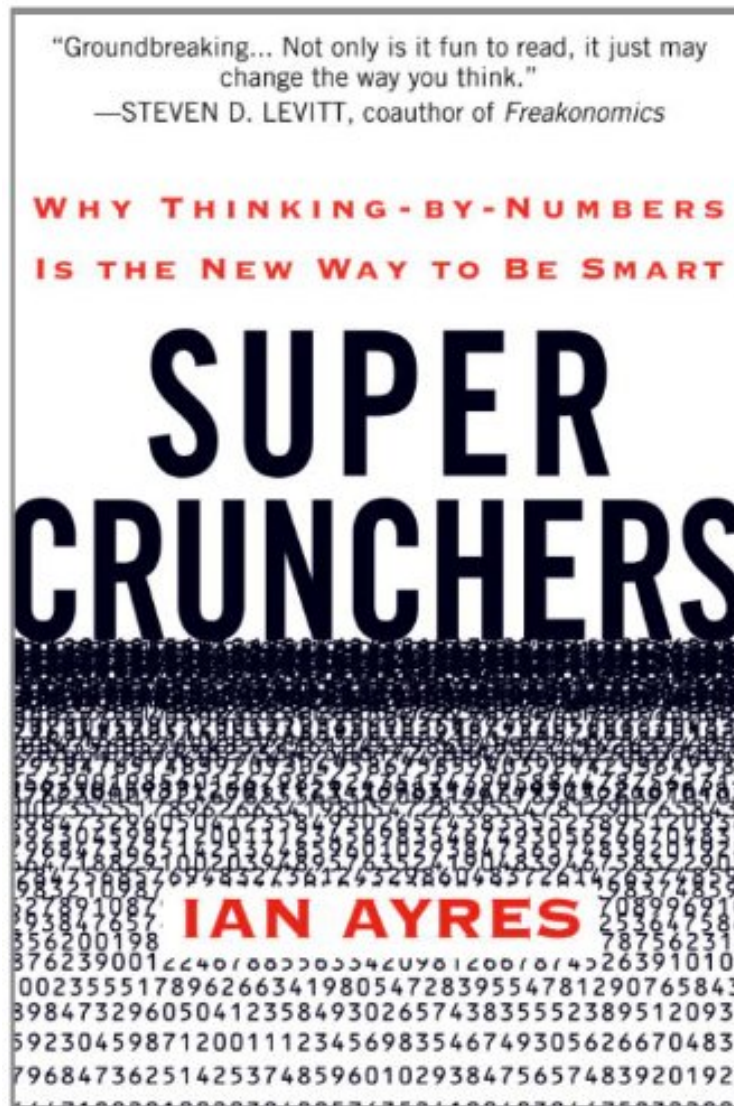


Super Crunchers: Why Thinking-by-Numbers Is the New Way to Be Smart

Ian Ayres

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Ian Ayres : Super Crunchers: Why Thinking-by-Numbers Is the New Way to Be Smart before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Super Crunchers: Why Thinking-by-Numbers Is the New Way to Be Smart:

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Why would a casino try and stop you from losing? How can a mathematical formula find your future spouse? Would you know if a statistical analysis blackballed you from a job you wanted? Today, number crunching affects your life in ways you might never imagine. In this lively and groundbreaking new book, economist Ian Ayres shows how today's best and brightest organizations are analyzing massive databases at lightening speed to provide greater insights into human behavior. They are the Super Crunchers. From internet sites like Google and Amazon that know your tastes better than you do, to a physician's diagnosis and your child's education, to boardrooms and government agencies, this new breed of decision makers are calling the shots. And they are delivering staggeringly accurate results. How can a football coach evaluate a player without ever seeing him play? Want to know whether the price of an airline ticket will go up or down before you buy? How can a formula outpredict wine experts in determining the best vintages? Super crunchers have the answers. In this brave new world of equation versus expertise, Ayres shows us the benefits and risks, who loses and who wins, and how super crunching can be used to help, not manipulate us. Gone are the days of solely relying on intuition to make decisions. No businessperson, consumer, or student who wants to stay ahead of the curve should make another keystroke without reading Super Crunchers. From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly 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 copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "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 ... Groundbreaking ... Not only is it fun to read. It just may change the way you think' -- Stephen D Levitt co-author of *Freakonomics* 'Entertaining and enlightening' -- *Financial Times* 'Convincing' -- *Economist*