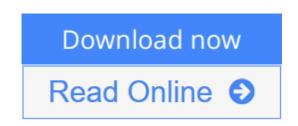# Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet

By Sherry Turkle

Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet By Sherry Turkle

Life on the Screen is a book not about computers, but about people and how computers are causing us to reevaluate our identities in the age of the Internet. We are using life on the screen to engage in new ways of thinking about evolution, relationships, politics, sex, and the self. Life on the Screen traces a set of boundary negotiations, telling the story of the changing impact of the computer on our psychological lives and our evolving ideas about minds, bodies, and machines. What is emerging, Turkle says, is a new sense of identity- as decentered and multiple. She describes trends in computer design, in artificial intelligence, and in people's experiences of virtual environments that confirm a dramatic shift in our notions of self, other, machine, and world. The computer emerges as an object that brings postmodernism down to earth.

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Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet By Sherry Turkle Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Sherry Turkle is rapidly becoming the sociologist of the Internet, and that's beginning to seem like a good thing. While her first outing, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit*, made groundless assertions and seemed to be carried along more by her affection for certain theories than by a careful look at our current situation, *Life on the Screen* is a balanced and nuanced look at some of the ways that cyberculture helps us comment upon real life (what the cybercrowd sometimes calls RL). Instead of giving in to any one theory on construction of identity, Turkle looks at the way various netizens have used the Internet, and especially MUDs (Multi-User Dimensions), to learn more about the possibilities available in apprehending the world. One of the most interesting sections deals with gender, a topic prone to rash and partisan pronouncements. Taking as her motto William James's maxim "Philosophy is the art of imagining alternatives," Turkle shows how playing with gender in cyberspace can shape a person's real-life understanding of gender. Especially telling are the examples of the man who finds it easier to be assertive when playing a woman, because he believes male assertiveness is now frowned upon while female assertiveness is considered hip, and the woman who has the opposite response, believing that it is easier to be aggressive when she plays a male, because as a woman she would be considered "bitchy." Without taking sides, Turkle points out how both have expanded their emotional range. Other topics, such as artificial life, receive an equally calm and sage response, and the first-person accounts from many Internet users provide compelling reading and good source material for readers to draw their own conclusions.

From Publishers Weekly
The Internet, with its computer bulletin boards, virtual communities, games and private domains where people strike up relationships or emulate sex, is a microcosm of an emerging "culture of simulation" that substitutes representations of reality for the real world, asserts Turkle (The Second Self). In an unsettling, cutting-edge exploration of the ways computers are revising the boundaries between people and computers, brains and machines, she argues that the newest computers?tools for interaction, navigation and simulation, allowing users to cycle through roles and identities?are an extension of self with striking parallels to postmodernist thought. She also looks at "computer psychotherapy" programs such as Depression 2.0, a set of tutorials designed to increase awareness of self-defeating attitudes; hypertext software for creating links between related songs, texts, photographs or videos; and "artificial life," attempts to build intelligent, self-organizing, complex, self-replicating systems and virtual organisms.
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From Library Journal
This treatise by the best-selling author of The Second Self (LJ 6/15/84) explores the world of virtual identity on the Internet by examining "Multi-User Domains" (MUDs). Turkle describes MUDs as a new kind of "virtual parlor game" and a form of online community in which one's identity (both physical and behavioral) is represented by one's own textual description of it. She portrays MUDs as "a dramatic example of how an activity on the Internet can serve as a place for the construction and reconstruction of identity." She discusses these computer-mediated worlds and their impact on our psychological selves, describing a virtual world in which the self is multiple, fluid, and constituted in interaction with machine connections. In her concluding remarks, she points out that MUDs are not implicated in occurrences of multiple personality disorder (MPD); rather, manifestations of multiplicity in our culture, including MUDs and MPDs, are contributing to an overall reconsideration of our traditional views of identity. A provocative if somewhat esoteric study of virtual identity. For an informed audience.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marcia Fullerton:

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Desmond Goforth:

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Daniel Slater:

The book untitled Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains the girl idea with easy way. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do not necessarily worry, you can easy to read that. The book was published by famous author. The author will take you in the new period of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or device, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can start their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice learn.

Eileen Schmitt:

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