

“From Data Confusion to Data Intelligence”

By: Adaria Blackwell

Description

This episode, presented by Elaine McVey and David Meza at the 2023 Posit Conference, explores the organizational challenges faced by data science teams, especially in environments where expectations are high but foundational understanding is low. They compare experiences launching data teams in startups vs. large institutions and offer practical approaches for overcoming common hurdles in accessing data, gaining support, and navigating uncertainty.

Something I learned

1. One major issue is that many companies enthusiastically hire data scientists without having the infrastructure or understanding to support their work—like providing analysis-ready data or cross-team collaboration.
2. Their strategy of “scan for opportunity and show, don’t tell” reframes early data projects as proof-of-concept tools that can build trust and gain buy-in through action, not just planning.

Connection to INFO 511

This podcast directly ties into the course because both understand the importance of clean, accessible data and communicating insights effectively. The “show, don’t tell” principle reinforces the value of using visualizations and exploratory data analysis to demonstrate impact. Lastly, it highlights the real-world importance of collaborative storytelling with data—something visualization tools like R are built for.

Podcast link: <https://youtu.be/HTMvZWUTBug?si=fhX4t7vJkoHg7ZGp>