



The Disruption of *Lost*

by

[Scott Pickard](#)

When she looked back on it, she could see that even though society pushed hard to innovate and make progress and make life easier and more fulfilling through machines and computers, the unintended irony was that the more progress was made, the more a piece of our brains was going dark forever. But in the beginning it was happening in slow motion so we didn't notice it and were not aware of it. And then the acceleration of technology became a blur which brought changes to our lives so fast that it was overwhelming.

-- a few years earlier --

One fine day she was taking a walk with a friend who said something that shook her up.

"Do you realize that for the first time in human history we will never be lost?" her friend said, holding up his smartphone. "I mean, with this smartphone and GPS and maps, we will never be lost! Being lost was a big thing in our day. It was part of the randomness of life; it was risky; it could make you break out into a cold sweat.

People got lost all the time. It could really strike a deep fear in you. If you got lost in a strange city, you could be in some deep shit. If you got lost in the forest or on top of a mountain, you could die! But if you got lost and eventually found your way back using your survival skills and instincts, it was the most tremendous feeling of relief that you had skirted disaster but made it through. You had an exciting story to tell all your friends and it felt good like you were really living life out there on the edge."

"And so, what's your point?" she asked.

"Well, that's all gone! I mean, think about our kids. They will never know the fear and

exhilaration of being lost. In fact, the definition of the word won't mean anything to them. *Lost* is forever disrupted by technology. Don't you feel that something fundamental to the edginess of life is now gone? *Lost* is lost! So many things are now gone having been replaced by a technology that is accelerating faster and faster by the day."

She looked at her phone and the MAPS icon on the face and said, "Wow, this really snuck up on mankind, didn't it?"

"Yeah!"

They stopped walking and stood facing each other contemplating the significance of it all.

"This is incredible!" she said. "There should've been a worldwide announcement, a tickertape parade on Fifth Avenue, massive midnight fireworks in every megacity on planet earth. But we were all so absorbed scrolling our Twitter feed that we missed it."

They walked over to a bench next to the running path and sat down and stared silently for a while watching the runners, dog walkers, and skateboarders pass by.

"What the hell does this mean?" she said. "Is this not that big of a deal, or is it a very big deal? Or is it that we have become so used to a new innovation on our smartphones almost every day, that we have become desensitized to the acceleration of it all and we've lost our perspective of the big picture. Nobody seems to care because we are all so delighted in our devices and technology and apps and everything that is being done for us. Why are we not at least a little skeptical of this? Just because we can, doesn't mean that we should. But it's hard to resist these apps. They're very addictive which I assume is the strategy."

Her friend nodded his head and said, "The speed and complexity of our days – I think it's getting to everybody. And what's scary is there's no way to slow it down."

Her friend leaned over and picked up a twig on the ground and started to make two vertical and two crossing horizontal lines for an old-school game of tic-tac-toe in the dirt. He looked up and said, "You know what I can't do anymore? I can't compute change in my head when I'm ordering food at the counter. And I can't remember anybody's phone number. I used to be able to remember everybody's phone number but I just can't do it anymore. But, who needs to?"

"And nobody really writes anymore," she said. "I saw an online course being offered for *Rediscovering the Lost Art of Sentences*. Nobody cares much about spelling or grammar. It's a 280-character bullet and off you go. Which reminds me, I've got to get back to the office."

She pulled out her smartphone and opened her UBER app and then looked up and said, "And you know what else is lost? Forgetting!"

"Forgetting what?" her friend asked.

"Anything!" she said, holding up her smartphone in answer to the question as the UBER driver pulled up.

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