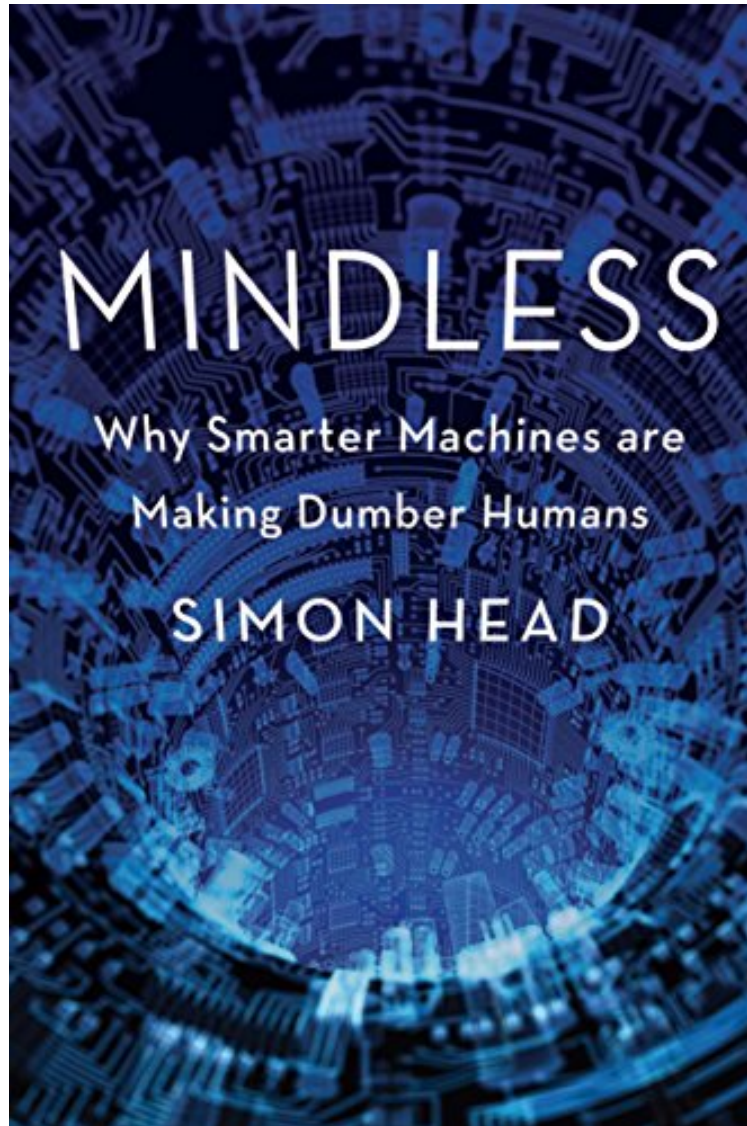


(Free download) Mindless: Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans

Mindless: Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans

Simon Head

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Simon Head : Mindless: Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mindless: Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Broad view of the consequences of modernityBy Johnny Von RoadblockAs an IT consultant I see the effects of automation on not only the unskilled workforce but also on the white collar world. This book gives a unique look at the consequences of our modern world. Hard work, education, and ambition may no longer be guarantees of success. Blake's "dark satanic mills" are being replaced by the fluorescent lit

cubicles. I've always been a die-hard capitalist but this book gives the best justification yet for some form of wealth redistribution in our society for the sake of capitalism itself. The author points out that Henry Ford was perceptive enough to raise wages in Ford's factories in order for the workers to afford automobiles. Without this type of income/wage reform at a national level, capitalism will not have the markets to sustain itself. It is in the best interest of capitalistic societies to adopt some wealth reallocation tenets of socialism. The author also has some very interesting comparisons of the command economies of the Soviet and Chinese to the command and control hierarchies of British academia. A very original and thought provoking book. Highly recommended! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Understand our society and our future better! By Peter Lydon This is a bad title, but a really good book. Serious and penetrating thinking on modern society by an Englishman who sees well the problems created by hyper-rationalized late industrialism and the immense capacities of computers and modern communications. Our problems of social inequality and of structural and growing unemployment are deeper than we think, and Simon Head is far ahead of the crowd in understanding them. To his credit, he proposes no facile but useless remedies. This book should be getting wider distribution and commentary than it has received. Read it after you've read Piketty. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Doesn't make his case so strongly By Jeffery Berry I appreciated an interview with Simon Head on this subject much more so than the book. He doesn't make his case that strongly. But reading this in conjunction with some other recent works I've read by Matt Taibbi (The Divide) and Michael Lewis (The Flash Boys) and Dubner Levitt (Think Like a Freak) it seems like a fitting essay on the misuse of automated "thinking" machines. It's not so much that they are making humans dumber, as dumb humans (or, probably more accurately, intellectually lazy humans) are relying too much on programs to make decisions for them.

We live in the age of Computer Business Systems (CBSs)—the highly complex, computer-intensive management programs on which large organizations increasingly rely. In *Mindless*, Simon Head argues that these systems have come to trump human expertise, dictating the goals and strategies of a wide array of businesses, and de-skilling the jobs of middle class workers in the process. CBSs are especially dysfunctional, Head argues, when they apply their disembodied expertise to transactions between humans, as in health care, education, customer relations, and human resources management. And yet there are industries with more human approaches, as Head illustrates with specific examples, whose lead we must follow and extend to the mainstream American economy. *Mindless* illustrates the shortcomings of CBS, providing an in-depth and disturbing look at how human dignity is slipping as we become cogs on a white collar assembly line.

New York of Books "[An] arresting new book... Head offers a powerful indictment of contemporary Anglo-American Capitalism... He brilliantly translates ideas remote from the experience of most people into everyday language... [and] deconstructs and demystifies the pseudoscientific, abstract, jargonized language of management studies in order to reveal the dispiriting realities it obscures." Kirkus s, Starred A dark, revealing view of computerized control and monitoring of the workplace A sobering, important book. Richard Sennett, author of *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* The regimented society has arrived, and Simon Head is its most probing critic. He not only shows the grip of computerized bureaucracy on people's lives, he also analyzes the economic interests and political processes which drive regimentation. This wide-ranging book is clearly and at times eloquently written. A must-read. Robert Skidelsky, author of *Keynes: The Return of the Master* With insight and clarity, Simon Head describes the insidious effects of combining scientific management with IT systems and its propensity to create a world of top-down control, where workers are stripped of skills and satisfaction in their work. His fascinating account ranges from Walmart and its tightly controlled supply chains to Goldman Sachs's manipulation of sub-prime mortgages. In doing so he shows how the drive to automate human abilities and increase profits has depressed wages and undermined economies. Paul Duguid, co-author of *The Social Life of Information* The world abounds in enthusiastic technologists offering their vision of the ideal, democratic future to which technology will deliver us, if only we are willing to follow. Simon Head's penetrating *Mindless*, with its well-chosen and impressively unpredictable case studies of Computer Business Systems in the workplace, the military, and academia, gives us reasons and the tools to question such advice. Importantly, Head shows us that the future is not inevitable. We have choices, and for the good of society we need to make them. Avner Offer, Chichele Professor (emeritus) of Economic History, University of Oxford, and Fellow of All Souls College Simon Head's penetrating and eloquent book shows how mass surveillance is already manipulating employees in business. Are citizens next? It provides clues about where government surveillance is heading or maybe we are already there.