

Stand Out of Our Light

Former Google strategist, now Oxford-trained philosopher James Williams argues that a next-generation threat to human freedom has emerged in the systems of intelligent persuasion that increasingly direct our thoughts and actions. As digital technologies have made information abundant, our attention has become the scarce resource – and in the digital “attention economy,” technologies compete to capture and exploit our mere attention, rather than supporting the true goals we have for our lives. For too long, we’ve minimized the resulting harms as “distractions” or minor annoyances. Ultimately, however, they undermine the integrity of the human will at both individual and collective levels. Liberating human attention from the forces of intelligent persuasion may therefore be the defining moral and political task of the Information Age. Drawing on insights from ancient Greece as well as Silicon Valley, Williams’s thoughtful and impassioned analysis brings much needed clarity to one of the most pressing questions of our time.

This title is also available as Open Access.

Stand Out of Our Light

Freedom and Resistance in the
Attention Economy

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