

Self-Tracking

author: Gina Neff, Dawn Nafus

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Synopsis

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People keep track. In the 18th century, Benjamin Franklin kept charts of time spent and virtues lived up to. Today people use technology to self-track: hours slept, steps taken, calories consumed, medications administered. Ninety million wearable sensors were shipped in 2014 to help us gather data about our lives. This audiobook examines how people record, analyze, and reflect on this data, looking at the tools they use and the communities they become parts of.

Gina Neff and Dawn Nafus describe what happens when people turn their everyday experiences - in particular, health and wellness-related experiences - into data and offer an introduction to the essential ideas and key challenges of using these technologies. They consider self-tracking as a social and cultural phenomenon, describing not only the use of data as a kind of mirror of the self but also how this enables people to connect to and learn from others. Neff and Nafus consider what's at stake: who wants our data and why; the practices of serious self-tracking enthusiasts; the design of commercial self-tracking technology; and how self-tracking can fill gaps in the health-care system. Today no one can lead an entirely untracked life. Neff and Nafus show us how to use data in a way that empowers and educates.

Reader's comments

comment 1: Alex Thompson

In 'Self-Tracking,' Gina Neff and Dawn Nafus delve into the burgeoning world of personal data collection with remarkable insight and clarity. The authors offer a comprehensive examination of the self-tracking phenomenon, a trend that has gained significant momentum with the advent of wearable technology and mobile apps. Neff and Nafus explore how individuals use these tools to monitor their health, productivity, and even mood, highlighting both the empowering and potentially intrusive aspects of this practice. The book is well-researched, drawing on a range of case studies and interviews that provide a nuanced understanding of the motivations behind self-tracking. The authors do not shy away from discussing the ethical and privacy concerns, prompting readers to reflect on the implications of living in a data-driven age. Furthermore, the book serves as an accessible introduction to the Quantified Self movement for those unfamiliar with the topic. Overall, 'Self-Tracking' is a thought-provoking read that challenges us to consider how the data we collect about ourselves shapes our lives, offering a balanced perspective on its benefits and drawbacks. Whether you are a tech enthusiast or a skeptic, this book is sure to leave you contemplating the future of personal data.

â€” Alex Thompson (2026-05-30 15:58:33)