



Always on: How the Iphone Unlocked the Anything-Anytime-Anywhere Future--And Locked Us in

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An intriguing, definitive analysis of technology's current all-in-one revolution, and a serious reflection on the social implications of an always on society.

Always on: How the Iphone Unlocked the Anything-Anytime-Anywhere Future--And Locked Us in Details

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From Reader Review Always on: How the iPhone Unlocked the Anything-Anytime-Anywhere Future--And Locked Us in for online ebook

Greg says

I was expecting this book to be simply a list of the author's favorite iPhone apps and some cheerleading for Apple products, but it turned out to be much more than that.

Chen covers the iPhone beat for Wired magazine, so he knows the subject well. In this book, he gives a summary of the entire history of Apple and its development of the iPhone.

Then he tackles the question, "Are 'always on' digital devices that can answer any question on the spot good or bad for us individually and as a society?" Do smart phones and tablets make us smarter or dumber?

He cites lots of studies on the uses of iPhones in schools and brain plasticity.

I don't think I give anything away when I say he decides that, like any technology, the benefits depend on how it is used.

Arnav Shah says

Well written and many interesting threads of thoughts, but felt incomplete and short lived. The examples are great, but there's little depth that hold this all together. This book is great to get one started in thinking about the way portable computers affect us. Coverage on relevant history is solid. Recommended for everyone that works with app phones.

Stephanie Moore says

I had to skip to the end it 3/4 of the way through to see if any of the information presented was going to go anywhere. It just felt like lots of interesting factoids strung together in a way that doesn't really go anywhere interesting... not as "big picture" as the jacket notes suggest it's going to be. Boo.

Nadia Aubin-Horth says

I was waiting for this book to come out. I wanted to think about this topic and thought that reading the book would spark some thoughts on my own life and how I manage (or not) the "always connected" life. Having finished it, I think I can say that Mr. Chen is not sure if he loves or hates the always on life, which is interesting, since the book seems to try to look at both advantages and problems. What is less interesting, is that some arguments seemed to rely on little data, or anecdotal stories about a single person or event. All in

all I don't regret reading it but it left me waiting for a real synthesis of the different aspects presented over the book.

Corey McNair says

Read it because I flipped to the best part while I was at the library. Yes, phones are diverting us from other people, yet they are increasingly essential to our daily lives. Hearing the author try and fail to live without using texting or e-mailing was interesting, but the rest of the book is comprised of dull factoids about iPhones and Droids that don't amount to much. At least it's a quick read.

Toni Chanakas says

Great overview of how the electronic age has enhanced our daily lives. I liked how Brian did a study where he didn't use any digital media and how it was very difficult to work and interact. We have become addicted or smartphones and electronic devices are necessary to conduct business and to socially interact. It is so much easier to send a text or an email than to meet personally.

I was engaged from page one until the end where new devices will surface that is being done right now - augmented reality (AR).

Matthew Ciarvella says

Interesting to see how many of the predictions made in 2011 have come true here in 2016. Pokemon Go certainly supports Chen's predictions about augmented reality and its possibilities. On the other hand, the failure of Google Glass suggests that the march towards wearable tech might not be quite as straightforward as we'd like to think.

Overall, this book's biggest problem is its length. Its title promises to discuss how the iPhone (well, the smartphone, really, but the iPhone is the flagship example) unlocked everything while locking us in, but the brief arguments made to that point mostly seem to equate to "eh, maybe?"

Melody says

Overall, this analysis of the iPhone (and its followers) and its effect on our culture was interesting. I know mine has changed the way I used and retrieve information in a big way. I am old enough to remember a world without the internet, and having to walk to the library to find out who sang Brunnhilde in the Met's 1934 production of Die Walkure, for instance. It's better now.

I found Chen's dogged insistence that the studies showing that the always on culture is not ideal are deeply flawed, while the opposite ones are perfectly accurate fairly strident. I understand he's got several dogs in this hunt, but I began to feel weary the 8th time he hit me over the head with one.

Aaron Jacob says

A pretty good account of how mobile devices are affecting our lives and our society.

i've read two other books on this subject so far this year (i don't know why i never bothered before this year... i am a subscriber to wired and a habitual reader of gizmodo, i09, and other tech/sciencey type sites...) and this one was the most sober and straight forward of the lot.

You can't really compare it to Nicholas Carr's "The Shallows," even though it is in the same vein. Shallows is way more in-depth neurologically and historically. though it does tend to seem doom-and-gloom, i didn't see it that way. That book, and Chen's Always On could act as companion pieces, telling slightly different versions of the same story. It offers nice counterpoints to Carr's book, and Always On does this without it sounding preachy, vainglorious, or senselessly cheerleading, like Nick Bilton's "I Live In The Future (and this is how it works)." which from the very first page, turned me off. Bilton ended up sounding like a tech-savy frat boy -

"you don't like tech? WELL FUCK YOU. YOU'RE STUPID."

- i guess my impression of Nick Bilton doesn't come off on "intarwebz" so well... le sigh.

The only reason i'm giving it 4 stars is that i feel like the book wasn't long enough, and the lead-ins from chapter to chapter were a bit rough. I was also a bit dissapointed in the end, feeling it a bit abrupt. all in all, it's a fine book and should be read by anyone who likes to examine the world of Tech.

Cathie says

I have had an I phone since it first came out. I have been amazed with the speed of my adaption.

-Have a question about the Nile river google it.

-want to take a picture than send it in a email, post it on face book add it with notes for later reference.

It can all be done in your hand. And I have many times a day.

This book talked about where we are today. Where we might be tomorrow. And some of the challenges that come with it.

Absolutly fascinating.

Scottsdale Public Library says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The author manages to keep a delicate balance between the technological/business and social aspects of Apple's iPhone and how those aspects come into play in every one's life--whether you own an iPhone or not. He gives enough thought-provoking information with only subtle pushes for the pros and cons of the iPhone's impact and implications. But just as he has you leaning toward thinking one way, he will gently show you reasons why you may go the other direction. Brilliant topic, writing and author combination. -- Kassandra V-L

Lauren Ruth says

This is a fairly superficial book, and a very light read. But it does have some interesting nuggets.

Does the multitasking (or constant distraction, depending on how you see it) enabled by the iPhone bear any responsibility for degrading our ability to concentrate? It's a question worth asking, but the 3 or 4 studies of a handful of college kids cited here are not going to answer it. The light treatment and slightly defensive tone of this discussion is about what you'd expect from a guy who works for *Wired*. The experiment at Abilene Christian Univ. to throw out textbooks and class discussions and instead have students Google all their classroom study topics gives me hives. Don't get me wrong; I think Google's a great boon for researchers; I remember how much more arduous research used to be.

But college is where learning is supposed to be guided. It's supposed to give you the critical thinking skills to deal with being thrown into the deep end, later on. Sounds to me like a great big abdication of teacher responsibility. You may choose to believe that Facebook mirrors your real-world social life rather than replacing it; you may choose to believe that a rise in Facebook user's self-esteem is a result of real achievements rather than fooling oneself. But an author is usually expected to produce some evidence for such bald statements, not just a few dubious anecdotes. And, after poor Tyler Clementi's suicide, are we really asking if privacy matters?

I learned a few interesting tidbits: an iPhone app that helped save the life of a resourceful hurricane victim, a parental-controls app that spied on the kids it was supposed to be "protecting," and sent data about their online behavior to marketers. Oddly, Mr Chen tells both stories in the same breezy tone. He can't wholeheartedly defend the problematic technologies he's discussing, but he doesn't want to admit the things he loves are as problematic as they are. So he takes no firm stand at all.

Justin Hermiz says

this book was about how the iPhone is a revolutionary device that has changed the world. the iPhone has allowed people to do things more easily such as book a table for lunch, or be able to read first aid advice at anytime. the book just explains how the iPhone has created a , as the author describes it "anything-anytime-anywhere future".

the book was very informative, but i gave it a two, mostly because to me it read like a documentary. it was all facts and statistics and just about how the iPhone has succeeded in more ways than it ever dreamed.and how apple is both pleased and disappointed with its results.

"our products will enable us to do more than they ever have before, as their capabilities will be expandable with the tap of a download button(Chen 06)". he makes it sound so simple, but as you read and he talks about the history of apple, especially when they almost went bankrupt , you see the dark side of the story, but you now see the obvious, that they control all of the market areas they enter.

this book also connects to how we discussed the way that apple was better choice, just like when we write

college essays to persuade a college. apple did the same, they showed the world they could be this mighty tech empire that used to be on the verge of bankruptcy and multiple lawsuits.

i would recommend this book to people who are very tech savvy, or apple savvy. i would also recommend this book to people who are very interested in apple's revolutionary vertical style of economics and production, which has granted them success.

Socraticgadfly says

A disappointment. Chen is a former writer for Macworld, and, while I could tell the book was thin by picking it up at the library, nonetheless, with the dust cover promising to talk about vertical integration, issues I've called "infowars" on my blog, I still expected a more critical eye on Mac. I agree with Chen about Android's open source kind of biting back Google, but Chen appears to worry not that much about Apple's semi-dictatorial vertical control, only enough to slap it on the hands as if he was trying to appear not too biased. As far as psychological-type implications of people being "always on," it wasn't that deep that way, either.

John T. O'Farrell says

Brian Chen does a good job of providing a very broad overview of the impact of being in an "always on" society. Of course to provide a broad view many of the topics he explores only scratches the surface. I was impressed that he did give more attention to the consequences and benefits of closed app environments versus open web than I was expecting.

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\nA decent easy to read, I recommend this book especially to those interested in the mobile space but who may be at a novice level of really understanding it (which I suspect may be more of them we would like to think).

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\nNOTE: If you do read this book please note the first two chapters could have been condensed down to about three or four pages. Skim them!

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