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Our future hangs on an ability to filter signal from noise, turn signal into stories, and use stories to foster understanding. More than an individual, a model, or a dashboard, this requires complex systems of ingesting, curating, and then translating through storytelling if we are to move past justification by data to that place where data is the heart of our decisions. In my 25 years of experience, across numerous industries, I have built the systems and trained the storytellers that turn businesses around.

I once had a chance to pilot a simulator for a 45k ton cargo ship with a full bridge, including places for a dozen people to run stations, read instruments, and make calls. Each station could be automated for the simulator, and (as no fool) I turned on the autopilot for all of them. After a frustrating half hour of trying, I couldn't get it out of dock, instead running it to ground and taking out a good portion of the Port of San Francisco.

Companies today dwarf that ship in complexity, having hundreds (if not tens of thousands) of people making key decisions every day. What more, the information those decisions need is constantly changing - in variety, volume, and velocity - keeping us from being able to rest on what has gone before. Rather, if we're going to innovate, our analytics must innovate to enable it. Autopilot is not an option.