Austin Smothers

CISP 430

Ted Talks “Algorithms”

\*Turned in late due to my right lung collapsing

I agree with Kevin Slavin that algorithms govern the modern world through the global stock market, and that speed has become of the utmost importance; after all, “time is money.” The thing that scares me about this is Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, relating to electron movement within an electron shell; that you can know either how fast you are going, or where you are, but knowing more about one necessitates knowing less about the other. In other words, you can either be fast, or be accurate, but not both. A higher degree of speed – which is what these algorithms shoot for – necessitates a degree of inaccuracy that will sooner or later become alarming. Slavin speaks of the 2:45 market crash; could not such a thing happen more often, due to a computer throwing out data in exchange for faster processing times? Could not such reckless abandon lead to a global market collapse because we finally push these algorithms to go a little too fast, destroying the delicate ecosystem that has developed around these markets? My reaction is one of caution, and perhaps my faith leads to believe that such algorithms may very well be the cause of the global economic collapse prophesied in the book of Revelation, but I do truly believe that with our global economic systems in the hands of algorithms that compete for speed above all else, our security has never been in more peril.