

Imaginaries and materialities of educational data science

Ben Williamson

Big data and smarter learning software systems are beginning to impact on education both through their application in the materiality of pedagogic practices and for the purposes of the quantitative analysis of education. This presentation will trace the emergence of a 'digital data imaginary,' a vision of a desirable future of education that its advocates believe is attainable through the application of big data technologies and practices, particularly within the schools sector. The implications are considerable, in terms of how powerful data analytic organizations are staking their claim to authority and expertise in education, how learners and teachers are monitored, measured, and managed, and how knowledge is produced and circulated.