50 shades of data. (Confessions of a NymphoDATAct).

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It was the best of datasets, it was the worst of datasets, but none of that really matters, because it is my dataset to control and do with what I please. Numbers or letters, ratios or intervals, processed or raw, ordinal or categorical, quantitative or qualitative, big or small. Not even size matters, for my needs to be fulfilled, I must have it all. My obsession is big data, little data, all data. My nearest rival is mother nature, who has been collecting data for aeons, and storing it and sharing it in the sedimentary rocks, ice fields, tree rings, the stars in the night sky, and even the thermal layers encoded on every humans back. Her diary is everywhere if you look in the right places, and you have received the gift of wisdom. As you look back through time, I cannot help but wonder what connections, stories, adventures and revelations you discover your own adventures. But I have science and technology to shape it share it, and an army of slaves, high priests of analysts and data scientist, and a willing army of business persons, educators, students, and in fact the general populous, who also love to feed off my obsession, my data addiction, their greed.

Sometimes I love to play with my data, to be able to torture my data, I am its master and I control it by bending it to my will, to manipulate it until it fits my image of it. Sometimes I want it pure and virginal, sometimes I want it dirty and sluttish, but all the time and every time, I just want it. Maybe I am just a junkie for it, I am always seeking that next data fix. Maybe I just want to dominate it, collect it, display it, and even on occasions I love the power of destroying it. For I am the true datapath.

Sometimes I buy it, on occasions I rent it, perhaps i even think about stealing it. My every thought , all the time is about obtaining it, regularly I scavenge the open source data networks, where I can get my next fix for free. I love to transform it, to join it together into

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I finally, I also get to romance it, date it, match make it, seduce it, take

I hurt it I rejoice in its pain. I can never get enough data, its everywher

breathe, the water we drink, the energy we use, the ground we walk on

need to kick the start of every day.

While St Paul could not be all things to all people, data is. Perhaps, dat

the existence of God, because I cannot believe that data was created by

is too much purpose, usage, and dependability on it by animals, plants,

machines, for it to be an accident of random linkages or proximity of d

But I gather by now, you are wondered if this is all too much, to be foc

author has gone mad. While data is useful and some may even say esse

we could not live, do business, or function in any way, shape or form, i

It's the patterns that we gather from the data, that works our bodies, dri

supports our leisure, feeds our desires, powers our thinking, and suppo

our time of need. But I suggest to you my reader, that the relationship l

pattern recognition is one of symbiotic one. That in reality, neither one

independent the other.

So now hopefully you can understand my fear, guilt, love, desire, and need for data. But what is actually data. Is it a technology? Is it a product? Is it a service? Is it a resource or a raw material? Is it something else totally, is it everything I have mentioned and more? Data transforms in front of your eyes. While your focus is on data, everything else becomes metadata. Switch your focus to a piece of metadata, and the original data transforms into metadata, and the metadata becomes data. It really is a wonder to behold.

Of course I have my own person preferences on whether I practise inclusive analytics (widest possible) or exclusive analytics (narrowest) datasets, and I have my dimensions of data situationality; 1st (The observation), 2nd (Metadata about the observation), 3rd (Its Purpose), 4th (The space / time of the observation), 5th (The Causality of the observation), and finally the 6th (Is it Natural or Unnatural).

One thing that can be said about data, is that data has an impact on everything we do. But while my data is my truth, other people's data is their truth. Data is in the eye of the beholder, be it natural, artificial, or systemic, and either processed by cognition, cause & effect, or algorithm. Other entities data, and its usage, impacts on our lives. While data maybe neutral, its usage by others is not.

As I said earlier on in this piece, that data is all things to all people. But like weapons and drugs, it is its usage and intent of that usage, which makes data either imperative or destructive. We drive the impact of data through technology on our society. Our actions not only tell us about the data, the also tell us about us. Do we treat data as a resource, a weapon, a slave, a lover, a friend, a conquest, a tool, or a thing? Is it data that shapes technology, or is it technology that shapes data. Perhaps it is a combination of both. As you my dear reader are a user of data and a user of technology, are you not also a guardian of both as well? Where do you stand on the issue, are you at the coal face, a silent ethicist, a strategic player, a passive follower, or an aggressive leader?

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(output) of technology, and microforms as the writing slaves of technolog

benevolent masters of our own invention, nourish us, protect us, comfo

transport us, entertain us, educate us, inform us, and ultimately dispose

return is that we serve them with gifts of energy and parts, repair their

their products and services. For this service, they provide more data tha

deal with. Which keeps us in our place, as our decisions path is most o

poison of information overload.

While it was lots of fun writing this piece, it does make you think, abo

way that you can think about data, and indeed all the different ways yo

trouble in this growing transdisciplinary world is the language, terms, a

cross over in so many ways, the difficulty is enlarged by the fact that a

disciplines and occupations / industries are also interested in data. This

society, as confusion increases the more in-depth you move into the top

new generation of terms is needed, rather than trying to adapt old langu

look at the usage of sex and gender. They are totally different categorie

One is about the biological determination, the other is the cognitive asp

by its practise. Hence there is traditional 2 sex's and 7 gender's. Yet the

unaware of the difference and continues to transmit the falsehood. My

confusion will extend to data also.

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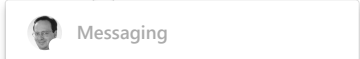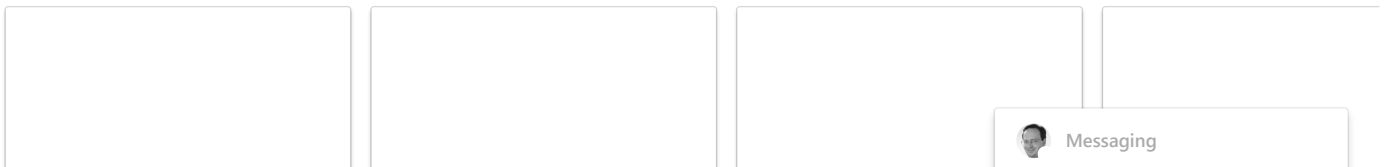Quality Insight Executive at Three.
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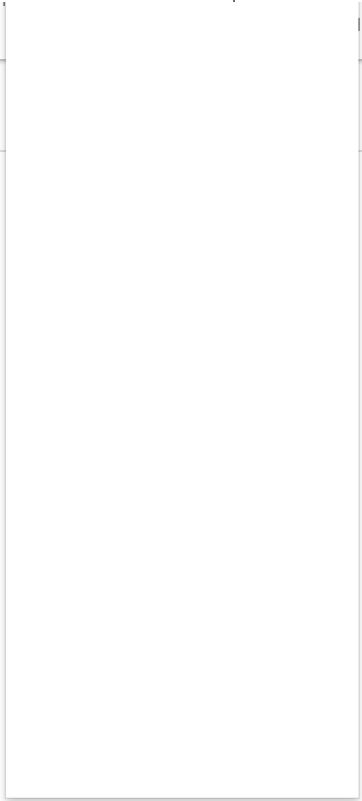**Tony Nolan OAM**
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