

Data Driven

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Synopsis

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A behind-the-scenes look at how digital surveillance is affecting the trucking way of life.

Long-haul truckers are the backbone of the American economy, transporting goods under grueling conditions and immense economic pressure. Truckers have long valued the independence of their work, sharing a strong occupational identity rooted in a tradition of autonomy. Yet these workers increasingly find themselves under many watchful eyes. Data Driven examines how digital surveillance is upending life and work on the open road, and raises crucial questions about the role of data collection in broader systems of social control.

Karen Levy takes listeners inside a world few ever see, painting a bracing portrait of one of the last great American frontiers. Federal regulations now require truckers to buy and install digital monitors that capture data about their locations and behaviors. Intended to address the pervasive problem of trucker fatigue by regulating the number of hours driven each day, these devices support additional surveillance by trucking firms and other companies. Traveling from industry trade shows to law offices and truck-stop bars, Levy reveals how these invasive technologies are reconfiguring industry relationships and providing new tools for managerial and legal control—and how truckers are challenging and resisting them.

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