ALEPHTALKS
606 Post Road East, Suite 667, Westport, CT 06880

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
30 October 2026

A Bell Labs scientist spent a career finding where other fields looked in the wrong place. Then he audited himself and found 121 errors.

Not Where You Looked: Lessons from a Life in Science, by Barton Stuck, is published in two editions: the Full Edition in three paperback volumes and one e-book, and a one-volume Reader's Edition in paperback and e-book.

WESTPORT, Conn., 30 October 2026 — AlephTalks today published *Not Where You Looked: Lessons from a Life in Science*, a memoir organised as an argument by Barton Stuck, a former Member of Technical Staff at Bell Laboratories. Across mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, the book shows the same thing happening again and again: **the structure a discipline is looking for turns out not to be in the object it is looking in.**

Then the book does what few books do. In its final part, Stuck turns the same test on his own published work — a 1985 textbook and four refereed papers — and prints every error he finds, **121 in all, 57 of them substantive**, with the arithmetic. A closing chapter then audits the audit and records the mistakes made while finding the others.

WHY READ IT

Because most hard problems are hard for a reason nobody wrote down. The book's claim is that the decisive results in science are facts about *kinds*, not about effort. Something turns out to be impossible, forced or invisible because of what sort of object it is, and no amount of money, data or computing moves it.

The book makes that claim nine times over, each time with a worked case:

- More data does not settle a question when the data has no variance to estimate.
- A molecule's shape is not in the equation that governs the molecule.
- The pattern of a developing embryo is not in its genes.
- The errors in a textbook are not where the author was careless. They are where nothing downstream ever read the number.

It also tells you which good stories are not true. Several famous anecdotes turn out, on checking, to be unsupported: Gauss measuring a mountain triangle to test geometry, the Alhambra containing all seventeen wallpaper symmetry groups, Hilbert's half of the Hilbert–Pólya conjecture. Stuck believed each of them and keeps each in the book with its correction attached.

And it is written by someone with standing to make the argument. Stuck spent twelve years at Bell Labs and four decades in network analysis, consulting and venture capital. One of his papers, on simulating random variables, has been cited more than 1,500 times.

WHAT IS NEW

1. **An author who audits himself, in public, with the arithmetic.** Part VIII applies the book's test to Stuck's own 1985 performance-analysis textbook and four of his refereed papers. It finds 121 errors, 57 substantive, each recomputed and listed.
2. **A finding about where errors live.** Four regions of the textbook, audited to the same depth, returned 14, 12, 13 and 11 substantive errors. The yield was flat wherever he looked, including the place he was sure it would not be. An earlier, more dramatic finding that the errors clustered in one place is printed and then withdrawn, with the reason.
3. **An audit of the audit.** A final chapter records the errors made while producing the catalogue. They include a check that could not have failed and therefore proved nothing, a failure most reviewers never test for.
4. **Nothing is quoted that was not recomputed.** Every computed claim comes from a named script listed in the colophon. Where a published number did not reproduce, including the author's own, the disagreement is printed rather than smoothed over.
5. **Every chapter grades itself.** Each one sorts its claims into what is proven, what is open, and what is the author's interpretation. A closing table says what evidence would change each claim.
6. **Current to October 2026.** The chemistry chapters take in the 2026 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, awarded to Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai for how molecules come to be of one hand. The mathematics draws on a March 2026 Bourbaki report.

WHAT IS USEFUL

Two questions any reader can take to their own work: *Is the difficulty in the problem, or in how the problem was posed?* and *Could this check have failed?* No chapter assumes the one before it, so readers can start in their own field.

If you work in	Start at	What you get
Engineering, networks, computing	Part III, *Ceilings That Are Theorems*	Limits that no budget, data set or computer can move, and how to tell one before you spend on it
Statistics, data science	Chapter 11, *How Much Data Would Settle It*	Why a bigger sample cannot answer some questions, worked from real telephone-line noise data
Physics	Parts II and V	What symmetry does and does not buy you, and what is actually claimed about the stage physics happens on
Mathematics	Part IV, *Space as a Choice of Type*	Euclid's fifth postulate, topology, the seventeen wallpaper groups, the primes, Langlands
Chemistry	Part VI, *The Shape Is Not in the Equation*	Molecular shape, handedness, symmetry rules and the periodic table
Biology	Part VII, *The Form Is Not in the Gene*	Where the pattern of a living thing actually lives, if not in the genome or the wiring

If you work in	Start at	What you get
Reviewing, editing, managing technical work	Part VIII	Where errors hide in published work, and how a check can pass without testing anything

EDITIONS AND FORMATS

Two editions, each in paperback and e-book. The Full Edition carries every chapter at full length with its derivations and sources, about 270,000 words, in three paperback volumes or a single e-book. The Reader's Edition gives every chapter in short form, about 62,000 words, with the derivations set apart in ruled boxes and the full corrections register kept.

Edition	Format	Pages / trim	ISBN-13	Price (US)
Full Edition, Volume I: *Where the Instrument Came From* Parts I–II and Chapter 11	Paperback	232 pp, 6 × 9 in	979-8-953713-03-0	$29.95
Full Edition, Volume II: *Ceilings, and the Shape of Space* Chapters 12–25	Paperback	268 pp, 6 × 9 in	979-8-953713-06-1	$29.95
Full Edition, Volume III: *The Arena, and the Instrument Turned Around* Parts V–VIII, with the full corrections register	Paperback	302 pp, 6 × 9 in	979-8-953713-05-4	$29.95
Full Edition, all three volumes Everything above in one file	E-book (EPUB)	—	979-8-953713-02-3	$29.95
Reader's Edition All 37 chapters and Part VIII in short form	Paperback	222 pp, 8.5 × 11 in	979-8-953713-01-6	$24.95
Reader's Edition The same, as an e-book	E-book (EPUB)	—	979-8-953713-00-9	$9.99

Published 30 October 2026. Available from Amazon.

FROM THE AUTHOR

On where the book began, with a suggestion from a member of his MIT doctoral committee in 1970:

> *"The assignment was one clause long. I have spent fifty-six years finding out what was inside it, and the last of it came out while writing this book."*

On why the book ends by auditing him:

> *"A method which only catches other people's overreach is not a method."*
>
> *"It is not a comfortable way to end a book, and it is the only honest one."*

On the stories he had to correct:

> *"Each of those is a thing I believed."*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barton Stuck received the SBEE, SMEE, EE and ScD degrees from MIT. From 1972 to 1984 he was a Member of Technical Staff at Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill. He has lectured at more than fifty institutions in North America, Western Europe, the Soviet Union and Japan, published over thirty refereed articles, and chaired IEEE INFOCOM. From 1984 he undertook more than 450 consulting engagements for venture funds and telecommunications carriers, and from 1998 he worked in venture capital. In 1990 he helped produce a ten-year strategic network plan for South Korea. He is co-author of the 1985 textbook *A Computer and Communications Network Performance Analysis Primer*. Since 2020 he has made AlephTalks with Marjorie Partch.

ABOUT ALEPHTALKS

AlephTalks publishes educational talks and books on philosophy, science, theology, mathematics and the arts. It is based in Westport, Connecticut. alephtalks.com

MEDIA CONTACT

Barton Stuck, AlephTalks
606 Post Road East, Suite 667, Westport, CT 06880
bartstuck@gmail.com · alephtalks.com

Review copies are available in PDF and EPUB on request. The author is available for interviews.

###

Fact sheet for editors

Not Where You Looked: Lessons from a Life in Science

Title	*Not Where You Looked: Lessons from a Life in Science*
Author	Barton Stuck
Publisher	AlephTalks, Westport, Connecticut
Publication date	30 October 2026
Edition	First edition, 2026
Formats	Full Edition in three paperback volumes and one e-book; Reader's Edition in paperback and e-book
ISBN-13	Full Edition, Vol. I (paperback) 979-8-953713-03-0 Full Edition, Vol. II (paperback) 979-8-953713-06-1 Full Edition, Vol. III (paperback) 979-8-953713-05-4 Full Edition (e-book) 979-8-953713-02-3 Reader's Edition (paperback) 979-8-953713-01-6 Reader's Edition (e-book) 979-8-953713-00-9
Price (US)	Full Edition, each paperback volume $29.95 Full Edition (e-book) $29.95 Reader's Edition (paperback) $24.95 Reader's Edition (e-book) $9.99
Subjects	Science, philosophy of science, mathematical physics, memoir
Span	1964 to 2026
Structure	Eight parts, 37 numbered chapters, two part codas, four Part VIII chapters
Length	Full Edition about 270,000 words; Reader's Edition about 62,000 words
Corrections register	121 items, 57 substantive, printed in full in Full Edition Volume III and in the Reader's Edition
Reading level	Technical readers; each chapter needs at most one field's background