

Will Odom



24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep

By Jonathan Crary (2013)

Illuminated screens are nearly everywhere we go. We walk around in a blur of seamless, rapid digital interactions and transactions. The boundaries between work and home and other contexts are increasingly muddled. Philosopher Jonathan Crary speculates on the creeping consequences of

living in a world that privileges uninterrupted connection and availability. In my current work, I too question this trend by challenging the emphasis on engineering domestic technology to be always on and accessible through designing new interaction patterns with devices aimed at provoking experiences of slowness, pause, and reflection. As form givers of interactive systems, HCI researchers and practitioners must critically consider the effects of our innovations and how they shape everyday life. We don't, after all, want sleep to be our only refuge from a growing menagerie of often enticing, subtly controlling, and nearly always attention-grabbing "glowing rectangles."

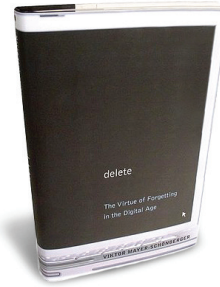
"Viktor Mayer-Schönberger offers a salient reminder on the importance of forgetting."



Specs

Focus: The design of new forms of technology for reflecting, forgetting, and slowing down interactions

Base: Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA



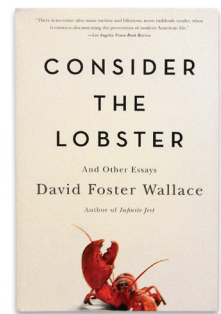
Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age

By Viktor Mayer-Schönberger (2010)

In a world where it is so easy to capture and track many mundane and momentous aspects of our everyday lives, Viktor Mayer-Schönberger offers a salient reminder on the importance of forgetting. I have been involved in a series of projects aimed at subverting technology's intrinsic ability to preserve and replicate personal digital content and archives. The hope is we might design interactions with systems that better connect to longstanding rituals and practices surrounding letting objects, and the memories they conjure up, go. Whether in the digital or physical realm, developing a sense of who we are is just as much about what we decide to hold onto as what we choose not to possess.

How Things Don't Work By Victor Papanek and James Hennessey (1977) In their thoughtful and, at times,

hysterical critique of the (over)designed world we live in, Papanek and Hennessey go beyond pointing out how things don't work to presenting visions of how our world could be improved—from the minutia of needless everyday products to the encompassing social systems they help construct. This work makes clear that the choices to not design certain things are at least as significant as the ultimate outcome of a design process. Few books are capable of being serious intellectual undertakings while having sections that are nothing other than laugh-out-loud hilarious. A true classic I love going back to.



Consider the Lobster and Other Essays

By David Foster Wallace (2005) It's a joy grappling with DFW's wildly imaginative process of making sense of a postmodern world that rarely does.

Will Odom is a Ph.D. candidate in the HCI Institute at Carnegie Mellon University.