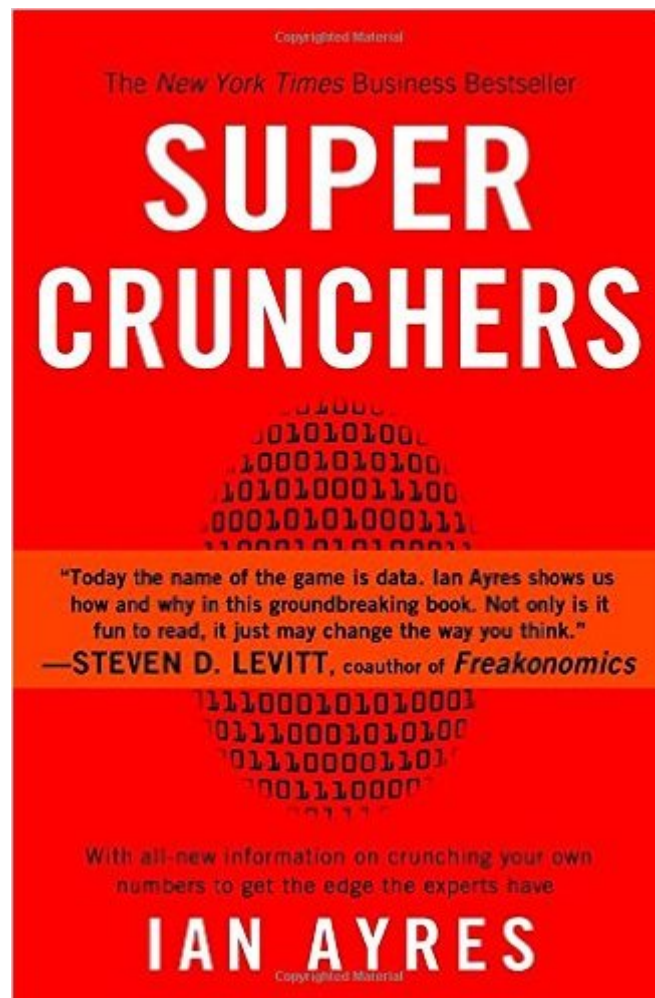




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Super Crunchers: Why Thinking-By-Numbers Is The New Way To Be Smart



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Synopsis

An international sensation—and still the talk of the relevant blogosphere—this Wall Street Journal and New York Times business bestseller examines the “power” in numbers. Today more than ever, number crunching affects your life in ways you might not even imagine. Intuition and experience are no longer enough to make the grade. In order to succeed—even survive—in our data-based world, you need to become statistically literate. Cutting-edge organizations are already crunching increasingly larger databases to find the unseen connections among seemingly unconnected things to predict human behavior with staggeringly accurate results. From Internet sites like Google and that use filters to keep track of your tastes and your purchasing history, to insurance companies and government agencies that every day make decisions affecting your life, the brave new world of the super crunchers is happening right now. No one who wants to stay ahead of the curve should make another keystroke without reading Ian Ayres’s engrossing and enlightening book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Yale Law School professor and econometrician Ayres argues in this lively and enjoyable book that the recent creation of huge data sets allows knowledgeable individuals to make previously impossible predictions. He calls the data set analysts super crunchers and discusses the changes they’re making to industries like medical diagnostics, air travel pricing, screenwriting and online dating services. Although Ayres presents both sides of this revolution, explaining how the corporate

world tries to manipulate consumer behavior and telling consumers how to fight back, his real mission is to educate readers about the basics of statistics and hypothesis testing, spending most of his time in an edifying and entertaining discussion of the use of regression and randomization trials. He frequently asks whether statistical methods are more accurate than the more intuitive conclusions drawn by experts, and consistently concludes that they are. Ayres skillfully demonstrates the importance that statistical literacy can play in our lives, especially now that technology permits it to occur on a scale never before imagined. (Sept. 4) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"In the past, one could get by on intuition and experience. Times have changed. Today, the name of the game is data. Ian Ayres shows us how and why in this groundbreaking book *Super Crunchers*. Not only is it fun to read, it just may change the way you think." — Steven D. Levitt, author of *Freakonomics*

"Data-mining and statistical analysis have suddenly become cool.... Dissecting marketing, politics, and even sports, stuff this complex and important shouldn't be this much fun to read." — *Wired*

"[Ayres's] thesis is provocative: Complex statistical models could be used to market products more intelligently, craft better movies, and solve health-care problems — if only we could get past our statistics phobia." — *Portfolio*

"When statistics conflict with expert opinion, bet on statistics.... Businesses, consumers, and governments are waking up to the power of analyzing enormous tracts of information." — *Discover*

"*Super Crunchers* shows that data-driven decisionmaking is not just revolutionizing baseball and business; it's changing the way that education policy, health care reimbursements, even tax regulations are crafted. *Super Crunching* is truly reinventing government. Politicians love to tout policy proposals, but they rarely come back and tell you which ones succeeded and which ones failed. Data-driven policy making forces government to ask the bottom line question of 'What works.' That's an approach we can all support." — John Podesta, President of the Center for American Progress

"A lively and yet rigorously careful account of the use of quantitative methods for analysis and decision-making.... Both social scientists and businessmen can profit from this book, while enjoying themselves in the process." — Dr. Kenneth Arrow, Nobel Prize winning economist, and Professor Emeritus at Stanford University

"Ayres's point is that human beings put far too much faith in their intuition and would often be better off listening to the numbers.... The best stories in the book are about Ayres and other economists he knows, whether they are studying wine, the Supreme Court or jobless benefits.... Ayres himself is one of the [statistical] detectives. He

has done fascinating research. • The New York Times Book Review "Ian Ayres [is] a law-and-economics guru." • Chronicle of Higher Education "Lively and enjoyable.... Ayres skillfully demonstrates the importance that statistical literacy can play in our lives, especially now that technology permits it to occur on a scale never before imagined.... Edifying and entertaining." • Publishers Weekly "Super Crunchers presents a convincing and disturbing vision of a future in which everyday decision-making is increasingly automated, and the role of human judgment restricted to providing input to formulae." • The Economist "Insightful and delightful!" • Forbes From the Hardcover edition.

As an open source consultant getting into the Big Data and Analytics-field, this books was an inspirational read about how "thinking by the numbers" really is the new way to be smart, and with hands-on examples about how bad things can go when we leave the decisions to our own device. You won't find anything ground breaking stuff here, but I can assure you that you will find the nuts and bolts of analysis, backed up with stories from the real life. It is an easy read who also gives you a few pointers as to what other literature to read. I can highly recommend it.

"Tried and True" vs Innovative "Rule of Thumb" vs Scientific Method "Gut Hunch" vs Verifiable Methodology If you are on the left side of each of these pairs - read this to see why "the other side" can be very helpful. If you are on the right side of each of these pairs - read this to see why maybe "vs" should at least be "and" - using scientific method and techniques to quantify or revise the best guesses of "the experts" - combining factors that the experts consider in ways that produce repeatable and verifiable results - from baseball to wine and farther afield.

Despite being nearly a decade old now, it's a great book for a general background in the world of big data. Interesting to see how things have changes since then. For example a TB is not nearly as impressive as it was when this book came out!

I am not a statistician but I found this book very enlightening if not, at time, disconcerting. While Super Crunching is here to stay it is frightening what is known about each individual.

Interesting

I thought this book was interesting. It begins by basically explaining number crunching and then

shows a bunch of examples of number crunching and the different ways you can use it. All-in-all, I thought this book was okay. Interesting, but not great.

This book provided for me critical, foundational background knowledge as I researched for and wrote my book (on the topic of predictive analytics). This book is an inspiration, and one of a small number of must-reads I heartily urge all creators and thinkers to pack for your next flight! Eric Siegel, Ph.D. Founder, Predictive Analytics World Author, [...]

Great book with lots of examples of real world applications. Not enough explanation of the math, but it does encourage the individual to seek more information

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