

The Daily You: How the New Advertising Industry Is Defining Your Identity and Your Worth

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The Internet is often hyped as a means to enhanced consumer power: a hypercustomized media world where individuals exercise unprecedented control over what they see and do. That is the scenario media guru Nicholas Negroponte predicted in the 1990s, with his hypothetical online newspaper *The Daily Me*—and it is one we experience now in daily ways. But, as media expert Joseph Turow shows, the customized media environment we inhabit today reflects *diminished* consumer power. Not only ads and discounts but even news and entertainment are being customized by newly powerful media agencies on the basis of data we don't know they are collecting and individualized profiles we don't know we have. Little is known about this new industry: how is this data being collected and analyzed? And how are our profiles created and used? How do you know if you have been identified as a “target” or “waste” or placed in one of the industry's finer-grained marketing niches? Are you, for example, a Socially Liberal Organic Eater, a Diabetic Individual in the Household, or Single City Struggler? And, if so, how does that affect what you see and do online?

Drawing on groundbreaking research, including interviews with industry insiders, this important book shows how advertisers have come to wield such power over individuals and media outlets—and what can be done to stop it.

The Daily You: How the New Advertising Industry Is Defining Your Identity and Your Worth Details

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Amy says

If you'd like to be creeped out by what corporations, marketing, and media companies are doing to solicit and keep your business (and in the end, your \$\$), this book is for you. You may think those little "cookies" you clear out of your browser's cache every couple of months mean nothing, but really, they mean everything. They determine what ads you see, what offers/coupons you get, and what audience segments you fall into when data aggregators decide to collect all your information and sell it to the highest bidder.

Frankly speaking, it's worth knowing about, this business of buying and selling personally identifiable (PI) data. You should know that you're constantly being bought and sold over the Internet, and at times, your online information is being linked off-line, too. Keep in mind though, that this book can quickly become out of date, as mobile technologies change the nature of buying, selling, and tracking data. I imagine an update to this book by 2014 or 2015, if Turow can keep up.

Peter Mcloughlin says

This is mostly an academic book but pretty well written nonetheless that examines the growth of advertisements use of the internet and social media to determine the value of users of said media by collecting much of our personal data to be used for marketing. Most people know this story in a vague way but this book gives a more detailed picture of what is going on. I don't know how you feel about sharing your deepest secrets with a multinational corporation but to me it is creepy and troubling and at the same time hard to fight against. It is a detailed picture of the deepest darkest fears of a paranoid only it is true.

Ogi Ogas says

My ratings of books on Goodreads are solely a crude ranking of their utility to me, and not an evaluation of literary merit, entertainment value, social importance, humor, insightfulness, scientific accuracy, creative vigor, suspensefulness of plot, depth of characters, vitality of theme, excitement of climax, satisfaction of ending, or any other combination of dimensions of value which we are expected to boil down through some fabulous alchemy into a single digit.

Sarah says

Good info, but as a book, it's pretty dry. And I would have liked more emphasis on the social effects of this personalized, targeted web - it's pretty much confined to the intro and the last chapter.

Aud says

This book has a lot of good information but it also easily put me to sleep every time I had to read it.

Roy Kenagy says

From Review, New Scientist Culture Lab: <http://bitly.com/zSM0D3>

"JOSEPH TUROW'S invaluable The Daily You is a warning about the impact of the "Web 3.0" revolution - though he doesn't use the term - on individual freedom and privacy.

"Coined by Reid Hoffman, the Silicon Valley venture capitalist and co-founder of LinkedIn, the term Web 3.0 defines our digitally networked age of "real identities generating massive amounts of data". It is via this avalanche of personal data, available through networks like Facebook, Foursquare, Google and The Huffington Post that, Turow warns, "the new advertising industry is defining your identity and your world"."

Will says

Overall, I'm glad I read this. I believe I heard about it after the author was interviewed on NPR.

That said, I do think it's a little on the dry / academic side. Most of the things in the book are not revelations to me, but I would have been interested in less speculation about what these things mean for society, and more technical detail and insight into how existing companies are (ab)using personal information.

Ahmer says

I have to say this book was one of my toughest reads to tackle, but the challenge was rewarding. This book has a lot of information to offer to many uninformed buyers about the advertisement business and how it operates and the secrets behind pulling some one in. I surely learned a lot from this book as it presented many great topics and modern examples of what goes on in the advertising business; and wouldn't mind going through it again sometime in the future.

Although I have to agree with another reviewer this book was pretty dry in some areas and quite confusing too. I almost just breezed through the pages looking for some good facts and interesting info. Overall this book is a good read.

Mara says

You know how you one time searched for something about a camera your friend had and now you're bombarded with ads as if you were Ansel Adams? Well, eventually that kind of stuff makes a difference... Honestly, I think I liked the NPR segment better than the book.

Paige says

I didn't make it through this book--as other reviewers say, it's somewhat technical. I just couldn't do it this time around, but it's very important information and I'd like to come back to it when I have more time to concentrate on it.

Deb M. says

Lots of good info but very boring reading.

Allan says

The book is technical in orientation, as others have noted, but this did not deter me. I'm generally happy--if not overjoyed--to wade into this kind of specific and technical material.

What did deter me in the end was the lack of a broader frame of reference on the tension between the Internet as a tool for research, collaboration, and dissemination, and its potential to be seized as a medium of retail and retail persuasion (as one executive at P&G salivated rabidly). In this book, the reality of advertising is taken for granted. I've been long steeped in a culture that takes the other side of the coin for granted, so I found it hard to reasonably raise my ire.

When "content" is mentioned, it's mainly in the context of entertainment media as used to bait buying eyeballs, and for which advertisers often foot the bill--not always happily as this book discloses. When one considers that the majority of human knowledge is available through the Internet, one realizes this view is a distortion and that consumption content is just a thin--though very popular--facade. The dual nature of the Internet as opposed to the model of television was insufficiently addressed.

Neither was there much frame of reference on the tension in retail between push and pull. As a consumer, my approach is that I'll find the products I need when I need them. This is easier to do now than ever. As for coupons, if I need the coupon to justify the purchase then I reason that I clearly don't need the product all that badly in the first place. At that point I'm shopping, not purchasing. Time to give my head a shake and walk away. So I find it hard to care whether I'm profiled as a "toxic waste" consumer. Let me say the feeling is mutual concerning much of the junk for sale.

It did bother me while reading the book the lack of symmetry in this relationship. There's much advertising that intrudes upon my life I'd happily classify as "toxic waste" and never hear from again. I don't think Google's relevance algorithm does half so thorough a job as I'd do myself, given the means to dispatch the unwanted sludge on a permanent basis with a twitch of my lip (surely such an interface is coming soon). I don't think the pendulum of power has yet ceased to swing.

The book also fails to address the bifurcation of consumption patterns. I'm type B. Brands just don't give me a warm fuzzy. As they say about mutual funds: past performance does not guarantee future results. Many once-famous brands have been hollowed out. I prefer to trust the authenticity--and nose for a sharp shift in the prevailing sea breeze--of independent product review. Life is not all roses for the type B consumer. Recognizing and discarding the burgeoning astroturf requires a certain skill and effort. In my case, I doubt the content-mills will ever defeat me completely (fortunately I'm not mainly shopping for vacation amenities), but they might make it so difficult as to no longer be worth my while--this seems to be their goal. So yes, independent review can be polluted, but then so too can brands themselves if the horde has motive (vengeance of crowds). This book is not so broad in outlook as to examine the race to the bottom to remake the fountain of knowledge into the world's largest tissue of lies.

Mostly I found it hard to care about all this aggregated profiling. (Yes, they ought not to be doing it so glibly. This is not news.) Where the power relationship *could* potentially get out of hand is when your reputation as a pro-active consumer (i.e. not influenced or negatively influenced by advertising) spills over into credit relationships, to punish people for straying from the path of dutiful consumption. Is this a dystopian outcome we need to actively fret over? The book hints at this, but doesn't ultimately say much.

The chapter that most sticks with me concerns the looming collapse in the separation of editorial church from advertorial state and the expropriation of circles of trust. I must here award the book five stars and a Power Ranger for so clearly foretelling last week's Instagram TOS fiasco, which opened the door for using people's photos in advertisements without their permission. (Note to readers more than a week henceforth: This door was slammed shut again almost instantly by a gale of outrage.) I don't by any means think this war has ended. Next time, the fine print will be that much finer.

It's a well researched book and certainly this book will prove to be an invaluable reference when the author comes along to write the book I wish this one had been.

Jennifer says

I was very interested when this first was published, as I have an acquaintance who has worked for an internet advertising firm. I finally got around to reading it...or trying to read it...this week.

I found this overly dense and technical. Although the title seems to indicate that this is meant for the lay reader who might be interested in how their personal data/computer use is being tracked and used by advertisers, in truth it would be more of interest to business people/ad industry people as a history of internet advertising. I gave up about half-way through.

Evan Miner says

At first i had picked up this book because I wanted to learn more about the subject of targeted advertising. I assumed the book would be about the ethics of this and how it is being used in the world today, i unfortunately was not.

The book primarily focused on how information was collected about people and not about its effect. As

someone reading this book already with a basic knowledge of the subject i thought it would be interesting to see someone else's point of view on the matter, but it ended up being extremely technical, not that i mind having that explained, it went on and on with just technicalities, and i found it boring, never completely finished the book because of this, and from skimming it did not appear to change much.

I think that while the matter is important this is not the book to read if you actually want to learn about it.

Mini says

I thought this book was decent, more like something I might read for a class than for my own personal growth. While I started it with the impression that it would clearly explore the way advertisers targeted different individuals, *The Daily You* was too technical for my taste. The numerous examples of companies, definitions of roles in the advertising business, and explanations of web history and the technologies created since the 1990s were either confusing or boring. While I do like learning new things, I feel like Turow threw too many at me at once. His descriptions on topics such as cookies and web beacons required intense focus to follow, and I don't think they elicited enough interest to earn that. The first several chapters were devoid of much thought-provoking content, and didn't express internet tracking in easily understandable terms. Additionally, there were very few connections between advertisers' practices and their significance for individuals or society. After Turow taught me about something else media buyers or publishers might do, I thought "So what?"

I did think the later chapters of this book contained some more relevant information. Instead of just explaining the ways advertisers gather information about individuals, here, Turow mentioned how people might be affected. His descriptions of how companies can track their targets all the way into "brick and mortar stores" and on their television sets conjured up dystopian images. These sections actually made me want to learn more about tracking and what we can do about it. I was particularly interested in Turow's descriptions of how personalized ads might begin to segment the population into different groups, weakening society, and making individuals feel inadequate. I also found his suggestions about how to solve this problem intriguing. This was the material I had been hoping to read throughout the whole book.
