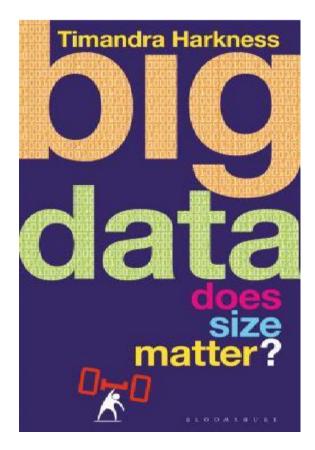# Big Data: Does Size Matter

Big Data: Does Size Matter

By

Timandra Harkness, Bloomsbury, New Delhi, 2016, Paperback, ISBN: 9781472920065.

The book titled: "Big Data: Does Size Matter?" by Timandra Harkness comprises three broad parts, related to Big Data and they are: "What is it? Where did it come from"; "What has big data ever done for us"; "Big Ideas." These broad sections comprise 11 chapters. As the book progresses, it gives the basics of Big Data. The first part has three chapters. These three chapters describe the details of data and what data is defined as big. Part II is made of four chapters. This gives the detail of how big data is defined in different functions. Part III gives the details of big data and its future in the market.

From the ever first wolf bone about 30 thousand years ago, to about 40 million megabytes of data per second produced by the Large Hadron Collider the size of the data is increasing. The more the data, the more are the applications from tracking the wolves in Minnesota by GPS to the prediction of crime. The book gives a good insight into where the concept of data came from, to the present-day concept of Big data. It is focused at general reading for people who are interested in data analytics and are interested to know what is the much talked about the concept of Big Data? Describing the evolution of data and giving real-life examples for a better understanding of the concept. As the concept of Big Data that is becoming popular and is omnipresent, it becomes important to understand clearly the concept. It defines Big Data in different ways. Big data knows the location of your visit with your family. It helps to predict when one could have a heart attack or whether someone will be a victim of crime or not. It

claims to know you better than you know yourself. The data collected through your mobile devices, wherein each movement is tracked forms a part of Big Data.

The "I bought it online" concept increases the data each day. Maybe it started small, but today there is hardly anything that people do not purchase online. From books to electronics, to flight tickets and the list is endless. Each transaction done online leads to data, that is not small but unimaginable. How does one handle such data? How was this data handled earlier? From the past to the present the book answers each small detail.

Though all chapters have a different idea shared with the readers, a few specific chapters need a specific mention. These chapters discuss the data used in different areas of study and further where is this big data going to lead us to, Chapters 5: Big Science, Chapter 7: Data–Driven Democracy and Chapter 11: Even Bigger Data. Chapter 5 discusses in detail how data is being used in the field of natural sciences. There is a 27 kilometer log tunnel in which the subatomic particles go flying at mind-boggling speeds. This tunnel is called the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). In LHC, the amount of data is big by anyone's standards. There are instances in which data in human genetics is much larger than the capacity of a decade old desktop computer. Chapter 7 discusses how data in connection with the public helps to understand the future trends of politics. There can be data on personal details of voters that are collected by apps which can be used for advertising to individuals in a particular manner. There are also large sets of data that is collected through social media websites such as Facebook which helps to assess the details of the actions that the voters might take. The voters may post their opinions on social media which helps in this kind of assessment. Text analysis helps in understanding the posts.

Chapter 11 titled Even Bigger Data describes how the data is increasing in volume. The new technologies are helping in handling this data. IBM's Watson helps in dealing with the analysis of cancer patients. There is also help in various other treatments such as macular degeneration of the eye. There have been various tie-ups of hospitals for making use of the analytical prowess of many analysts. The data is growing at an increasing rate and each one has to learn how to adapt to the changes happening at a fast pace.

The best feature of this book is that it tells you the complex concept of Big Data in an easy to understand manner and language. It is not necessary that one is a person who understands computers and especially not a person who understands coding in computers. This book gives details of the concept of big data from the very basics to the complex. Through the book, an understanding is developed of the use of "Big Data" in different fields from business to politics.

Till now maybe one may have heard of the concept of big data at social gatherings and meetings. Have you ever wondered what can the concept of big data be understood in layman terms? The answer to these questions lies in this book. With each turning page, each detail unfolds like a mystery. From the past to the present, it gives a good description unfolds the mysteries one at a time.

In conclusion, though the book helps a layperson to get a broad overview to understand the concept of the Big Data, it lacks the details for a person who wants to work with Big Data. The book answers the in detail for a general reader what he/ she should understand about big data but does not give any details on how to handle this Big Data. It is a perfect first time read to an introduction to the concept, but for those who are looking for insights into how to handle big data, they will have to further read more books beyond this introductory book.

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