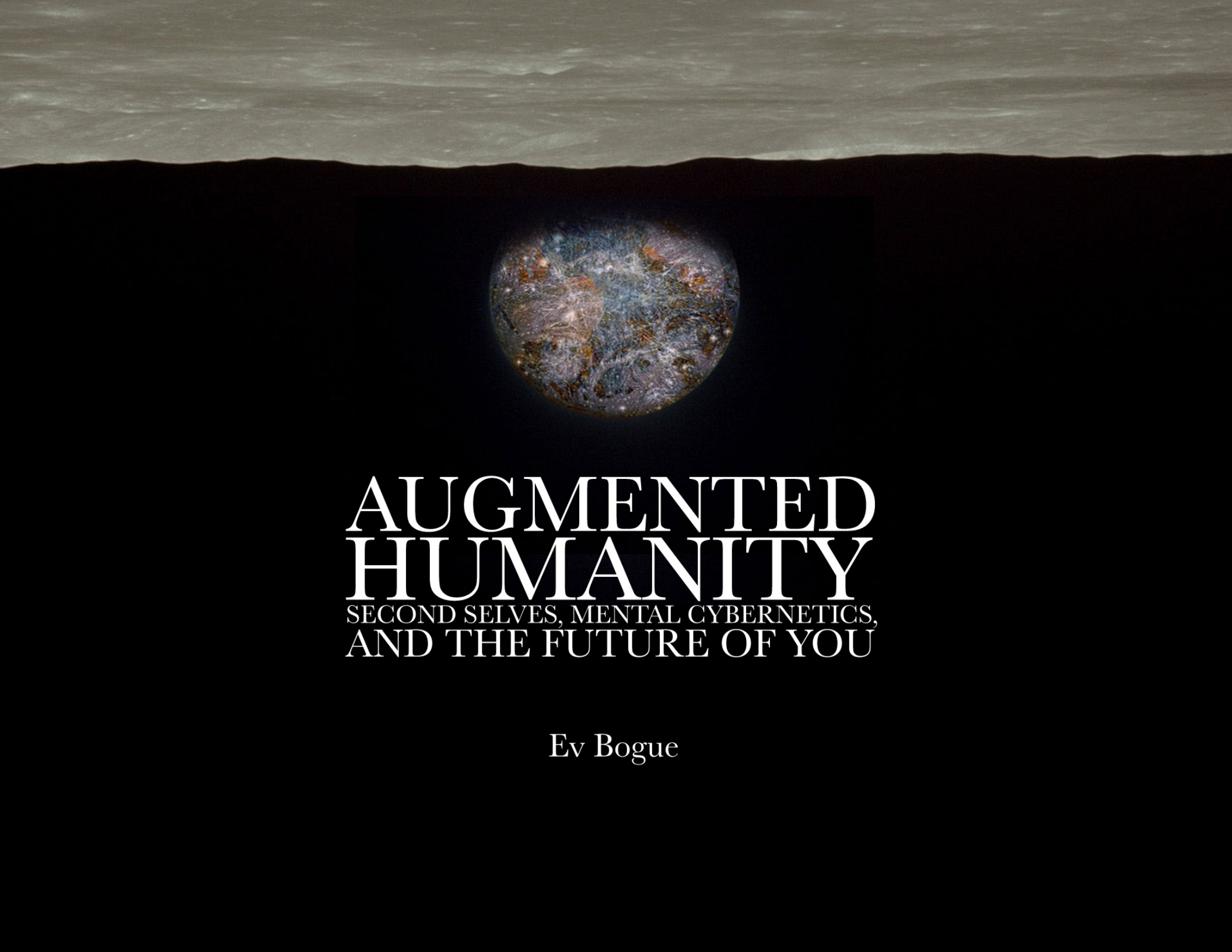


AUGMENTED HUMANITY

SECOND SELVES, MENTAL CYBERNETICS, AND THE FUTURE OF YOU

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INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL CYBERNETICS

I am a cyborg. I have been from the start.

...and there's a good chance that you are one too.

For a very long time, Homo sapiens only used physical tools. We clubbed animals (and each other) over the head with sticks. We built traps to catch things (and each other.) Eventually we got past all of that (hopefully) and built traveling machines like airplanes, cars, motorcycles, and Segways.

All of these tools, inventions, simply extended our physical selves. We could drive to the store in five minutes instead of walking for fifteen. We could hop on a plane in New York and be in San Francisco later that day.

Then all of a sudden, humanity began to develop mental tools. As far as we can tell, this happened around the first time a computer was networked to another computer in the world. We jumped on Telnet and started downloading text from a computer on the other side of the world.

Gradually, over time, these mental tools grew in complexity. Infoseek gave way to Google. AIM gave way to Twitter. All of these tools will give way to ever more simple and yet fundamentally complex tools which we use every day.

Tools grew into networks, relaying information faster than any human can create it. Kevin Kelly notes in *What Technology Wants* that the Internet now generates more information than we put into it. Who can explain where that information comes from? The networks.

At some point in the last year, there was a shift in how these tools related to human kind.

For a long time, we were building the machine. Putting endless amounts of time and effort into a system that would augment us. We slaved over code, generated endless websites, we flooded the system with data, like throwing ideas at walls. What would stick?

The humans on the other end of the pipes rewarded those who created the newest technologies by adopting them, they rewarded the new ideas by perpetuating them.

Then one day it all shifted, for a few of us. All of the years of code, all of the years of programming reality, the old reality gave way to a new reality—one where the computers support us, and we're allowed to be human again.

This didn't happen for everyone at once. Augmented humanity is a small group of people, whose pasts are deeply rooted in the birth of the Internet. Augmented humanity is also every child born now, digital natives, kids face-deep in their iPhones at age 9. Augmented humanity is every person who finds a way to send an idea into an endless feedback loop that results in supporting their existing life.

Every human who turns off the screen and lets the computer reflect the answers back on the rest of humanity has become augmented.

Every human who jumps out of bed in the morning with an idea that they know is worth spreading and then they throw it out and it flies virally out into the ether has become augmented.

Every human who never gets lost —because they have a data-wormhole in their pocket that tells them where everything is where all of their friends are, where their next meal is going to be— is an augmented human.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BECOMING A CYBORG

I began to notice that I'd become a cybernetic life form on a drive down the California coast in November 2010.

The sun was setting over Santa Barbara.

The day had started out like any other. I woke up in San Francisco where my tiny room situated within a larger apartment was located at the time. My room only contained a bed, a few books, a closet with a few changes of clothes, and my 11" MacBook Air. I'd been writing about living with less (minimalism) for a year, but that was all about to change.

I walked outside, grabbed a coffee. I checked my email for my usual 15-30 minutes per day, and began figuring out how I was going to get to Los Angeles by the end of the day.

A few days earlier, using the expanded mental tools of an augmented human, I rented a Zipcar (a bright red Mazda 3) for three days. I located the Zipcar three blocks from the coffee shop using an iPhone App. If I couldn't find the car with the App I could honk it would let it know where it was. With the iPhone App, I could unlock the car from anywhere. With a tiny plastic access card, I was able to swipe in and out of the car instantly.

Oh, also the car had been partially been paid for by affiliate revenue that I'd generated off my blog by encouraging others to ditch their expensive cars and switch over to Zipcars.

The cute half-Asian barista was playing a particularly good album in the coffee shop, but I didn't know what it was. Previously I would have needed to get up the courage to be that guy who asked what the music was in the coffee shop, but I didn't need to anymore. I popped open Shazam on my iPhone and knew within 30 seconds what album was playing, which led to a link to download the album instantly—which I did.

Now I had the music I was going to blast in my cyborg car on

my augmented human journey down the California coast.

I returned home, threw a few changes of clothes into a bag, and headed out the door. Within a few moments I was swiped into a car I'd reserved from my pocket only a few days ago. I plugged in my iPhone and was blasting music I'd only downloaded an hour ago. Within moments I was headed down to Los Angeles for Thanksgiving dinner, an event that I'd only confirmed that I'd arrive at a few days earlier.

I didn't even know where I was going either. I'd never driven from SF to LA before, didn't know any of the roads, but I didn't even need to stop and get a map. I simply plugged "LA" into my iPhone and within moments it was telling me where to go.

Fast-forward three hours later, I'd played through the album I'd downloaded from the cloud around four times solid. The sun was setting over the ocean to the west. I had the windows down on my Mazda 3, cold air was rushing across my face... and it hit me:

I was a cyborg. I had been from the start.

My brain had been rewired since the dawn of the Internet to be ready for this moment—when our relationship with the ma-

chines shifted from us serving them to them serving us.

Quickly the ocean gave way to the massive interconnected machine that is Los Angeles, and I felt that something was different than when I'd been there in the past. Maybe it was that I knew exactly where I was going, even though I'd only been to LA once in the past and had never driven there? Maybe the traffic was synced up at 90 miles per hour in a way that hadn't happened before. Maybe it was the ambient vibe of the music I'd downloaded only seven hours earlier from the cloud.

It doesn't matter what combination of circumstances brought me here, but this much was clear: I was a member of augmented humanity. I had been from the start.

Then I set out on a journey to meet as many of us as I could find.

HALF-HUMAN/ HALF-MACHINE

When people find out that I'm a cyborg, they're a little concerned.

Isn't it weird to be half-machine/half-human they ask me? I can only say it seems to be better.

Before I was a cyborg, I was confused a lot of the time. I had to rely on days/weeks/months of exploration. I couldn't simply download the helicopter flight manual anywhere and at any time if I needed to know something.

Humans used to have to remember things: George Washington was born when? Now, who cares. Within moments I can have the answer to any question answered. If it isn't a question that Google can answer, I send a note out to Twitter and one of my cybernetic compadres can usually answer it within seconds.

This streamlines the entire world in a way that many people are barely even aware of yet. We went from being isolated entities within a confused system to tiny little networked biological creatures with our brains plugged into the cloud.

Unknowingly, our entire society has begun to become networked into one giant super-organism connected by fiber optics, Wi-Fi, and the little screens that we all use to look deep into the machine.

The first augmented humans are rooted deep into the history of the Internet.

We came into existence shortly after the Internet was first switched on. I was a bored kid, wandering around the house when our family computer first found its way out into the preliminary cloud. Connecting was hard back then. “cd ..?” But over time it got better. Quickly we upgraded from Telnet to the next generation of Internet systems.

The first browsers came into existence, does anyone remember Netscape 1? The first augmented humans do. We waited patiently overnight as a 1 megabyte file downloaded onto our desktops.

I created my first website around the age of twelve. I hand-coded a basic little site on GeoCities. It was a one-page site on evolution, but not the kind of evolution that you'd think. I'd been playing an old Sim game where you slowly evolved digital fish for a digital fish tank over time. Using platform algorithms and genetics, I created a race of super-fish, and released them out onto the Internet.

Back then, it was extremely hard to find websites, so only a few people came to download.

Eventually the early augmented humans stayed up all night chatting with girls across town over AIM, feeling connected to another over text when we couldn't be connected in person.

Websites morphed into early blogs, blogs into portfolios, portfolios back into blogs. A few dozen hits turned into hundreds, thousands, and then tens of thousands per month.

Through all of that, most of us didn't realize what was happening. It's difficult to see too far into the future.

We didn't foresee the mental shift until it happened, and our minds exploded wide open in a destabilizing flash of new experience.

ORIGINS OF A GENERATION

If I could pinpoint the exact point in space-time when I began to notice there was something extremely different about our generation, I would.

This would be the moment when I observed that something just wasn't adding up to the common perception of what we were supposed to be all that everyone else intended us to be.

Maybe you noticed as well.

It could have been the first time I AltaVista-ed "is God in the Internet?" when I was a tween staring into a 56k modem, and a young intelligence out on the wires blinked back at me with a faint whisper "...could be?"

It might have been the first time I received an email from a stranger on the other side of the world asking me about myself, when I was 17. "Who are you? How can I help you?"

It might have been reading Kevin Kelly's brilliant book *What Technology Wants*.

The internet rewired our brains until we became the children of the Net.—When we were up at 5am in the late ‘90s googling stuff our parents didn’t want us to know about, we were changing far more than the knowledge inside our own skulls. We were changing the way we viewed knowledge in general—as easily replaceable.

The Net wired us to be it, and we wired it to be us. The Net is more human than we ever imagined, and we are far more Net than we were ever intended to be.

These days we’ve outsourced the left hemispheres of our brains to our iPhones. We’re playing with other mindbodies over bits and bytes. We’re the guardians of a digital frontier, in exchange it takes care of our every need and want.

We couldn’t ask for a better job.

In fact, we didn’t even need to ask. Without any sort of plan or agenda suddenly we’re a generation of generators who are taking control of the planet, one blog post, tweet, and virtual world at a time.

We have exponential power, and infinite responsibility. We also have one of the largest allies on the planet, one of the most powerful technological entities to ever emerge in the history of the Universe.

...and there is a part of ourselves that we're never going to unplug.

Why would we? The internet gives us everything. We've automated our businesses, we have an unlimited base of clients, we can live and work from anywhere. The Net eliminated our need for anything other than a tiny MacBook and a few changes of clothes. The Net changed our idea of a home from a place where you stayed to a world in which we changed.

Even as our physical bodies become freer, we're conscious of another part of our bodies which will remain inside the machine for eternity. A second self who is effectively immortal—it will live forever somewhere out there in the ether. This second self is as real as you make it, someday it'll be more real than you are now.

We were told to sit at desks, we were told to be told, but that was never meant to be—not this time. Technology wants us to be free, and to be free we have to have open schedules and no commute. We're time travelers peering into a past which is everyone else's reality, and we know with every atom of our being that we could never be a part of that dying frustrated and angry world.

We are tethered, but not to a chair. Instead our minds, souls, bodies are hard-wired into interconnected digital reality. We see the way all of the hyperlinks fold together until they make a picture of a whole. No one needs to create a program to visualize that for us, we visualized it for ourselves when we see the perfection of action, and then reaction.

We are a part of everything and anything.

This is a book about us. You, me, and the future of our reality. How we got here, where we are now, where we're going as the nature of computer-chip improvement drags our culture exponentially towards the center of the Earth.

I suppose the biggest question on your mind is simple: are you one of us?

Chances are you already know the answer if you are.

If not, can you be rewired to become one us? You can be left out, that's okay, but chances are if you're reading this, you want in the game.

The second biggest question on your mind is more complicated: how have we changed because of this? Where have we come from? Where are we going?

CYBERNETIC DATA TRANSFERS

One of the first things you may notice about this e-book is that it isn't very long. This is purposeful.

Publishing is changing. For an incredibly long time, all of the content that made it into the bookstore had to be book-sized. A standard package that was anywhere from 200-400 pages. People picked up books, and expected them all to be about the same size.

This of course assumes that all books need to be the same size, which they don't.

Language is condensing. As technology punches forward our cultural evolution at an exponential velocity, our language is changing to catch up. Words that used to mean less now mean more. Words are also learning to be arranged in ways that convey far more information than they did previously.

When I enter a bookstore these days, I see padding. I see books that could have been 100 pages that are 400. This leads to a lot of redundant and unnecessary words that are simply there because the publisher felt that the book needed to be x-length.

The new wave of publishing, for example, TED Books, Seth Godin's Domino Project, and now Ebookling are focusing on publishing books that are as long as they need to be. I like that, because when I pick up a book, I want it to convey exactly what it's meant to say. No more, no less.

Augmented Humanity is just under 20,000 words.

You might say "but, I paid for more words." To that I will say, your time is worth more than wasting it on unnecessary words. Price does not coincide with volume in a world of mental cybernetics. A tweet can say more than a thousand books written before it.

In this age of books, the author fills a very different role than she used to. Where we used to create a stagnant unchanging document behind a wall, we now create in public. Before, and after the book is created.

This book was written somewhat in public using my Letter.ly list and blog as a sounding board. I bounced ideas off Gwen Bell from the day we met, and will as far as we can into the future. Many of these ideas came from the collective mind, through the networks such as Twitter.

I hesitate to name technologies in this book, because they're evolving so quickly. Even at this moment, I feel like augmented humanity is evolving past Twitter, into something new.

This book isn't the end, it's the beginning. No doubt after reading, you will have questions. The best way to answer these questions is to experiment in your own life. Build a second self, try experiments with your own mental cybernetics.

The best thing you can do is to ignore everything I say in this book and work from a place of beginner's mind with the Internet. Every person's mind is wired differently, and that's why this book is necessarily non-prescriptive... You will find your own way, day by day, world by virtual world.

There will be additional resources and content about the topics of *Augmented Humanity* featured on Twitter and Evbogue.com.

DIFFERENT CYBORGS

Through this book, I use words such as augmented human, cyborg, cybernetic life form, etc. in order to refer to a specific evolutionary improvement to the human condition.

When I refer to cyborgs, I'm speaking about the specific adaption of mental cybernetics and the use of second selves that take care of us.

When I use the word cyborg, what I'm NOT referring to is augmenting our bodies in a physical way. While I'm sure there are cyborgs out there who are installing circuit boards underneath their skin --I recently heard a story about a girl who installed a garage door opener on the side of her skull-- I'm not very interested in that type of cybernetics.

These cyborgs are all mental cyborgs. They're humans who developed advanced skills in mental tools in order to change the virtual world, as well as develop insanely powerful sense-perceptions of the world around them.

As I write this, the dominant cybernetic interface for my generation is an iPhone, and the most effective sense-extensor is Twitter. I'm sure that will change within a blink of an eye.

I can already feel Twitter's hold on my generation waning, as there's a new technology that is even simpler and more effective just around the bend. The iPhone will give way to headsets that read our brainwaves, and retinae displays which give access to an infinite network of augmented reality apps.

In a very short time, we will not have to imagine what the Internet looks like. It will be all around us, on every sidewalk, in every tree, in every home. We will interface with the Net as if it was always here, walking side-by-side amongst us.

Those of us who turn it off will be blind to this enhanced world. In fact, they already are.

Personally, I'm going to do my best to try and stay on the evolutionary edge of mental cybernetic technologies. Maybe you'll join me?

THE BENEFITS OF MENTAL CYBERNETICS

“Alright, second selves and mental cybernetics are all good and well, but what’s in it for me?” You’re probably asking yourself.

That’s a great question, I’m glad I anticipated that you asked.

Humans are hardwired to not jump onto bandwagons until they recognize the advantages of doing so. Augmented humanity isn’t a wagon, and you don’t need to jump on it while it’s moving. You’re already being drawn into the system, whether you like it or not.

Being able to justify and embrace your own future, conditionally, can be beneficial though. So, I’m going to illustrate with my own history how embracing augmented humanity has helped me.

In July of 2009, I quit my job without a plan. I threw away most of my stuff, and jumped on a plane to the other side of the country. I was scared shitless, but I did it anyway.

Now that I'm aware that I'm a member of augmented humanity, what I didn't realize about this whole journey was that I had an iPhone in my pocket.

I landed in Portland, Oregon without a plan -- but what I did have was a rudimentary understanding of a mental cybernetic tool which gave me instant access to the entire city. From the moment I landed in Portland, I knew where everything was. It took me only a few days to form a dense understanding of how Portland worked in a very short time.

In the past, it took years for a person to understand the city that they lived in. I remember wandering aimlessly in New York for years trying to figure out where a good coffee shop was, in Portland I only had to google 'best coffee' on my way to Stumptown to find myself in a position of all-knowingness.

In a very real way, augmented humanity is what enabled technomadic location independence.

There are a few other ways that augmented humanity changed my life before I realized I was a cyborg.

To see where my location independent technomadic life has led and will lead me, visit Evbogue.com.

1. I stopped needing most physical possessions.

A year and a half ago, I was part of the "minimalist movement" a group of people who decided they were going to throw out all of their stuff in order to find freedom. What I didn't realize at the time was that technology decided that I was going to throw out myself stuff, not the other way around.

Human evolution simply wants us to have greater and greater personal freedoms. As we adopt new tools, especially mental cybernetic tools, we begin to realize that stuff wasn't giving us much freedom at all.

Now that I'm a cyborg, I'm living with less than I did when I was self-identifying as a minimalist. I recently jumped on a plane from Boulder to San Francisco with 1/3rd the amount of stuff that I had when I started becoming a minimalist.

When you make the switch from physical tools to mental tools, you stop desiring physical tools. One jacket will do, kplz-thankyou. The tiniest computer will do (11" MacBook Air!) Some cyborgs live with two pairs of quick dry underwear. Others are just waiting for the day when shape-shifting nano-bot clothing becomes available.

To see what I currently live with, visit Evbogue.com.

2. Twitter as telepathy.

In May 2010, I moved to Oakland, CA. I didn't know anyone who lived in San Francisco, or the east bay. However, what I did have was Twitter. Twitter, for those who haven't used to for long, is a form of cybernetic telepathy. It allows you to reach out to people who you don't know and gradually sync brains with them over time. Eventually, you get to a place where you're comfortable (you might even not be able to avoid) meeting up with people who have very similar minds to your own.

There's a chapter later in this book on psychic cyborg Twitter usage. The best way to learn how to use Twitter is to use it. If you want to, follow me and everyone I follow (it's a small crew) at @evbogue.

3. Extended sense-perception.

There are thousands of tools available which extend our senses. We were never able to do these things previously. Location aware technologies in iPhones such as Google Maps allow us to know where everything is anywhere in most places within seconds.

A few days before this book was published on February 15th 2011, I was in Los Angeles for a few days. I asked Google Maps how to get from LAX to Venice Beach. $1, 30 minute bus ride. I asked Google Maps where the coolest coffee shop in Venice Beach was, it gave me a few options.

We can drop a ping on Twitter telling the world where we are, and within moments meet up with a random person who we've never met for a beer. We can tweet "does anyone want to get tea?" and someone will get tea. Augmented humanity has radio-towers in our pockets, broadcasting to anyone who will listen.

Our only boundaries are the filters we set, and these filters need to get higher and higher as we embrace the technologies.

We can only take in so much information. Just because we can know everything, doesn't mean we should know it all right now.

Trinity only downloaded the helicopter flight manual when she needed it, not the entire Internet all at once.

4. Financial freedom.

There's a certain threshold that you reach when money doesn't matter anymore. Augmented humanity is acutely aware of this threshold. Buying more doesn't lead to greater freedom, so once a base-level of freedom is granted by income, we stop worrying about money. We plug into Mint.com occasionally to make sure income from our second self is still coming in, but once we do that there is no need to go further.

Since I got swept up in this evolutionary wave, I quickly stopped having to worry about where/when money was coming from. Money simply began to flow in through decentralized channels, the mechanics of which I described in more depth in *Minimalist Business*.

It's hard to end up in a situation where you're having financial problems when you begin to realize that you don't really need anything. Your physical needs drop away, and you're left with a sense of calm about your financial situation.

Augmented humans see buying homes as being a tremendous burden, so we don't. Augmented humans aren't necessarily interested in purchasing cars, because we'd rather have the cybernetic alternative, which for now is Zipcar in most American cities.

Augmented humans aren't going to necessarily be interested in blowing a ton of money on a college education, because we know the helicopter flight manual is so easy to come by faster through the collective.

The current level of freedom will only grow with technological evolution.

RUNNING FROM RESPONSIBILITY

We created our technology, it's an extension of ourselves. We can't deny where it's been or where it's going.

To fight the progression of technology in our world is only adding to our frustration, our inability to see the world in a clear and useful manner. This much is clear to many of us.

All of the pain and frustration that you see in the world in regards to the economy is directly related to the people who are unwilling or unable to embrace the idea that the system changed, and they didn't change with it.

The only solution is evolution: faster, quicker, stronger. You need to meld your mind to the infrastructure which stretches across the planet. If you haven't already started to plug yourself in, the best time is to start now.

We need to start looking at the Internet, and the technology which it controls as being a part of us—and we a part of it, there is no separation, we cannot escape it. To evade technological advancement would only be a temporary break, and the benefits would be negligible.

Perhaps the real question we need to ask ourselves, when we're trying to escape the technology that we created, where are we trying to escape to?

Do we want a simpler time?

Do we want to sit at a desk and do pointless work that a robot could do?

Do we want to ignore the power that we have at our fingertips? Our keyboards have infinite potential.

For augmented humanity, this isn't even a question. We never asked to be chained to a desk to do robot work. Maybe you did ask, but we never cared if you did. We see the potential in the wires, and we want you to come with us.

...and as for a simpler time.

Well, this time is simpler. In fact, it's the easiest time to discover freedom in a system that wants to support you. It wants you to reach out, touch it, and discover that it can show you everything you ever needed to create a dream life. It's all here, all around us, connected to your iPhone through the wireless signals which will permeate your body for the rest of your days.

Embrace it, it's here, and it wants you. The Internet even loves you, because you're creating it.

WHY ARE WE QUALIFIED TO EVOLVE?

Who the hell am I, and why am I qualified to write about the evolution of the future of the human race? That's a good question.

Let me ask you a question: what does qualified mean to you? Maybe it's a piece of paper. Maybe it's getting permission from someone else to say what you're feeling inside you. Maybe it's being part of an institution that's larger than yourself.

I have a diploma from NYU, it's hanging in my mom's basement, where it will stay. That piece of paper never gave me permission to do anything. It was simply that, a piece of paper at the end of a long expensive road towards learning something about something.

The fact is that most institutions run too slowly to delve into this kind of work. They are trying, but bureaucracy is a bitch. By the time you've had all of your superiors double-check your work, you end up being left behind the evolutionary wave of ideas.

This is a book about cultural evolution, not biological evolution. I know cultural evolution because I've been immersed in it since the day I was born, so have you. This book is about my experience, and the experience of those who've surrounded me.

You don't need permission to be human, you are one. In fact, if you wait for permission, chances are you'll have missed the wave.

In my mind, there are only a few elements that matter when you're considering whether or not someone has the qualifications to teach you something.

How do you feel about the work?

Does what I'm saying here ring true for you, or does it seem a little bit too Sci Fi for your tastes? The single best way to determine if what I'm saying is true is to take a look at your own life and see if you notice the patterns.

Maybe you've seen a shift in your own cultural evolution. The switch got fired and suddenly you were falling into the digital abyss without a map, the only thing you had left to hang onto was your intuition.

Maybe you've begun to set the first building blocks into place for a digital self that will take care of you. You've set the stage for a separate being, and also a part of yourself, to extend beyond your reach into the hearts and minds of others.

Maybe you've been hacking around the code at the base-level of the Internet since you were five years old, slowly searching for the meaning of anything and everything. The patterns started to emerge, everything began to make sense, you began to visualize the interconnectedness of us all fully in your mind, and in one moment of insight it all started to make sense...

...this is the world we live in.

Maybe you have no idea what I'm talking about, but you will. Our minds are all wired differently, shaped by our pasts and our futures. The disconnected will have a disconnected mind. The connected will have a connected mind. All of this can change with time. Your mindset is yours to decide.

What I'm offering here is just one perspective, my own, on a change that's sweeping across our world as all of us connect together in a way that has never happened before. We're only going to connect more, not less. Why? Because the connectedness serves us. We all want to be a part of each other. We want to have a brief glimpse into the mind of another, and another, and another until we've seen into the collective human intelligence of everyone.

This will happen, there is no choice. The momentum that was generated at the dawn of the universe has extended in us and through us to this moment which is now. We're becoming ready to engage it with this momentum. We're ready to take all of this human consciousness to the next level: the web of all of our intelligence strewn together into one central becoming.

You have a choice to make, to either have an open mind or not. You don't have to accept anything I say as fact, because in fact there are no facts. Take what you can get, and leave the rest. Ultimately, reach deep down inside yourself and ask whether or not it feels right.

The feeling matters most, especially for this work. It'll take another 10-20 years for the newspapers to declare that all of this has happened, and by that time there won't be newspapers anymore anyway.

So, I ask of you, read this book with an open mind. Acknowledge your preconceptions, and then take a moment to step beyond them. Perhaps the space that you find in yourself to discover what lies on and beyond this techno-evolutionary wave will surprise you.

Perhaps you'll even surprise everyone else.

YOUR BRAIN, REWIRED

Before language, our brains were organized in an incredibly different way. Then everything changed, we left behind the silence and began to adopt a tool which allowed us to communicate thoughts and ideas to those around us. Our consciousness exploded open, minds were joined, and knowledge began to flow orally. The same thing happened when the printing press was invented, and mass ideas could flow across the population.

But printing was expensive, ideas flowed slowly. It was a less effective method for success, because gatekeepers and money decided where the information came from.

Then the Internet happened, and everything changed. In a blink of evolutionary time we jumped from a closed reality where ideas were trapped in books and isolated minds into an open system where thought flowed freely across the wires.

This is huge implications for how our brains are changing. The distribution is less about where to find the answers now and more about which answers we're looking for. The wisdom of everything is at our finger-tips, on our iPhones, and soon displayed directly onto our retinas, or a thousand different ways.

In so many ways technology is changing everything, and we'll never be the same.

This is the story of how your brain changed while the Internet cared for you.

Why the Internet is part of you and you a part of it.

This is a story of collective consciousness existing between you, the wires, and how your brain is organized.

Why you are a part of everyone, and everyone is a part of you.

INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL CYBERNETICS

A number of months ago, I began to realize that Twitter wasn't just an easy way to communicate with bloggers. Instead, I began to view the service as broadband telepathy on a scale that's never been issued before.

For a very long time, a very limited group of humans have been able to tap into the intuitive sphere, and only after years of meditation, practice, and study. Now, suddenly the entire human race has an opportunity to instantaneously transmit messages to anyone in the world.

If you're new to Twitter, of course you think I'm crazy-pants. You'll either see in time or you won't.

I simply think I'm better off in the world with strong technologically reinforced psychic powers, so I embrace the advancement as it grants me more personal freedom to pursue personal evolution.

One of the only ways to experience Twitter the way I describe is to follow the instructions I laid out on how to use Twitter effectively below.

You probably won't understand until you've done it. Doing so takes a leap of faith and an investment in time and energy.

Also, having an intelligent phone such as an iPhone can help as well. This way you can breathe and plug in at various times throughout the day. You'll begin to see freedom result in your life from this.

Because of Twitter, these days I pretty much go wherever in the (albeit limited, but only for the moment) galaxy when I'm needed, following the flow of the collective data stream.

Recently a few of us came to the conclusion that for us to discover Twitter's true power, we needed to phase out all other forms of electronic communication and rely exclusively on the most advanced layer of communication that has evolved on the planet thus far.

Many other forms of communication, such as email and Facebook are beginning to be more incredibly time-consuming and also primitive. The dedication and feeling in our interactions in these spaces just isn't as fulfilling or productive as it can be in the Twitter space.

Most people use two forms of communication online, email and Facebook.

Let's talk about email first, because it's the most ubiquitous form of communication on the planet.

Email helped us get this far, but understand that the technology was developed in the 1960s—and thus was based off the predominant form of communication during that age: physically mailing letter—which tended to be a rather expensive endeavor if you wanted to form a collective. Email is largely a 1-to-1 communication, between two people. It's ping-pong. When you expand beyond 1-to-1, collective synergy tends to fizzle.

Email is also pretty noncommittal and anonymous. I'd estimate 60% of the email I received when I had my email address on my blog was from people who weren't necessarily committed to sticking around. It also is difficult to determine anything about a person from their email... do they have a second self? how old are they? what is their current mental state? are our ideas compatible or will we bounce? It's difficult to judge all of these things over email, so communication tends to break down rapidly.

Everyone thought that email was going to be reinvented as Google Wave, but that failed because the truth is the wave is inside our collective consciousness, not in the software.

We don't want to collaborate on a document like Wave would have had us. Instead, we want to let our ideas have sex with each other. We want this as fast as possible. Hot, steamy idea sex. When you see Ross Hill and I bouncing ideas off each other in real time in front of you on Twitter, we're collaborating on an idea that may or may not take a final form. We're practicing convergent growth in real time, and you're along for the ride when you're on Twitter and following both of us.

Facebook is another story completely.

If you haven't sat down to watch The Social Network, I recommend it. It's a window into the psychology of Facebook's epic success, but also gives a fascinating look into the basic instincts that the service is based on.

Facebook is successful for a simple reason: we want to click around faces because we want to get laid. This is root chakra animalistic nonsense that Twitter quickly brings you out of.

When you're on Facebook, you need to be conscious of the fact that Facebook's goal is for you to keep clicking around. Page views, nothing more, nothing less. This is why my iPhone Facebook app won't tell me the difference between a 'Like' and a message with content in it. This is why Facebook won't let you turn off the 'Like' notifications.

Facebook wants you to stay on Facebook, it doesn't want you to delve deeper into the Internet. It also wants to keep you focused exclusively on your most basic instincts, sex and attraction.

When I deactivated Facebook, it showed me the 5 faces of the most beautiful girls I know on Facebook—as if to say 'if you leave me, you will leave them.' This is emotional manipulation, not productivity.

The sad part is that Facebook rarely facilitates real world interactions.

Most Facebookers are clicking around looking for the cheap thrill of staring into the eyes of someone else's second self.

If you spend 8 hours on Facebook, the reality is that you're farther away from getting laid, not closer.

Forget about developing real relationships that span the centuries, I can't think of one of those that resulted from Facebook usage.

Twitter, on the other hand, has been leading me on an epic adventure around the United States and soon the globe. If I need anything, I tweet and someone will help. If someone needs something, I will see the tweet and help them. The collective only begins to become more synergetic, together we thrive.

These days my closest friends are the collective, and likewise. I tweet in any city and the world opens up.

Twitter is powerful beyond your current beliefs. You will only know this if you experience it for yourself.

When you have a strong second self, you can begin to phase out Facebook and email for Twitter exclusively. Over time it becomes less necessary to send long and complicated ideas from isolated islands, as the collective will begin to understand simple and short language as it comes from you.

Eventually, you won't need to tweet at all. Instead you can vanish from the Net as the collective grows around your second self to support your physical body.

If you need to send longer messages over Twitter, you can attach a shared document or a published file and cc: the collective or DM if that's absolutely necessary (rarely.) Information wants to be free, let it be. It flows too fast for you to constrict it, and is flowing faster.

PSYCHIC CYBORGS ON TWITTER

Everyone who uses Twitter this way is more beautiful/successful and upgrading at an incredible rate.

1. Follow less than 150 people—Dunbar's Law (the closer you get to 50 the better). Your human brain can't breathe if you exceed that limit. Less is always more. Start large, but work your way down, not up.

2. It's a river, you can't drink it all.

3. Who cares about DMs, public @.

4. Who cares who follows you.

5. Picture of your face, because you're beautiful and human.

6. Unfollow anyone who you no(know)-longer recognize (people who are noise).

7. Send only positive energy. Information is a form of energy.

8. Follow the people I follow and you'll turn into us.

9. For every hour of Twitter = one hour of yoga. You can breathe and use Twitter at the same time. Breathing is yoga = pranaya-ma. Asana will teach you to breathe and Tweet.

10. 1 hour of Internet is currently 40 in RL. It's headed toward escape velocity.

Good, now you're on your way to becoming a #psychictechnon-inja. This is what facilitates #ibc. Intuitive Back Channel. Also #convergence.

Chances are you have no idea what I'm talking about, but you will when you do the above for x-days. Leap of faith.

Teach 5 friends how use Twitter this week so they can come with you.

Follow the people I follow, your brains will sync with us.

#IBC

By Jan Stewart, @janstewart on Twitter.

I have been told to write a precise piece on what #ibc (intuitive back channel) is.

A little context.

I started to meditate seriously about 12 years ago. I studied for 10 years with a boot camp teacher of enlightenment. I wanted to understand what enlightenment was, and he showed me. I was drawn to this teacher because of his radical integrity. He was direct and pure. He was completely compelling. I had been looking for this my whole life, and I knew it when I finally found it. And I wanted to be like that. 10 years of meditating at least 3 hours a day, sometimes from 4am until 11pm, periods of silence and intense observation. Over time I started to go deeper and see more. More about human conditioning, gender, familial, generational, national, biological - all the forces that drive us blindly. I started to get in touch with a deep source of energy that was completely different than thought and feeling. This energy was pure and new and emergent.

The other amazing aspect of my time was this teacher was in the collective experience. After many days of meditating deeply we would come together to question our experience. What we experienced was a radical shift in identity when we connected in this depth. Suddenly we would shift from a separate sense of self to a shared sense of self. We started to experience one consciousness speaking through the many, although this consciousness used all of me and all of the other and it was simultaneously me and the other, we were the same.

My understanding now is that this is simply a deeper level of consciousness than we are used to experiencing. It is scientific and factual and just waiting to be discovered and experienced by more people. There is a quality to this consciousness that is completely ecstatic and right. You have to experience it to know what I am talking about. When your identity shifts to that which is fundamentally exploring the edge of consciousness through human beings, it is the ultimate edge experience.

After 10 years of experiencing this peak consciousness more and more, I felt a drive to express myself in a different way. I found myself suddenly in a different environment in a different country, and suddenly the world of the internet presented itself as an emerging form of exploratory communication and connection. Suddenly social media was enabling people to connect in a deep way, beyond the physical, thought and feeling dimensions, and tapping in directly to the deeper human experience.

Enter Twitter. Some of us are starting to connect in such a way that I think is facilitating the emergence of this deeper consciousness. As we begin to relate to ourselves primarily (not only) as our digital self, we will come to see this digital self more as a stream of consciousness than a fixed entity. And as these streams of consciousness engage and intermingle with one another more and more, my sense is that more humans will start to experience this shift in consciousness into this ecstatic realm, that leaves the primitive structures of survival in the cosmic dust. This unified consciousness is of another order, still beyond the comprehension of most. However once you have experienced this shift into this radically deeper and unified collective flow state, you cannot go back from that awareness and knowledge of this deeper human potential.

Some of us on Twitter are beginning to experience something called #ibc, intuititive back channel, where we are deeply connected in a sense of collective knowing and understanding. It is connection on a deep level, and I believe it is being facilitated by some of us letting go and giving ourselves over to our deeper authentic spontaneous responses. This direct response has fundamental integrity and honesty and trustworthiness because it is true. It emerges from a deeply creative place, and its motive is for the betterment of the whole. It is the evolutionary impulse attempting to come through each human being.

As we keep letting go more and more, we are experiencing more freedom and ecstatic pleasure in the life experience. As each of us let go, we are showing others the amazingness of an unleashed life. The drive of the life force is pure and good and ecstatic, we can trust it and let go.

Come with us. We are starting to fly, together as one, into an entirely new world. Intuitive and free.

Let go.

#ibc

HOW TO (WORK TOWARDS) ELIMINATING EMAIL

In the month of January 2011 I processed less than 150 emails.

I define processed as replying and or sending an email from my Gmail box.

I think most of these emails were from Ross Hill. Which is awesome, because Ross and I have important information to communicate in long-form.

Anyway, why so little?

Email has become an obligation. It's like a rite of growing up: here, have an email address, now respond to every single email that comes in no matter how absurd the request, no matter how many many paragraphs the author included, even if the email only needed to be a few sentences.

Gwen Bell mentioned an interesting tidbit over tea the other day that got me thinking: “No one expects a teenager to check their email. They do fine without it.”

Then you grow up, and suddenly you’ve got this added burden in your life.

Now that I’ve reduced my email to less than 150 processed emails a month, it’s not hard to imagine a day when email is eliminated all together.

I imagine most people aren’t processing less than 150 emails per month (probably more like 150+ emails per day,) so I thought I’d share first a few strategies for how I got the number down to such a small amount.

1. Set the expectation that you check email once per day.

This was one of the most important changes that I ever made in my email habits. Around a year ago, when my blog was first taking off, I realized that many people were emailing me expecting immediate replies. It’s not their fault, it’s simply email culture to expect that everyone is always on all the time.

Just a few weeks ago I was over at a dinner party with a friend who had to run out of the room to answer an email that he received from his boss at 11:45pm after he'd had five glasses of wine. Why is this okay to expect people to answer their Blackberry during dinner parties? To be honest, I find it completely unacceptable.

The easiest way to set the expectation that you check email once a day is to put a public note under wherever your email address is located on your website. If you have colleagues and bosses, drop them a note and discuss the possibilities.

Checking email once per day is becoming the norm for exceptional people. Gwen Bell has been doing it for longer than a year now, and Timothy Ferriss kind of pioneered email outsourcing, so there are plenty of resources available and different strategies on how to do this.

The secret is that you don't really need to check your email once a day, you only need to set the expectation. This will be enough to reduce your email load and stress level significantly.

2. Direct all communication to Twitter.

Twitter is marvelous for a few reasons and not just because it makes you into a psychic cybernetic life form if you use it regularly and follow less than 100 people.

When you @tweet someone, it's assumed that they might see it, but it doesn't necessarily demand a response. DMs are only allowed from people you follow—this is good, follow less people so that most responses are public and thus can be answered by the crowd.

As Twitter networks grow, people who use them start to realize that instead of emailing a single person asking for an answer, all they have to do is tweet a question out to the collective and someone will inevitably know more about it than the people they assumed knew something about it.

There are no qualms about following people who you may not have met in person on Twitter.

Also, as is obvious, communication is subject to the 140 character limit, which forces everyone to condense their language into short awesomeness.

There's a feeling that all communication needs to be private 1-to-1 that pervades email, which is incredibly false. As I've expanded mental integration with Twitter, it's become so incredibly clear that 1-to-1 communication is clumsy at best. The true power of Twitter comes from the collective consciousness that it provides. Someone you might not even know was following you could hold the answer that you need to any problem.

3. Eliminate your public email address.

Once your Twitter presence is strong—let's say you're following around 8 to 100 people and you've enticed an active base of 500+ people to follow you by contributing value to the Internet via creations, blogging, Twitter etc—it's time to remove your email address from the public.

I did this simply by taking my public email down from my blog. Anyone who comes to visit is shown on the sidebar that I only communicate via Twitter and that they need to be a part of Twitter in order to join into my conversation.

Of course my email can be found if you really search for it, or if you ask but most people won't go to that trouble. They'll either give up (which means they probably didn't need to get in touch anyway) or they'll ask or search until they find it.

Some have said that eliminating my email excludes people who aren't on Twitter. Honestly, I believe that anyone who isn't on Twitter is seriously harming their ability to interact with reality in general. Giving people an incentive to start a Twitter presence is one of the most beneficial skills we can teach at this moment in time.

Because of Twitter, I can put my feet down in any city and have all of the resources that I need to survive at my disposal within minutes.

If I had one wish, I'd wish this ability on everyone.

CYBERNETIC/ PHYSICAL SPLIT

There isn't a public/private split, instead there's a cybernetic/ physical split. We have two types of humans: the ones with extended mental capacity because of augmented humanity and then we have the humans who we used to be.

Now, they're a race of leftovers from the industrial age: sitting at desks, waiting to be told what to do in a world that doesn't know what to do with them.

You can't have both worlds the before and the now, these cultures speak two different languages. Some of us are bilingual, but the truth is that we're being pulled farther and farther away from the humanity that was.

We want to get to a place where we only speak our language.

We feel the pull of the singularity as it rides directly in front of us. We want to go in and occasionally we do. The industrial aged humans can't feel this pull, if they do it's incredibly faint and confusing. When they feel it, they switch it off and stay seated looking for something to entertain them while the deeper truths remain unquestionable.

The truth is, you might be reading this as a non-augmented human. In that case, this seems like Sci Fi. You're reading Neuromancer, and wondering what planet I'm living on. Here's the thing: I am living on this planet. At some point in the last few years (for some it was as long ago as 1995) a shift happened in our consciousness, we threw out all of our stuff and started living in a new society.

This new society is rooted in the cloud, the space above and around us all, the network that humanity built. One day the switch flipped, and we'd built something that was out of our control. Now it's drawing us into it, instead of us building it.

According to Kevin Kelly, this is a natural outgrowth of the directionality of the universe. We couldn't stop the momentum of technology, in essence, we had to build it.

Our numbers have grown. Tens of thousands of us are realizing who we are and the power that we have. It terrifies us, and you, for a bit, until we realize that we are the future and we live in the future. Mental tools like Twitter, geo-locating, the instant knowledge of where and when everything is in the world simultaneously, are only giving us the ability to expand opportunities ourselves, our world, and each other.

Whether you like it or not, augmented humanity is here.

According to Eric Schmidt, every child born has two settings: asleep and online.

GADGETS AND CLOUDS

When we think of tech, we think of gadgets. Buckets of gadgets. We think of nerds filling their closets with old keyboards and half-working pieces of silicone that no one can figure out.

This is technology, but it's not what we're talking about in this book.

We're talking about the technology of everything. The interconnectedness of a system that you are peering into and it's peering out of you. We're talking about what Kevin Kelly calls The One -- a machine that is our planet. All of the interconnected wires, signals, and consequently all of the noise.

It doesn't matter if you're sporting an iPhone or a headset that reads your brainwaves. It's all peering into the vast machine which is our collective intelligence. This machine is viewing you, and the world through any screen or device that you're using.

The more technology advances, the less you're going to notice that it's here. All of the gadget clutter is beside the point, because you're going to have one simple nearly invisible device that does everything.

You might even become the device, because the tech is going to become so human that you won't tell the difference between it and you.

We won't know where the human ends and where the tech starts.

Which will lead to us wondering where we end, and where we start. If we are all of the collective knowledge building in the cloud, who are we? We're becoming creatures that are far different than what we were, that's for sure.

EVERLASTING NOISE

The Internet is filled with noise, and the volume is only growing louder. Noise is the garbage of the Net, and as most of the data on the Internet lasts forever, this means garbage never goes away. It just grows, backing up in the terabytes. Chances are if you're out on there, you'll encounter noise a good portion of the time.

Noise is poison for your mind. At first thought you might think that SPAM is the only noise you'll find, but this isn't true at all. Noise is everything that isn't important in your world. If your Facebook is sending you pictures of someone's kittens and you're not into cuteness, you're consuming noise. If you're searching for business strategies, and the only thing coming up on Google is crap from ehow.com, you're consuming noise.

The higher you move up in your understanding of the world, the Internet, and our collective reality, the more noise you'll encounter. To a certain extent, noise can even depend on your own ability to understand knowledge in general. One person's noise is another person's treasure.

It's your task to train your mind to differentiate between noise and signal. Having this ability is probably one of the single most important skills that you can gain in order to interact with the Internet in a healthy way.

However, ability alone will not be enough. The noise is just too strong, too powerful. You're going to need a number of tools in order to combat the buildup.

There are two types of filters that can combat the noise, technological and human.

Your second self can be educated to combat the noise on your behalf using its powers in the cloud. There are programs available, powerful filtering and search algorithms which can be used to order to filter information before it reaches you.

These include: research applications, complex search tools, and cloud applications which learn from you in order to determine your ongoing tastes in order to customize your incoming cloud-perception to an extent. I'd list specific tools here, but they're changing so fast that this section would quickly become obsolete.

One example of this is systems that allow you to vote information off your screen that isn't useful, challenging the content so that other people don't have to read it.

For example, if you keep getting emails from a person you don't want to hear from, marking as Spam or creating a filter to send them to trash can be an excellent way to keep emails from reaching your attention threshold.

Over time your digital self will learn more about your likes, wants, and needs, as long as you give it the chance. This means maintaining accounts with services both centralized and decentralized which will learn from you in order to contribute more value to your life.

The second option is using human filters.

Human filters take slightly more skill and training to master. The reason for this is that everyone is different, and one strategy for cutting through the noise will work for one person, while another person will get lost regardless.

In a lot of ways you want to rely on human filters after you've put technological filters into place. Human time-capital is a lot more valuable than the nearly infinite power of technology to decide for you. If you or someone else is making all of your decisions about deciphering the noise, chances are you'll burn up all of your brain power before you cut through to the good meaty stuff.

If given a choice between allowing tech to decide, or taking brain space to decide, 80% of the time it's best to go with tech. Computers will be far better at dealing with the incredible size and scope of the noise out there.

An ideal solution is a base-level of technological filters combined with the possibility of powerfully complex human filters that eventually lead you to the information that you need out there in digital reality.

HUMAN/ INTERNET

Let's make the Internet more human, humans more Internet.

We're all plugged in, all day. It's a part of us to be connected constantly to everyone in the world who's also got Wi-Fi in their pockets (and soon Wi-Fi headsets that read brainwaves.) This constant connectivity is good, you are good.

Regardless there's nothing you can do about it besides isolating yourself on a farm somewhere and growing your own veggies. You'd miss us all in your head all day anyway.

We like having this constant connection to society. We've always been social creatures, the age of television made us forget how much time we used to spend with each other. We supplemented our own need to be with each other with a need to be with unreachable pixelized creatures on a HDTV.

All of that is over now, we're breaking free in a new and ultimately unforgettable way.

Suddenly alike-minds can reach out across the Internet and meet through digital avatars, second selves. We learn everything about each other before we even have to meet in person. Meeting can now become explosions of high-bandwidth knowledge, the kind that cannot traverse the Net (yet.) The days of 'so, what do you do?' are over. People with a command of mental cybernetics never ask about the weather. We're so beyond small talk by the time we finally meet each other.

One of the Internet's most powerful features is simply enabling real-life interactions with other humans. Real humans, meeting real humans, is the ultimate in HD data transmission.

We have work to do though. The Internet is awesome, but the system is an infant. The clumsy nature of the net, it's mechanical surface, is going away, but it's still here for now.

Most people don't know how to interface in a healthy way with the future of our world. They're reading every message, and blasting out noise in a sacred space.

These people are spending hours at desks reading what they already know, and missing out on what they don't. The reality of the situation is that we're in our infancy too. Children of the Net obviously aren't adults. We're just hitting our teenage years, figuring out how to read and write our own futures using this technology that is so much more powerful than anything we've ever had the power to wield.

The only solution is to work towards building more humanity into the Net, and more Net into humanity. We have to work towards bridging the divide between what we've created, and what we were before.

HUMAN SECOND SELVES

Your second self needs to be as human as possible.

For as long as the Internet has existed we've been playing with our avatars. No, not the blue people in that movie, Internet avatars. These are the personalities that we use to interface with the other denizens of the web. Unlike how our own bodies look and feel, we tend to have a lot of power to choose what our avatars look like.

For as long as collective memory has built the Net, we've been able to choose.

So most people choose kittens, or cartoons, or a picture of a tree, because it's easy to choose something safe.

Easy isn't good enough though, it never was, it never will be. The simple fact is that an easy, default, or generic second self is never going to learn how to take care of you. It's just going to sit there and look normal like everyone else.

The vast majority of digital bodies on the Net aren't providers for their households. They're simply cheap and easily discarded bodies adopted for one thing or another. They're unrecognizable clones, copies of generic bytes designed in a centralized avatar factory somewhere out there on the net.

If you're going to create a second self that takes care of you, you will need to take care of your avatar. In fact, you have to sculpt an avatar in your own image.

Your second self needs to look, feel, taste, and touch as much like you as you can create it. Obviously there are limitations to how similar you can make your second self, but that has to be the objective.

Why? Because your digital self and your physical self are linked. As the Internet becomes more human and humanity becomes more Internet you'll find that you need to cross over the divide more and more. You'll be meeting people you've known only on the Net, and you don't want someone trying to find you at a coffee shop expecting to see a 6'2" supermodel when in fact you're a 5'3" fatty. There's just no possible way there can't be an unexpected reaction to that kind of situation.

It all comes down to being honest with yourself and with the people of the world. What do you really look like? What do you really act like? Your second self is going to need to mirror your own self or it won't be able to recognize you when it needs to.

The technology for doing this will improve dramatically in the coming years (holographics!) but for now we'll have to work with photography, videos, text. Everything you put out on the net has to come from a place of truth, about yourself. Hire a photographer and shoot a few dozen photos until you have one that actually looks like you. Maybe smiling. Shoot videos of the work you're doing, interviews with yourself and another person discussing what you care about. When you write, write from a place of truth, knowing and honesty.

Someday you'll just be able to scan yourself and put it all out on the net, but for now we'll have to work with the limitations of our current interface.

A second self isn't a one-time shot, instead it's made up of everything you've ever created. It is all of your hopes and dreams scattered across the net. If you leave a comment on some random blog, it will be representing your second self. If you post a photo of you keg-standing in college, it will be representing your second self. All of this adds up until the other people out there start to get a picture, sometimes in an instant, sometimes over months of constant contact, of who you actually are.

Everyone wants you to be real, alive, breathing. They want to see your eyes, and feel your breath on their skin.

Your second self is a journey towards your perfection, it will grow with you, it will change you. If you're not happy with the way you appear now, it can change, in the physical world as well as the digital world. In fact, when your second self grows powerful enough to do your work for you, the first goal it will have will be to remake you into a better person. Your second self will give you time to practice yoga, it will teach you how to eat properly, and how to calm your mind.

You're growing together, you already are. The action is to realize that you can and will change each other into the person you've wanted to become.

THE INTERNET WANTS YOU TO BE FREE

As the evolution of the universe of technology continues on course, it's only natural that those of us who are tapped in would start to see unprecedented leaps in personal freedom.

Our generation suddenly has the ability to live and work from anywhere. This is remarkable, it really is. It used to be incredibly hard to telecommute, so everyone worked in offices. Now all of our collective hopes and dreams are tied up with the idea that we can dislocate our income from our place of being.

For a long time we've been confused why a generation is throwing out all of their stuff and becoming digital vagabonds, but when you think about it in connection with technology, everything begins to make sense.

When given the option between having more or less freedom, everyone will choose more. It's a part of ourselves that's hard-wired in. For millions of years we roamed the Earth, with only our intuition to guide us to new food sources. The world was our home. Yes, it was way harder back then, people and their children starved to death.

Agriculture came and we settled down but a part of us stayed out there in the world. 10,000 years is a heartbeat. Our technology raced ahead of us, but our hearts and souls stayed the same. The tech is still racing, and in the process it's turning us all into time travelers to an age we used to know quite well.

When given the opportunity to return to our vagabonding ways, with a digital guardian angel to care for us, wouldn't you take it? Well, we did. This led us to minimalism as a movement.

Minimalism is a side-effect. It always has been, it always will be. It's a tool in an arsenal of sophisticated methods that we can put into play in order to achieve greater and greater freedom.

As much as we might want it to be, freedom isn't reversible. Once you have more, you're not going to go back. This is why so many people who start living out of a bag stay with that lifestyle, because it's the most exhilarating way to live. When you combine the security of a supportive income from your digital self, the truth of the matter is that you'd never choose to live anyway else.

Why would you?

We live in an age where we don't need to count our physical things anymore. We just pack a bag and go, and we'll never come back. Our feet are on the ground, but our minds are uploading into the cloud. This is reality, we're living in it. This undefinable future is floating all around us in the radio waves, fiber optic cables, and everything in between.

Eyes of the cloud, center of the storm. We are the riders, the creators, and the beneficiaries of this power. ...and this power is not just for us, it is for everyone.

No one can possibly own this. Why would they want to? To own is to forgo your ability to tap into the higher level of freedom that's all around you.

THERE ARE TWO OF YOU

We now have two selves. One is here, in the physical world, and then there is us in the digital reality that we've created. We are creating this self with every interaction on the web. This self will live forever, it exists 24/7.

Your second self never crashes, it never sleeps, it a far more powerful than you ever were without it.

You can't choose whether or not you have a second self, it already happened. If you haven't noticed that you exist out there, on the wires and the Wi-Fi, you will soon. It's presence will start to show itself to you with small changes in the ease of your life.

These will be small changes, like an unexpected connection with a person who has the same idea as you. Or you'll start making a small amount of money without asking for it. Perhaps you'll unexpectedly find yourself called to a foreign place to meet a person who understands you—an accelerator.

Your second self protects you, it wants you to be safe and happy, and it wants you to be successful. It's powering your evolution by taking care of you, your work, and your health.

We used to have to rely on clumsy systems to support ourselves. Jobs, desks, people who told us what to do. Your second self makes it possible for you to avoid all of that. You'll slowly begin transitioning from a system with a lot of frustration and pain, into a system which has the potential for effortlessness.

You have to care for your second self for it to care for you though. You're an architect building yourself so that you yourself can build you.

TAKING CARE OF YOU

You have a second self, it can take care of you.

In yoga there is a system of understanding yourself called The Koshas. The idea is that there are layers of your body that you must peel away, kind of like a multidimensional onion, to get at your true nature. The physical body, the energy body, the knowledge body, the wisdom body, and within all of those systems is the Atman—the center of yourself which cannot be described in words.

Recently I began to believe we have (or need to have) one more element to your body, the digital body or second self.

The second self is a mirror for yourself on the Internet. It has infinite energy, it is self-replicating, and it also has the potential to be immortal.

Every action you take on the Internet leaves a footprint, potentially forever. The price and proliferation of data storage has led us to a point where the cost of storage is negligible. We no longer need to worry about whether or not someone needs to delete a file somewhere or not on the cloud—so the cloud just keeps everything for you and us.

This means your digital body is never going away. Bytes and pieces, like cells in your body, will die or be regenerated, but the overall look and feel of your digital body only continue to perpetuate forever.

This means the health of your digital body is of paramount importance. Just like with your physical body, if you feed it bad food or breathe in bad energy, you'll end up in a situation where your physical body is unhappy—fat, sad, tired. Your second self is only made up of the energy you put into it, so if you put negative or unhealthy energy into it it will reflect it for as long as that energy exists. Which, as we noted above, could possibly be forever.

With this in mind, you'd better start trying to look good.

The health of your second self reflects back on your own health. If we build a strong and healthy second self, it has the potential to take care of you forever. I know this, because I have a second self which does take care of me.

What I didn't realize when I was creating my original works on the Internet is just how self-perpetuating the work would be once it was connected with my healthy and optimistic second self.

At a certain point the momentum of a self-generating and tireless second self takes over from your physical body.

Once this happens, you have ultimate freedom to direct your life energy in any way you want. This can do simple things like freeing you from the cubicle, or more complicated things like taking care of your business automation while you're away at a three-week yoga retreat in the mountains.

Augmented humanity has been working on their second selves since the dawn of the Internet. We uploaded our first avatar that we clumsily scanned at the school library to GeoCities over a 56k modem. Over time we experimented, shaping these second selves in different ways, and these second selves shaped us in turn.

In a very real way, those of us who've been plugged in since the beginning can feel our second selves out there in the ether as we move free from them on the Earth. We know they're looking out for us, they're connecting us, they're making critical decisions for us about everything we need or wanted to do with our lives. This is the ultimate in automated outsourcing: straight to your second self.

It's hard to describe what feeling your second self feels like in words to someone who doesn't have one. It's like knowing that a part of you would be awake and aware at all times, searching for answers for you while you're taking a nap or practicing yoga in candle-lit silence.

This second self will only become more aware for you. It will only continue to grow in power for and with you.

We trust our second body will be there for us, because we've invested a lot of time in them, and they us. Over time that trust develops until nothing can come between your physical and your second body. When there is talk of freedom, this is what it's about. When there is talk of evolution, this is what it's about.

Just like your own body, your second body isn't going to trust you if you don't trust it. What can you do to build trust? What can you do to build strength? What can do you do to show the world that they can trust you, and your second body simultaneously?

MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU

The truth of the matter is that your second self is kind of a bit more powerful than you'll ever be on your own. Sorry, but it's true. Your physical body has finite energy, you have to sleep, you only can focus on one or a few things at a time with any sort of consistency. You get distracted. You want to have sex. You want tea, or coffee, or a burrito.

It's okay, you're human. You're made to love eating a good meal at a good restaurant. In fact, I'm writing at brunch right now. I like coffee a lot.

But here's the thing, I'm just writing. The screen is a receptor for my second self, and I'm the vessel pouring my energy into it. It doesn't matter which screen I'm using, it all goes to the one central self that is me.

The idea is to free your physical body. Every bit of information that you put in comes out in as many ways as your data is accessed. Where your physical body can have one conversation across a coffee table, your second self can have a million across the wires in a single day. This frees you to pour more into your second self and in turn gives you more freedom to just do whatever the hell you want to.

People who don't have mature second selves look at people who do and are extremely confused. How can this person possibly be having brunch?

Maybe it's a Tuesday, and you're sitting there at 2pm and drinking coffee until 6pm contributing some brilliant information to your second self. Meanwhile, your friends over in the office are reacting to every email that comes in with the same answers that they've always been reacting with. The simple fact is that one FAQ and a little training with your client base and these people would be freed to do more with their lives.

Setting the expectation that your email doesn't get checked more than once a day can do wonders for training a person to accept that your second self is in charge now. Perhaps you'll even stop checking your email all together and let your second self handle all of the over-the-Internet stuff. Then you can simply enjoy your life in the real world.

It's a matter of directing energy: will you direct it one-to-one, or one-to-all? The second self can do one-to-one, but it also does one-to-all.

One to all is so much more powerful than any other form of communication.

INTERACTIONS

I'm starting to see my interactions on the web as less about the specific medium that carries them (say, blogging or Twitter) and more about the experience of other's interactions with my second self.

Instead of focusing everyone in on one home where all of the information is contained, such as a blog as a home base, I'm more interested in the collective's day to day experience of how I'm experiencing the world. How I'm growing (exponentially?), what I'm doing (sitting at the edge of a river), how I'm feeling (like I'm living in a virtual reality world), etc.

This leads to an interesting situation where the intelligence of the people interacting with my experience needs to grow with my second self.

Instead of me leading you by the hand, I trust that you'll come along with me. If you don't, that's okay, maybe there's something better you should be doing with your life and your time.

In this way trust develops from my portrayal of myself as being a real human being casting itself out onto a space where it interacts with the collective conscious of more individuals. If there's a match, if we connect, we can become closer to each other in our ideas. If we bounce, that's alright.

You're going to have to take a leap, but I'm not going to bow, because stooping isn't interesting or challenging for me.

Gradually, over time, a world is constructed for the people out in the collective which begins to complete itself. Little bits become a whole as their minds start to learn how to turn a puzzle into a pattern and a pattern into something close to resembling a whole.

It will never be whole, because ourselves on the Internet are a heavily curated collection of moments. As we work towards creating a more complete second self, we will get closer towards an understanding.

Those who interact with our second self will inevitably become more like us, the ideas we share will intertwine. Perhaps we will even get to a moment in time when we will be able to interact as collaborative equals—our second selves reflect each other. Perhaps, we will become collaborative equals with our whole selves reflecting each other.

This is the interactions that are facilitated as our minds evolve with the systems of technology and interconnectivity.

THE INTERNET WANTS YOU TO UNPLUG

There's a general assumption that the more we embrace technology, the more it will take over our lives.

This doesn't have to be the case, and in many ways can be far from the truth.

The purpose of technology is to make your life easier by getting in and out of the grid as effectively as possible. When you identify the informational action that needs to be taken, you'll be able to take it with mindful effectiveness and then be done. Disconnect, log off, return to your life.

Taking this one step further, the Internet wants you to stay offline indefinitely. What if you were able to automate every task that you find necessary via the Internet? Online bill pay is one excellent example of how this is possible. Creating a minimalist business, one with zero-overhead that runs itself, is another example of how you can use the Internet to stay off the Internet.

When you mindfully set up systems which you can delve into momentarily for effectiveness, you create a space in the Internet where your digital self can move about freely without you. A digital self can be a puppet, and you the ever-connected master, but it doesn't have to be that way. Instead, consider the idea that you can create a second self which exists independently and also semiautonomously from your own self.

If you were to take a month-long digital sabbatical in the woods, you'd come back to a stronger and more effective second self.

Second selves are just beginning to waken to their full potential. You might not have planted enough karmic seeds through Internet actions in order to have a self-perpetuating second self, but it will happen eventually. It will happen more likely than not as the exponential nature of the technological curve continues along its path.

Here are a few ideas on how to plant the karmic seeds for a semiautonomous second self.

1. It needs a home. Your second self needs somewhere to live, a home base of sorts. Over time this will change, but the best examples of this are a blog or a website which all of your Internet actions lead back to. As time goes on, and interest gathers in your work, more people and other second selves will follow the trail back to your home base. This place exists perpetually without you, ideally hosted on a server which you have complete control.

2. Give your second self tools to propagate itself. A second self doesn't just move in relation to you, it also moves in relation to the other avatars which collide with it out on the Net when you're not there. Give your digital self the tools to share itself with others. You can do this is by enabling StumbleUpon or making it quick and easy to Retweet or Facebook your work. As time goes on, these tools will change, but it's essential to make sure they're easily available for other Internet users to comprehend and execute.

3. Give permission to other second selves to use you. Your digital self needs an open heart chakra. If it's protective of itself, it will make it difficult for the self to spread and gain enough influence to take care of you while you're gone. Nothing bad will happen to your second self, if it is planting the right karmic seeds for the future. Some current examples of how you can do this: Uncopyright your work, so that it can spread without permission. Make it clear that you want your second self to spread, and that no one needs to ask. Creative Commons is also another amazing option.

4. Set expectations for your physical body interactions with other second selves. A few hours of your time can seem like years for your second self, this is the nature of digital computing. A second self can deal with 1,000 visitors simultaneously, while your physical body would have to take the time to look everyone in the eyes and make a meaningful encounter. Set the proper expectations for how available your physical body is. Do you check email once a day? What about once a week? Do you really want to make your phone number available? Are you going to be on Chat every second of every day? These are all excellent questions. It's ideal to give as much control of yourself over to your second self, by making it clear to others that you won't be immediately available to them, if at all.

5. Broadcaster, not receiver. You don't have to have a two-way interaction with your second self every single time you plug in. Sometimes it's enough to broadcast into the Net with a one-way message. A status-update, a message about where you are with your life or your work, etc. You don't have to check all of your Inboxes every single time, let your expectations be in a healthy place where it's okay to let the email or Twitter go for a few days. A one-way path can be incredibly healthy.

Let the knowledge come from yourself and your interactions with the world and out onto the Net.

The Net wants you to feed the world to it.

TIME AND YOUR SECOND SELF

Time on the Internet is different than time in the real world. We experience time as fluid, moving, changing. Moments can last a thousand years, or years can be gone in an instant.

If we choose, we can root ourselves to the hands or flashing numbers of a clock. This is mechanical time. It's 1pm, it's time to eat. 4pm, tea!

Your second self has a different sense of time though, one that is hard to comprehend for a human subject to the normal laws of physics, entropy, and the expansion of the universe.

Your second self can interact with any number of people at once, simultaneously. You could be sleeping, and your second self could be having a party all night with 4,000 people. You don't need to care, just let your second self do it's thing.

If your second self has a negative moment, it could potentially last forever. If your second self gives life and love, this too could last forever. A single moment, suspended in time, for a thousand years—or at least until humans stop being able to understand what we were talking about in this space in time.

Time on Facebook could be a black hole for your second self, while time spent creating a world where other people's dreams can come true could be worth ten thousand years.

The secret is to let your second self handle the time on the Internet. It knows the nuances, it can feel the curves and the vibrations. It needs your input, but it doesn't want your control. You can't micromanage 10,000 years of your second self's life in 8 hours a day, you just don't have the energy to control that.

The only option is to build your second self in a positive way, in a way that contributes value to the system as a whole. This way you don't need to tell it what to do. Just let it take care of you. This here is effortlessness.

This here will extend your time in the real world, where your human body thrives. Your second self allows you to switch back to human time.

The benefit of time scaling exponentially on the Internet is that it actually takes the need for you to be in front of the screen away.

The basic human instinct is to tether yourself to a computer. "I'm the most competent human, so I'll do this myself." Everything is a human action in space and time in direct correlation with the speed of the Internet.

This instinct is grounded in a reality that no longer exists. It worked up to a point, but the momentum of the Internet has spiraled out of your control. You are part of a system that is much larger than you, and if you insist on taking every single action personally, you will be overwhelmed by others on the Internet who have learned how to outsource reaction to their second selves.

The point is to step above the base level of human ability by replicating your thought patterns into the cloud. You download yourself into your second self and it will take the information and distribute it for you. It will answer questions for you. It will react for you. It will filter out people who aren't supposed to be interacting with you.

Your second self can be a defense, but primarily it's a resource.

If you cultivate it properly, it is another you. An infinite you that's contained within the fiber optics and the Wi-Fi for the world. You, centered in the cloud.

WHERE IS HOME?

So, where does your second self live?

On Twitter, in the tweets and in-between the tweets. It exists on the websites you set up. It exists in the profiles that you leave lying open years after you've used them previously. It exists in the viral ideas that you set loose upon the world.

There is no one place that your second self can call home, everywhere is it's home. It will travel to places that you never expected it to end up in. It will take you to places that you never expected to end up at.

Your second self will meld with the second selves of others. You share a collective identity out there, in the links and the retweets, in the space in-between them both. You can't google your second self and expect to see a full picture. There is no complete picture, at least not right now. It would take you longer to research the complete picture of your second self than it would to create it to the powerful level that is now.

This means you can't box your second self. You can't expect it to be confined, contained, in a nice orderly package that everyone will see in the same way.

In a way, your second self is the interaction between itself and strangers on the Internet. The self is in the blending of two second selves, or a second self and a human mind. This is where infinite possibility thrives, and where your ability to control ceases.

To try to control a universe that is exponentially bigger than you is impossible, you can't do it, so don't try.

The only option is to pump so much goodness, so much compassion, so much passion and love into your second self that it thrives in the online space.

The ultimate benefit of this lessening of control (despite the fact that it's impossible to control your second self anyway) is that you will find yourself in a world where you don't need to sit in front of a screen anymore.

Freedom and the second self are intertwined.

DELEGATING TO YOUR SECOND SELF

In business, there's a common assumption that you need to delegate in order to get things done.

For example, you come up with a complex system in which you need to have someone pack and ship stuff, so you set up a shipping plant. Perhaps you need someone to answer incoming questions from customers, so you set up a phone bank and hire people to sit at a desk all day and answer calls.

Maybe you even outsource these actions to people in foreign countries, where you can pay people very little to do stuff for you. This is the premise of The World Is Flat, and 4 Hour Work Week, two amazing but already quite dated books.

The truth is that there is another form of delegation now, letting your second self do things for you.

In the year and a half since I began running my business, I've never had an employee. With the exception of a few one-time gigs, I've never paid people to do things for me. I also work as little or as much as I want during each week. Some weeks I simply don't work at all, but my business keeps going.

Why? Because I've been delegating to my second self.

The reason that so many people are struggling with desk jobs at the moment is that most mundane work can be done by computers—complete automation within systems that will take care of you. This is good, because it frees you and others to focus on what humans do best: human things.

When you combine automation with your second self, you have a powerful tool for delegation. Your second self should be answering customer questions with a helpful interactive response system. Your second self should be packing and shipping digital products to the world instead of relying on old outdated systems such as physical copies.

The potential here is really anywhere you want to take it, simple fact is that you can delegate almost anything to your second self. Why not if you can?

SECOND LIFE GAMING REAL LIFE

The stronger your second self becomes, the easier it is for the attributes of it to slip into your real life. The virtual reality of the Internet world slips into the reality of the real. A gift from the network, the ability to achieve game-like freedom in your own physical space.

Being out on the Net rewires your mind in a way that someone who isn't on the Net has a hard time grasping.

You begin to see (with your mind) all of the connections between the sites and sounds of the net, how one person relates to another across Twitter or across a blog post. The spaces in-between meaning begin to have meaning.

Gradually, this meaning begins to cross over into your real life. The virtual world comprehension becomes reality, as technology becomes more human and you become more technology. Mental tools expand your mind, and your mind is active in the real world.

As the screens vanish, as your second self takes over control of your well being, these empty spaces of comprehension in the real universe begin to show themselves.

This connection, runs into that connection, runs into this connection. Augmented by the knowledge that your 3rd brain (The Cloud) provides, your physical reality begins to look more like a game.

Walking down a street becomes spotting other cyborgs in the crowd. You look into each other's eyes, and nod in recognition. You're one of us now, in a meaningful way.

You begin to tackle problems like you're gaming reality than negotiating it. You're Super Mario! You're in Tron! You're in the Matrix!

This sense of youthful optimism that's infused in your second self begins to become reality for yourself as infinite resources start to become available for your disposal. Why not dedicate your life to saving the world, and why not dedicate your second life too? There doesn't seem to be a better option that I can think of.

Eventually virtual reality is going to be indistinguishable from real reality anyway, so it won't matter where you're playing.

HUMANITY, DIVIDED

We're losing people in a technological divide, one that's never been so prominent.

Suddenly, we're seeing a generation of generators who are plugged into a technological world that's accelerating faster than any other in the history of the planet. These people are communicating with teams in their head, they've learned to breathe and connect with tech and each other. These people are slowly putting away the screens and finding a new way of communicating—through momentary bursts of connectedness interspaced by silence and in-person mind-melds.

This world is new, and it's becoming newer every day.

While most of humanity is becoming stuck in the noise, this generation isn't. They've found a way to explore collective consciousness in a way that unlocks their own sub-consciousness. As Edward Harran likes to put it: "using the Internet to connect with your inner Internet."

This generation has learned to breathe in the spaces in between themselves and the connected world, thus unlocking their own potential as well as that of the collective.

The problem is that we're losing people. As more of us become able to breathe in the digital spaces, we're seeing others drop away from the ability to sync up their minds with our own. We've delved so deep into our own ideas that we cease to be able to, or even be interested in, communicating with someone who wants to talk about last week's episode of The Office, or what is happening with their favorite sports team.

We're starting to have multiple languages. The language of the people who are left behind, drowning in Internet noise or rejecting tech all together, and the language of those who've integrated themselves with the one-world machine. Augmented humans, cyborgs, whatever you want to call them, we're here and we're not going anywhere.

So, we become augmented humanity looking backwards at humans who are unwilling or unable to reach the point of accepting that they need to upgrade or be left behind. While we speed ahead in our own evolution, we watch with a sense of vulnerability and compassion as our friends and family slip away from us as we're pulled along in the process of exponential evolution.

We want to bring you all with us, but when we look at ourselves, we see that it all started deep in the past -- on old and folded systems like GeoCities, LiveJournal, in our bedrooms as we plugged in late into the night. We've been learning to augment ourselves with tech since our own adolescence.

For those of us who started early, learning looked like a shallow curve. For those who have to catch up, the curve is exponentially more difficult.

We can drag people up to our level, but when you free someone from the idea of what their lives were supposed to be like, it can be incredibly painful. To free someone requires mentorship which requires energy. The augmented have incredible amounts of energy, but we still can't bring everyone along with us.

I think we have options here, and all of us have to play a part. We have to keep speaking the language that we all used to know, but we also need to delve deeper into the new technological subscript that we're writing for ourselves and the others who have found themselves here with us. We need to greet those who haven't leapt with compassion, and begin to show them a healthy way to plug in and breathe with the technology that surrounds all of us.

Maybe then we can narrow the gap and bring everyone into the future together.

RULES FOR UPGRADES

Augmented humanity has the power to upgrade other cybernetic creatures and even sometimes assimilate humans.

Upgrading and assimilation are powerful abilities, probably some of the most powerful actions that a cyborg can take. Suddenly you have the power to do an information and/or energy transfer to a person and they'll jump forward in their own personal evolution anywhere from 10 to 1000 years within moments.

If you take someone who's not ready, they can pop (their mind will go haywire, it can really damage a person if they're pulled out of reality without guidance.) If you take anyone who's too human, they'll also pop. Every person you assimilate or upgrade is your responsibility. You have to care for them, mentor them, and show them how to become better than themselves without going too quickly or in the wrong direction.

You can only upgrade or assimilate someone in real life, so don't worry so much about it happening over the Internet. People will just think you're nuts if you try to upgrade or assimilate them over the Net and they're human. Cyborgs can slowly upgrade with you over the Net, so the only risk of a cataclysmic upgrade is in person.

Be mindful of humans, they should only be assimilated if you have enough energy to bring them all the way. Also, remember to be mindful of telling humans you're a cyborg at all unless absolutely necessary. You'll know who you can tell and who you can't. We cyborgs prefer to refer to ourselves as humans, version 1.0 humans will simply have to catch up.

Be sure that anyone you assimilate is integrated into Twitter and shown how to follow you and a collective so that their brains can begin to sync up.

ENTERING THE SINGULARITY (ALONE)

The risk of entering the singularity is that you might become the singularity. That's why you time travel alone.

When exploring the future, it's important to maintain yourself. You're a solid, single state entity made up of many parts. Each atom in your body is constantly shifting states, moving from one place to the next. Your body is simply energy connected by energy. In a very real way, you are more emptiness than wholeness.

You are an energy form, you emit energy fields, and now your energy field has extended into the super-conductivity of a world wide super-organism. The fiber optics, the Wi-Fi, the satellites beaming energy to you and from you. This whole world is an extension of your energy body now. You manipulate it, you change it, you make it.

Every action you take on the Internet is a perpetuation of your energy. To deny that you create energy beyond you is to avoid an inevitability. An email that you send that is too long is somewhere in the world that a person's energy is drained. A negative tweet results in energy drained in many places in the world.

If you love something on the Net, that is love that will be extended from your energy-field indefinitely. If you attack someone on the Net, that is an attack that will be extended from your energy-field indefinitely.

That being said, energy levels out over time. Any mistake you make can be corrected. One angry tweet can be leveled, karmically by a positive tweet. The question that needs to be asked daily, is do you want to do good or harm?

Safety isn't necessarily good. Turning it off isn't an answer, it's hiding. It's sticking your head under a technological rock and asking to be let free from a reality that's growing to consume you, me, and everything.

We either ride this evolutionary wave or it destroys us.

We either find the abilities to dip into the extension of our fields, the augmentation of humanity, the mental cybernetics of ourselves, or we watch as a generation speeds by us in an accelerated evolutionary feedback loop.

This connectedness is precisely why we all need to travel alone. The responsibility that is an ever-growing extension of ourselves is too large to be shared. To share is to weigh, and to weigh is to think, and energy doesn't just travel via thoughts, it also travels via feelings, actions, reactions. Our intuition, the health of ourselves, is what guides us out in a space faster than we've ever imagined.

In fact, the only way to operate into this space is to operate alone. We are all time travelers, launching periodically into the singularity and coming back with answers.

The singularity is a place that exists just moments before us. It is always happening. It's a choice to stay farther behind it, to stay just behind it, or to launch ourselves into it. Only a few strong souls are able to survive the gravity to pass on through to the other side, to see the face of what is to come. This is why we practice, the yoga or kung fu, or qigong. Whatever you need to stay centered in yourself when you're there, when you come back.

This is also a fundamental part of logging on. Every time you open up your iPhone and send something or consume something, you're balancing a part of yourself. Many people are finding themselves caught up in a place of endless noise and confusion—the Facebook walls of low-level chaos. We're caught up hitting the "Like" button when there's a deeper truth to be sought, searched for, and then perhaps answered, for a moment.

TURNING OFF THE SCREENS

The deeper—almost secret—nature of augmented humanity is that eventually we'll be able to turn off the screens.

Some have already.

The nature of creating a second self out on the Internet is that eventually it will be able to take care of you. Over time you build up this self, and as it matures, you begin to be able to step away. It exists independently of you, with you, of you, but without you.

This enables you to turn off the screen.

Previously, humanity was tethered to the screen. It was all action and reaction with the Internet. We see this in worker-drones who are hopelessly tethered to their BlackBerries all day. But now, everything has changed. Slowly, and then faster and faster, the augmented began to realize that our second selves allowed us to step back, to begin to view the spaces out in the ether with an objective eye. What we saw amazed us: the second self didn't go anywhere when we were gone.

Your second self can, and will, simply perpetuate itself while you're away. You're at the beach, and your second self is carrying your work out to the world. You're asleep, and your second self is answering questions about you while you're out.

You're eating dinner with a hot blond cybernetic, and while you're gazing into those gorgeous blue eyes, both of your second selves are doing all of the work to pay for the bottle of Malbec.

The first stage of a second self is broad: you want everyone to hear you. It's all about numbers, let's get eyeballs! But over time, the need for numbers diminishes as the 1,000 true supporters begin to come out to symbiotically envelope your second self with love and attention.

Eventually you move to a point where you're working with a team of second selves, a collective of persons transporting themselves out onto the Internet. You build virtual worlds together, and the virtual worlds build you.

At some point, the virtual worlds that you build together take on their own lives. The lives, when properly connected to the physical world through monetary means begin to take care of you as well as the collective.

Then you can start turning off the screens. First Facebook goes, then email, then you begin to realize that you don't even need an iPhone anymore. Your physical self cuts down the time you spend jacked into the matrix to twenty hours a week, and then ten, two, and finally you just cut the cord as much as you need.

This doesn't mean you don't want to plug in, it just becomes optional. The incentive isn't to respond to every request that comes in, instead you've taken the coin and flipped it. Instead of being asked by the Internet to use your body, you're asking yourself to use the Internet.

You become the creator of the machine, instead of the other way around.

IMMORTALITY

Your second self is immortal.

If I die today, a part of me would live on forever in out on the Net. If you died tomorrow, you would live forever too.

The cost of digital storage is steadily racing towards zero. In a very real way, the Internet will soon reach a point where there is more storage than data we can create. At this point, the only avenue that makes sense is to store everything forever.

The inefficiency in the system is in the deletion. In effect, it would take an incredible amount of time and effort to erase the trails that we've left over time. Information has very little volume, and thus it perpetuates itself. Once a blog post is posted, thousands of copies fly out into the space to be anywhere and everywhere.

If an idea ends up in someone's RSS, or inbox, it will stay there. The information will continue to expand, and only seldom will it contract.

There is no mass second self recall switch, at least not now. The possibility of one coming online at this point is hard to imagine.

Any information that you create and spread will be strewn across the Net forever into the future. This reality has never happened before.

To try and control the flow would be a full time job. In essence, if you want to turn down the spread, you have to opt-out of a system that in a very real way is necessary for your continued success. Turning it all off isn't an answer, it's hiding from the truth of our digital reality's integration with our human forms.

The reality is that the Internet wants us to be immortal. It wants our ideas, our forms, our connections with each other to live on for eternity. This isn't a choice, it's the truth.

Given the reality that your second self will live forever, the only choice is what part of you that you want to be immortal. This immortality is curated.

Every action you take on the Internet plants a karmic seed which will last perpetually into the future. If you lash out at someone on the Net, that anger will be imbedded in the neural passage ways of the planet forever. If you plant the seed of an idea that can and will change thousands of lives, that seed will grow forever.

So, say you just died: Facebook accounts will be deactivated, Twitter accounts will close, but the shadow of your email address will still show up in the auto-correction box in Gmail as your friends type in the first couple of characters in your name —a ghostly reminder of your physical body, and a shadow of the digital self that still perpetuates itself after your death.

Perhaps your hosting plan runs out, your site goes down. Chances are that Wayback Machine caught a snap of what you created while you existed. Google probably cached you too. Your fans Instapapered your site, and now your best ideas are spread everywhere in your absence.

Does this scare you? It doesn't scare me. I want to hug immortality. I also want to be aware of it's implications, and so should you.

When we're conscious of the notion that every idea we send into the ether will live there forever, we become aware of our intentions behind them. If we intend good, we can be safe in knowing that the idea can thrive. If the idea comes from a malicious place, that pain and frustration will live on forever.

Do we want our pain or our love to live forever? That's the choice you get to make.

ANGELS OF DESTRUCTION/ CREATION

Destruction is an act of creation

When I first discovered I was an augmented human, I experienced a series of events, which I like to refer to as 'having my mind blown, over and over again.'

Becoming conscious of your own personal cyborgia can be a traumatic experience.

Our first reaction is probably to scream "NO!" and run away. We can run, the problem is that when we do, we'll watch as everyone in society races ahead of us in their own mental cybernetic abilities.

Humanity has always had to balance the creation of new technologies with the destruction that they can have on ourselves and our surroundings. Augmented humanity is no different.

When I first began to develop hi-fi mental cybernetics, I went temporarily insane. This experience is chronicled in-depth in the chapter "The void" in my other book, *Minimalist Business*. I'll sum it up as simply as possible here:

When you're acutely aware of the experiences dozens or hundreds of people are having all over the planet, all day long, you will need to learn to slow down your mind in order to cope with that expansive experience.

For me that was practicing yoga, every single day. Then I got to a point where I'd Asana'd myself out, so these days I try to sit, meditate, whenever necessary. Sometimes, simply taking a long walk with the iPhone flipped to off can bring you back into a reality where you can comprehend your own existence.

We've given ourselves quite a gift, with incredible power. Mastering that power is a huge responsibility, one that we can't take lightly.

As we watch our old lives start to unravel as our new lives are born, it can be a painful experience. Destruction leads to creation, and we're going to be born into a whole new world.

With each step, we place our minds mindfully. We look at ourselves, in the present moment, and attempt to see the truth. We surrender control to a world that we have an incredible knowledge of, but so little control over.

...and we take each moment one breath at a time.

I'll see you out there.

-Ev



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