Data Science Handbook Summary

Riley Newman – Chief Data Scientist at Airbnb

A self-made guy who made his way through college by being part of US Coast Guard and not the typical data scientist as he is one of the few who possessed the economic background. He had been called by the US Coast Guard to serve after he finished his master’s. After he finished his obligation, he worked for a few years in economics consulting for the technical training. After working intensively for 3 years, he is looking for a way out and then he accidentally meet with the founders of Airbnb and ended up joining as one of the early employees where he confessed that he is finally excited about helping to build something and see the impact of this.

He is of the believe that Data Science will become less technical in the future, so much that we don’t even need to analyse the data, the insights are there just waiting for us. But he doesn’t think that it will be completely automated as good data science is more about the questions we pose the data rather than data mungling and analysis.

5 key points:

1) Try to have a wide variety of background as this will bring different skill sets and approaches to problem solving and set us apart from other person

2) One doesn’t have to come from statistics background to become data scientist. As long as they have a solid grasp of statistics, experience with coding, and able to communicate then they are set to become a good data scientist.

3) The final product or insights delivered must deliver an impact otherwise it wasn’t that valuable.

4) Being data scientist doesn’t mean we have to do find insights by ourselves, but also collaborate with others.

5) As tools get more sophisticated, there will be parts of the analysis process that can be automated but that doesn’t necessarily mean data science field will fade away. A good data science is more about the questions we pose of the data rather than data mungling and analysis.