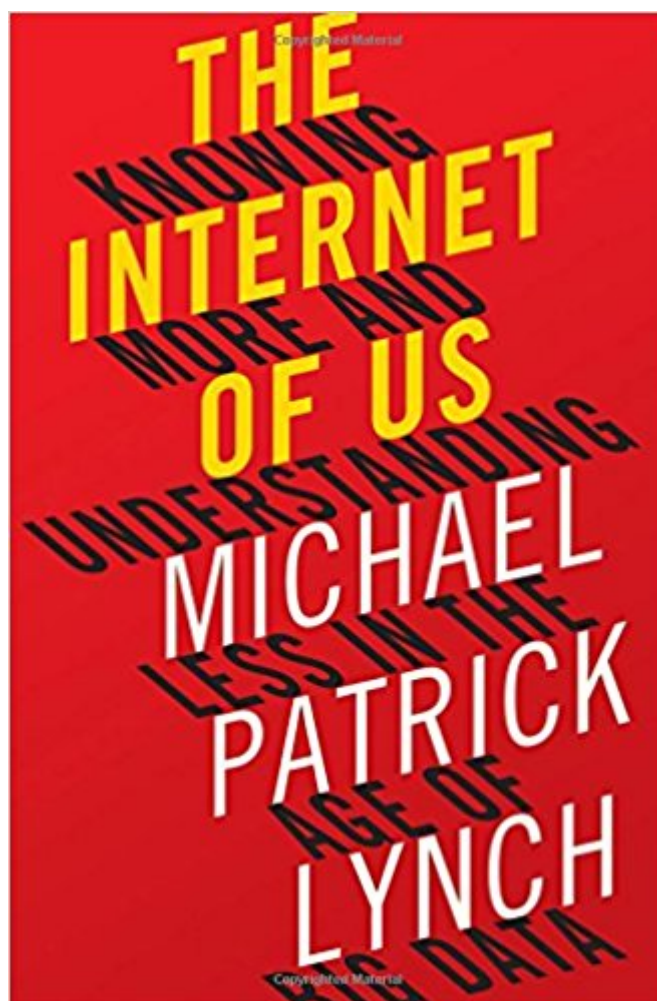


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# The Internet Of Us: Knowing More And Understanding Less In The Age Of Big Data



## Synopsis

With far-reaching implications, this urgent treatise promises to revolutionize our understanding of what it means to be human in the digital age. We used to say "seeing is believing"; now googling is believing. With 24/7 access to nearly all of the world's information at our fingertips, we no longer trek to the library or the encyclopedia shelf in search of answers. We just open our browsers, type in a few keywords and wait for the information to come to us. Indeed, the Internet has revolutionized the way we learn and know, as well as how we interact with each other. And yet this explosion of technological innovation has also produced a curious paradox: even as we know more, we seem to understand less. While a wealth of literature has been devoted to life with the Internet, the deep philosophical implications of this seismic shift have not been properly explored until now.

Demonstrating that knowledge based on reason plays an essential role in society and that there is much more to knowing than just acquiring information, leading philosopher Michael Patrick Lynch shows how our digital way of life makes us overvalue some ways of processing information over others, and thus risks distorting what it means to be human. With far-reaching implications, Lynch's argument charts a path from Plato's cave to Shannon's mathematical theory of information to Google Glass, illustrating that technology itself isn't the problem, nor is it the solution. Instead, it will be the way in which we adapt our minds to these new tools that will ultimately decide whether or not the "Internet of Things" — all those gadgets on our wrists, in our pockets and on our laps — will be a net gain for humanity. Along the way, Lynch uses a philosopher's lens to examine some of the most urgent issues facing digital life today, including how social media is revolutionizing the way we think about privacy; why a greater reliance on Wikipedia and Google doesn't necessarily make knowledge "more democratic"; and the perils of using "big data" alone to predict cultural trends. Promising to modernize our understanding of what it means to be human in the digital age, *The Internet of Us* builds on previous works by Nicholas Carr, James Gleick and Jaron Lanier to give us a necessary guide on how to navigate the philosophical quagmire that is the Information Age.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

• - Booklist  
Lynch effectively presents the case for rationality against factional loyalties and insists that there should be vigorous promotion of scientific methods and thinking in public discourse. . . . An excellent, much-needed contribution to the constant battle to sort truth from falsity.  
• - Kirkus Reviews, starred review  
[Lynch] pursues his argument with commendable seriousness, clarity, and attunement to historical context. He has written an intelligent book that struggles honestly with important questions: Is the net turning us into passive knowers? Is it degrading our ability to reason? What can we do about this?  
• - David Weinberger, LA Review of Books  
[A] fascinating new book  
Lynch has been writing about this topic for a long time, and passionately.  
• - Jill Lepore, The New Yorker  
Lynch's basic argument is that if we understand better the conditions under which knowledge is produced and disseminated conditions he explores clearly and cogently then we will become more 'responsible' knowers.  
• - Wall Street Journal

Michael P. Lynch is the director of the Humanities Institute and a professor of philosophy at the University of Connecticut. His previous books include *True to Life*, an Editor's Choice by the New York Times Book Review. A recipient of the Medal for Research Excellence from the University of Connecticut's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Lynch has held grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and is a frequent contributor to the New York Times. He lives in Storrs, Connecticut.

I am really enjoying this book!! In chapter 2, he talks about how he wrote down 4 tasks and worked to find answers to these 4 items without using the internet. He describes the challenges he faced in doing that as the equivalent of dressing up in Civil War costumes and participating in war reenactment LOL. These were his questions: 1. What is the capital of Bulgaria? 2. Is a four-stroke outboard engine more efficient than a two-stroke? 3. What is the phone number of my U.S.

representative? 4. What is the best-reviewed restaurant in Austin, Texas, this week? I wonder how my children would fare at this task? This should be a social experiment (or a high school classroom project). I am thinking about making this a family scavenger hunt /challenge project...it's crazy how reliant we are on the Internet and how much MORE information we have access to than we used to (in my own lifetime.) and how much we trust that information...This is an interesting read. I

Recommend checking it out!

Examines different types of knowing, and how technology can help nurture, but not replace, them. Very clearly introduces and applies a number of philosophical concepts. Ends disappointingly, though. There are clearly implications here for personal and family conduct as well as public policy that are not fully explored. A pleasure to read, and thought-provoking for IT professionals like myself.

Was very excited about reading first third of the book. Found some very interesting ideas. But could not finish it, as the second half is getting pretty cumbersome and I did not find it inspiring then, as no solution is proposed, but pure philosophical discussions.

A good read covering a number of different problems the new age of connectivity has put us in. If you have this sinking suspicion that you are seeing the rise of echo-chambers and reduction of the value of true understanding, then this book clearly explains and frames those suspicions.

This is a good book about some of the consequences of "Google reading" as opposed to "holistic reading", understanding, or as the ancients called "wisdom". In explaining these differences the author warns about some of the dangers of the Internet revolution, and also reiterates some of the consequences thereof. It is well written, clear and updated although somewhat repetitive and shallow at times. Overall quite readable and worth the money's worth.

An educated take on the limits of the internet. Everyone should read it.

One book that shows that the internet is both good as well as bad for society and how we have to be careful with the information that we have access to.

Every page was interesting and educational!

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