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Enchanted Objects: Innovation, Design, And The Future Of Technology



Synopsis

In the tradition of *Who Owns the Future*, an MIT Media Lab scientist imagines how everyday objects can intuit our needs, improve our lives, and form “an ethereal interconnection of gadgets and human desires that...will pervade our lives in the very near future” (The Wall Street Journal). We are now standing at the precipice of the next transformative development, a world in which technology becomes more human. Soon, connected technology will be embedded in hundreds of everyday objects we already use: our cars, wallets, watches, umbrellas, even our trash cans. These objects will respond to our needs, come to know us, and even learn to think ahead on our behalf. David Rose calls these devices “which are just beginning to creep into the marketplace” “Enchanted Objects.” In Rose’s vision of the future, technology atomizes, combining itself with the objects that make up the very fabric of daily living. Such innovations will be woven into the background of our environment, enhancing human relationships, channeling desires for omniscience, long life, and creative expression. The enchanted objects of fairy tales and science fiction will enter real life. Groundbreaking, timely, and provocative, *Enchanted Objects* is a “delightful” (The New York Times) blueprint for a better future, where efficient solutions come hand in hand with technology that delights our senses. It is essential reading for designers, technologists, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and anyone who wishes to take a glimpse into the future.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Scribner; Reprint edition (April 28, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1476725640

ISBN-13: 978-1476725642

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 40 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #116,086 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #75 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Decorative Arts & Design > Industrial & Product Design #183 in Books >

Science & Math > Technology > Social Aspects #4051 in Books > Engineering &

Transportation > Engineering

Customer Reviews

"David Rose has written a spectacular book. While glass slabs have already entered every nook and cranny of our lives, Rose paints a much more compelling future where we are deeply engaged with enchanted objects. Rose's vision of human computer interaction is more exciting and persuasive than the current norm and this brilliant book gives us a road map for how to get there. While I'll continue to invest in many things that improve our glass slab world, I believe that the future is enchanted objects." (Brad Feld, Managing Director at Foundry Group)

"Beyond the internet of things we find the internet of enchanted objects, a medium designed for pre-attentive cognition, conveying information subliminally and delightfully. I highly recommend this book. It is filled with evocative examples that will influence our imagination and help us move beyond our fixation on the screen." (John Seely Brown, former chief scientist, Xerox, and visiting scholar at the University of Southern California)

"David Rose's vision for enchanted objects and their platforms is spot on. With this book, he offers innovators and businesses a convincing guide for success in this space." (Glenn Lurie, President, Emerging Enterprises and Partnerships, AT&T Mobility)

"David Rose does not predict. He extrapolates the future from personal experience and technical fluency. His balance between a romantic humanism and scientific destiny is unique. His storytelling is intellectually rich, laced with history and never pedantic. Enchanted Objects is a truly enlightening read." (Nicholas Negroponte, Professor and Co-Founder, MIT Media Lab; author of Being Digital; a founder of WiReD Magazine)

"Delightful. . . . In the scrum of talking heads wrestling to gain control of the narrative behind the Internet of Things, Mr. Rose is an engaging, plain-spoken guide." (The New York Times)

"Rose touches something significant to most of us... A fine tour d'horizon of innovative enchantment and its ground rules and responsibilities." (Kirkus Reviews)

"In the fully realized, enchanted world of David Rose...objects that, once instructed, require no human prompting to function, already exist. They're part of the Internet of Things, an ethereal interconnection of gadgets and human desires that...will pervade our lives in the very near future." (Wall Street Journal)

"Provocative." (Fast Company)

David Rose is an award-winning entrepreneur and instructor at the MIT Media Lab, specializing in how digital information interfaces with the physical environment. A former CEO at Vitality, he founded Ambient Devices, which pioneered technology to embed Internet information in everyday objects like lamps, mirrors, and umbrellas. CEO of Ditto Labs, Rose has been featured in The New York Times and parodied on The Colbert Report. A frequent speaker at conferences and for corporations, he lives in Brookline, Massachusetts, with his wife and two children. Enchanted Objects is his first book.

This book helps me look at human interface design in a different sense. Decades of experience designing software and control systems have taught me a lot, but David Rose has made some things clear which escaped me. And it's a very readable, enjoyable book! I love it.

Interesting read for the creative and imaginative person. Some neat product mentioned/created is not marketed but that's OK.

Enchanted Objects uses the Internet of Things as a present day context for facilitating the design of what the author calls Enchanted Objects. Enchanted Objects are things that feed us useful information or simply perform some useful function while being largely blended into our environment (as opposed to being front-and-center like our iPhones). And while the idea of the "Internet of Things" (or certainly the phrase, anyway) is relatively new, the author has been a designer of enchanted objects for a very long time. I'm a product designer myself and quite technologically savvy as well. Still, Enchanted Objects gave me an opportunity to step back and think about the work that I've been doing (and the work I will do in the near future) in a refreshing new context. The book is an easy read, filled with stylized diagrams that I really enjoyed. The Author draws on his own personal experience as a product designer, entrepreneur and professor but also on a large body of knowledge in this field.

I enjoyed this book and have also passed it along to others who had similar sentiments. It's not super deep, but it inspires the reader to open their mind to the possibilities in this domain.

What a delight to read what's technologically available, on the drawing boards, and in the heads of those on the forefront. Rose puts it out there in a fun and enlightening way that's encouraging and very intriguing.

Interesting portrait of the future. Several examples of possible and available enchanted objects, but could have done with more.

David Rose is a harbinger of things to come, and has laid out a roadmap of questions to be answered by current and future innovators.

I read David Rose's *Enchanted Objects* with great interest. I am a confessed gadget fiend and love trying out all the new devices that people are always making. David Rose provides a good perspective on how to think of gadgets and objects. He starts out by sketching a dystopian world where people are always looking at flat glass slabs, a world he calls terminal world. This is, of course, the world we currently live in. He then provides a more expansive view where one can imagine interacting with objects, not just in the sense of literal computers but more in the sense of things that traditionally are held and touched. He goes through a plethora of interesting objects such as a balance table for promoting conversation, the Lockitron lock and, of course, his Ambient Orb and GlowCaps. (These latter two things he particularly spearheaded.) He talks about a lot of key concepts in thinking about objects such as multimodality (dealing with different senses at the same time), having a shadow digital presence for physical objects in the real world and modularity between components to deal with obsolescence. He also talks a lot about the subtle problems we have in dealing with objects such as the "filter bubble" (where we are essentially just dealing with a virtual world and not the real world) or the uncanny valley (when objects get too lifelike and this seems a bit spooky and it is almost better for them to be stranger). He deals a bit with the issue with privacy and surveillance talking about the cameras in the Innovation Center where he worked. But I could imagine going into a lot more detail on the future world of information storage in the cloud and its privacy implications. In any case, it was an overall a good read and really gave me a lot of valuable thoughts on the physical world of the objects that I love to play with.

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