



Uberland by Alex Rosenblatt

Think you might want to read this book?

Alex Rosenblatt took 400 Uber rides in the U.S. and Canada, rode over 5,000 miles, interviewed 125 drivers, and analyzed driver data for nearly four years to collect data for *Uberland*. She masterfully analyzes that data to drive home two main points: 1- Uber escapes major protection regulation by operating under the premise that it's a technology company and both drivers and riders are simply consumers of their app and 2- algorithms aren't just exposing us to goods/ideas we may be interested in, but are also being used in ways that unknowingly cost us money (e.g. Orbitz charging those who use a Mac more) and time (e.g., Are we sure Google Maps doesn't send us on a longer route so they can fill traffic data voids?). *Uberland* is a great read for anyone interested in how data/algorithms are being used to change the world we live in. It is also fun to extrapolate what algorithms could mean for more efficient leading and more dynamic learning.

What would Socrates ask?

- Should teachers, parents and students all have equal access to content and assessments?
- When building out learning experiences, are we focusing on student, parent or teacher ideas of what learning should look like?
- Does the collaborative nature of organizations like Folio, Mastery Transcript Consortium, One Schoolhouse, etc., mean that we are heading towards a digitally linked and more uniform experience for all students?
- Are there unhealthy remnants of previous educational models that are being embedded in new educational platforms?
- How do we set up learning environments where sharing work is the norm?
- What if we used algorithms to align teacher strengths with student needs within a school, city, region, nation or globally?
- What if we leveraged technology to meet the needs of advanced students as well as those who need remediation?
- What are the ways teachers can build strong relationships with students via digital learning experiences?
- What if students aimed for different levels of understanding in each subject—maybe comprehension, proficiency or mastery?
- How can algorithms create seamless learning experiences across disciplines and over time?

- Are teachers who deliver/support content via an online platform connected to the teaching experience in a similar way to classroom teachers?
- What if algorithms were used to keep students constantly at their Zone of Proximal Development?
- What if there were schools that provided free space and curriculum and only charged for feedback and assigning credit?
- What if we reported out on time spent and modalities of learning used in addition to traditional grades?
- What if we leveraged technology to give students immediate, consistent, and anonymous feedback on all of their work?
- How should schools get students ready for the sharing/collaborative economy?
- How can we use algorithms to connect students with mentors, teachers, professionals and craftspeople from around the world?

Research

- Services through online intermediaries (Uber, TaskRabbit, etc.) accounted for 0.5% of all workers in 2015.

Concepts

- A myth of the gig economy is that it's easy to piece together two or three part-time jobs and match the money and benefits of a salaried full-time job.
- There is a trend where new Uber drivers are happy, but become dissatisfied over time.
- Exploitation is becoming embedded in the ways we use technology.

Quotes from the author

- "Uber maintains that it is not a taxi company- it's a technology company that uses neutral algorithms to merely facilitate connections between consumers and drivers."
- "Technology in the sharing or gig economy is framed as an intervention in the declining pathways toward upward class mobility."
- "Uber is a chameleon: it becomes what it needs to be at different times, in different places."
- "Silicon Valley spins algorithmic management as being neutral, yet we've now seen why this claim is not true."

Quotes from others

- “The reality is that the United States now has probably the lowest degree of social mobility among the rich countries. And if you are born poor, guess where you’re going to end up- poor.” - Philip Alston
- “In the new collaborative economy, sharing and networking assets, like platforms, car seats and bedrooms, will always deliver more value faster. - Robin Chase
- “Some of the World’s Largest Employers No Longer Sell Things, They Rent Workers.” - Wall Street Journal

Organizations/school working on answers

- [Knewton](#)

Gateways to further learning

- [How Adaptive Learning is transforming teaching and learning](#)
- [Outsmarting the Machine: Redesigning Education to make Students, Teachers relevant in the Algorithm Age](#)

The applicability of this book to education is ...



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