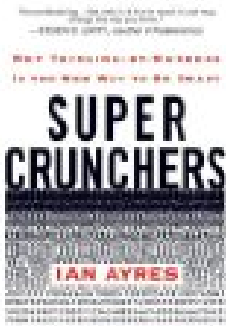


Book Review

Super Crunchers

Author: Ian Ayres

First Published by Bantam Books in 2007
(260pp)



Ian Ayres, a Professor at Yale Law School and a famous economist, enlightens the readers of *Super Crunchers* by presenting the concepts of data

mining, regressions, randomized trials and other statistical theories in a practical way with very interesting case studies.

Though I should not categorize *Super Crunchers* as a text book of statistics, I am compelled to state that Ayres has clarified the statistical terms for me in the least mundane way that I have ever come across after having taken statistics in five semesters during my schooling.

Ayres makes his readers feel that statistics is a tool that anyone can use. He also makes us realize how inundated life has become with data and that “quantitative prediction is reshaping business and government.”

The growth of massive databases has created an opportunity to analyze large collections of real world experience to determine what really works. Its application to medical treatments has already provided fascinating insight into the effectiveness of traditional treatment procedures. In some cases, they are shown to

be ineffective. It also helps lead the way to more effective approaches.

The author shows how this approach can be applied to many varied applications resulting in evidence based solutions. It is a very interesting exposition on the use of regression analysis and random experiments to provide answers to many difficult problems in a wide range of human endeavor. Many real world examples highlight the use of statistical techniques. Ayers thinks it is the way of the future and after reading the *Super Crunchers* I am inclined to agree.

The book is not instructional and does not contain complicated mathematical demonstrations. But, to my surprise, reading *Super Crunchers* does not require an advanced math degree. It also will not provide a step-by-step outline of how to incorporate the benefits of data mining in your company. Even better, it will open one’s mind to new possibilities and thinking about applications one probably had not considered.

When all is said and done, the readers will see the world in a much different light, while no doubt acknowledging that everything around is a randomized test waiting to happen. At the very least the readers will appreciate the seemingly endless amount of interesting tidbits and case studies that are referenced.

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