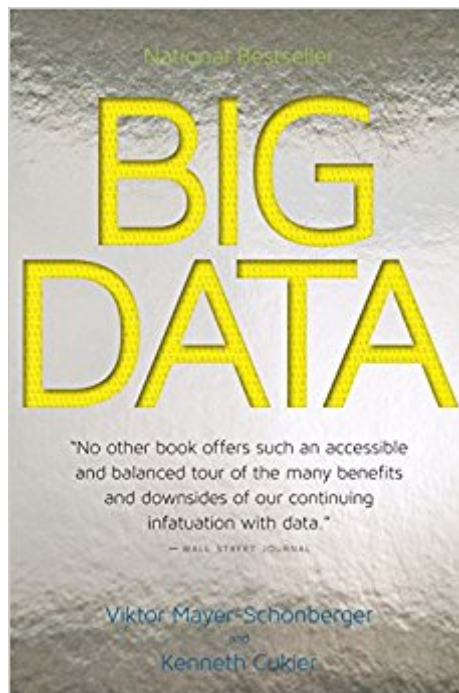


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# Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, And Think



## Synopsis

Financial Times Business Book of the Year Finalist • Illuminating and very timely . . . a fascinating and sometimes alarming survey of big data's growing effect on just about everything: business, government, science and medicine, privacy, and even on the way we think. • "New York Times" It seems like "big data" is in the news every day, as we read the latest examples of how powerful algorithms are teasing out the hidden connections between seemingly unrelated things. Whether it is used by the NSA to fight terrorism or by online retailers to predict customers' buying patterns, big data is a revolution occurring around us, in the process of forever changing economics, science, culture, and the very way we think. But it also poses new threats, from the end of privacy as we know it to the prospect of being penalized for things we haven't even done yet, based on big data's ability to predict our future behavior. What we have already seen is just the tip of the iceberg. Big Data is the first major book about this earthshaking subject, with two leading experts explaining what big data is, how it will change our lives, and what we can do to protect ourselves from its hazards. • "An optimistic and practical look at the Big Data revolution" just the thing to get your head around the big changes already underway and the bigger changes to come. • "Cory Doctorow, boingboing.com"

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The book opens by relating how Google, on its own initiative, devised a means to track the spread and intensity of flu prior to the 2009 flu season. Their methodology began by comparing the 50

million most common American search terms with CDC data on the spread of seasonal flu between 2003 and 2008. Google's software found a combination of search terms that, appropriately weighted, strongly correlated with official data. However, unlike the CDC, Google was able to make those assessments in real time, not a week or two later. Oren Etzioni, frustrated to learn that many passengers booking a flight after he had, were able to pay less - contrary to conventional wisdom. He then 'scraped' information from a travel website from a 41-day period to forecast whether a price was a good deal or not, founding Farecast to offer this new ability. Etzioni next went on to improve the system by digesting data from a travel site that covered most American commercial routes for a year - nearly 200 billion flight-price records. Before expanding to hotel rooms, concert tickets and used cars, Microsoft snapped up his firm (\$110 million) and incorporated it into Bing. New processing technologies like open-source Hadoop allow managing far larger quantities of data. Hadoop uses a computational paradigm named MapReduce (by Google) to divide an application into many small fragments, each of which may be executed on any computer node in a cluster. Visa was able to reduce processing time for two years worth of data (73 billion transactions) from 1 month to 13 minutes using Hadoop. The authors define 'big data' as things that can be done on a large scale that cannot be done on a smaller one, and see it as offering a major transformation.

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