



The Big Disconnect: The Story of Technology and Loneliness (Contemporary Issues)

By Giles Slade

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Smart phones and social media sites may be contemporary fixations, but using technology to replace face-to-face interactions is not a new cultural phenomenon. Throughout our history, intimacy with machines has often supplanted mutual human connection.

This book reveals how consumer technologies changed from analgesic devices that soothed the loneliness of a newly urban generation to prosthetic interfaces that act as substitutes for companionship in modern America. The history of this transformation helps explain why we use technology to mediate our connections with other human beings instead of seeking out face-to-face contact.

Do electronic interfaces receive most of our attention to the detriment of real interpersonal communication? Why do sixty million Americans report that isolation and loneliness are major sources of unhappiness? The author provides many insights into our increasingly artificial relationships and a vision for how we can rediscover genuine community and human empathy.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Giles Slade is dead-on with regard to the dangerous way we are embracing our machines. What we have lost is the sense of identity as part of a bigger world: nature. . . . In *The Big Disconnect*, we relearn that our ability to connect with nonhuman nature is an essential part of being human."

-DAVID SUZUKI, professor emeritus, University of British Columbia, and author of *The Sacred Balance*

"A perceptive, challenging meditation on the isolating consequences of modern technology. Do you think all those clever gadgets, apps, and websites are making your life better? If so, Giles Slade would like a word with you. Slade is a very smart man; you may not always agree with him, but you need to listen to what he has to say."

-MARK KATZ, author of *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*

About the Author

Giles Slade is the author of *Made to Break: Technology and Obsolescence in America*, which won the IPPY gold medal for best environmental book of 2007. He writes regularly for the *Huffington Post* and is featured in *The Light Bulb Conspiracy*, a MediaPro documentary about planned obsolescence that premiered on European television in seven languages in 2011.

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