TED Talk: *What makes technology so habit-forming?*

https://www.ted.com/talks/nir_eyal_what_makes_technology_so_habit_forming

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Before watching

Task 1. Think & predict

Discuss in pairs:

1. What apps or websites do you check every day?
2. Which digital products are difficult to stop using?
3. Why do you think people keep returning to the same apps?
4. What can make a digital product become a habit?

Predict:
What four stages do you think might be involved in creating a digital habit?

While watching — Part 1

Task 2. Listen for the main idea

Watch the first part of the talk and choose the best answer.

The speaker's main purpose is to explain…

a) why people spend too much money on technology
b) how companies make technology products habit-forming
c) why smartphones are replacing computers
d) how to reduce screen time

Task 3. What is a habit?

Complete the definition:

A habit is a behaviour that we do with little or no _____ thought.

Which of your digital activities have become habits?

Examples:

- checking messages
- checking social media
- searching Google
- watching YouTube
- checking email

While watching — Part 2

Task 4. The Hook

The speaker introduces a design pattern called **the Hook**.

Complete the diagram:

1. _____ → 2. _____ → 3. _____ → 4. _____

Task 5. Match the stages

Stage	Description
1. Trigger	a. The user does something simple
2. Action	b. The user puts something into the product or develops a connection with it
3. Reward	c. Something encourages the user to act
4. Investment	d. The user receives something desirable or interesting

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While watching — Part 3

Task 6. External or internal?

The speaker distinguishes between **external** and **internal triggers**.

Decide which type of trigger each example represents.

1. A notification appears on your phone.
2. You feel bored and open YouTube.
3. You receive an email notification.
4. You feel lonely and open a social media app.
5. You see an advertisement telling you to download an app.
6. You are unsure about something and automatically Google it.

Task 7. Motivation + Ability + Trigger

The speaker explains that behaviour requires three elements:

MOTIVATION + ABILITY + TRIGGER → BEHAVIOUR

Complete the examples:

Example 1: Instagram

- Motivation: _____
- Ability: _____

- Trigger: _____

Example 2: YouTube

- Motivation: _____
- Ability: _____
- Trigger: _____

While watching — Part 4

Task 8. The Reward

Why does the speaker say that **uncertainty** can make a reward more powerful?

Choose:

a) We always know exactly what we will receive.
b) The unknown can increase our curiosity and attention.
c) People dislike surprises.
d) Rewards only work when they are predictable.

Task 9. Apply the Hook

Choose **one technology you use regularly**:

📱 Instagram
💬 WhatsApp
▶️ YouTube
🔎 Google
✉️ Email
🎵 Spotify
🎮 a game
or another app.

Complete:

TRIGGER: What makes me open it?

↓

ACTION: What do I do?

↓

REWARD: What do I get?

↓

INVESTMENT: What do I put into the service that makes me want to return?

After watching

Task 10. True or False?

1. The speaker says that all technology is harmful.
2. Habit-forming products are designed to encourage repeated behaviour.
3. Triggers can be external or internal.
4. The easier an action is, the more likely people are to do it.
5. Rewards always have to be predictable.
6. The speaker believes habit-forming technology can also be used for positive purposes.

Critical thinking

Task 11. Discuss

1. **Are we choosing to use technology, or are some technologies choosing for us?**
2. Why are some apps much harder to stop using than others?
3. Is making a product habit-forming necessarily unethical?
4. Where is the line between **useful engagement** and **manipulation**?
5. Should technology companies be responsible for the habits their products create?
6. Can the Hook model be used to create **good habits**?