



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

By Sherry Turkle

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*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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### 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:**

#### **Ashley McKay:**

Hey guys, do you want to find a new book to study? Maybe the book with the name *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* suitable to you? The particular book was written by a well-known writer in this era. The particular book titled *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* is the main of several books that everyone reads now. This book has inspired lots of people in the world. When you read this publication, you will enter the new shape that you never knew prior to. The author explained their strategy in a simple way, thus all of people can easily comprehend the core of this e-book. This book will give you a wide range of information about this world now. So that you can see the representation of the world in this book.

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#### **Donna Bledsoe:**

Reading can be called imagination hangout, why? Because while you are reading a book, specifically a book titled *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, your mind will drift away through every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe not known for but surely will become your mind friends. Imagining every word written in a reserve then become one type conclusion and explanation, this maybe you never get ahead of. The *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* giving you another experience more than blown away your head but also giving you useful facts for your better life within this era. So now let us demonstrate the relaxing pattern at this point, your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished reading through it, like winning an activity. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

#### **April Miller:**

Are you kind of a busy person, only have 10 as well as 15 minutes in your morning to upgrading your mind expertise or thinking skill perhaps analytical thinking? Then you are experiencing a problem with the book

than can satisfy your short space of time to read it because all of this time you only find guide that need more time to be learn. Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet can be your answer as it can be read by an individual who have those short time problems.

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