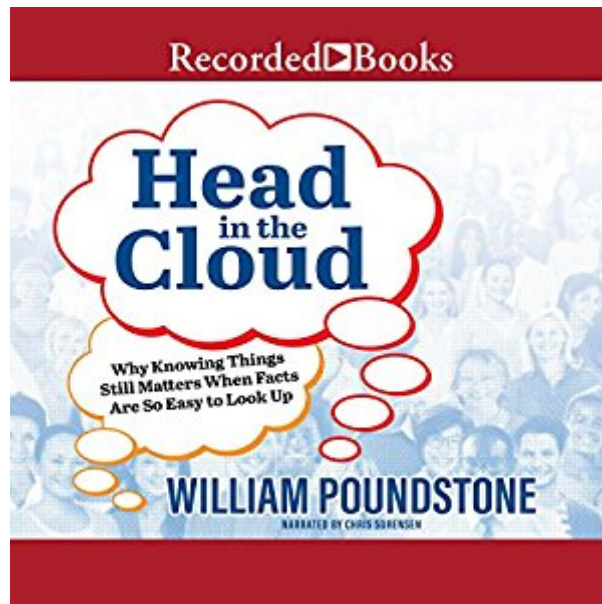


The book was found

Head In The Cloud: Why Knowing Things Still Matters When Facts Are So Easy To Look Up



Synopsis

The real-world value of knowledge in the mobile-device age. More people know who Khloe Kardashian is than who Rene Descartes was. Most can't find Delaware on a map, correctly spell the word occurrence, or name the largest ocean on the planet. But how important is it to fill our heads with facts? A few keystrokes can summon almost any information in seconds. Why should we bother learning facts at all? Best-selling author William Poundstone confronts that timely question in *Head in the Cloud*. He shows that many areas of knowledge correlate with the quality of our lives - wealth, health, and happiness - and even with politics and behavior. Combining Big Data survey techniques with eye-opening anecdotes, Poundstone examines what Americans know (and don't know) on topics ranging from quantum physics to pop culture. *Head in the Cloud* asks why we're okay with spelling errors on menus but not on rÃ©sumÃ©s; why Fox News viewers don't know which party controls Congress; why people who know trivia make more money than those who don't; and how individuals can navigate clickbait and media spin to stay informed about what really matters. Hilarious, humbling, and wildly entertaining, *Head in the Cloud* is a must-listen for anyone who doesn't know everything.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 45 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Recorded Books

Audible.com Release Date: July 19, 2016

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B01HS74UE4

Best Sellers Rank: #163 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Computers & Technology
#460 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Social Psychology & Interactions #668
in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Social Psychology & Interactions

Customer Reviews

I love William Poundstone's books. I remember reading *Big Secrets* for the first time, was one of the catalysts that convinced me to read non-fiction. I have read almost everything between that book

and this one, and was really looking forward to Head in the Cloud. Despite high expectations, this book fell short. The premise is that facts are still important, despite the internet, and skills are not the only thing worth learning. This is well-argued, but never moves beyond argument. There are very few 'solutions' offered (other than to not exclusively watch Fox News) and the book never feels well put together or like it is building towards anything more than most people these days are idiots who don't know much of anything. Here is what I didn't like and could have been improved:

- * Tone - Poundstone often comes across as arrogant and all-knowing when talking about how many things other people don't know. I knew most of the answers to his sample questions, but not all.
- * Tests - He gives some samples of the questions, but would have loved to see reproductions of the tests and even online tests where you could measure up against others. Those were not provided.
- * Facts - There are some 'facts' that he brushes over as indisputable, though I'm not sure they are the best questions to test knowledge with. Politically and culturally charged questions that point to the plain truth are often not black and white. To be fair, he does have a chapter that explores this with two different ways to phrase a question on evolution, but was not clear if it was connected to some of his other questions.
- * Solution - Very brief, scattered solutions were offered but never anything comprehensive.

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