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“They’re Watching You at Work” by Don Peck

1. In the human resources arena, companies have shifted to big data analytics – the collection and analysis of immense quantities of data with software - in a process known as “datafication”. Companies are adopting online evaluation tools, predictive mathematical models, and screening algorithms to optimize the hiring process and eliminate human intuition as a hiring factor. In general, people analytics tools allow companies to assess human potential based on a variety of different variables and thus gain a competitive edge over their rivals.
2. By the 1950s, executive hiring had evolved into a formal and efficient system that evaluated potential employees’ intelligence, medical history, professional aptitude, personal history, and psychological stability. One of the most important factors in hiring was one’s educational background; the college degree was an important signal of intelligence and capability. In recent decades, however, companies have become wary of using biased evaluations in light of anti-discrimination laws. This, along with an increase in job-switching and a decreased emphasis on long-term financial results, has decreased the importance and relevance of such techniques.
3. Knack is a small startup based in Silicon Valley that uses mobile video games to help companies find talented people. These games include Dungeon Scrawl,

which challenges players to navigate a maze and solve puzzles, and Wasabi Waiter, which challenges players to serve as a waiter in an increasingly packed sushi restaurant. The Royal Dutch Shell company's GameChanger program, which provides venture capital to certain business ideas, was able to successfully use Knack's games in order to identify the best ideas. Knack's algorithm, which searched for six key characteristics of successful innovators, allowed the GameChanger unit to devote their full attention to those ideas that were viable.

4. Historically, businesses have based hiring decisions on extraneous factors such as appearance, height, race, age, and gender. Businesses have also expressed bias against older workers (who are seen as incompetent and resistant to change) and younger workers (who are seen as entitled and uncreative). In his book *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell describes how professional orchestras have combatted discrimination against women; when orchestras switched to blind auditions, the proportion of women that won spots increased by a factor of five. Businesses such as Xerox have made efforts to eliminate false human judgments and nepotism by implementing online evaluations and algorithms in the hiring process.
5. New methods of making hiring decisions will prevent bias by providing companies with the necessary information to evaluate prospective employees on a more objective basis. These methods will benefit those who were left behind in school or the job market by enabling companies to identify skilled and capable people who lack the credentials to succeed. As for those who stand to lose, people who rely on charisma and function well in the artificial world of academia will be

at a disadvantage when employers are able to identify signals of value that are far more pertinent than the traditional college degree.

6. Sandy Pentland's electronic badges collect data regarding employees' social interactions. These badges record details such as the length of conversations, the tone of voice of the people involved, and the extent to which people talk or listen. I believe that I would like to wear such a badge because it would allow me to compare my conversational habits with those of successful people and learn what I am doing correctly or incorrectly. In my opinion, wearing such a badge would allow me to improve myself and increase my productivity and effectiveness as a worker.
7. Predictive data analytics can help workers get hired by improving companies' abilities to identify and contact potential employees. With predictive data analytics, workers could use games to reveal their strengths in certain fields and identify themselves to companies that are seeking to hire. In general, predictive data analytics provides the tools necessary to help companies assess workers' true value and teach them how to do a better job.

## Works Cited

Peck, Don. "They're Watching You at Work." *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, 20 Nov. 2013. Web. 05 Jan. 2016.