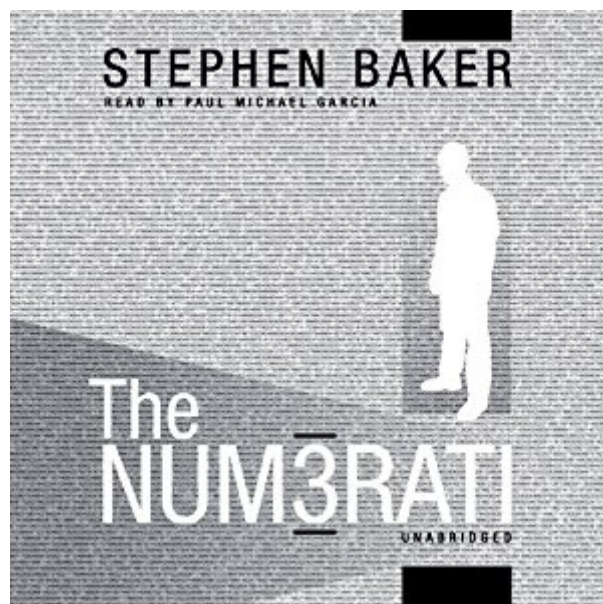


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# The Numerati



## Synopsis

Every day, we produce loads of data about ourselves simply by living in the modern world: we click web pages, flip channels, drive through automatic toll booths, shop with credit cards, and make cell-phone calls. Now, in one of the greatest undertakings of the 21st century, a savvy group of mathematicians and computer scientists is beginning to sift through this data to profile us as workers, shoppers, patients, voters, potential terrorists, even lovers. Their goal? To manipulate our behavior - what we buy, how we vote - without our even realizing it. In this tour de force of original reporting and analysis, journalist Stephen Baker provides us with a fascinating guide to the world we're all entering and the people controlling that world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Stephen Baker, a technology writer for Business Week, takes us into the world of data miners, forecasters, and matchmakers. The math whizzes who analyze our blogs for trends, create the ads that make us eager to buy, and analyze the chatter that could conceal signs of criminal activity--these are the Numerati. Baker gives us a chapter each on work, shopping, politics, spy vs. spy, healthcare, and even [...] (What does the length of your ring finger have to do with the kind of person you're attracted to? Read and find out.) Some of it is "house-of-the-future" stuff--imagine, for instance, a floor tile that will alert the doctor when your aging parent's gait seems more hesitant than usual. According to Baker, experts watching old reruns of Michael J. Fox shows can detect characteristic signs years before he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. And then there's the

political game. With ever-more-insightful analysis, political math mavens have found that (thank god!) America is nowhere near as polarized as you would expect. Many a liberal Democrat lurks in the McMansion suburbs, and vice versa. But politics is tough--your grocery basket doesn't lie, but nobody wants to give the time of day to a pollster. How they craft the exact political messages that will get you to the voting booth might, oddly enough, be related to your shopping habits. Shopping--now this is a chapter that should be of interest to every die-hard fan. Sophisticated algorithms designed to deduce your taste in novels or music can be frighteningly accurate (or, as my Quick Picks occasionally remind me, maddeningly stupid, but that's the topic for a different book). After finishing this chapter, I could think of half a dozen things my grocery store knows about me that I never told them.

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