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Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds For The Better



Synopsis

How technology boosts our cognitive abilities—making us smarter, more productive, and more creative than ever before—is undeniable: technology is changing the way we think. But is it for the better? Amid a chorus of doomsayers, Clive Thompson votes yes. The Internet age has produced a radical new style of human intelligence, worthy of both celebration and investigation. We learn more and retain information longer, write and think with global audiences in mind, and even gain an ESP-like awareness of the world around us. Modern technology is making us smarter and better connected, both as individuals and as a society. In *Smarter Than You Think*, Thompson documents how every technological innovation—from the printing press to the telegraph—has provoked the very same anxieties that plague us today. We panic that life will never be the same, that our attentions are eroding, that culture is being trivialized. But as in the past, we adapt, learning to use the new and retaining what’s good of the old. Thompson introduces us to a cast of extraordinary characters who augment their minds in inventive ways. There’s the seventy-six-year-old millionaire who digitally records his every waking moment, giving him instant recall of the events and ideas of his life going back decades. There are the courageous Chinese students who mounted an online movement that shut down a \$1.6 billion toxic copper plant. There are experts and there are amateurs, including a global set of gamers who took a puzzle that had baffled HIV scientists for a decade and solved it collaboratively—in only one month. But *Smarter Than You Think* isn’t just about pioneers, nor is it simply concerned with the world we inhabit today. It’s about our future. How are computers improving our memory? How will our social “sixth sense” change the way we learn? Which tools are boosting our intelligence—and which ones are hindering our progress? *Smarter Than You Think* embraces and interrogates this transformation, offering a provocative vision of our shifting cognitive landscape.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this excursion into techno-optimism, Thompson discusses computerized, interconnected social activity. Relying on journalism's staple of the human-interest story, he describes individuals' experiences of exploring the Internet in pursuit of their interests. In Thompson's examples, those pursuits range from retrieving a personal memory to critiquing TV shows to finding a house for sale to researching proteins to organizing political movements. The commonalities Thompson finds among all those searches are prodigious data storage-and-retrieval capacities and the latent presence in cyberspace of someone interested in what you're interested in. Connecting interest with information animates Thompson's many anecdotes, whose motif of the delight felt by strangers or long-lost friends upon discovering a mutual concern propels his belief that Twitter, Facebook, and social-media sites built by amateurs positively motivate people to think and write better. To criticisms that social media degrade or isolate people, Thompson ripostes with studies or classroom examples that show improvements in learning and the creation of collaborative groups. A lively presenter with a sunny outlook, Thompson will engage readers drawn to the sociology of technology. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

The New York Times Book Review: "[A] judicious and insightful book on human and machine intelligence." Maria Popova, Brain Pickings: "Clive Thompson • one of the finest technology writers I know | makes a powerful and rigorously thought out counterpoint | Thompson is nothing if not a dimensional thinker with extraordinary sensitivity to the complexities of cultural phenomena. Rather than revisiting painfully familiar and trite-by-overuse notions like distraction and information overload, he examines the deeper dynamics of how these new tools are affecting the way we make sense of the world and of ourselves. Smarter Than You Think is excellent and necessary in its entirety." New York Magazine: "It's straw men everywhere in this debate. Mercifully, Thompson always works from data, not straw." Los Angeles Times: "Thompson | a lively thinker | is well-versed in media and technological history, revisiting some of the field's most valuable case

studies. His intellectual posture is one of informed optimism. Kirkus
Reviews: "A well-framed celebration of how the digital world will make us bigger, rather than
diminish us. Publishers Weekly: "[An] optimistic, fast-paced tale about the
advent of technology and its influence on humans. Joshua Foer, New York
Times bestselling author of Moonwalking with Einstein: "We should be grateful to have such
a clear-eyed and lucid interpreter of our changing technological culture as Clive Thompson. Smarter
Than You Think is an important, insightful book about who we are, and who we are
becoming." Chris Anderson, New York Times bestselling author
of Makers, Free, and The Long Tail: "Almost without noticing it, the Internet has become
our intellectual exoskeleton. Rather than just observing this evolution, Clive Thompson takes us to
the people, places and technologies driving it, bringing deep reporting, storytelling and analysis to
one of the most profound shifts in human history." Jane McGonigal, Ph.D., Author of Reality is
Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World: "There's good news in
this dazzling book: Technology is not the enemy. Smarter Than You Think reports on how the
digital world has helped individuals harness a powerful, collaborative intelligence becoming
better problem-solvers and more creative human beings." Clay Shirky, author of Here Comes
Everybody and Cognitive Surplus: "Thompson declares a winner in the cognitive fight
between human and computers: both together. Smarter Than You Think is an eye-opening
exploration of the ways computers think better with humans attached, and vice-versa." --This text
refers to the Paperback edition.

This book is a fantastic read. Be you technophile or luddite, this book is worth your time. I read both
this book and Nick Carr's 'The Shallows' simultaneously and really appreciated both books.
Although my personal prejudice is more closely aligned with Carr's, I found this book very helpful in
balancing my concerns about technology and the future role that it will play in our lives. While
reading this book, I felt that I was getting a glimpse into the not-so-distant future. Whereas 'The
Shallows' does a great job in raising awareness of the neurological impact of distracting technology
in our lives, this book provided an equally powerful wallop in helping calm some anxieties and excite
us with the possibilities of what new technology can do. Similar to Carr's 'Shallows', Thompson's
'Smarter' provides some new vocabulary to label and comprehend what's going in our
internet-saturated world. These new labels, from both books, enable us to think more clearly and
more rationally about the modern, digital world.

I bought this as a gift and my daughter loved it so much, I read it myself. Everyone in the family wants to read it now. It was even great beach reading! I learned a tremendous amount about technology. I came to understand why the younger people in my office have a different attitude toward meetings. I got ideas for my teaching. I was amazed at some of the inventions I'd never heard of before. Although I was initially skeptical of the premise, Thompson makes a good case for how technology can make us more social and--well--smarter.

Read this book to understand the unique life that we have lived within the digital age. Thompson does a great job linking the change in technology to earlier milestone changes in history. The book is not only informative but expands your concept of how the technology can be used on a global scale.

I enjoyed reading this book and recognized most of the social media and technology that was mentioned. Felt some nostalgia for some earlier efforts that were mentioned like Deep Blue and Space Invaders. Clearly and succinctly put in an interesting read, the author, gives evidence in the case of "how technology is changing literacy". I found the book to have a pleasantly optimistic tone balanced with some cautions and reality checks. The technological present and future may remain good places to be alive.

Just finished Smarter Than you Think by Clive Thompson. This is a great example of a well researched "pop sci" book, along the lines of Gladwell, but more evidence based. Clive has an academic style that is fun to read, and will send you to the kindle dictionary occasionally to look up words. As a NYTimes reporter, he has had access to some fascinating people, and also to some fascinating robots, i.e. Watson. Overall if you are interested in the impact on technology on memory and knowledge work, grab this book.

This book could have been from page one a drool book but was not. Instead was from page one a intuitively adapting book into commonplace technologies adapting the reader all around the world. Through all various levels of... grade school to gamer... all levels of education... and all levels of business.... It did not ever stop with information... And I'm glad this was my first book back into the reading fields again!!

This is a very informative, entertaining, and instructional read. You don't need to have an extensive

background in cognitive theory to understand this material. The author brilliantly explains difficult concepts in a way that is painless. Information is delivered explaining what you need to know about technology in order to take advantage of which tools work to enhance your or your child's learning technique. It's a whole new ball game out there and methods of research and learning will never be the same. Catch up while you can.

Clive takes complicated concepts and synthesizes them into incredible vivid and clear explanations with highly relevant examples. His ability to delve deep into the seemingly shallow yet difficult to understand technological world around us is extraordinary. He allowed me opportunities to reflect on my own technology and social media usage and frequently I had the "oh yeah" "aha" moments that I so enjoy when I read books like these. Highly recommend!

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