



Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked

Adam Alter

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An urgent and expert investigation into behavioral addiction, the dark flipside of today's unavoidable digital technologies, and how we can turn the tide to regain control.

Behavioral addiction may prove to be one of the most important fields of social, medical, and psychological research in our lifetime. The idea that behaviors can be being addictive is new, but the threat is near universal. Experts are just beginning to acknowledge that we are all potential addicts. Adam Alter, a professor of psychology and marketing at NYU, is at the cutting edge of research into what makes these products so compulsive, and he documents the hefty price we're likely to pay if we continue blindly down our current path.

People have been addicted to substances for thousands of years, but for the past two decades, we've also been hooked on technologies, such as Instagram, Netflix, and Facebook—inventions that we've adopted because we assume they'll make our lives better. These inventions have profound upsides, but their extraordinary appeal isn't an accident. Technology companies and marketers have teams of engineers and researchers devoted to keeping us engaged. They know how to push our buttons, and how to coax us into using their products for hours, days, and weeks on end.

Tracing the very notion of addiction through history right up until the present day, Alter shows that we're only just beginning to understand the epidemic of behavioral addiction gripping society. He takes us inside the human brain at the very moment we score points on a smartphone game, or see that someone has liked a photo we've posted on Instagram. But more than that, Alter heads the problem off at the pass, letting us know what we can do to step away from the screen. He lays out the options we have address this problem before it truly consumes us. After all, who among us has struggled to ignore the ding of a new email, the next episode in a TV series, or the desire to play a game just one more time?

Adam Alter's previous book, *Drunk Tank Pink: And Other Unexpected Forces that Shape How We Think, Feel, and Behave* is available in paperback from Penguin.

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