

Techno Creep: The Surrender of Privacy and the Capitalization of Intimacy

Thomas P. Keenan, Professor of Environmental Design and Computer Science, Calgary, A.B., 2014
ISBN 978-1-939293-40-4

technocreep.com

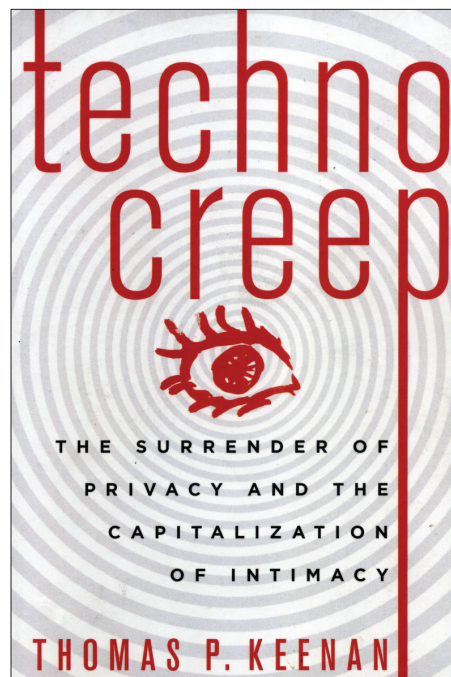
A warning for parents, students and educators at all levels where technology is an indispensable part of curriculum and life today

It's impossible to live without technology nowadays, but do we really know how to live or cope with it, especially since it is reshaping our lives in so many imperceptible, uncontrollable and disturbing ways?

The book's 17 chapters deal with topics as diverse as *Intelligence Creep*, *Tracking Creep*, *Body Creep*, *Deception Creep*, *Child Creep*, *Pet Creep* and *Robot Creep*. It has an extensive bibliography and several references, many of which are Canadian, for those who wish to pursue techno-privacy issues.

According to the author, who regularly attends Black Hat and Defcon conferences about computer hacking, "...the major premise of this book (is that) our lives are infected with an increasing amount of technocreepiness," which takes on forms we thought existed only in futuristic science fiction.

For example, SPIT (Spatial Phase Imaging Technique) can read a person's fingerprints from a distance of 10 feet. Rastreador de Namorado, a Brazilian invention, is actually a "Boyfriend Tracker," or an app that can invade



a person's cellphone to report via GPS where the device has been, and eavesdrop on phone calls and other text messages. Surprisingly – or frighteningly – enough, Smart TVs can monitor users 24/7, even when turned off, since this innocent-looking household appliance is really a digital video camera, computer and microphone all rolled into one.

In Australia, Canada and the U.S., over 400,000 customers who rented computer equipment created by DesignWare, a Pennsylvania-based firm, were spied on through, "Detective Mode," enabling web cam pictures of people at home, user names and passwords for social media websites, email accounts, medical records and financial institutions to be gathered. Even a school district in Philadelphia used similar technology (TheftTrack) to spy on students at

home, but was sued for doing so.

The same RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification) tags used to track prisoners are now being attached to clothing so that stores can monitor what customers purchase and then send their patrons advertisements on their home computers.

However, it is possible to "creep-proof" our lives. Keenan highly recommends that trackers be blocked by equipping our computers with software such as Ghostery or Lightbeam. Pop-ups, ads and invisible websites can be blocked with free software such as Adblock Plus, Disconnect, or HTTP Switchboard plugin for the Chrome browser, which also help speed up Internet browsing and declutter screens. A computer's history and cache files should be cleared regularly, or a browser can be set to "keep no history," in addition to the use of free programmes such as CCleaner to scrub down the rest of the computer. Your entire hard disk should be encrypted to prevent easy access to the data stored on it. To avoid having your credit or debit cards compromised, try to use cash (or maybe Bitcoin) wherever possible. A credit card is safer than a debit card since a hacker could wipe out your entire account if you use the latter.