



What Algorithms Want: Imagination in the Age of Computing

By Ed Finn

BRILLIANCE AUDIO, 2017. CD-Audio. Condition: New. Unabridged. Language: English . Brand New. We depend on--we believe in--algorithms to help us get a ride, choose which book to buy, execute a mathematical proof. It's as if we think of code as a magic spell, an incantation to reveal what we need to know and even what we want. Humans have always believed that certain invocations--the marriage vow, the shaman's curse--do not merely describe the world but make it. Computation casts a cultural shadow that is shaped by this long tradition of magical thinking. In *What Algorithms Want*, Ed Finn considers how the algorithm--in practical terms, a method for solving a problem--has its roots not only in mathematical logic but also in cybernetics, philosophy, and magical thinking. Finn argues that the algorithm deploys concepts from the idealized space of computation in a messy reality, with unpredictable and sometimes fascinating results. Drawing on sources that range from Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* to Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, from Adam Smith to the *Star Trek* computer, Finn explores the gap between theoretical ideas and pragmatic instructions. He examines the development of intelligent assistants like Siri, the rise of algorithmic aesthetics at Netflix,...



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