

The books:

- "Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy", Cathy O'Neil, 2016
- "The Master Algorithm: How the Quest for the Ultimate Learning Machine Will Remake Our World", Pedro Domingos, 2015.

In your assigned small groups, share your thoughts and opinions of the first five questions, and then as many of the other questions as interest you all, and for which there is time. Feel free to take some notes since we'll share discussion points as a class also.

1. did you enjoy reading these, if so - what about them in particular?
2. do the authors have opposing views, similar views, or are they talking about totally different things?
3. are we as a society putting too much faith in big data?
4. do you think a "master learning algorithm" could possibly exist? would discovering it benefit or harm society?
5. are mathematical models oversimplifications of reality and therefore to be avoided? how can they be used responsibly? are the models the problem, or how they are being used the problem?
6. is Cathy O'Neill's book (WMD) an oversimplification in and of itself? providing only one side of the story by focussing on the few instead of the many?
7. are you a rationalist or an empiricist by nature?
8. should/could there be restrictions on how algorithms/ML are used in order to avoid harmful effects [to a subset of people]? if so, who should be the watchdogs?
9. how do you feel about profiling/filtering targetted ads etc. based on your browsing history? by google, amazon, facebook? is it the same or different depending on the usage/provider?
10. is machine learning the next step/phase of natural learning?
11. were there specific examples in either book that personally resonated with you?
12. what is the role of biases in ML? in WMDs? in our lives??
13. are we immersed in "the rise of the machines" already in this day and age? is this an exciting or fearful prospect to you?

Group A: Billy, Adam, Reid, Camila, Allison

Group B: Fionn, Tiger, Cindy G., Reece, Dorothy, David

Group C: Clair, Arsen, Nick, Brandon, Daya

Group D: Han, Frank, Claudia, Julia, Kelvin, Varun

Group E: Eric, Abdur, Nikita, Rachel, Cindy Y.

Group F: Will, Gabe, Nathaniel, Simon, Lilian, Evonne