

The Wisdom of Crowds

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The Hype Machine. A landmark insider's tour of how social media affects our decision-making and shapes our world in ways both useful and dangerous, with critical insights into the social media trends of the 2020 election and beyond "The book might be described as prophetic. . . . At least two of Aral's three predictions have come to fruition."—New York NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY WIRED · LONGLISTED FOR THE PORCHLIGHT BUSINESS BOOK AWARD Social media connected the world—and gave rise to fake news and increasing polarization. It is paramount, MIT professor Sinan Aral says, that we recognize the outsize effect social media has on us—on our politics, our economy, and even our personal health—in order to steer today's social technology toward its great promise while avoiding the ways it can pull us apart. Drawing on decades of his own research and business experience, Aral goes under the hood of the most powerful social networks to tackle the critical question of just how much social media actually shapes our choices, for better or worse. He shows how the tech behind social media offers the same set of behavior influencing levers to everyone who hopes to change the way we think and act—from Russian hackers to brand marketers—which is why its consequences affect everything from elections to business, dating to health. Along the way, he covers a wide array of topics, including how network effects fuel Twitter's and Facebook's massive growth, the neuroscience of how social media affects our brains, the real consequences of fake news, the power of social ratings, and the impact of social media on our kids. In mapping out strategies for being more thoughtful consumers of social media, The Hype Machine offers the definitive guide to understanding and harnessing for good the technology that has redefined our world overnight.

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