

One mouse's brain provided largest neural network yet mapped

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Once upon a time, there was a little black mouse. When he was nine months old, he died.

After that, some men and women scooped out his tiny brain and sliced it into slices thinner than a whisker. Over the next few years, the men and women looked at all the slices very, very closely. Some of the parts, they realized, connected to other parts. And the men and women published what they saw in a journal. With pretty pictures.

This is the true story of that brain. It's part of the drive toward connecting the brain's structure to its function—a quest for which a lot of mice have died. But *this* brain—specifically, a 450-by-450-by-150 micrometer chunk of visual cortex—is the subject of what its researchers say is the largest network of neural connections ever mapped. (Yes, that's what passes for a large brain map right now.)

Clay Reid and his collaborators at Harvard and the Allen Institute of Brain Science have been obsessing over *the one's* brain for years. Three dozen people used two very different techniques to trace the paths of 1,278 connected neurons, and connect those traces to the neurons' spikes when they're processing visual information. In the long term, putting those two types of data together will help researchers understand how the brain is organized and why.

Read full, original post: [The Nameless Mouse Behind The Largest-Ever Neural Network](#)