

Book Rec Research: An Overview

Interview with Ross

- He rates the book summary as pretty important, as it's the first thing he reads after the title, author, and cover. Genre is semi-important to him, but "there's some science fiction books I just can't read."
- He is starting to consciously choose books with more representation, saying that "I've read plenty experiences of troubled young white men" [he is Asian American for context] and wants to read more experiences other than his own.
- In regards to other people's reviews, he takes it with a "big, big grain of salt" because "everyone will hate something." He pointed out that if a book has one star, there's a high chance the reader is likely upset by the topic and not the actual quality of the writing.
- In terms of specific themes, Ross says he does take it to consideration when he is in a specific mood or kick. "There was this weird European anti-war novel phase I went through last year," he remarked, going on a tangent about how European perspectives on the World Wars are far different than American ones.
- He also brought up the concept of machine learning to help the user figure out their next book to use, which will be excellent for actual app creation.

Interview with Mia

- The most important factor into whether or not she will like a book is if she likes the author's writing style. As such, she always reads a chapter first to make sure.
- A friend's book review is more important than a random person's online to her.

Book Recs Google Form (33 Responses)

- Book Summary: A Little (9 votes), *Extremely* (10), Not Very (1), *Very* (13)
- Genre: A Little (7 votes) *Extremely* (5), Not Very (6), *Very* (15)
- Representation: A Little (18 votes), *Extremely* (4), Not Very (7), *Very* (4) **It is worth noting that those who indicated that representation was important to them were part of historically marginalized groups in society.**
- Themes: *A Little* (15 votes), *Extremely* (2), Not Very (7), *Very* (9) **It is worth noting that people mentioned the equivalent of themes when they discussed "tags" or how they determined what book to read in their process.**
- Reviews: *A Little* (12 votes), *Extremely* (4), Not Very (5), *Very* (12)
- EXCERPTS OF PEOPLE'S PROCESSES:
 - "I read the title on the spine of the book. I look at the cover and see if it catches my eye. Covers usually reveal something about the book. Then I read the summary or the short blurb meant to entice readers (on the back or inside the front cover). Occasionally, I will read the tags below or on the back of the title page (ex: family, fantasy, etc.). If the summary/blurb (and the tags) piques my interest, then I will choose that book. If I am looking at books online, I will generally ignore reviews about the book unless it reveals "plot" or character spoilers and those spoilers turn me off from the book."
 - "If I already know of and like an author, I'll usually give their new books a try since I already know I like their writing style and their content. For completely new books/authors, I rely on word of mouth (recommendations from friends) and

finding books on Goodreads (through reviewers I trust and whose taste generally aligns with my own, or just looking up recent releases). I also make an effort to look for diverse stories - stories written by and featuring people of color, queer people, etc because representation is important to me in the books I read.”

- “I often choose books based on recommendations from my family and friends who I know have similar tastes to me. If I am just in a store looking without a recommendation, I usually look for new works by authors I like first. I then move on to whichever genres I like best or categories of literature. By this I mean whether a book can be considered something like Victorian literature or Irish literature. They may not really be genres but they are two categories I use to look for books I may like.”
- “After I have finished reading a book, I give myself a few days to digest what I’ve read. It’s almost as if I grieve that the story is over and that I am no longer involved in the characters’ lives. At this point, I usually get recommendations from friends about what good books they have read lately. Then I review the books on Barnes and Noble website to read the summary of a given book and any reviews from others. I then try to make a decision”
- “Recommendations from people I trust or book sellers: librarian. Care a lot about relevant themes, similar type of writing to other books I like, author endorsements. Care about representation - so getting female recommendations or POC”