, C., Karam, Z., Estes, B., Bennett, M.,
United States Patent No. 11270340, Mar 8, 2022. Assigned to Bluecore, Inc.
- **“Experience optimization.”**
Collet, S., Karam, Z., Knodel, G., Hurwitz, M., Leung, V., Shah, B., Tunnell, A., Bennett, M., Estes, B.,
United States Patent No. 11238502, Feb 1, 2022. Assigned to Bluecore, Inc

EXTRACURRICULARS

- Public Speaking: have done frequent public speaking engagements
- Musical Composing: have composed original works of jazz
- Video Game Development: Unity development and C# programming
- Improv Comedy: performance and long-form improvisation