

Our Technological Lives

Frederiksberg HF 2024/2025

IRL

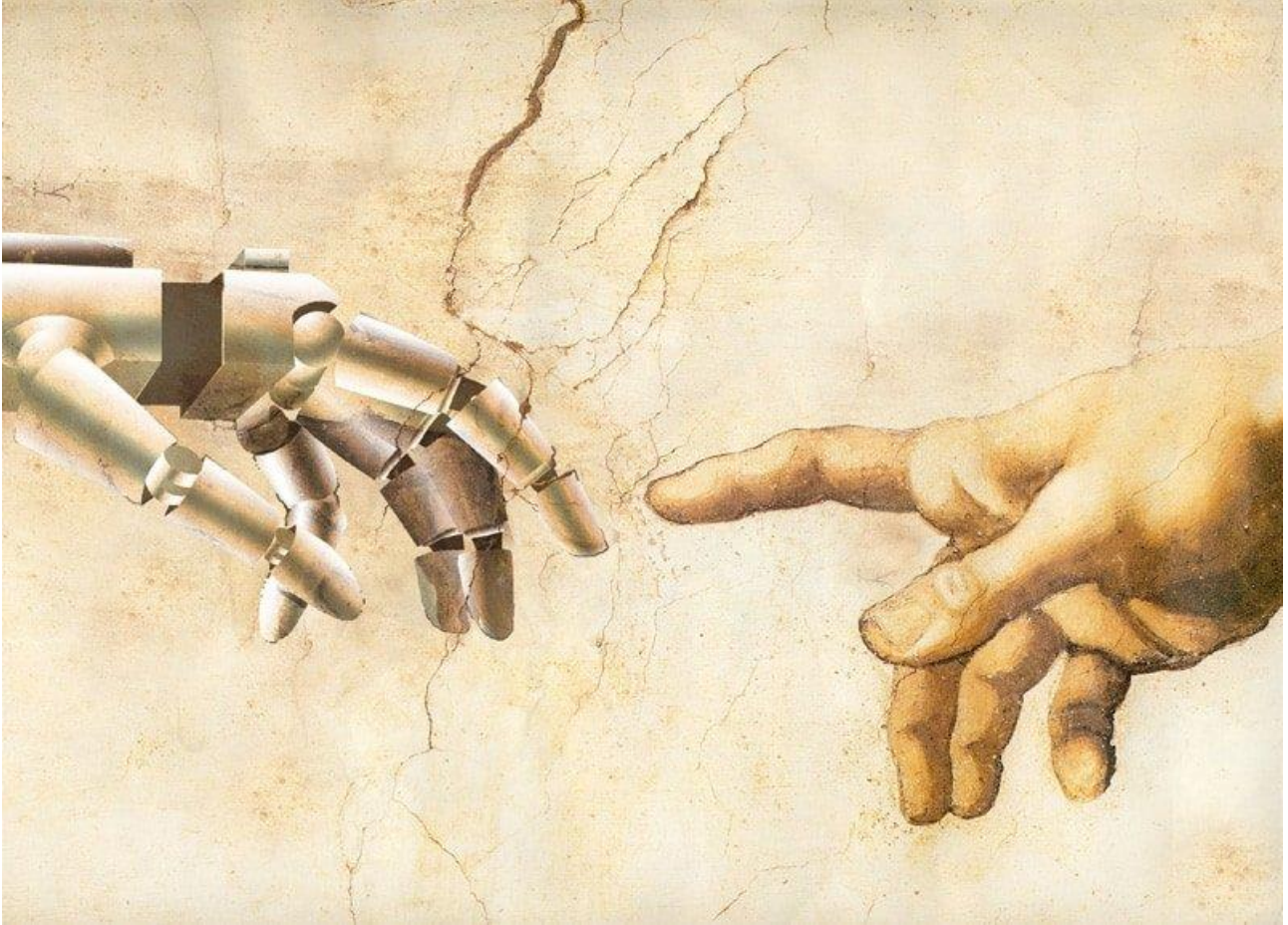


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Is Google Making Us Stupid?

What the Internet is doing to our brains

• By Nicholas Carr

im'placable *adj.*
uforsønlig
poignant *adj.* intens,
gribende
Odyssey *sb.* Odysseé –
eventyrlig rejse
circuit *sb.* strømkreds
for'lornly *adv.* ulykkeligt,
fortabt
tinker *vb.* rode med
neural *adj.* nerve-
circuitry *sb.* kredsløb
I'mmerse *vb.* fordybe
narrative *sb.* fortælling
fidgety *adj.* rastløs

“DAVE, STOP. STOP, WILL YOU?” Stop, Dave. Will you stop, Dave?” So the supercomputer HAL pleads with the implacable astronaut Dave Bowman in a famous and weirdly poignant scene toward the end of *Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey*. Bowman, having nearly been sent to a deep-space death by the malfunctioning machine, is calmly, coldly disconnecting the memory circuits that control its artificial “brain.” “Dave, my mind is going,” HAL says, forlornly. “I can feel it. I can feel it.”

I can feel it, too. Over the past few years I’ve had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn’t going – so far as I can tell – but it’s changing. I’m not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I’m reading. Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I’d spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That’s rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something

Google
UK

Is Google Making Us Stupid?

Google Search I'm Feeling Lucky

else to do. I feel as if I'm always dragging my wayward brain back to the text. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle.

I think I know what's going on. For more than a decade now, I've been spending a lot of time online, searching and surfing and sometimes adding to the great databases of the Internet. The Web has been a godsend to me as a writer. Research that once required days in the stacks or periodical rooms of libraries can now be done in minutes. A few Google searches, some quick clicks on hyperlinks, and I've got the telltale fact or pithy quote I was after. Even when I'm not working, I'm as likely as not to be foraging in the Web's info-thickets, reading and writing e-mails, scanning headlines and blog posts, watching videos and listening to podcasts, or just tripping from link to link to link. (Unlike footnotes, to which they're sometimes likened, hyperlinks don't merely point to related works; they propel you toward them.)

For me, as for others, the Net is becoming a universal medium, the conduit for most of the information that flows through my eyes and ears and into my mind. The advantages of having immediate access to such an incredibly rich store of information are many, and they've been widely described and duly applauded. "The perfect recall of silicon memory," Wired's Clive Thompson *has written*, "can be an enormous boon to thinking." But that boon comes at a price. As the media theorist *Marshall McLuhan* pointed out in the 1960s, media are not just passive channels of information. They supply the stuff of thought, but they also shape the process of thought. And what the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.

I'm not the only one. When I mention my troubles with reading to friends and acquaintances – literary types, most of them – many say they're having similar experiences. The more they use the Web, the more they have to fight to stay focused on long pieces of writing. Some of the bloggers I follow have also begun mentioning the phenomenon. *Scott Karp, who writes a blog about online media*, recently confessed that he has stopped reading books altogether. "I was a lit major in college, and used to be [a] voracious book reader," he wrote. "What happened?" He speculates on the answer: "What if I do all my reading on the web not so much because the way I read has changed, i.e. I'm just seeking convenience, but because the way I THINK has changed?"

[...]

wayward *adj.* egensindig, ulydig
a godsend *sb.* som sendt fra himlen
re'quire *vb.* kræve
telltale *sb.* informative, bevis
pithy *adj.* fyndig, bevingede
forage *vb.* rode efter
thicket *sb.* vildnis
liken *vb.* sammenligne
merely *adv.* blot
pro'pel *vb.* drive
conduit *sb.* medie, mellemlid
duly *adv.* behørigt
recall *sb.* her: anvendelse
boon *sb.* fordel
su'pply *vb.* levere
shape *vb.* forme
chip away *vb.* hugge, slå en flis af
contem'pation *sb.* ovevejelse, fordybelse
swiftly *adv.* hurtigt
zip *vb.* suse
ac'quaintances *sb.* bekendt
con'fess *vb.* tilstå, indrømme
lit major *sb.* have hovedfag i litteratur
vo'racious reader *sb.* læsehest
con'venience *sb.* bekvemmelighed

u'biquity *sb.*
allestedsnærvarrelse
e'merge *vb.* fremkom
mere *adj.* kun, blot
disen'gage *vb.* fra- eller
afkoblet
cog'nition *sb.* erkendelse
de'vice *sb.* apparat
i'mmeasurably *adv.*
umådelig
sub'sume *vb.* omfatte
ab'sorb *vb.* opsuge
gewgaws *sb.* dingel-
dangel, unyttigt legetøj
scatter *vb.* sprede
di'ffuse *vb.* diffundere,
sprede
a'ttune *vb.* tilpasse
capsule *vb.* stærkt
sammentrængt
info-snippet *sb.*
informationsbid

Thanks to the ubiquity of text on the Internet, not to mention the popularity of text-messaging on cell phones, we may well be reading more today than we did in the 1970s or 1980s, when television was our medium of choice. But it's a different kind of reading, and behind it lies a different kind of thinking – perhaps even a new sense of the self. “We are not only what we read,” says Maryanne Wolf, a developmental psychologist at Tufts University and the author of *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. “We are how we read.” Wolf worries that the style of reading promoted by the Net, a style that puts “efficiency” and “immediacy” above all else, may be weakening our capacity for the kind of deep reading that emerged when an earlier technology, the printing press, made long and complex works of prose commonplace. When we read online, she says, we tend to become “mere decoders of information.” Our ability to interpret text, to make the rich mental connections that form when we read deeply and without distraction, remains largely disengaged.

[...]

The Internet promises to have particularly far-reaching effects on cognition. In a paper published in 1936, the British mathematician Alan Turing proved that a digital computer, which at the time existed only as a theoretical machine, could be programmed to perform the function of any other information-processing device. And that's what we're seeing today. The Internet, an immeasurably powerful computing system, is subsuming most of our other intellectual technologies. It's becoming our map and our clock, our printing press and our typewriter, our calculator and our telephone, and our radio and TV.

When the Net absorbs a medium, that medium is re-created in the Net's image. It injects the medium's content with hyperlinks, blinking ads, and other digital gewgaws, and it surrounds the content with the content of all the other media it has absorbed. A new e-mail message, for instance, may announce its arrival as we're glancing over the latest headlines at a newspaper's site. The result is to scatter our attention and diffuse our concentration.

The Net's influence doesn't end at the edges of a computer screen, either. As people's minds become attuned to the crazy quilt of Internet media, traditional media have to adapt to the audience's new expectations. Television programs add text crawls and pop-up ads, and magazines and newspapers shorten their articles, introduce capsule summaries, and crowd their pages with easy-to-browse info-snippets. When, in March of this

year, The New York Times decided to devote the second and third pages of every edition to article abstracts, its design director, Tom Bodkin, explained that the “shortcuts” would give harried readers a quick “taste” of the day’s news, sparing them the “less efficient” method of actually turning the pages and reading the articles. Old media have little choice but to play by the new-media rules.

Never has a communications system played so many roles in our lives – or exerted such broad influence over our thoughts – as the Internet does today. Yet, for all that’s been written about the Net, there’s been little consideration of how, exactly, it’s reprogramming us. The Net’s intellectual ethic remains obscure.

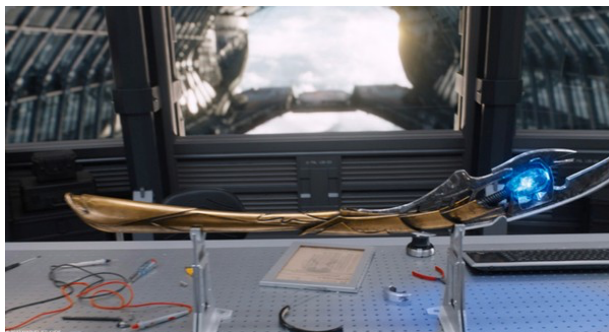
harried *adj.* plaget,
stresset
e'xert *vb.* udøve
ob'scure *adj.* lidet kendt,
uigennemskuelig

Smartphones Aren't Addictive — But Their Increasing Usage Points To Bigger Problems

5 Jason Hreha (Co-founder and head of the Walmart Behavioral Science Team, Lead researcher in the Stanford Persuasive Technology), Medium, April 20, 2017. [Link](#).

Back in 2012 I was worried. Really worried.

- 10 I felt that, like Tony Stark in The Avengers, I had come across some secret power that, in the wrong hands, could cause great destruction.



Loki's Behavior Design staff

- 15 While I was mainly working on self-improvement and wellness products, I thought that I might be on the verge of opening Pandora's box.

“Behavior Design” was just getting popular, and I was one of the people at the forefront of the movement. We were getting quite good at creating fun, easy-to-use, habit-forming apps. What if those with improper aims grasped this power? What if gaming companies could get people to use their apps for so long they would later need reconstructive thumb-joint surgery? What if e-commerce titans could get people to purchase books until they defaulted on their mortgages and sold off their pet cats to support the habit?

- 20
25 In a moment of guilt, I wrote an article for GigaOm called “When Did Addiction Become a Good Thing?”. [You can read it here](#).

However, over the years, I've become more and more skeptical that digital addiction is a true addiction. Part of this is due to my neuroscience background. In many of my college courses, we studied the neurobiology of addiction. The dramatic biochemical and neuroanatomical changes there seemed like they would require quite robust biochemical insults—from drugs/chemicals instead of Pokemon or Instagram.

- 30
35 [...]

On the Verge: *tæt på*
Pandora's box: *Pandoras aske (kilde til uoverskuelige besværligheder)*
behaviour design: *adfærdsdesign*
habit-forming: *vanedannende*
Improper aims: *Uarligt/upassende mål*
thumb-joint: *tommelfingerled*
e-commerce: *internethandel*
defaulted: *forsømte*
mortgages: *lån*
Neuroscience: *neurovidenskab*

True Addiction

5 It was about 5:15 in the morning and I was cold. My breath formed clouds in front of me as I scampered down the sidewalk, head down from the strain of my backpack.

10 Suddenly, in the dead quiet of the early morning, I felt a bony hand clutch my shoulder. A tingly, electric jolt shot through me. Adrenaline. I jumped back and looked up at the gaunt, sweatshirt-clad figure that loomed in front of me. There was just enough light for me to catch the structure of his face: a set of interlocking rectangles—all sharp angles. He was in bad shape; an emaciated homeless man.

15 And there I was, face to face with this figure, adrenaline coursing through my veins, ready to fight if necessary.

“Want some crack?”

His voice was froggy, high pitched.

He continued: “How much money you got? Five bucks?”

20 I tried to walk forward, but he was surprisingly fast. He blocked my path and lurched towards me.

Again: “I’ll take anything you got. Here — I’ve got crack. Five bucks.”

25 We were going to collide. I put my hands out in front of me and felt his sunken chest press into my hands. I pushed as hard as I could. He went back a few feet, tripping a little, startled.

30 This gave me enough space for me to make my move. I was off and running down the street to my apartment — safe. [...]

About 5 years later, long after I had moved out of that area (The Mission), I found myself in the subway station near that same street corner. I was poking my hands around in my pockets, looking for my wallet, so that I could purchase a ticket.

35 While doing this, a beggar came up to me and asked for some change. “Sorry, I’ve got no cash.” He thanked me and started to turn, which is when I saw his face.

40 It was the same man, but he looked different.

45 Most of his teeth were missing, and he was hunched over. His shoulders curled in towards his chest. And he seemed... shorter. It was as if he had been left in the dryer too long. All of his features were sucked in, shrunken.

We made eye contact for a second or two and then he walked off. I haven’t seen him since.

50 A lot of people think that smartphones are these addiction engines, perfectly designed to “hook” their users; ensnaring them in endless time-wasting

Scampered: *for*
(*datid af fare*)
Tingly: *prikkende*
Jolt: *stød*
Gaunt: *udmagret*
Loomed: *tonede frem*
Interlocking: *sæt sammenknyttede*
Collide: *støde sammen*
Emaciated: *udtøret*
hunched: *krumbojet*
shrunken: *indskrumpet*
ensnaring: *fange*

activities. While I don't deny that smartphones and their associated apps are quite engaging (and can consume a lot of time and attention), I do take issue with them being characterized as "addictive"... and I don't think that the smartphone-checking/using behavior is, itself, the problem, anyways.

5 In this section, I want to make the point that smartphone/tech addiction isn't a real addiction, and to call it one is hyperbolic and irresponsible.

10 Have you ever heard of someone being so addicted to a video game (or Facebook) that they weren't able to hold a job and earn a living? Have you ever heard of someone scrolling through their Twitter feed so much that they ended up on the street, unable to escape the ravages of homelessness? Me neither.

15 Addiction is a serious thing. It's heartbreaking. It's bloody. It destroys lives and families. It decays the body, the mind, and the spirit of the person in its clutches.

20 So, when we call something an addiction, we better be sure it's worthy of the label.

In the case of "smartphone addiction" and "technology/app addiction", this is not the case. Having trouble controlling your desire to see what your friend Michael is up to, or getting caught up in a 30-minute nostalgia session, is on a completely different, less serious level. [...]

25 **Technology.**

Tech is what's new-shiny.

30 It's flashy and easy to see. It doesn't really meld into the background.

35 And it's ever evolving and changing. It's rare that some piece of technology is installed in our environment and just sits there for decades, untouched. Just walk into any office in America—the computers are changed at least once every 2 years (often more frequently).

For these reasons, tech is almost always top of mind, and it's easy to point a blaming finger at.

40 This has happened before (think Luddites), and it will happen again. But just because something is fashionable doesn't mean that it's true.

Which leads to my next question: Do you fidget?

45 Do you ever bite your nails?

When you're stressed do you like to just get some running shoes on and just sprint as long and as hard as possible?

take issue: *være imod*
hyperbolic: *overdreven*
ravages: *ødelæggelser*
Luddite: *Ludditter (maskinstormer). De var britiske arbejdere, der i begyndelsen af 1800-tallet organiserede opstande mod indførelse af nye maskiner, som de anså for årsagen til arbejdsløshed og social nød. De ødelagde ofte maskiner, og protesterede mod de ændringer, som den industrielle revolution havde forårsaget. Fidget: være rastløs, være nervøs.*

All of us have stress coping mechanisms — things we do to feel better about our situation. Some people crack their knuckles, some people smoke. Others eat. Others play video games.

- 5 If you're really, really stressed do you think you'll do these things more or less?

More, obviously. [...]

- 10 Just look at the state of the world today. We have unprecedented political polarization, growing inequality, and automation (and crummy policies) causing the destruction of millions of jobs. It's a stressful time to be alive, so it's understandable that people will look for outlets and coping mechanisms. We might even engage in behaviors that some consider
15 "addictive" or inappropriate, such as playing video games, scrolling through our social network news feeds, and logging many many hours in other online communities (like Reddit).

- 20 Does that mean that these things are the problem? No, probably not. They're coping mechanisms. If you take them away, people will just find other ways to let out that steam and gain a sense of control and comfort. [...]

- 25 So, I ask you: Do smartphones *really* seem like the problem? Are these "addictions" causing harm? Or are they merely stress relief mechanisms, improperly maligned due to sloppy thinking (correlation does not equal causation)?

You know how I feel. What do you think?

Coping mechanisms: måder, hvorpå man håndtere noget ubehageligt eller anstrengende, fx en smertefuld sygdom, en psykisk belastning eller en trangt livssituation
Unprecedented: uden fortilfælde
polarization: polarisering
Inequality: ulighed
Crummy: Ussel
Outlets: afløb (figurativt)
Maligned: tilsmudse (figurativt)
correlation does not equal causation: Korrelation er ikke det samme som kausalitet (det handler om, hvorvidt forskellige fænomener påvirker hinanden).

Cyber manners

– Parenting for the Digital Age

'perpetrator gerningsmand
suburban forstads-
disagreement uenighed
minor mindre
issue problem
'ultimately til syvende og
sidst, i sidste ende
engage in indlade sig på
boundary grænse
adolescence ungdom
verbal sproglig, (her) bruger
ord
prod stikke til
limit grænse
interpersonal mellem
mennesker
spat lille skænderi
resolve løse
'sensitive følsom, fintmær-
kende
counselor rådgiver
untraceable som ikke kan
spores
mediating mæglende
needy trængende
clingy ikke til at ryste af sig
fake falsk
al'ternate alternativ
mock håne
'scurrilously groft
alleged påstået
insulting fornærmende
attention opmærksomhed
intended påtænkt
humiliate ydmyge
taunt håne
attorney advokat
mutual fælles

The perpetrator, Kiki, was a bright, attractive, well-liked girl from an upper-middle-class suburban home. As most sixteen-year-olds will do, Kiki got into a disagreement with a friend at school over a minor issue. A psychologist friend once told me, “At the risk of sounding sexist, studies show that young females, who are ultimately more responsible for family and child-rearing than males, engage in testing the boundaries of communication with their friends during adolescence.

5
10 All adolescents can be emotional, but girls tend to be more verbal and will push and prod each other and engage in negative conversation for the purpose of finding where the limits are.” Interpersonal spats, while often painful, can generally be resolved with the help of a sensitive parent, teacher, or school counselor. But in Kiki’s case, her bullying was on the internet; it was untraceable, so there was no mediating force, and ultimately, police and lawyers were brought in.

Kiki had grown tired of her friend “Essie”. She felt that Essie had become needy and clingy, and Kiki wanted to end the friendship. But she didn’t know how to do it without emotional risk. Then she learned that it was easy to set up fake Facebook and Twitter pages and email addresses. So she created an alternate cyber-identity using a false name. She was no longer “Kiki”. She became “Candi”. And Candi was a much crueler girl than Kiki ever was.

20
25 Candi “friended” Essie on Facebook. Essie accepted the new “friend” request. “Candi” followed Essie on Twitter. Essie followed her back, and a new cyber-friendship was born. But this friendship turned dark and cruel very quickly, for Candi never intended to be Essie’s “friend” – cyber or real – but only to hurt her. Candi posted false rumors on the internet about everything from Essie’s eating habits to her sexual life. She mocked
30 Essie’s body type. Whatever way Candi could scurrilously attack Essie, she did. And it hurt.

Adolescents often have hundreds of Facebook “friends” and Twitter followers, and Candi made sure that every one of them learned of Essie’s alleged faults. False rumors about Essie were retweeted, and Candi
35 emailed links, connecting others to Essie’s Facebook page. This unwanted, anonymous, and insulting internet attention had its intended effect. Essie was humiliated. She was taunted in school by friends and strangers who confronted her with the false internet rumors that Candi was spreading.

Essie and her parents contacted the police and hired an attorney.
40 But, unfortunately, they accused the wrong person. The day local police officers entered the high school, a mutual friend of both Essie and Kiki’s

principal rektor
 ex'pulsion bortvisning
 mis'deed ugerning
 confess tilstå
 expel bortvise
 perpetr'ate begå
 rehabilit'ation resocialisering
 ascribe tillægge
 involv'ement inddragelse
 law enforcement (her) politiet
 finality endelig afgørelse
 shed sprede
 sobering tankevækkende,
 som bringer en ned på
 jorden igen
 scar ar
 en'tire hel
 outlet udbyder
 ban forbyde
 taunting hånende

was brought into the principal's office for questioning and was accused of cyberbullying Essie. The girl was threatened with expulsion from school.

5 The real perpetrator, Kiki/Candi, was worried. She watched as an innocent classmate was accused of the misdeeds that she herself had committed. Kiki went to her father, an attorney, and tearfully confessed what she had done. Her father contacted the high school and brought his daughter in to face the consequences. Kiki admitted to school and police officials that she had cyberbullied Essie. Kiki was thanked for her honesty, but she was expelled from school for the cruel nature of the cyberbullying
 10 she had perpetrated upon her old friend Essie.

Kiki's parents placed Kiki in a rehabilitation group for school bullies and bullying victims, and they eventually found a school that would accept Kiki as a student. Perhaps time does heal all wounds, but it took years before the high school hallways stopped echoing with the cruel and
 15 false rumors that Kiki had ascribed to Essie. For the students, teachers, and parents who were witness to this unfortunate case, the involvement of law enforcement and attorneys and the sad finality of Kiki's expulsion from school shed a new and sobering light on the issue of cyberbullying. Tragically, some victims of cyberbullying have chosen suicide as a way
 20 out of their hurt and humiliation. Fortunately, Essie did not attempt suicide. But Kiki's anonymous cyberbullying left a scar on an entire school community.

Being anonymous on the web is too easy. And it appears that internet anonymity sometimes brings out the worst in people. For this reason,
 25 many internet news outlets are now banning anonymous comments from their websites. I believe that most of the angry, taunting comments we see on web pages are comments that the writers would never make if their identities were known.

Now teenagers think sharing naked selfies is 'normal': Youngsters say sending photos is 'fun' despite knowing the risks

- Some children as young as 12 are sharing nude images through phones
- For many it was a natural way of exploring sexuality with trusted partner
- A few admitted they were coerced and threatened often by strangers

BY DAILY MAIL REPORTER, 3 NOVEMBER 2016

explore udforske, undersøge
coerce tvinge
researcher forsker
reveal afsløre
differentiate skelne
abuse misbrug
coercive tvangs-
grooming optræning
expectation forventning

5 **M**any young people choose to share naked selfies despite knowing the risks because they see it as a 'normal and fun' part of relationships, a worrying study has shown.

10 Researchers discovered that some children as young as 12 are sharing nude images through their phones and social media. And for many of the study group, consisting of people who had shared naked photos under the age of 18, it was a natural way of exploring their sexuality and something they did with a trusted partner.

But some admitted they were coerced and threatened, often by strangers they met online.

15 The study – called Self Produced Images – Risk Taking Online (SPIRTO) – also revealed the difficulty police, parents and schools faced in trying to differentiate between normal behaviour and abuse

20 Dr Ethel Quayle from the University of Edinburgh said: 'The experiences of the young people varied from coercive online grooming where children were pressured to produce images by use of aggressive threats, to the other end of the spectrum where the images were produced in a romantic and caring relationship.'

'In between we saw different levels of what might be thought of as coercion, where children felt an expectation that sending selfies is what people are doing, and if you didn't do it there was something wrong with you.'

25 'The consequences of sending the images were not always absolutely catastrophic, but they were for some people.'

Men Are Different *by Alan Bloch*

I'm an archaeologist, and Men are my business. Just the same, I wonder if we'll ever find out about Men – I mean *really* find out what made Men different from us Robots – by digging around on the dead planets. You see, I lived with a Man once, and I know it isn't as simple as they told us back in school.

We have a few records, of course, and Robots like me are filling in some of the gaps, but I think now that we aren't really getting anywhere. We know, or at least the historians say we know, that Men came from a planet called Earth. We know, too, that they rode out bravely from star to star; and wherever they stopped, they left colonies – Men, Robots, and sometimes both – against their return. But they never came back.

Those were the shining days of the world. But are we so old now? Men had a bright flame – the old word is “divine,” I think – that flung them far across the night skies, and we have lost the strands of the web they wove.

Our scientists tell us that Men were very much like us, and the skeleton of a Man is, to be sure, almost the same as the skeleton of a Robot, except that it's made of some calcium compound instead of titanium. Just the same, there are other differences.

It was on my last field trip, to one of the inner planets, that I met the Man. He must have been the last Man in this system, and he'd forgotten how to talk – he'd been alone so long. Once he learned our language we got along fine together, and I planned to bring him back with me. Something happened to him, though.

One day, for no reason at all, he complained of the heat. I checked his temperature and decided that his thermostat circuits were shot. I had a kit of field spares with me, and he was obviously out of order, so I went to work. I turned him off without any trouble. I pushed the needle into his neck to operate the cut-off switch, and he stopped moving, just like a Robot. But when I opened him up he wasn't the same inside. And when I put him back together I couldn't get him running again. Then he sort of weathered away – and by the time I was ready to come home, about a year later, there was nothing left of him but bones. Yes, Men are indeed different.

Divine: <i>guddommelig</i>
Weave: <i>væve</i>
Field trip: <i>ekskursion</i>
Fling: <i>kaste</i>
Calcium: <i>kalcium</i>
Strand: <i>fiber, streng</i>
Compound: <i>forbindelse, sammensætning</i>
Circuit: <i>strømkreds</i>
To be shot: <i>være ødelagt, nedslidt</i>
Weather away: <i>forvitre, slide ned</i>



Segregationist

• By Isaac Asimov

surgeon *sb.* kirurg,
operationslæge
ex'pression *sb.* udtryk
restless *adj.* rastløs
crisply *adv.* skarpt
intricate *adj.* kompliceret
a'pproach *vb.* gribe an,
gå i gang med
un'mollified *adj.* ikke
formildet
in'differently *adv.*
ligegyldigt
stolidly *adv.* upåvirket

THE SURGEON looked up without expression. 'Is he ready?'
'Ready is a relative term,' said the med-eng. 'We're ready. He's restless.'
'They always are... Well, it's a serious operation.'
'Serious or not, he should be thankful. He's been chosen for it over an enormous number of possibles and, frankly, I don't think...'
'Don't say it,' said the surgeon. 'The decision is not ours to make.'
'We accept it. But do we have to agree?'
'Yes,' said the surgeon, crisply. 'We agree. Completely and wholeheartedly. The operation is entirely too intricate to approach with mental reservations. This man has proven his worth in a number of ways and his profile is suitable for the Board of Mortality.'
'All right,' said the med-eng, unmodified.
The surgeon said, 'I'll see him right in here, I think. It is small enough and personal enough to be comforting.'
'It won't help. He's nervous, and he's made up his mind.'
'Has he indeed?'
'Yes. He wants metal; they always do.'
The surgeon's face did not change expression. He stared at his hands. 'Sometimes one can talk them out of it.'
'Why bother?' said the med-eng, indifferently. 'If he wants metal, let it be metal.'
'You don't care?'
'Why should I?' The med-eng said it almost brutally. 'Either way it's a medical engineering problem and I'm a medical engineer. Either way, I can handle it. Why should I go beyond that?'
The surgeon said stolidly, 'To me, it is a matter of the fitness of things.'
'Fitness! You can't use that as an argument. What does the patient care about the fitness of things?'

'I care.'

'You care in a minority. The trend is against you. You have no chance.'

'I have to try.' The surgeon waved the med-eng into silence with a quick wave of his hand – no impatience to it, merely quickness. He had already informed the nurse and he had already been signaled concerning her approach. He pressed a small button and the double-door pulled swiftly apart. The patient moved inward in his motor-chair, the nurse stepping briskly along beside him.

'You may go, nurse,' said the surgeon, 'but wait outside. I will be calling you.' He nodded to the med-eng, who left with the nurse, and the door closed behind them.

The man in the chair looked over his shoulder and watched them go. His neck was scrawny and there were fine wrinkles about his eyes. He was freshly shaven and the fingers of his hands, as they gripped the arms of the chair tightly, showed manicured nails. He was a high-priority patient and he was being taken care of ... But there was a look of settled peevishness on his face.

He said, 'Will we be starting today?'

The surgeon nodded. This afternoon, Senator.'

'I understand it will take weeks.'

'Not for the operation itself, Senator. But there are a number of subsidiary points to be taken care of. There are some circulatory renovations that must be carried through, and hormonal adjustments. These are tricky things.'

'Are they dangerous?' Then, as though feeling the need for establishing a friendly relationship, but patently against his will, he added, '... doctor?'

The surgeon paid no attention to the nuances of expression. He said, flatly, 'Everything is dangerous. We take our time in order that it be less dangerous. It is the time required, the skill of many individuals united, the equipment, that makes such operations available to so few...' 'I-know that,' said the patient, restlessly. 'I refuse to feel guilty about that. Or are you implying improper pressure?'

'Not at all, Senator. The decisions of the Board have never been questioned. I mention the difficulty and intricacy of the operation merely to explain my desire to have it conducted in the best fashion possible.'

'Well, do so, then. That is my desire, also.'

'Then I must ask you to make a decision. It is possible to supply you with either of two types of cyber-hearts, metal or...'

'Plastic!' said the patient, irritably. 'Isn't that the alternative you were going to offer, doctor? Cheap plastic. I don't want that. I've made my choice. I want the metal.'

'But...'

a'pproach *sb.* ankomst
briskly *adv.* hurtigt
scrawny *adj.* radmager
peevishness *sb.*
pirrelighed, surhed
sub'sidiary *adj.*
sekundære
circulatory *adj.* kredsløbs-
patently *adv.* åbenlyst
im'ply *vb.* antyde
im'proper *adj.* uretmæssig
intricacy *sb.* kompleksitet
con'duct *vb.* udføre

alternate *adj.* forskjellig, vekslende

su'perior *adj.* bedre

fibrous *adj.* fibrøs

infinitely *adv.* uendeligt

poly'meric *adj.* polymert

worn-out *adj.* nedslidt

alloy *sb.* legering

manhandling *sb.*

mishandling

e'quipment *sb.* udstyr

alter *vb.* ændre

suit *vb.* tilpasse

'See here. I've been told me choice rests with me. Isn't that so?'

The surgeon nodded. 'Where two alternate procedures are of equal value from a medical standpoint, the choice rests with the patient. In actual practice, the choice rests with the patient even when the alternate procedures are not of equal value, as in this case.'

The patient's eyes narrowed. 'Are you trying to tell me the plastic heart is superior?'

'It depends on the patient. In my opinion, in your individual case, it is. And we prefer not to use the term, plastic. It is a fibrous cyber-heart.'

'It's plastic as far as I am concerned.'

'Senator,' said the surgeon, infinitely patient, 'the material is not plastic in the ordinary sense of the word. It is a polymeric material, true, but one that is far more complex than ordinary plastic. It is a complex protein-like fiber designed to imitate, as closely as possible, the natural structure of the human heart you now have within your chest.'

'Exactly, and the human heart I now have within my chest is worn out although I am not yet sixty years old. I don't want another one like it, thank you. I want something better.'

'We all want something better for you, Senator. The fibrous cyber-heart will be better. It has a potential life of centuries. It is absolutely non-allergenic...'

'Isn't that so for the metallic heart, too?'

'Yes, it is,' said the surgeon. 'The metallic cyber is of titanium alloy that...'

'And it doesn't wear out? And it is stronger than plastic? Or fiber or whatever you want to call it?'

'The metal is physically stronger, yes, but mechanical strength is not a point at issue. Its mechanical strength does you no particular good since the heart is well protected. Anything capable of reaching the heart will kill you for other reasons even if the heart stands up under manhandling.'

The patient shrugged. 'If I ever break a rib, I'll have that replaced by titanium, also. Replacing bones is easy. Anyone can have that done anytime. I'll be as metallic as I want to be, doctor.'

That is your right, if you so choose. However, it is only fair to tell you that although no metallic cyber-heart has ever broken down mechanically, a number have broken down electronically.'

'What docs that mean?'

'It means that every cyber-heart contains a pacemaker as part of its structure. In the case of the metallic variety, this is an electronic device that keeps the cyber in rhythm. It means an entire battery of miniaturized equipment must be included to alter the heart's rhythm to suit an

individual's emotional and physical state. Occasionally something goes wrong there and people have died before that wrong could be corrected.'

'I never heard of such a thing.'

'I assure you it happens.'

'Are you telling me it happens often?'

'Not at all. It happens very rarely.'

'Well, then, I'll take my chance. What about the plastic heart? Doesn't that contain a pacemaker?'

'Of course it does, Senator. But the chemical structure of a fibrous cyber-heart is quite close to that of human tissue. It can respond to the ionic and hormonal controls of the body itself. The total complex that need be inserted is far simpler than in the case of the metal cyber.'

'But doesn't the plastic heart ever pop out of hormonal control?'

'None has ever yet done so.'

'Because you haven't been working with them long enough. Isn't that so?'

The surgeon hesitated. 'It is true that the fibrous cybers have not been used nearly as long as the metallic'

'There you are. What is it anyway, doctor? Are you afraid I'm making myself into a robot... into a Metallo, as they call them since citizenship went through?'

'There is nothing wrong with a Metallo as a Metallo. As you say, they are citizens. But you're not a Metallo. You're a human being. Why not stay a human being?'

'Because I want the best and that's a metallic heart. You see to that.'

The surgeon nodded. 'Very well. You will be asked to sign the necessary permissions and you will then be fitted with a metal heart.'

'And you'll be the surgeon in charge? They tell me you're the best.'

'I will do what I can to make the changeover an easy one.' The door opened and the chair moved the patient out to the waiting nurse.

The med-eng came in, looking over his shoulder at the receding patient until the doors had closed again.

He turned to the surgeon. 'Well, I can't tell what happened just by looking at you. What was his decision?'

The surgeon bent over his desk, punching out the final items for his records. 'What you predicted. He insists on the metallic cyber-heart.'

'After all, they are better.'

'Not significantly. They've been around longer; no more than that. It's this mania that's been plaguing humanity ever since Metallos have become citizens. Men have this odd desire to make Metallos out of themselves. They yearn for the physical strength and endurance one associates with them.'

a'ssure *vb.* forsikre

tissue *sb.* væv

i'onic *adj.* jonisk

hesitate *vb.* tøve

citizenship *sb.*

borgerskab, borgerret

fit with *vb.* udstyre med

changeover *sb.* overgang,

omskiftning

re'cede *vb.* trække sig

tilbage

punch out *vb.* udstanse

significantly *adv.*

væsentligt

plague *vb.* plage,

hjemsege

yearn *vb.* ugk

en'durance *sb.*

udholdenhed

a'ssociate *vb.* forbinde

su'pply *vb.* levere
tendon *sb.* sene
e'quivalent *sb.* modstykke
fierceness *sb.*
voldsomhed
di'lute *vb.* fortynde,
udvande
mongrelli'zation *sb.*
blanding, uægthed
segre'gationist *adj.*
adskillelse-
emphasis *sb.* eftertryk
re'quire *vb.* kræve
im'passioned *adj.*
lidenskabelig
burnished *adj.*
blankslebet

'It isn't one-sided, doc. You don't work with Metallos but I do; so I know. The last two who came in for repairs have asked for fibrous elements.'

'Did they get them?'

'In one case, it was just a matter of supplying tendons; it didn't make much difference there, metal or fiber. The other wanted a blood system or its equivalent. I told him I couldn't; not without a complete rebuilding of the structure of his body in fibrous material... I suppose it will come to that some day. Metallos that aren't really Metallos at all, but a kind of flesh and blood.'

'You don't mind that thought?'

'Why not? And metallized human beings, too. We have two varieties of intelligence on Earth now and why bother with two. Let them approach each other and eventually we won't be able to tell the difference. Why should we want to? We'd have the best of both worlds; the advantages of man combined with those of robot.'

'You'd get a hybrid,' said the surgeon, with something that approached fierceness. 'You'd get something that is not both, but neither. Isn't it logical to suppose an individual would be too proud of his structure and identity to want to dilute it with something alien? Would he want mongrelization?'

'That's segregationist talk.'

'Then let it be that.' The surgeon said with calm emphasis, 'I believe in being what one is. I wouldn't change a bit of my own structure for any reason. If some of it absolutely required replacement, I would have that replacement as close to the original in nature as could possibly be managed. I am myself; well pleased to be myself; and would not be anything else.'

He had finished now and had to prepare for the operation. He placed his strong hands into the heating oven and let them reach the dull red-hot glow that would sterilize them completely. For all his impassioned words, his voice had never risen, and on his burnished metal face there was (as always) no sign of expression.