

# Against The Smart City - The City Is Here For You To Use

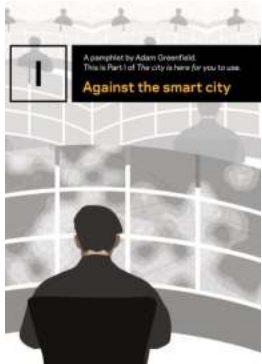


In this fast-paced world, technology has taken over various aspects of our lives, including how cities function. The rise of the so-called "smart cities" promises a more efficient and interconnected urban environment. However, amidst the hype and excitement, it is crucial to critically examine the implications of such a transformation.

## Understanding the Smart City

Smart cities are envisioned as urban areas that utilize digital technologies and data collection to enhance services, optimize resource allocation, and improve the quality of life for residents. These technologies range from sensors and

surveillance systems to data analytics and automation. While the idea of a city that respond to residents' needs in real-time may sound appealing, it raises concerns regarding individual privacy, surveillance, and the increasing reliance on technology.



## **Against the smart city (The city is here for you to use Book 1)** by Adam Greenfield (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English  
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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
X-Ray : Enabled  
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Lending : Enabled



## **The Loss of Human Connection**

One of the main drawbacks of the smart city is the potential loss of human connection. As technology takes over various aspects of urban life, it can replace human interaction and spontaneity. From automated processes in transportation to self-checkout systems in stores, the human touch becomes less prevalent. This shift has profound effects on social cohesion, community building, and the overall well-being of citizens.

## **The Privacy Dilemma**

With the vast amount of data being collected in smart cities, privacy becomes a significant concern. In order for these cities to function efficiently, a massive amount of personal and sensitive data is gathered from citizens, ranging from

their locations and behaviors to their preferences and habits. Although this data is anonymized, there is always a risk of re-identification and misuse. Citizens' daily lives are constantly monitored, eroding their right to privacy and autonomy.

## **The Dark Side of Efficiency**

Advocates of smart cities often highlight the improved efficiency and resource management that they bring. However, this efficiency can come at a cost. In the relentless pursuit of optimizing systems and processes, cities may prioritize the needs of corporations and institutions over those of individual citizens. The focus on efficiency could lead to neglecting the needs of marginalized communities, exacerbating existing social inequalities.

## **The Power of Citizen Engagement**

Rather than relying solely on technology to shape our cities, there is great power in citizen engagement and participation. The city should be a space where individuals can actively shape their environment and influence decision-making processes. By prioritizing community involvement, we can create cities that are democratic, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of their residents.

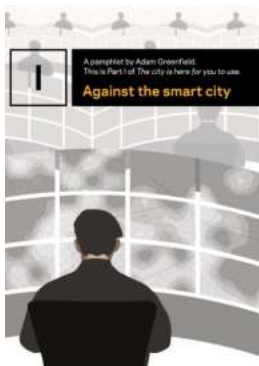
## **Reimagining the City**

It is essential to challenge the notion that technology is the sole solution to urban challenges. Instead, we can reimagine the city as a place that prioritizes human connection, creativity, and sustainability. By fostering a sense of community, supporting local businesses, and promoting sustainable practices, cities can become vibrant places that thrive on human interaction and innovation.

While smart cities offer the promise of increased efficiency and convenience, we must critically evaluate the implications of such transformation. The potential loss of privacy, human connection, and the prioritization of efficiency over individual

needs necessitate a careful examination of the smart city model. By engaging citizens and promoting human-centric values, we can create cities that are truly for the people and by the people.

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\*Named one of Verso's Best Books of 2013!\*

From the smartphones in our pockets and the cameras on the lampposts to sensors in the sewers, the sidewalks and the bike-sharing stations, the contemporary city is permeated with networked information technology.

As promoted by enterprises like IBM, Siemens and Cisco Systems, the vision of the "smart city" proposes that this technology can be harnessed by municipal administrators to achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency, security, convenience and sustainability. But a closer look at what this body of ideas actually consists of suggests that such a city will not, and cannot, serve the interests of the people who live in it.

In this pamphlet, Everywhere author Adam Greenfield explores the ways in which this discourse treats the city as an abstraction, misunderstands (or even undermines) the processes that truly do generate meaning and value — and winds up making many of the same blunders that doomed the High Modernist urban planning of the twentieth century. “Against the smart city” provides an intellectual toolkit for those of us interested in resisting this sterile and unappealing vision, and lays important groundwork for the far more fruitful alternatives to come.

#### PRAISE FOR "AGAINST THE SMART CITY":

"Adam Greenfield does for 'urban renewal' in the twenty-first century what Jane Jacobs did for it in the twentieth."

- Ian Bogost, Ivan Allen College Distinguished Chair in Media Studies and Professor of Interactive Computing, Georgia Institute of Technology.

"A critical inquiry into the constrained reality of the smart city and its free-floating narratives. Adam Greenfield's vast knowledge about the subject allows him to pinpoint the extreme moment where 'the ideology of the smart city finds its purest expression.' A great piece of analysis, a sharp exegesis — and great writing."

- Saskia Sassen, Columbia University, author of *The Global City*.

"For those who believe technology's finest, most broadly-empowering urban applications have not yet been deployed, this book is for you. It is less 'against' the dominant smart city narrative than a foundation for what we might yet assemble from the parts and pieces that remain after Greenfield's done deconstructing it."

- John Tolva, Chief Technology Officer, City of Chicago.

"Adam cuts the smart city marketing game to the quick. He reminds us, like the great urbanists before him, that cities are about people — people who shape their city from the bottom up with their character, agency, independence and yes, intelligence."

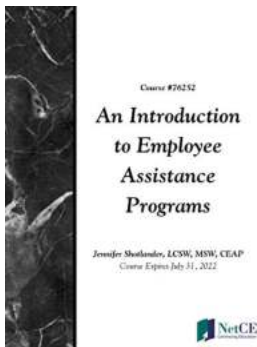
- Benjamin de la Peña, The Rockefeller Foundation.

"A cogent debunking of the smart city. Adam Greenfield breaks down the term with wit and clarity, exposing that the smart city may be neither very smart nor very city at all. An insightful, timely and refreshing read that will make you rethink the city of tomorrow."

- J. Meejin Yoon, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, architect and designer.

"Every 'Smart City' advocate in the world should read this short book. Read it now, before people show up at the City Council and start quoting it."

- Bruce Sterling, author of Shaping Things.



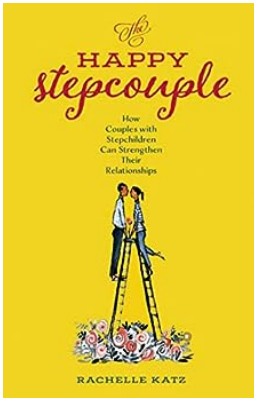
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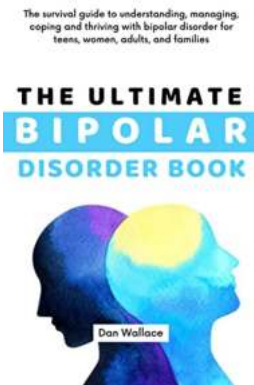
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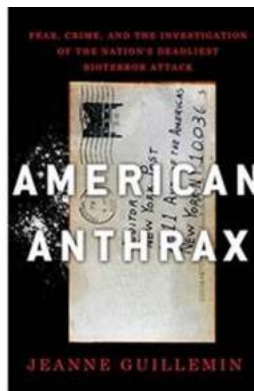
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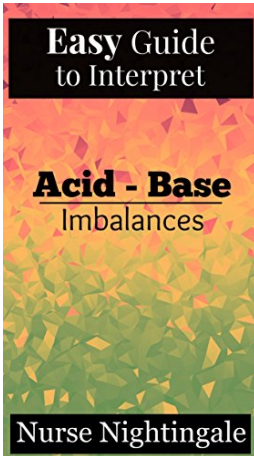
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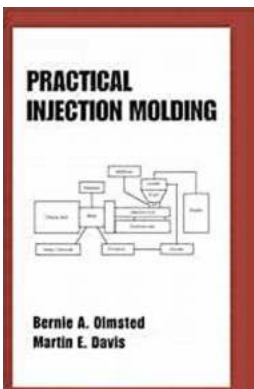
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