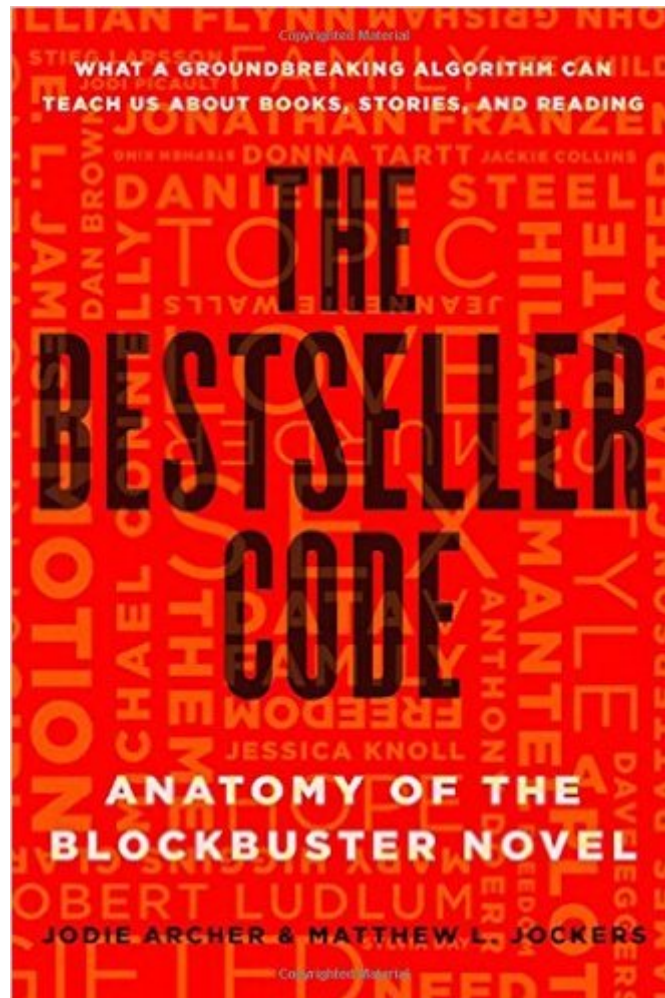


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The Bestseller Code



Synopsis

"When a story captures the imagination of millions, that's magic. Can you qualify magic? Archer and Jockers just may have done so." — Sylvia Day, New York Times bestselling author

Ask most book people about massive success in the world of fiction, and you'll typically hear that it's a game of hazy crystal balls. The sales figures of E. L. James or Dan Brown, they'll say, are freakish — random occurrences in an unpredictable market. But what if there were an algorithm that could predict mega-bestsellers with stunning accuracy? What if it knew, just from reading an unpublished manuscript, not just that genre writers like John Grisham and Danielle Steel would sell in huge numbers, but also that authors such as Junot Diaz, Jodi Picoult, and Donna Tartt had signs of New York Times bestselling all over their pages? Thanks to Jodie Archer and Matthew Jockers, the algorithm exists, the code has been cracked, and the results are stunning. Fine-tuned on over 20,000 contemporary novels, the system analyzes themes, plot, character, setting, and also the frequencies of tiny but amazingly significant markers of style. The "bestseller-ometer" then makes predictions, with fascinating detail, about which specific combinations of these features will resonate with readers. Somehow, in all genres, it is right over eighty percent of the time. This book explains groundbreaking text mining research in accessible terms, but its real story is in what the algorithm reveals about reading and writing and how successful authorship works. It offers a new theory on the success of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. It explains why *Gone Girl* sold millions of copies. It reveals the most important theme in bestselling fiction and which topics just won't sell. And then there's "The One," the single most paradigmatic bestseller of the past thirty years that a computer picked from among thousands. The result is surprising, a bit ironic, and delightfully unorthodox. The project will be compelling and provocative for all book lovers and writers. It is an investigation into our intellectual and emotional responses to stories, as well as a big idea book about the relationship between creativity and technology. It turns conventional wisdom about book publishing on its head. The Bestseller Code will appeal to fiction lovers, data nerds, and those people who have enjoyed books by Malcolm Gladwell and Nassim Taleb.

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Customer Reviews

I read the "sneak peek" chapter last night. The information it contained was intriguing and helpful, however, I have a problem with their obvious disdain for fantasy and science fiction. They claim that the bestselling Harry Potter and Game of Thrones novels were flukes that only appeared on the NYT list briefly. They also claim that the bestselling topics and overarching theme chosen by the computer makes it clear that fantasy and science fiction could never make the bestseller list. What they fail to notice is that the favored theme of human connectedness and the most common topics of family life/relationships and crime and violence appear in abundance in Harry Potter and GOT. In other words, they were bestsellers (Harry Potter sold 450 million worldwide and made Rowling a billionaire) for the very reason this algorithm claimed Steele and Grisham are bestselling authors. So much for the public rejecting fantasy. The other problem I have is that the authors chose to focus on the NYT bestseller list. This list is obviously biased in favor of books published by the big 5 NY publishing companies. The Martian is probably the only self-published digital book to make the list and that only happened because it was made into a movie. As for the likes of Grisham, Steele, Nora Roberts/J D Robb, Jodi Picoult, etc. who are the darlings of the big publishers (rightfully so), of course their books sell in the millions. Yours would too if it appeared on the shelves of every grocery store, drug store, bookstore and airport in the country. With that kind of exposure an author would need to have written a very poor book to fail. Finally, this algorithm was created by two individuals using their parameters. Can they honestly say that the information they have gleaned is completely unbiased? All that being said, this is just one chapter in the book. Perhaps subsequent chapters are less insulting and are more inclusive of other genres. I don't know. Right now I can't even look at the table of contents. In any case, I will wait for more reviews before I consider spending \$15 for the hardcover version.

This looks like it might be a very interesting book, the first of its kind. If it's not too late, I'd like to

point out to the authors that the 'invented' words in A Clockwork Orange are in fact Russian and Russian-based words.

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