

Slice of MIT Podcast | The Art of Data [EXCERPT]

- MATT** So on Yelp, if you look, there's people that review prisons. And they don't generally get well reviewed, but it's an interesting societal feedback loop. A person doesn't have to say yes to get reviewed. Just like restaurants didn't have to agree to get reviewed.
- STEMPECK:**
- DENISE CHENG:** You also have the opposite thing happening on Amazon where you have the horse mask as one of the most popular selling items. And then everybody who comments on it-- it's actually a game. People comment on it because it's really funny. And they create these really wild stories that they want to post. And there's actually a--
- HOST:** The five-star rating might be the most standard review system, but it's far from the most accurate. Denise says that it's dominated by social cues and motivated more by politeness than accuracy.
- CHENG:** A five-star rating is ultimately not objective. It seems objective because it's a number. You can aggregate and average things out. But at the end of the day, these are based on cultural biases in the world.
- Also, that because some of these ratings are so blunt and unhelpful, they really become acts of courtesy. So when you get out of a Lift or an Uber you give a five-star rating because it's an act of courtesy. It's a way to ensure that that person's going to continue to have work from Lift or Uber.