



I Live in the Future & Here's How It Works: Why Your World, Work, and Brain Are Being Creatively Disrupted

Nick Bilton

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Are we driving off a digital cliff and heading for disaster, unable to focus, maintain concentration, or form the human bonds that make life worth living? Are media and business doomed and about to be replaced by amateur hour?

The world, as Nick Bilton—with tongue-in-cheek—shows, has been going to hell for a long, long time, and what we are experiencing is the twenty-first-century version of the fear that always takes hold as new technology replaces the old. In fact, as Bilton shows, the digital era we are part of is, in all its creative and disruptive forms, the foundation for exciting and engaging experiences not only for business but society as well.

Both visionary and practical, *I Live in the Future & Here's How It Works* captures the zeitgeist of an emerging age, providing the understanding of how a radically changed media world is influencing human behavior:

- With a walk on the wild side—through the porn industry—we see how this business model is leading the way, adapting product to consumer needs and preferences and beating piracy.
- By understanding how the Internet is creating a new type of consumer, the “consumnivre,” living in a world where immediacy trumps quality and quantity, we see who is dictating the type of content being created.
- Through exploring the way our brains are adapting, we gain a new understanding of the positive effect of new media narratives on thinking and action. One fascinating study, for example, shows that surgeons who play video games are more skillful than their nonplaying counterparts.
- Why social networks, the openness of the Internet, and handy new gadgets are not just vehicles for telling the world what you had for breakfast but are becoming the foundation for “anchoring communities” that tame information overload and help determine what news and information to trust and consume and what to ignore.
- Why the map of tomorrow is centered on “Me,” and why that simple fact means a totally new approach to the way media companies shape content.
- Why people pay for experiences, not content; and why great storytelling and extended relationships will prevail and enable businesses to engage with customers in new ways that go beyond merely selling information, instead creating unique and meaningful experiences.

I Live in the Future & Here's How It Works walks its own talk by creating a unique reader experience: Semacodes embedded in both print and eBook versions will take readers directly to Bilton's website (www.NickBilton.com), where they can access videos of the author further developing his point of view and also delve into the research that was key to shaping the central ideas of the book. The website will also offer links to related content and the ability to comment on a chapter, allowing the reader to join the conversation.

I Live in the Future & Here's How It Works: Why Your World, Work, and Brain Are

Being Creatively Disrupted Details

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Kevin Connery says

Possibly better if read as a soapbox rant, or fiction rather than non-fiction. The author tries to make a case about some things and cites a lot of research, but, while he's honest enough to list the counter-points, he hand-waves almost all of them as not applicable or wrong (without any support for that position), and touts the points from the studies that he does agree with--again, often without offering any more than his opinion that it's correct. Granted, he does collect a lot of studies about how media is changing, and how people's brain pattern's respond to certain kinds of changes, but he fails to connect them in any reasonable fashion. If you don't mind non-science masquerading as science, and are willing to wade through that nonsense to get to a large collection of links and names of studies, it's worthwhile. Maybe.

Kristin Emmons says

The ideas -while a little dated at this point - are definitely worthy of consideration and thought. An enjoyable read.

Gianfranco Ruffini says

Giornalistico. Facile, priorità

Trish says

My initial review of this title in December 2010 was unkind and perhaps even unfair to the author. Since that time I have spent a great deal more time becoming involved with online media and social networking, and I'm not completely sure he isn't right in some major ways. Now, in April 2011, the below more closely reflects my current thinking.

Years ago I read a book by Jeff Gomez called Print is Dead. Gomez electrified me by writing something we know but may have never articulated: (to paraphrase)"It's not how you read something, it's the ideas that count." Bilton covers some of that same ground, but with an updated focus. While Gomez may have been talking about eBooks and online newspapers at the time, twitter and Facebook didn't exist. Social networking sites have become important tools to use in the information landscape that shapes our worldview, according to Bilton.

Bilton thinks it's OK to just go with what your family, neighbors, and friends tell you about the world. Research shows that "most people do." When I read this, I felt scandalized. It's downright frightening, when we have so much at stake in our lives, our democracy, and our global communities, that we don't spend more time with authoritative sources to learn what we need to know to make informed decisions. I felt in the minority, and it didn't give me ease. I read on because Bilton flamed George Packer (author of Assassins'

Gate and a *New Yorker* staff writer) for not wanting to hear what people had for breakfast on Twitter. I admire Packer immensely and would love to be considered aligned with him, *but*...after having participated in social networking and online media for some time now, I realize that no one really wants to follow those that talk exclusively about trivia, unless as diversion from more important things. But I do agree with Packer's contention that one just has to shut out the world sometimes and sit down and "do it" if one is trying to assimilate a complicated group of facts and ideas, or write something original.

Bilton says that "online name recognition and trust may be more important than simply affiliating with a trusted institution..." Hmm. I still don't think I agree with this. I read him because he was NYTimes correspondent. Maybe once a personality has made their name with a "trusted institution" people will *follow* them to new places, but to begin...it would be rare. Could be done, I suppose. Anyway, I have less certainty now...I have always been most certain about those things I know less about :)

Bilton writes he "virtually never feels overwhelmed" by information. I scoffed in my original review, and this contention still surprises me. I have seen something from him lately (yes, I have begun to follow him on Twitter) that suggests information overload is still not a problem for him. I admit to skepticism, though perhaps tinged with a grudging admiration. How can it be? But I can see why he doesn't go to the media aggregators: I can barely get there with email and Twitter and Facebook and whatever else filling my inbox. I suppose Bilton feels that he gets his daily dose of important news and thoughtful riposte from his circle and he is perhaps better organized and better connected than the rest of us. Okay, I'm not worried about him. I worry about us.

I read on because Bilton said that there are immigrants to technology (anyone over 40) and there are "digital natives." He is probably right about this, though I admit it creeps me out that 40 is the new "old." I thought he was the digital native that was going to unlock the secrets. But he says he is a borderline native. No secrets on how to be reborn a native, then.

My assessment of the book now is now a step removed. When I first read it, I was aghast: my *family* and *friends* giving me the *news* I need to make informed decisions about the world? Clearly he doesn't know my family or my friends. Twitter adding to my stock of important knowledge in 140 characters or less? But I think I see what Bilton means: it is incumbent upon each of us to *find* the "friends" that are going to allow us to make informed decisions about the world. The news aggregators will be there, but many of us have too many sources now to read the paper cover to cover. We must go by number of times our friends have pointed out that this information is crucial. And many times news aggregators are giving us old news...more fully understood and comprehensively sketched news, yes, but not news as it is happening necessarily. News aggregators are still going to be important, but even they have their doubts about that. Their role is/has clearly changed.

Anyway, perhaps because I wrote a negative review when I first read it, this book has stayed with me. Being afraid about the future is fruitless and unproductive. We still need to seek out information, but more important, perhaps, is Bilton's contention that we must find ways to be part of *communities*. Actually, one of the more interesting discussions in the book included an introduction to Benedict Anderson's (Cornell Professor Emeritus) new definition of nation. It seems to me that a nation is going to include people we don't agree with--perhaps don't even like very much--and in order for the society to operate well, we must put aside our own preferences and attitudes and shore up the lives of others by working together. But Bilton talks about communities we *choose* to participate in. Bilton raises the idea of "homophily," or "living within a segregated bubble" in any nation but claims it is not happening: "we see drastically more opinions and viewpoints than we do in traditional media such as television and newsprint." Is this why we see such divisiveness, practically anarchy, everywhere on the web? Because we get more information about the thinking of those we don't agree with? Anyway, I'm going to take the step of recommending this book for interested readers and book clubs. The arguments will rage. I actually wouldn't mind hearing what others think about this piece of work.

Christine says

In the middle of reading this now on my Kindle app, so far it's excellent.

Baylee says

Puoi trovare questa recensione anche sul mio blog, La siepe di more

Sono rimasta un po' delusa da questo libro, che credo sia la prima (e per ora unica) cantonata che ho preso nello scegliere i libri per la 2017 Read Harder Challenge. Non penso sia del tutto colpa di Nick Bilton, ma questo non-fiction è invecchiato un po' male.

Dico questo perché è un libro del 2010: sembra quasi impossibile, visto che stiamo parlando di un passato così recente, ma molte delle tecnologie (e servizi conseguenti) che oggi usiamo quotidianamente erano appena state introdotte, o addirittura non erano ancora nate. Per dire, gli smartphone e i tablet si sono sviluppati nei primi anni 2000, Spotify è del 2008, Netflix (per come la conosciamo oggi) del 2011 e così via.

Giusto per ribadire il concetto dell'invecchiamento precoce, vi dirò anche che in teoria *Io vivo nel futuro* doveva essere corredato di un'app e di contenuti ulteriori sul sito dell'autore, dei quali non c'è più alcuna traccia...

Il fatto è che è un libro focalizzato sugli aspetti positivi delle nuove tecnologie – il che andrebbe bene se non fosse che oggi siamo immersi in alcuni lati negativi nel 2010 appena accennati, ma adesso decisamente importanti. È un peccato, perché poi in *Io vivo nel futuro* ci sono anche informazioni interessanti, soprattutto su come gli esseri umani hanno fronte a cambiamenti così imponenti.

Jamie says

Maybe I read too many books like this, but this one didn't bring anything new to the table.

- Ch. 1 - Porn has always adapted to new technologies.
- Ch. 2 - The printing press, radio, and tv also changed the culture.
- ch. 3, 4 - digital natives don't consume news and entertainment like we do.
- ch. 5, 7 - is multitasking bad or just different?
- ch. 6 - social networking
- Ch. 8 - yep. it's changed alright.

If any of this seems new, this one is probably for you. If not, you could have probably written this book yourself.

John Norman says

Weak.

Brian Mackey says

Memo to corporate — if you read just one paragraph in this book, make it this one:

"It's not enough to sit idly by, ignoring and quieting the employee inside your company who doesn't buy CDs anymore, or canceled her cable television, or started playing video games instead of reading a book, or stopped buying the print edition of the newspaper. These people are trying to tell you about the future and how it works. It's up to you to listen."

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Jeff - ISB Utecht says

Just finished this book while traveling. Nick does a great job of outlining how our world has changed around us, and how we're struggling to take it all in. We know that society is changing we see it in the use of cell phones, the popularity of the Internet and around social-network sites.

What we're going to continue to see on the Web is more and more social-networking sites coming together to create communities. Whether it's a community at school, a community of students, or a community where you live, that's what the Web is really about.

This is going to have a great impact on education, because content is free and when content is free teachers have to understand that their job is no longer to deliver content, but to hold discussions about the content that students are reading on their own time. This new approach is called "Reverse Instruction" where what use to

be homework now becomes classwork and what use to be classwork is now homework.

A great book for anyone who loves the Internet and wants to understand what the Internet is really about and what the future holds for us as a global society.

William says

Nice read...I highly recommend for anyone thinking technology is ruining our society/culture...

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Ensiform says

The author, a technology reporter for the New York Times, shows the ways in which media have changed due to technology and how in turn this change shapes consumers' expectations of how media are consumed. He argues against the Luddite claims that short-form, rapid-fire media "bytes" are destroying our brains (though he allows that our brains are changing due to how we use technology). He also argues that despite the radical nature of recent change, and the ability to acquire vast amounts of specialized and personalized information free, consumers still value the same things they always have – quality and a good experience – and are willing to pay for them.

The book is hardly awe-inspiring prescience, just a solid grounding in the tech world and an eagerness to accept innovation. In fact, Bilton's a bit of a naïve Polyanna on some issues, saying for example that "Facebook was trying to create a better experience for its users" in sharing users' information (not, you know, trying to generate revenue?); or in defending video games, saying that consumers "will most likely play games as much as they read" – uh, no, certainly not. In fact, the very real issue is not that video games are somehow warping our brains by their very existence, but that they replace more in-depth and active mental stimulation such as reading and debating. Bilton makes good points about the editor's job being the same whether it's curating a broadsheet, a newspaper, or a blog, and the emerging role of the consumer as co-creator of the media, who values a specialized experience more than plain content. This information is useful and provides clues as to how the next generation of media might be used. But throughout the book, Bilton sidesteps his ideological opponents' actual claims, by dismissing studies of violence and video games as "preconceived notions," and more or less ignoring the speed, ubiquity and depth of change in consumers' attention spans, which are the real points of concern. In short, yes, Bilton's world, in which everyone games, tweets, blogs, chats, and reads weighty tomes with equal abandon, is a tech utopia – but it's not the real world.

Stephanie says

This book challenged me to rethink my rules about the use of cellphones and ipods during class. I am trying to be less legalistic. So far most students are fine. As in most of life, the few who are not able to handle the freedom will ruin it for the rest of us. I would say no more than a dozen students are unable to monitor their own use of the devices. That leaves 138 who are able to focus on classwork with only minimal electronic device usage.

Nick Bilton makes a nice case for the awesomeness of technology, which I pretty much agree with. I wish our institutional movement on technology would keep up a little better with real life!

Jessica says

I think I would have liked this book better if it offered me new information, but I am of his generation, already speaking his language. His book is persuasive to a generation older than me, with my iPhone streaming a personalized Reader feed full of news. But if I handed this book to someone who was a little older than me and prone to Luddite-ness, I think it would definitely have value.

I liked his letter to the media dinosaurs at the end. Because he's right, things will never look backward, only

forward, and those still insisting upon persecuting 'poster child' individuals for piracy should probably find a better way to deliver their content instead of holding so tightly to an archaic format and focusing so much energy on punishing people who are merely conforming to the times.

As an ex-Blockbuster employee, it was quite interesting to watch the choices the giant corporation make based on the idea that their 'brand' alone would carry them through. Guess what guys? It wasn't. You should have innovated your content delivery long ago instead of just piggy backing on other successful ideas and conceitedly thinking that the logo would carry you through...
