Radical Techno- logies: The Design of Every- day Life

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A field manual to the systems that are transforming our livesEverywhere we turn, a startling fresh device promises to transfigure our lives. We already depend on the smartphone to navigate every part of our existence. In this urgent and revelatory excavation of our Info Age, leading technology thinker Adam Greenfield forces us to reconsider our romantic relationship with the networked items, services and spaces define us. It is time to re-evaluate the Silicon Valley consensus determining the near future. But at what cost? We're told that innovations—from augmented-fact interfaces and virtual assistants to autonomous delivery drones and self-driving vehicles—will make life easier, far more convenient and more productive.and offers ways to reclaim our stake later on. In answering these questions, Greenfield' Having successfully colonized everyday existence, these radical systems are actually conditioning the choices available to us in the a long time. How do they function? Who benefits from their adoption? What difficulties do they show us, as people and societies? And, even while, fiendishly complicated algorithms are working quietly in the backdrop, reshaping the overall economy, transforming the fundamental conditions of our politics and also redefining what it means to be human.s timely guideline clarifies the level and nature of the crisis we now confront — 3D printing promises unprecedented control over the form and distribution of matter, while the blockchain stands to revolutionize everything from the recording and exchange of worth to just how we organize the mundane realities of your day to day.

Techno-humanist tour de force, and left-brain companion to "Dark Mirror" I 1st met Adam Greenfield when he accepted an invitation to provide a guest talk at a computer systems conference I co-organized in '09 2009. His talk on what would later become known as "smart towns" was ahead of its time and (in my own mind) firmly placed him as today's urbanist, well within the tradition of Jane Jacobs but with a deep technology sensibility, as his later book "Against the Smart Town" revealed. In his latest publication he emerges as a true humanist, once again with a deep knowledge of the function of technology. The queries

he poses to the reader right here go well beyond urbanism, to an existential study of the friction between what we believe we are right here for and the precipitous acceleration towards a 100% technology-mediated lifestyle.The essential message of the book is that mediation by extremely complex technology stacks has (at least) four pernicious effects. It erases the "wetware" versions of quotidian actions such as for example hailing a cab or clustering around a Television, which, though mundane, build social capital. The proven fact that the technology itself could possibly be "chaotic neutral" is hardly ever really resolved.The structure and attitude of this book is what sets it aside.g. And if therefore, did they really conclude that a upcoming embodying those dangers was one worth pursuing?And it removes the assumption of an underlying shared reality, in a dark, Gibsonian-dystopia sort of way. (It really is in these lines of argument that Greenfield's intellectual heritage as an urbanist comes through most obviously. Yet we generally have no idea whose values or factors underlie the distinctions between the choices presented for you and those shown to me.Socioeconomically, this means (for instance) that Google Real estate defaults to using OpenTable for making restaurant reservations, which diverts money from the restaurant to the service yet appears frictionless to the buyer; Google Maps presents Uber as a frictionless transportation option alongside generating or transit, to the exclusion of other choices; and so on, showing how attention, culture, and dollars are subtly steered in particular directions, for ends usually opaque to the very users they state to serve.Politically, one could not hand an authoritarian government an improved tool to divide and control its subjects..And for an excellent right-brain companion to the book, watch the British Television series "Dark Mirror". that this solution can be arrived at algorithmically, via the functions of a technical system furnished with the proper inputs; and that solution is something can end up being encoded in public areas policy, once again without distortion. Understanding the realities of the things that we are dependent on is constantly an eye opener.Rapidly-used and soon-to-be-ubiquitous technologies seem to fall into two categories: those that are ostensibly well-intentioned but whose use used falls ludicrously brief of their primary aims, and those that are banal but potentially dangerous if "weaponized" by immoral actors (with which history is definitely replete).Greenfield wraps up with a caution and a call to action. Cryptocurrencies, or more specifically "smart agreements" and their derivatives Distributed Autonomous Institutions (essentially virtual corporations run completely by algorithm), obscure rather than clarify their networks of ownership and power and can be found in a vacuum oblivious to human being foibles. Robotics are being created apace in Japan never to assist humans, but to replace them in such human-centric roles as treatment assistants for the aged. This should be right up the author's road, but he gets distracted by the "stupidity" of everybody associated with the DAO hack. In every, Greenfield asks, did the creators of these technologies think through the dangers connected with developing and deploying them?) whose functions may be benign or also banal when they 1st appear, but can rapidly and almost invisibly be placed to make use of to subvert our person or societal goals, and even to move those goalposts.The lament of the book is that it generally does not have to be in this manner.) And all too often when technologists attempt to deploy technology to serve rather than supplant social interaction, it has the aftereffect of using technology to "paper over" social inequities and friction instead of wanting to eliminate them. The patterns of smartphone use (to mention just decreasing technological manifestation of Greenfield's problems) are just the opposite: receiving the notification of a note or a call tends to cause an immediate cultural disruption, and the concept of shared public existence suffers as a result. You and I discover different features on Google Maps, receive different prices and recommendations from Amazon, are shown different news headlines, and even though we may become occupying the same space simultaneously, we're each simultaneously in two different "someplace elses". "Sensitive technical deployments" of technology are a lot more than possible, such as an app that uses facial recognition and Search on the internet to softly remind those folks with bad recollections of a colleague's name at a cultural function, smoothing out

cultural friction rather than creating social isolation. Therefore digital fabrication, once conceived in an effort to end scarcity, becomes a narrow channel for folks to obtain issues the marketplace cannot provide, because they are either bespoke or unlawful. The warning can be that we should assess a technology not based on what it was intended to do, however noble, but only on the basis of what it is observed to do used, and how quickly it really is rechanneled to entrench existing power structures to the detriment of you and me. (Or in the words of cyberneticist Stafford Beer, "[the] purpose of something is what it does.") The decision to action takes the proper execution of presenting four visions of possible technology-mediated futures, the extremes of which are not as well dissimilar from those sketched in the unrelated novella "Manna", as a proactive approach to the reader: "...people with remaining politics of any stripe absolutely cannot allow their eye to glaze more than when the topic of conversation turns to technology, or in any way cede this terrain to its existing inhabitants, for to take action is to surrender the commanding heights of the modern situation."Although occasionally the author's tone of voice crosses over in to the overtly polemical, the book as a whole can be an informed tour de force that needs to be required reading not merely for anyone functioning at the technological frontier, but also for anyone who would like to understand the opportunities we are potentially leaving on the table by allowing the sociable infiltration of those technologies to develop untrammeled. Indeed the "clever metropolitan areas" and "Internet of issues" credo appears to be that there is "only one common and transcendently correct option to each identified specific or collective human want; Thought provoking I had recently been rethinking a few of the dependencies of my entire life, technologically anyway. It litters the socio-technical landscape with technological ingredients (in the form of code libraries, e. It conveys the core concepts of every technology, the vision of its proponents, social and political implications, and also the ways it might either fail to catch on, or the ways it might go wrong. Without strictly becoming for or against any particular technology or advancement, it offers us the tools for making our own assessments, for measuring these tendencies against our very own values, expectations, and fears. It's very much of the Trump era: people are either intelligent and good (and on the left, in this particular case) or dumb and evil (and on the right). This cannot be solved by thermodynamics because it relies on social (not statistical) inequality. Self-Limited Technically, this book is very good - in places the emphasis seems just a little off, suggesting that the author's understanding isn't quite right, yet I didn't notice an individual major blooper. It gives a useful, critical assessment of many (no biotech for reasons uknown) upcoming tehcnologies. Nevertheless the author raises some reputable questions and worries about where our latest technologies are taking us. I came across this book tough to read. This is clarified in the ultimate chapter which exorts those on "the left" to be more associated with new tech.Maybe this explains some of the presentation, which is a little tribal.I think about this to be a critical book for anyone who wants to better understand a few of the key technological tendencies of our time, their impacts, and methods we may still be able to shape more positive outcomes. Devices that do weird, sometimes amazing, often dumb items, exactly like their creators. For instance, the way a blockchain relies on marketplace forces (greed) to provide distributed security is usually a neat twist that raises queries about how exactly it can be used in other applications. It's an excellent contrast to the hype-driven content (both hopelessly optimistic and pessimistically dystopian) you often discover about these topics. Machine learning algorithms that could help predict where and by whom crimes may be committed are rather being deployed in China to encumber citizens with a "karma points" system which will determine access to virtually all social goods and services--eerily similar to the fictitious one in "Nosedive", Season 3 Episode 1 of "Black Mirror". My only stage of minor criticism relates to the book's structure, which is split into chapters that deal with specific technologies one at a time. I found this publication to be both illuminating and terrifying. It's not unusual to see some aspect of a technology being derided when utilized by the proper, then praised when utilized by the still left. It further divides haves from have-nots.And that's a pity, since when we get to the debate on artificial

intelligence this simplistic binary division between great and evil obscures the idea that we're creating pictures in our own likeness.This insufficient empathy for the (real and imagined) other is a pity because - apart from the lazy caricatures - the author misses some interesting points. And we've managed - regardless of the current political disaster in the USA - to be friends with this (with one another) for millenia. The solution to many legal issues with AI (and, of course, the foundation of many more) could come from recognising that they are mirrors of our own, imperfect selves. Important reading for citizens of our digital age Good outline and appraisal of a range of the latest digital technologies, from artificial intelligence to blockchain and more. Importantly, goes beyond the all-to-common boosterism to critically consider the true potential of these technologies, highlight their interpersonal impacts and determine potential issues for citizens and policy makers. Full of wonderful insights. As a developer and an educator Full of wonderful insights. As a developer and an educator, I came across this useful on many amounts. Greenfield takes on the problems of our age that deserve instant, intense reflection and analysis. Where are our current leading technology taking us? I couldn't work out who was the target audience. Tone seemed relatively melancholy and very academic as if it was created to the author's very own peers, and I was just getting half the discussion.For most of the publication, though, I was a little confused. Often the technology creators themselves have no idea how their inventions will be utilized. Privacy may be one of our sacrifices. Sorry, there aren't any warm fuzzy emotions here. A terrific publication that strikes a well-considered balance between your real political potential offered by new systems on the one hand, and the countless (institutional, ideological, technological) limitations they encounter when interacting both with one another and with the world around us on the other..In short, we have invited companies, standards bodies, and potentially malicious hackers to intervene in the "innermost precincts of our lives", perilous precisely because those activities are so banal we're not susceptible to worrying about who is observing or intermediating them. A terrific book that strikes a well-considered balance between the genuine . Greenfield writes with enthusiasm, eloquence, and huge knowledgeability about these topics, in language that is available and engaging without sacrificing nuance or complexity.The book is divided into chapters by technology. This helps it be harder for the publication all together to build a real feeling of momentum or develop a single solid argument, while also (unavoidably, I believe) yielding a sense of repetitiveness on occasion. Once you're about 20 webpages in though, you'll quickly latch onto Adam Greenfields tone and cadence and value the publication for what it really is - a detailed/nuanced breakdown on core technologies such as the smartphone, IoT, AI that's therefore thoughtfully conveyed that the simple act of deliberately eating each chapter will broaden your understanding and perspective on each one of these game-changers. A critically important book, a guide for our time This book is a a fantastic field guide to the sometimes mysterious technologies that are either already an integral part of our lives or stand a chance of being integral soon, visibly or invisibly." Yet data is hardly without biases, you start with the decision of what data to get and how exactly to taxonomize it, and actually in the best-intentioned instances, can be misused following the reality, as happened when occupying German forces "weaponized" Dutch identity-card data to look for those of "unwanted" ethnicities and races (and the Trump administration aims to do with DACA registrations). Each follows a similar pattern: a good, non-technical primer, arguments showing the way the right will abuse things (or has recently), a discussion of the way the still left can't quite use this to advantage, and the final outcome that we are all doomed. Just how that he deconstructs our items - going backwards for us. Anyway, this book is normally interesting and thought-provoking. Better than I thought it was going to be Initially I had my doubts with this one - I mean, after all, who could the mark audience be for a bookish publication (told in a rather erudite manner) spotlighting some of today's most transformative technologies and how their inevitable growths and evolutions will continue to drastically the world for better and even worse? But these are small quibbles about a significant book that comes strongly suggested. If you have ever found yourself left out

of the dialogue on emergent tech such as block chain, crypto currency or machine learning after that this book is a good way to truly get you up to speed and prepared to enter the fray. Five Stars Good.

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