

## BBC: How Technology Tries to Hack Your Brain

### Presenter:

Balliol College Oxford was built to **withstand**<sup>1</sup> the distractions of the pre-smart phone age. The heavy wooden doors and **castellated**<sup>2</sup> quad are fortifications against attention hijack. James Williams is a former google executive who became concerned that Silicon Valley's central mission is to interrupt our every waking thought. He resigned and now studies at Balliol.

### Williams

The way we are **monetizing**<sup>3</sup> most of the information in the world is by distracting people, keeping them from doing what they want to do rather than helping them to do what they want to do. I don't know anybody, I've never met anybody, at least, who wants to spend all day on Facebook or wants to keep clicking articles all day. If there are people like that, I'd love to meet them because I'd love to understand their mind and their priorities. But when you think about the goals that people have for themselves, they tend to be things like, you know the things that when we're **on our deathbed**<sup>4</sup> will regret not having done. Like, I want to take that trip with my family, or I want to learn how to play the piano, or you know, spend more time with friends. These are the real human goals that people have and they are the goals that technology ought to help us to pursue. If they don't then I don't know what technology is for.

### Presenter:

Most technology companies have another goal: welcome to the attention economy. Because the internet is funded largely by advertising and the companies need us **glued to**<sup>5</sup> their apps or they don't make money.

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<sup>1</sup> To withstand: (verb): to be strong enough, or not be changed by something, or to oppose a person or thing successfully

<sup>2</sup> Castellated: (adjective): made to look like a castle by having towers and battlements

<sup>3</sup> Monetize: (verb) to convert into money, to make money from something

<sup>4</sup> On your deathbed: (idiomatic phrase) in the process of or very close to dying

<sup>5</sup> To be glued to: to pay very close attention to