

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The book the social media generation never got

Stolen Minds: The Engineering of Human Obsolescence — by Liam Stanley — is out now

A technologist who spent thirty years inside the architecture of the attention economy has published the warning he says the public was never given: that what social media did to attention, artificial intelligence is now doing to judgement, memory and creativity — and that this time, the people building the systems are saying so on the record.

Stolen Minds, by Liam Stanley, argues that human obsolescence has stopped being an accidental side-effect of the technology industry and become, in his phrase, its design specification. The book is out now in paperback, Kindle and audiobook.

The argument

The book sets out three layers of what Stanley calls planned human obsolescence. The first — coercive — describes how engagement-maximised platforms spent a decade dismantling the cognitive substrate of attention, focus and memory. The second — replacement — describes how AI tools now substitute for the functions that broken substrate can no longer reliably perform. The third — optimisation — describes how competitive pressure is making that substitution rational at the institutional level, penalising the professional who tries to keep an unaided skill.

Rather than forecasting, the book reports from the present: it collects the public statements of the architects of the major AI systems, draws on peer-reviewed neuroscience and economics, and follows working professionals — among them a radiologist who no longer trusts her own eyes, a software engineer who has lost his spatial memory, and an accountant whose professional skill is hollowing out year by year.

“The story you have been told about AI — that it will assist you, augment you, free you for higher work — is the cover story.”

Why now

Stanley argues the AI-anxiety conversation has reached saturation without producing a book that names what the industry's own leaders are saying and connects it to a coherent account of what to do. Where Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation* addressed children and social media, and Johann Hari's *Stolen Focus* explained the collapse of concentration, *Stolen Minds* addresses everyone, and what is now being built on top of that broken attention. The

second half of the book is a practical manual of tested, opinionated practices for individuals, parents, professionals and citizens.

About the author

Liam Stanley is a British technologist and creative entrepreneur who has co-founded companies building behavioural-analytics platforms, audience-intelligence systems, and narrative- and disinformation-monitoring tools used by media organisations, brands and political campaigns. The book, he says, is written against — rather than from — the commercial interests of that work. He is the father of two sons.

Title	Stolen Minds: The Engineering of Human Obsolescence
Author	Liam Stanley
Formats & price	Paperback £12.99 · Kindle £8.99 · Audiobook — out now
Paperback ISBN	978-1-83709-676-3
Interviews & review copies	liamstanleybooks@proton.me

Liam is available for podcasts, longform written press and radio. The full press kit — cover, headshot, sample chapter and sell sheet — is available at the book's website.