Turn Your Product into a Habit with Nir Eyal
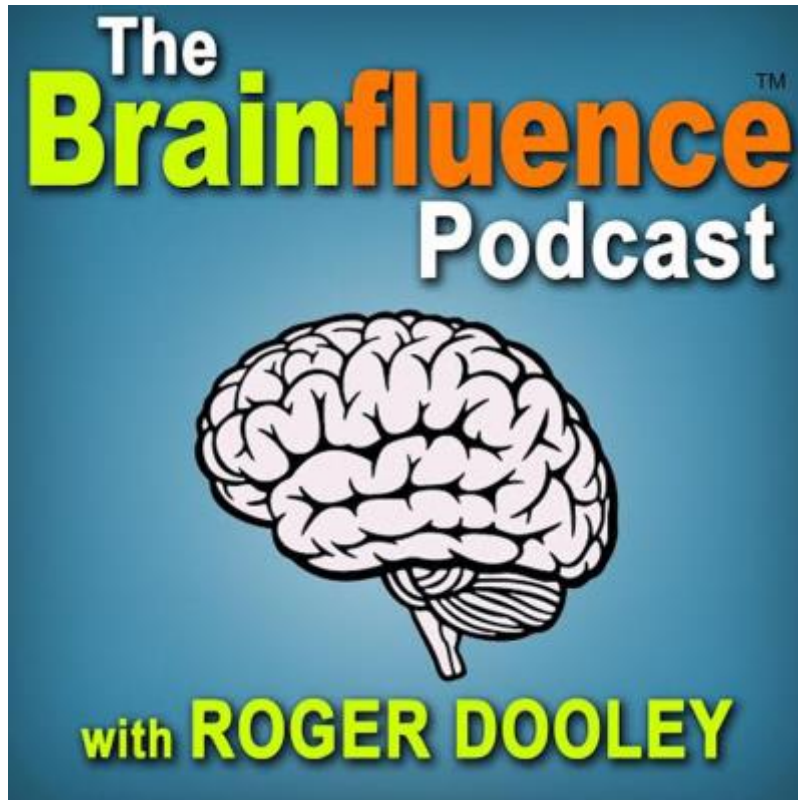

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

Turn Your Product into a Habit with Nir Eyal

Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast, I'm Roger Dooley. Our guest this week was Guest Number Two on this show and we're now past episode 150. I really appreciate his being a willing victim and the fact that he was the second guest, is a measure of how relevant I found his thinking, and I still do. Time flies and I'm excited that once again my friend Nir Eyal can join us.

Nir's an expert on how products become habits. Last year and the year before, Nir was part of my South by Southwest panel on creating persuasive products. You probably know him as the author of the best-selling book, Hooked: A Guide to Building Habit Forming Products. I often joke that I recommend, Hooked, more than my own Brainfluence, because it offers such powerful insight into not only how to get someone to try your product, but to keep them coming back.

Some of our listeners may think of Nir as a Svengali who has taught at makers to be so effective that their products become productivity destroyers, and occasionally addictive. I've read Nir's stuff, and seen him speak many times and he always emphasizes the positive use of habit formation. Some habits like exercise and learning new skills are good for us, but, just like Big Macs and Chunky Monkey ice cream are more attractive to us, to most humans, than broccoli and kale, the products that suck us in aren't always good for us ... Video games, social sharing of junk content and so on.

In this session, we'll look at not just Nir's latest insights on product design, but also how you can resist forming habits that aren't consistent with your goals. We'll hear about Nir's new podcast. I'm sure that if you're listening to this, you'll love what Nir's working on. Nir, sorry for the long-

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winded introduction there. I have probably a record there as well, but welcome to the show.

Nir Eyal: Roger, I could listen to that all day. I mean, your compliments, keep them coming. That's, I really appreciate it. You're far too kind and I got to tell you that knowing you, and speaking together, and you've been at my Habit Summit before, I gotta tell you, that having you as a friend is such a great asset and has really benefited me in so many ways. I'm very very thankful to be Guest Number Two and I'm super thankful to be back with you today.

Roger Dooley: Great. Thanks Nir. One of the ... Talk about something a little bit different today ... Certainly want to get into your ideas of habit forming products, but looking at it from a little bit different perspective, a few months ago, you wrote an article for The Atlantic, and congrats on that by the way, they really set the standard for long-form journalism, and it talked about Q-Tips and how they relate to digital products.

It seems like neither Q-Tip makers nor app designers always think about what's best for their users, true, Unilever, who owns that trademark, probably loved the headline in the article. Have you started a defense fund yet?

Nir Eyal: The prompting of the article was this recent reaction that I got after I wrote Hooked. People who hadn't read the book, interpreted it as a guidebook to controlling people's minds. The word that kept coming up ... and the reason I know that they didn't read the book is because they kept calling me the guy who teaches Silicon Valley how to addict people.

I took very deliberate action in not calling the book "How to Build Addictive Products". The book is called "Hooked: How to Build Habit Forming Products" because there's a big difference between an addition and a habit. A habit is just an impulse to do something that with little or not conscious thought, whereas an addiction, is this persistent, compulsive dependency on a behavior or substance that harms the user. The fact that I kept getting lumped into addiction, when the book is not about addiction.

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Addicting users would be sadistic and immoral, which is where I wanted to deal with the subject of addiction a bit. Particularly when so many people say,"Aw, Facebook is so addictive! Instagram and Snapchat and video games, all this stuff is just melting our brain, and it's so addictive.

I kind of wanted to peel back the onion of what does this mean, addiction? What does the word mean? What is the condition of addiction? And what I discovered was that there are a ton of misconceptions around what addiction really is, to the extent that I've come to believe, that calling these things addictive, is actually harming us in and of itself. And that should kind of be a revelation, that really, by calling these things addictive, we are harming ourselves. We are in fact making them harder to resist, and we can get into why that is.

Roger Dooley: Right. Well we teased with Q-Tips, so why don't you explain the Q-Tip problem.

Nir Eyal: Yeah. The Q-Tip problem. So let's start with the ... I don't know what to call this, so I'm just going to call this the AYOL rule ... I don't know, I need to come up with a new name for it. But the AYOL rule is, that any sufficiently good product is used by sufficiently large number of people, will have addicts. Anything that is sufficiently good, used by a sufficiently large number of people, will have addicts, who abuse the product.

The case in point here is a Q-Tip. If you look at the side of a package of any package of Q-Tips, or cotton swabs as their supposed to be called, because Q-Tips as you mentioned is a brand name. If you look at the side of any cotton swab package there's a big fat warning there that says "WARNING: Do not put in your ear." That's often times a surprise to people because most people think, "Well what the hell are Q-Tips for?" Well the reason you don't want to put them in your ear -

Roger Dooley: If you look at the photo, they're for rubbing your cheek apparently, that's what the ... that's where they, apparently they expect people to use them for.

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Nir Eyal: Right, right. But the one thing you're not supposed to do with them is put them in your ear, and the reason you're not supposed to put them in your ear, is because when people do that, they tend to do one of two things. They either dry out the ear wax that's supposed to be in your ear, it's supposed to moisten your ear and keep it that way. What people tend to do is they scrape it all out and so their ear gets dry. Or, even worse than that, they scratch their eardrum.

        Both of these things that you're not supposed to do with the product, cause a bit of irritation, which when a body part gets irritated, blood flows to that body part and it becomes red and inflamed. In your ear, that inflammation feels very much like something's in your ear. That tricks people into thinking, that there's still water, or blockage, or ear wax, or something in their ear. And then, feeling that sensation, what they do, is, you guessed it, stick another Q-Tip in their ear to try and clear that feeling, even though the feeling isn't the problem, the irritation that they've caused is the problem. I just thought that was a great metaphor for what we were seeing, that can happen with all sorts of products. When the product itself becomes the problem, that's when we have an addiction. That's what kind of defines these addictions. Whether it's gambling, or pornography addiction, or Facebook addiction, or gaming addiction, or even drug addiction. When the solution ... the thing that's taking us out of discomfort becomes the source of the problem, that's the Q-Tip affect.

        There's a few morals here to this story. One is, the whole problem starts with the inappropriate use of the product. That's the first problem that happens here. This is not something you should do. Every ear, nose, and throat doctor will tell you the same thing. Never stick Q-Tip in your ear. That's the first thing, is the inappropriate use of the product.

Roger Dooley: Do you know that Unilever makes something called a precision Q-Tip that has a pointy end? It's like the little cotton swab, but instead of having a nice rounded tip, it actually comes to a point at the end. The reason that they probably aren't going after the Atlantic with the title of

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that article, is because they're too busy defending product liability since ... from people who stuck those things in their ear.

Nir Eyal: Could be. I really looked at it as this metaphor for our industry, for the technology industry in many ways. So the first lesson is that the reason that people are like "Wait a minute, what are you talking about? Why would Q-Tips ever be addictive?"

By the way, if you look online, and you type in "Q-Tip addiction", you will actually see, there are message boards full of people who describe this addiction, where they can't stop using these Q-Tips. But of course that feels really weird to us, to most people that is, because for the vast majority of people, Q-Tips are not addictive at all. And yet if you look at the literature of addiction, you see more and more of these cases, where people get addicted to all sorts of stuff. Heads back to that rule I told you about, if product is used by enough people, somebody's going to get addicted.

If you think about ... I don't know if you've ever seen that television show "Intervention", where they have people who get addicted to sniffing glue, or people who get addicted to eating paper bags, or people who collect ... or are addicted to balloon collecting, and obsessive balloon collecting. The show is really sad in that these people really struggle with these things that to most people, feels ridiculous. Why would I get addicted to collecting balloons?

It happens, but the answer there is, you can't just blame the product. There is no such thing as an addictive product. Even things that we tend to think of as the most addictive things, and I'm going to go out on a limb here, even things like heroin. It's not the product itself that's addictive, it's clearly the interaction of the person with the product.

Now, that doesn't mean that product makers don't have some responsibility, and we can talk about that, and I talk about that in the Atlantic article, but first we have to understand what we're actually talking about when we talk about addiction. It's not that everybody gets addicted to Q-Tips, just like not everybody gets addicted to booze, or Facebook, or

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video games. The responsibility can't be only on the maker of the product, there's something about the interaction between the two.

Roger Dooley: I guess in the digital world you've got the ... often success metrics are defined by the amount of time users spend with the product, so there's a tendency to optimize for that. I've built web communities over the years, and what you look at to see if you're successful, you look at the number of visits per day, for an individual, or you look at the time spent on site, the amount ... the number of posts they create, and so on, and so on.

Up to a point, that's as really positive thing. It's sort of like gambling ... what does a casino call a gambling addict? My best customer. To some degree, these super engaged people for a community, are really important. They contribute a lot, they help newbies, they often are great content creators, and make up the bulk of the really good content on the site, and so on, and so on.

But, then you have to step back and wonder, "Gee, do these people have a life? Are they ... what else ... is their life being impacted?" So, there's some tension there, because if somebody isn't engaged with the site or the product or the app or whatever at all, then it's ineffective. You want some sort of optimal level, but what that optimum is tough to define.

Nir Eyal: Yeah, yeah. I think you hit the nail on the head in a few regards here, that the problem is not so much the product itself, it's the degree of use. And even more importantly than that, it's the harm done. The trouble with defining these things as blanket bad or blanket good, as a lot of people are apt to do when it comes to new technologies, is that the same exact metrics that scare us as addictive, are also the same metrics that we look to to see if our product is good.

What other metric should a company use to know whether it's servicing its customers' needs, other than the fact that people keep coming back? And love it, and keep using it, a lot! It's very difficult to figure out how else to measure whether your product is any good, other than whether people keep using it.

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What about the addicts? What do we do about them? I have a proposal, about what to do with the addicts, in that, for the first time in history, these companies know. That's different, because if you were an alcohol maker, still today, if you're an alcohol maker, you don't know who the alcoholics are. You can throw up your hands, and have a credible argument to say, "How could we possibly know who is abusing our product? We don't know how much people consume, they buy from the grocery store, not directly from us."

But the upside about all this data that's collected about us, and certainly when it comes to Las Vegas these days, you can't play a machine without having a loyalty card. The same exact technology is at work all over the web. How much we use Reddit, and Netflix, YouTube, and Facebook, and social games. They all know how much we're using.

My proposal is, if there are people who are bonafide addicts, meaning they want to stop but can't, that's a different class of people. That should be a protected class, just like we wouldn't let my eight year old daughter walk into a casino, a Bloody Mary in one hand, and start playing a slot machine, that doesn't make sense, right? She's not capable to make decisions that involve money, gambling money, and alcohol. She's too young for that, and so, the reason that she would get in a special class, children are in a special class, because they're not in their right minds to make these decisions. I think that addicts, that bonified addicts, people who want to stop but can't, should be a protected class.

What I've been doing since I wrote that article is meeting with companies all over Silicon Valley. There are not many of them, thankfully, that have this problem. Most companies are struggling, and most of your listeners, if they're working on a product, their problem isn't that people are overusing their product, their problem is that most people don't care enough about their product, they wish there were people that would use their product more. But there are a few companies out there, many of them here in Silicon Valley, who are making products that qualify for that test we talked about earlier, that they have a degree of addicts. The good news is

that if they wanted to do something about them, they could. And for the vast majority of these companies, doing something for these addicts, would actually not even hurt their bottom line that much.

We all know about that person on Facebook, who's on Facebook way too much, and just clutters up our Newsfeeds. Those kind of people aren't necessarily going to ... if they were moderated, their behavior a bit, that actually wouldn't hurt Facebook much. What I want companies like Facebook to do, is to give me some kind of number. To say look, if you use Facebook more than 30 hours a week, 40 hours a week ... just give me a number. We're going to reach out to you, and see if you need help dialing back. We're going to reach out with some kind of message that says, "Look, your behavior is indicative of someone who may have a problem, can we offer assistance? Can we help? Can we help you blacklist this site? Can we help you temper? Can we give you resources to help figure out what's going on? Can we refer you to professional help, if needed? Most companies here in Silicon Valley, this will not be a problem for them. I think it's a very simple solution to do the right thing by users.

Some companies, however, can't do this. Las Vegas can't do this, because if Las Vegas were to kick out the addicts ... they don't care about the yous and mes of the world who come to Las Vegas and play a few table games for a bachelor party or a bachelorette party. That's not what they care about. What makes Vegas in the black, are the addicts, the locals, that play into what the industry calls "extinction", meaning they play 'til all their money's gone. Those types of industries are the industries I won't work with because they prey on people they know have a problem. They know they can't operate in the proper headspace and I think that's unethical.

Roger Dooley: Let's dial back from the addiction a little bit, I think that even for those of us who are not addicted, what we do find is that overuse of various digital products can be a bit of an issue, if only from a productivity standpoint and time management standpoint. You read an article and you click on that link, and before you know it, you've gone down

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the rabbit hole of looking at three other articles, or you jump on Instagram because someone sent you a link, and then you spend 15 minutes browsing other stuff, and so on and so on. I think that's probably more common than true addiction.

One thing I should mention here, I think you were the one who turned me on to a product that is kind of interesting and that's called "Pocket". It's certainly improved my productivity a little bit, and it's for those listeners who may not be aware, it's an app that lets you immediately save anything ... an article that you run across, anything that you want to read, you save it to Pocket and it saves it for later. It lets you access it from any device so you can be on your laptop checking emails, somebody sends you a link, you decide to read that ... rather than reading it and interrupting your task of clearing your email in a very short period of time, you just save it, and then when you're in line at Starbucks, or when you're sitting on your couch with your iPad or whatever, you can read it later.

The big plus is not only does it allow that time shifting, so as not to interrupt your productivity, it strips away all of the content links, all of the ads, and so on, that have that distraction potential. We talked about building communities, and one of the ways you do that, is by giving people content that's relevant to what they're reading now. That can be a real benefit if you're researching a topic, to show you related stuff, but often it sort of sends you down as I said, that rabbit hole, you end up spending a lot more time than you expected so, I appreciate that recommendation and to me, that is one way that folks can get at least part of their time back from a content consumption standpoint, it may not help with the social media links, I haven't found a way to use it for that purpose, but it does help with that.

Nir Eyal: I think to your earlier point, around what about people who are not addicted, what about everybody else, which turns out to be around 95-98% of the population, depending on that type of product you're looking at, is not addicted. If you look at these technologies, and you say to yourself, "Man, I like using these products a lot, but does it harm me, and can I stop

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if I wanted to?" If you say to yourself, "You know what, it doesn't really harm me," it's not an addiction. And if you say to yourself, "I can stop. I'm sure I can stop," it's also not an addiction. It's a misnomer to think that these things have this mind-controlling power over us that we can't put them in their place, that's a bunch of bullshit.

In fact, I have a lot of sympathy, because I struggle with these technologies too, but I have no pity. If you're not actually addicted to these things, this is the price of living in this miraculous age that we're a part of. The price of these technologies, that let's face it here, are so good, we want to use them all the time. Why are we complaining about this? This is great! This is like ... the metaphor I like to use is, imagine you walk down the street, and you walk by a baker, and the baker ... you can smell the baked goods and the sweets wafting out the window, and you walk into the baker and you start yelling at him for making such delicious products. "How dare you make things that are so enticing that I want to eat! You should go out of business!" That makes no sense. I don't want to live in a world without delicious baked goods, even though I know they're bad for me. I want the choice.

I don't want to live in a world where Facebook is regulated, or we put barriers to people making great products and services, these things are wonderful. By the way, most of them are free! So, what are we complaining about? What we should be complaining about, in our lives, and I experience this as well, as I said I have lots of sympathy, no pity, I have sympathy because I struggle with this too.

Writing, which is how I spend most of my professional waking hours, is really hard. When I get in a rut, or I'm bored, or I'm distracted, or something ... it's not flowing, I apt to go browse the web, or look at Instagram, or check email, or do something that's not the thing I need to be doing. That's part of life. That comes with being in a world with all these great products. So, what's the solution? The solution, I think, and I'm a little biased here, but the solution I think is to understand how these products are built. To take out the hooked model, which is the basis of my book,

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Hooked, and systematically breaking these habits we don't want in our lives.

There's four steps to the hooked model, and the way we build a habit is to make sure people go through these first steps, and the way we break a habit, is to remove the four steps. We can do that very systematically, and the good news is the solution to all this technology, the bad sides to all these technologies, is that now there's this new wave of products, you mentioned one of them that I'm a big fan of, Pocket, but there's so many products in what I call "attention retention devices". These technologies that we can use to help moderate bad technology use.

For example, when I write, I use an app on my phone called "Freedom". I use another one called "Self Control" on my desktop, that blocks out the internet during certain times when I really need to get work done. It's all about removing the trigger, which is the first step of the hook. Really the answer here, is, if you're not actually addicted, it's on you. And it's on you to figure out how to put technology in its place, by using other technologies to help you have more self-control, and to understand how these technologies work, so that we are not controlled by them. I think it's a winnable war. It's only unwinnable, and I've seen a lot of commentators talk about this and kind of put them blame at the ... point the finger at the product makers ... that's when it's unwinnable. We have a lot of data that shows us that when people blame something else as being something they can't resist, whether it's food, whether it's technology, whether it's drugs, they are much more likely to relapse, to keep using.

Roger Dooley: So it's been a few years since "Hooked" came out. If you were creating the new, expanded version of the book, and maybe you are for all I know, is there anything major that you would include today that wasn't in there? No pressure, it took Cialdini 30 years to add number seven to his six principles, but if subsequent time, is there anything significant you've found that changes the model or would add to it?

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Nir Eyal: Yeah there actually are. There are several things I have not included, which I think after the book was published, I think I should have included.

One was about the role of variable rewards, in that there are some type of variable reward that are finite rewards, and some that are infinite variable rewards. If you think about ... sometimes people say, gamification, or if you've heard this phrase, gamification ... a lot of people are using these gamification techniques, using points and badges and leaderboards to try and make something more engaging, like a game, but many times that backfires. If you think about it actually games are really bad example of long term engagement. The fact that how many people are playing Super Mario Brothers, or who is playing Pacman anymore? Nobody does, right? Very few people still play those games. Or even Pokémon Go, that came and went, really quick. The reason those things come and go so quickly is that they are examples of finite variable rewards. The more we play these experiences, eventually we come to the end, and there's nothing variable anymore. Zynga's a good example of this, they made Farmville, and then Cityville, and then Chefville, and then Farmville 2, and it was the same game again and again, and people started to figure out, this is quite predictable. That is one thing I wish I would've talked more about in the book.

Another thing, has to do with how sometimes companies will want to give more variability, more uncertainty, into a product. For example, something where the need is entertainment, that's very good. We want to make it more interesting, and more variable. Other times, we want to give the user greater agency and control over something that's already variable. Let me give you an example there.

One thing I didn't mention in the book, is companies like Google, or Uber, what's the variable reward for a company look Google or Uber? There is not variable reward that's implanted, in fact, the situation itself, is variable. When I do a search query on Google, Google would want to insert variable rewards, because the experience of searching for something on

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Google is inherently variable. I don't know the answer to something, I'm looking for that answer. That is variable, that is uncertain. What Google gave us versus other ways to find information before Google came along, was that they're giving user greater agency, greater control over something that's already variable.

Another example with Uber. Uber wouldn't want to insert variability in the experience of catching a ride, what they're doing is giving me greater agency and control. If you remember, before Uber, when you wanted to catch a taxi cab, you'd look up some cab phone number in the yellow pages, you'd call the cab company, and you'd tell them where to pick you up, and then they'd always say the same thing in terms of how long it would take them to get to you, "Eh, 15 minutes." It was always 15 minutes. Maybe in reality, it was going to be 20 minutes, maybe it was going to be half an hour, you never knew because they never knew how long it would take the driver to actually get to you in time. Meanwhile, here you are, stressing out about can you get to where you're going to where you're going on time. That's the variability. That's the itch. Can I get to where I'm going on time? Well, here comes Uber. They put in the interface, they give you this little Pacman-like interface that tells you exactly how far the cab is to you, giving you greater agency, greater sense of control over your experience. I know I can get to where I'm going on time, because the app tells me how far away that experience is.

One thing I didn't put in the book, to answer your question, is that sometimes products will want to insert variability, and at other times, they want to give greater agency and control over something that's already variable.

Roger Dooley: Interesting. While we're talking about ... we're seeing a lot of advances in artificial intelligence and voice interaction. It seems like those technologies and the related technologies would have the potential to create whole new habit forming products by the way we break down and interface with the tech. Are we seeing this yet, or do you have any crazy visions for the future?

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Nir Eyal: Yes I'm very bullish on what I call conversation UI. I think that's going to continue to be a very big deal for a few reasons. Anytime that there is a new interface, anytime that there is a break in the traditional way that information is collected and delivered, that's an opportunity. That's when smart entrepreneurs build big companies, because that's where the incumbents typically can't play. The incumbents can't move quickly enough into these new interfaces.

Most importantly, this is where the habit deck gets reshuffled, this is where new habits are up for grabs, where we can move people's habits from one interface to this new interface, before the incumbents even can figure out what to do next. I think there's going to be a lot of opportunities when it comes to the conversation UI, when it comes to voice interfaces, I'm very very bullish on those.

The difference is, just to explain, voice interface is pretty obvious, the Amazon Echo, or the Google Home, or Siri. I'm also bullish on these conversational interfaces which are very simple, many of them are very low-tech. All they are is just, for experiences, where the user finds it easier to just ask a question versus just looking at a bunch of options, and what these companies will do, is they'll just do away with all of the drop down menus, and fields, and options, and what they do is, they just let the customer ask for what they want with something that looks like a text message.

I'm an investor in a company called Pana, P-A-N-A, which is a travel app, and every time you want something, I don't need to look at all these different options, I just want one best flight, or one best hotel room. You go figure out what the best deal is, and give me maybe one or two, and I'll decide between the two. There's health application to this. There's tons of these new apps coming out that are using this very smart interface, of a conversation UI that I think we're going to see more and more of. Of course, on the voice side, also, very interesting things happening because there are some opportunities where just talking or typing is much easier and faster than going through a bunch of menus and options.

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Roger Dooley: I think in particular the ability to get more and more conversational, and also extend the conversation. Right now, most of your interacts with the Siri, or an Alexa, or whatever are simple one-to-one exchanges. You ask a question and give a command and it happens, and that's it most of the time. Hearing about a Chinese chat app, where the average conversation includes about 26 messages on average, which, that's longer than most human conversations in person. I'm not even sure ... We've had 26, maybe a bit longer. I think that ... talked about a habit forming interface, if you are really inclined to converse ... and part of what they attributed it to was this very, sort of warm personality that they had built into the AI.

In other words, it wasn't just, "Yes, here's your answer." They made it intentionally conversational and warm and friendly. I think that's going to be a really interesting avenue for companies to pursue, is that, as technology becomes more widely accessible and you can apply it across a variety of domains, is there's probably nothing whether it's a visit to the doctor's office, or booking a reservation as you said, or many other transactional-type things, that couldn't benefit from a radically different interface.

Nir Eyal: Right. I think when it comes to this new interface, we know this is going to be a part of everybody's home, and if not, everybody's ears, very quickly, as we move from these desktop devices, like the Alexa, or the Google Home, to the Apple Airpods which I happen to be wearing now. We've all see the movie Her, we know where this is going, this is an inevitability. There will be technologies that are on our bodies at all times. I think the future is that we probably will have both. We will probably have some kind of auditory interface, some kind of voice interface that's constantly with us, as well as a screen or two that we use for certain functions that are better done on some kind of screen interface. I think our life will have lots of different ways to interact with technologies. I think the voice interfaces is really a gold rush opportunity, there's lots of things that we can do with it that we're not thinking of today. The caveat is, that unlike screen interfaces, where you have what I can an external trigger, you have something like a notification, like an alarm, like some kind of call to action

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that tells you what to do, that goes away with voice. At least today, I mean, some day they'll be bidirectional, but today, if I don't remember --

Roger Dooley: I don't know, I mean every now and then Alexa starts randomly talking to me occasionally.

Nir Eyal: Right, for no good reason. Eventually she will say "Good morning Roger," and offer you things, "Would you like to know the weather?" That's going to be a bit of a while, and I think if you're a new entrant, you really have to create that habit because if you don't remember what Alexa can do, you're never going to ask her to do it. There's over 10,000 skills that Alexa has today, and most people are using her to play music, or a fancy timer, which is a real shame because people just don't remember all of the things that she can do. Habits are super important when it comes to that interface.

Roger Dooley: Before I forget, why don't you tell us about your new Podcast, which I think will, by the time this episode airs, will have begun airing, so it should be available on iTunes ex cetera. Why don't you explain a little bit about it, how long they're going to be, what kind of guests you're going to have, or are they going to be solo? Or whatever.

Nir Eyal: Yeah. It's going to be a little bit of an experiment in the beginning. What I really like is to listen to articles, so what I'm going to do for the first two episodes is just me reading my greatest hits so to speak, some of the most popular articles that I've written over the past four years or so. Maybe you haven't heard them before, maybe it's a new topic for you, so I'm going to do that. They're going to be pretty short, maybe five to eight minutes. I'm also going to sprinkle in every once in a while, an interview, with someone who's working on something that I'm fascinated about, as I write, I talk to experts, and PhDs, and all kinds of folks in this field, and when I interview them, I'm going to start recording those interviews and sharing them with the audience as well.

Roger Dooley: Well that article reading concept, at first, I thought, "Huh, that sounds kind of odd," but actually I think it's a great way to get some

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content out there and for somebody to consume content, because often times you simply can't read and obviously you can get audiobooks, but audiobooks tend to be obviously long and I tend not to do them, simply because I don't have that much listening time. I listen to podcasts at the gym, that's about it, I don't have any long commute, where I can consume entire audiobooks in any reasonable period of time. The spoken article, would be much better of course, than the speech simulation article where you get ... Pocket actually I think has a feature where you can listen articles, and it will convert the text to speech, but, it's kind of robotic.

Nir Eyal: Yeah, it takes some getting used to. I love listening to those articles, I listen to probably 20 or 30 a day, but you're right, you really have to get used to that robotic voice. I was thinking,"Man, I'd really appreciate a well written article that ... and I'm also dyslexic, so it takes me a long time to actually read an article, I don't know why someone with dyslexia would choose to be an author like me, but that's a whole other crazy story. I really like having articles read to me, so I figured well, why not make what I would most like to hear. So, I'm going to give that a shot.

Roger Dooley: That's great ... be a nice sampler too, for folks who want to try it. I love Tim Ferriss's podcasts but those run two hours, and that's a major investment of time, although the content is good.

        Do you speed up your listening? Trying to push my time up, I think I'm up to about 1.4 or 1.5 speed now. I've heard of people going faster, but ...

Nir Eyal: Yeah, I'm at about 3. I listen to an audiobook I listen to at 3. I actually just finished The Undoing Project which was really good. At 3, I cranked through it in one flight, it was terrific. I listen to them pretty quick.

Roger Dooley: I've gotta get my listening rate up I guess on my audio content consumption but, already an improvement from the normal 1.0. Although it is kind of interesting, if you get people who are fast talkers on a podcast to begin with, then you accelerate them, they sound really fast.

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Nir Eyal: That's true, they sound like chipmunks.

Roger Dooley: So anyway, the other thing I should mention, is the Habit Summit. I think this will air shortly before that happens, why don't you explain what that is Nir, and what the date is, and hopefully we will get this up before then, and hopefully, if someone hears this and is interested there is still a seat or two available.

Nir Eyal: Yeah, it's an annual event too, so every year it's in San Francisco. We do two days of a gathering of several hundred people who are in the behavioral design space, so product managers, marketers, PhD's, people who are fascinated about how to design behavior for good, how to build healthy habits. We have lustrous speakers including our very own Roger Dooley was there last year, he did a fantastic job. That's going to be April 4th and 5th in San Francisco, and if you miss this one, then look for it at habitsummitt.com next year.

Roger Dooley: Great. Well that's probably a good place to wrap up. Let me remind our listeners, that we're speaking with Nir Eyal, author of "Hooked: A Guide to Building Habit Forming Products", and a host of the new Nir Eyal podcast.

Nir, how can our listeners find you and your content online?

Nir Eyal: My blog is Nir and Far, Nir spelt like my first name, N-I-R, Nirandfar.com, and the podcast is also called the Nir and Far Podcast.

Roger Dooley: Great, well we will link to those places, and any other resources we talked about on the show notes page on rogerdooley.com/podcasts, and we'll have a text version of our conversation there as well, to read or save to pocket, or grab as a PDF.

Nir, thanks for being on the show, and good luck with the new podcast, I'm definitely going to subscribe.

Nir Eyal: Thanks so much Roger, pleasure being here again.

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Thank you for joining me for this episode of the Brainfluence Podcast. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at RogerDooley.com.