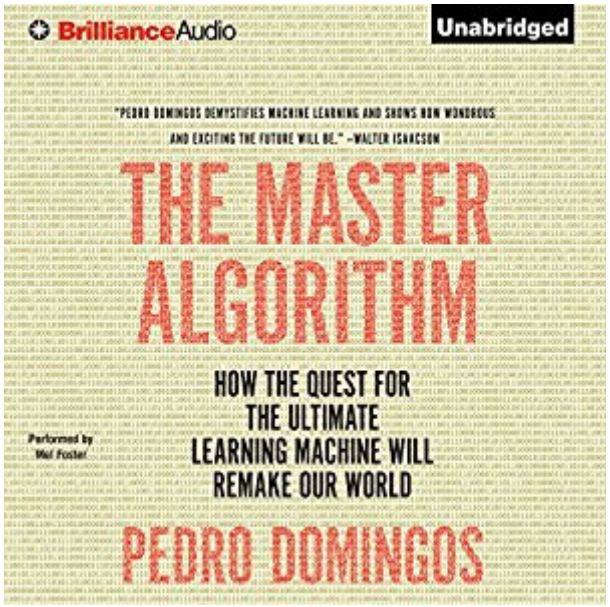
The Master Algorithm: How The Quest For The Ultimate Learning Machine Will Remake Our World



Synopsis

Under the aegis of machine learning in our data-driven machine age, computers are programming themselves and learning about - and solving - an extraordinary range of problems, from the mundane to the most daunting. Today it is machine learning programs that enable and Netflix to predict what users will like, Apple to power Siri’s ability to understand voices, and Google to pilot cars. These programs are already helping us fight the war on cancer and predict the movements of the stock market, and they are making great headway with instant language translation and discovering new laws of nature. But machine learning is incomplete, and its practitioners across the globe are seeking the most powerful algorithm of all. The Master Algorithm will not be limited to solving particular problems but will be able to learn anything and solve any problem, however difficult, and Pedro Domingos, a trailblazing computer scientist, is at the very forefront of the search for it. With the Master Algorithm in hand and data as its fuel, machine learning - essentially the automation of discovery, a kind of scientific method on steroids - will become the most powerful technology humanity has ever devised. And The Master Algorithm will be its bible.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book isn’t perfect, but I’m still giving it 5 stars because it provides a better overview of the entire field of Machine Learning than any other book I’ve come across. My background is in computer science and software engineering and I’ve been interested ML as more of a hobbyist and outside

observer for a few years (reading some books, taking Andrew NG's coursera course), just recently dabbling in some applications professionally. What I was still missing before reading this book was as high a level understanding of where all of the models and technique in the field of ML fit. Other books describe the difference between supervised and unsupervised learning, but this book goes further in describing how, say, decisions trees, support vector machines and deep neural networks fit compared to each other and within which subfields statistics play a larger role than others.The book also puts many techniques in historical perspective that I found very helpful, such as the rise, fall and rise again of deep neural networks with support vector machines taking a lead as the hottest technique in between (while also making clear that SVMs are a useful technique with unique strengths today). Finally, it makes clear that these techniques are not all competing for being the best overall at everything, but that they can be used quite complementary and/or they have unique strengths within certain problem domains. The book accomplishes all of this through a survey of broad subfields of ML, how each has attempted to be *the* master algorithm, has fallen short in some ways, but remains the best at some things and could play a role in the state of the art master algorithm (while acknowledging we're not quite there yet).

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