The Problem with Prof Hacking

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“Nowhere do you find more enthusiasm for the god of Technology than among educators.”
— Neil Postman

To the extent that they think about it at all, when most people hear the word “hacker,” they still probably picture someone who uses a computer to gain unauthorized access to information. In most people’s minds, hackers, even now, are criminals, and “hacks” such as headline-grabbing data breaches are a regrettable feature of twenty-first century life that one must deal with, not something the average person does. But since at least the mid 2000s, the term “hacking” has increasingly been applied to more and more activities outwardly having nothing to do with computers, and “hacking” has come to mean using ingenuity to improve things. People now routinely talk about hacking their work, their hobbies, their possessions, their bodies, and so on. These people have taken a practice traditionally associated with computers — i.e., “hacking” — and broadened it to encompass literally anything under the sun. Indeed, people now speak of

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hacking everything from IKEA furniture to democracy like it’s the most normal thing in the world. Business and lifestyle publications have rechristened advice from investment how-tos to beauty tips as hacks. I’m not the only one to notice this metaphor creep. People joke about it on social media all the time. Next up, I predict, will be “hacking fatigue.”

The application of the term “hacking” presumes that anything and everything is amenable to hacks or clever modifications the same way a computer system is. I maintain that the recent broadening of the term to encompass an endless multiplicity of life’s activities suggests the degree to which people in the twenty-first century are increasingly thinking about the world in vaguely computational terms. The broadening of the term “hacking,” though it might seem faddish, is thus important to attend to precisely because it reveals how the rhetoric of hacking and the point of view of the hacker have become normalized. I argue this rhetoric and subject position carry with them particular ideas. These ideas have deep roots in Western culture, namely a way of thinking about the world that David Golumbia calls “computationalism,” a “belief in the power of computation” that “underwrites and reinforces a surprisingly traditionalist conception of human being, society, and politics.” Put differently, in a thoroughly computerized world, hacking becomes a—or perhaps even the—preferred “way of seeing,” to borrow a phrase from art critic John Berger. What is problematic about this way of seeing, I contend, is that it is in line with long traditions in US culture of self-making and techno-fetishism.

In researching and writing a PhD dissertation on “life hacking,” the first of its kind to trace the broadening of the term “hacking” discussed above, I often found myself bouncing back and forth between two opposing positions: eager consumer of “life hacks” on the one hand and vociferous critic of them on the

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other. I started following and reading life hacking blogs more or less when they first appeared in the mid 2000s. Convinced there was something there worth studying, something that might help me illuminate certain contradictions at the heart of American culture, I gave my first paper on life hacking at an academic conference in 2007. As life hacking blogs turned into books, I bought and read them. When Twitter took off, I joined and followed prominent life hackers there. I watched life hacking TV shows. I listened to life hacking podcasts. I went all in. But at the same time, I was suspicious of life hacking’s promises of increased productivity via technology. Emboldened by life hacking pioneer Merlin Mann’s denunciation of life hacks in 2008 and subsequent critiques of life hacking by critics such as Evgeny Morozov and Nikil Saval, I became increasingly disenchanted with the whole concept. Life hacking’s shortcuts, I realized, had become dead ends, the metaphor itself problematic.

As a graduate student, one permutation of life hacking I followed especially closely was “prof hacking,” in particular ProfHacker (b. 2009), the Chronicle of Higher Education group blog “focused on pedagogy, productivity, and technology, and the various ways these intersect in higher education.” I began reading it when I was still an anxious graduate student trying to figure out my place in academe. At the time, ProfHacker’s advice, tips, and tutorials felt like they were aimed squarely at me and I devoured them eagerly. My comments here concerning the site are thus informed by the years I’ve spent reading it and wrestling with its advice as both a student and scholar. It’s important to understand that ProfHacker is a specific articulation of a larger cultural phenomenon. That is, prof hacking as a practice marks the linkage of the discourse of life hacking with the location of American higher education. I don’t think that linkage is an entirely benign one, as I hope to make clear. Namely,

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5 “Welcome to ProfHacker,” ProfHacker (blog), 19 April 2010.
ProfHacker’s application of the life hacking concept to academia ultimately seems congruent to me with the oft-remarked upon neoliberalization of the university insofar as it tends to reiterate discourses of productivity, efficiency, and self-improvement. As such, it is something I find intensely problematic at the same time I personally find it tremendously seductive.

That I read ProfHacker religiously and even contributed a post to it once isn’t particularly surprising when one considers that my time in graduate school in the late 2000s coincided with the decisive computerization of academia and the explosion of the digital humanities. Now, at the tail end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, one of the most salient aspects of academic life is the influx of digital technologies. Such technologies are not only central to the basic operations of the contemporary university — admissions, registration, financial aid, administration, record keeping, and so on would be unthinkable without them — but, obviously, to research and teaching as well. They are how professors look up articles, create and share work, prepare lectures, post grades, and so forth. These technologies are all invariably pitched in the same way: as tools that will make the entire process of higher education — from teaching and grading to research and publication to communication and coordination — more efficient and productive. In a word, better. Professors are told, in ways both subtle and obvious, they must not only learn how to use new digital tools, but they must learn how to use them well.

During my time as a PhD student at the University of Iowa, for instance, I saw classrooms go from rooms often consisting of little more than desks and whiteboards (or even blackboards) to “wired” classrooms with computers, digital projectors, dependable WiFi, and the like. What I watched play out at Iowa played out at colleges and universities across the country. Today, if an American college classroom is not yet “wired,” you can bet that someone, somewhere (an administrator perhaps, or an educa-
tional technologist, or maybe a technology company) has plans to fix it, to “rescue” it from its “backwardness” and make it attractive enough to parent and student “consumers” that it can be put in a college brochure or shown off on a campus visit. In the eyes of some, a college classroom that doesn’t have at least WiFi can now scarcely even be considered a classroom. Students, after all, have to be able to use their devices to connect to the internet. As the campuses of tech companies resemble more and more the campuses of colleges, the campuses of colleges feature more and more of the products of tech companies. As Michael Bugeja notes, “academe has invested heavily in technology since 1995, funding proliferation with easy student loans, higher tuition, and all manner of technology-related fees.”

The reason for this? Well, as self-described “ed-tech Cassandra” Audrey Watters has relentlessly documented, the idea that new technologies can improve education is a well-worn — if not well-substantiated — one in American culture. And not only are new technologies billed as tools that will help students, but as tools teachers can use to professionalize themselves. Yet one of the more striking contradictions about pitching technologies as “professionalizing,” is that learning to use them, let alone master them, often takes a lot of time. As Margaret Cassidy writes in her 2004 book Bookends: The Changing Media Environment of American Classrooms:

Advocates are once again offering the argument that new technology will professionalize teaching — for example, by bringing to the teaching profession the kind of productivity that has purportedly come to professionals in other fields through their use of technology. However, many teachers are experiencing something different when they start to use new technology. The amount of time required to produce approx-

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8 To learn more about Watters’s work, see her website: http://hackeducation.com. Her use of the word “hack” here is not lost on me.
appropriate and valuable curricular materials is staggering. On top of that is the time involved in locating useful Web sites and software programs, evaluating possible software and hardware purchases.⁹

Precisely because they demand so much time of instructors, rather than unambiguously aiding them in their individualized aspirations for prestige through productivity, Cassidy sees these technologies as de-skilling teachers by 1) forcing them to rely on other people’s content and software and 2) cutting into their time to do things such as research and talk to other teachers, once ordinary parts of the job they now no longer have time for because they are too busy simply trying to stay up to date with the latest software application they are being told is the solution to all their troubles. It is, as one might imagine, a vicious cycle. Here’s Cassidy again: “Although using technology might appear, even to teachers, to professionalize their work, it may merely add additional tasks onto an already difficult workload, thus creating a work speed-up that leaves teachers looking for short-cuts and ready-made solutions to their problems.”¹⁰ Although Cassidy’s focus is on public K–12 education, her overall argument about the hype and hope invested in new technologies is applicable to higher education as well. As media scholar Harold Innis quipped over sixty years ago, “The blight of mechanization spreads from the high schools to the universities.”¹¹

Here one might reasonably ask: Shouldn’t professors make time to learn how to use new computer technologies? Isn’t that a good thing? My response to that is to ask a different question: Isn’t the pressure to do exactly that overwhelming, even irresistible, in higher education, where digital technologies have almost wholly infiltrated how we communicate, research, write, publish, and teach? Does one even have a choice not to use such

¹⁰ Ibid., 268.
¹¹ Harold Innis, The Bias of Communication (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), 207.
technologies? For the few holdouts left, there exist institutional structures whose raison d’être is getting professors to use the latest tech: educational technologists; administrative initiatives; training sessions; for-profit companies coming into schools and foisting, via incentives or mandates, such technologies on professors. You have to work now not to use the whole assemblage of digital technologies that have taken over academia. Would it be possible, for instance, to teach a college class without using email? To submit grades without going online? To design assignments that don’t require computers? Would you even want to? Is this something you even think about? I find that computer access and use is taken as such a given that it is only when my computer is on the fritz or a student tells me they don’t have reliable internet access at home that I realize how much I and the classes I teach are dependent on them.

Cassidy is worried about the focus on “issues of implementation and execution,”\textsuperscript{12} wherein the teacher is re-imagined more as “a technician that simply helps students use the technology, not a person who selects technology (or some other resource) as a way to help students learn.”\textsuperscript{13} I worry about that too. But are “prof hackers” similarly worried? For what Cassidy, with an eye to the past, sees as de-skilling, they, with an eye to the future, seem to see as skill-enhancing. What might explain this divide?

Since its inception in 2009, ProfHacker has published technology-centric tips and tricks aimed at educators in colleges and universities, especially professors in the humanities and social sciences, i.e., those most often thought of as “backwards,” recalcitrant parts in a system in dire need of speeding up and optimizing in the eyes of many administrators, boards, politicians, and critics. Hosted on the Chronicle of Higher Education’s website since 2010, and thus benefiting from the Chronicle’s imprimatur, ProfHacker is a group blog that, even though it periodically takes pains to assert that it’s not only about technology, to date has mainly celebrated and sought to help academics inte-

\textsuperscript{12} Cassidy, Bookends, 265.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 267.
grate the latest technologies into their professional and personal lives. As its name suggests, it is the chief prof hacking blog on the internet, but it is far from the only site applying hacking to academia. Similar contemporaneous blogs include GradHacker (housed at the Chronicle of Higher Education’s rival website Inside Higher Education since 2014, a fact which suggests how higher education trade publications feel the need to have a hacking “vertical” for the purposes of branding), and HackCollege (b. 2006). If ProfHacker is aimed mostly at professors, GradHacker is aimed mostly at graduate students, and HackCollege is aimed mostly at undergraduates. All, however, are similar in that they apply the metaphor of “hacking” to academic life, and their tips, though aimed at a more specific audience than the tips proffered by general interest life hacking blogs, nevertheless feel of a piece with those blogs. Collectively, they constitute a popular but under-analyzed discursive formation.

In my darker moods, despite its periodic posts acknowledging the structural problems plaguing contemporary academe, I worry ProfHacker works to shift attention from such problems to smaller — some might say trivial — technical matters. In other words, it addresses itself to those looking to change themselves more than it marshals those looking to change the system. Notably, it is when I felt at my most vulnerable as a graduate student that I turned to it and blogs like it for solace in the form of easy-to-follow advice, seeking to change myself so that I might better fit into academe, not changing academe so that it might better fit me. So even though I once contributed to ProfHacker, and ProfHacker has linked to my writing elsewhere, and even though I used to read it regularly, am friendly with several of its contributors, and have found some of its advice useful, I think it’s time to pose some neglected questions about it. In so doing, I am not trying to take potshots at individual contributors but, in the spirit of good-natured provocation, offer a critique of ProfHacker as an articulation of a larger propensity. Is the best way to improve academic life to hack it? More importantly, regardless of how useful much of ProfHacker’s advice is at the individual level, what are the social and political consequences
of propagating it? In whose interest does ProfHacker dispense these tips? And to what end?

As I have already noted, academics, particularly those in the humanities and social sciences, are increasingly pressured to use digital technologies so as not to become “obsolete.” I would argue that ProfHacker both responds to and perpetuates this pressure with the largely tech-centric advice it has offered to date. Take, for instance, seemingly harmless posts like “Using Google Forms for In-class Polling” (4/10/2016), “Create a New Habit with an App” (2/25/2016), “Managing References with Paperpile” (1/27/2016), “Tune In to Focus at Will” (12/3/2015), “Preparing Lectures for Large Online Classes” (9/14/2015), “Dropbox’s File Request Eases Receiving Files and Assignments” (9/8/2015) and “How (and Why) to Generate a Static Website Using Jekyll, Part I” (8/31/2015). Though their particulars differ, all of these posts are essentially about how already put-upon professors can do more via technology. “Prof hacking” writ large might thus be seen as a response to changing socioeconomic and technological conditions that’s congruent with those conditions themselves. And though it’s invariably presented in a can-do way, the advice ProfHacker dispenses is in line with the so-called neoliberalization of the university insofar as it addresses the individual, professional academic looking to improve him or herself, generally via technology, more than the larger structural circumstance academics now find themselves embedded in, even if it doesn’t deny that those structural circumstances exist.

Part of ProfHacker’s mission seems to be to help what might be dubbed the “hack-curious” academic transform

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into a full-fledged “hackademic,” the result of which is supposedly marked gains in productivity. Though billed as non-disciplinary, ProfHacker, in the time I’ve been reading it, seems to be stealthily addressing the aforementioned academics in the humanities and social sciences whose curiosity about technology is rooted in a fear of being outpaced and obsolesced. In short, ProfHacker is not for professors who are already hackers, so much as it is, one post at a time, trying to turn professors into hackers by sharing with them a series of hacker-esque productivity tips.

Conspicuously absent from ProfHacker’s posts as of this writing are extended criticisms of technology. This is not to suggest that those who write for ProfHacker are not themselves reflective about the technology they let into their lives, or that none of its posts grapple with technology’s Faustian bargains (a January 2012 post, for instance, admits that it would be impossible to “try out all ProfHacker recommendations and still maintain careers and families”). Rather, that from its inception ProfHacker has hailed a particular kind of reader, one who uses and cheers, and teaches others to use and cheer, digital technology, not one who asks pesky questions about its deeper rhetorical sources and structures. In other words, its attitude is more “Digital technologies are shiny new toys that are fun to play with” than “Digital technologies are perhaps something we need to be wary of.”

But this, according to cultural critic and educator Neil Postman, whose words serve as an epigraph to this essay, gets it backwards. From his point of view, the sort of technical tips put forward by ProfHacker are essentially trivial. What we need to know about technologies, he argues, “is not how to use them but how they use us.” My sympathies here are with Postman. He uses the example of cars. “In the case of cars,” he writes, “what we needed to think about in the early twentieth century was not how to drive them but what they would do to our air, our

15 Jason B. Jones, “Welcome to ProfHacker.com (Open Thread Wednesday),” ProfHacker (blog), 9 September 2009.
landscape, our social relations, our family life and our cities.” “I am talking here,” he concludes, “about making technology itself an object of inquiry.” I feel like Postman, if he were still alive, would subscribe to, as I do, Thomas Haigh’s (and others’) upended version of digital humanities: a digital humanities that seeks to “apply the tools and methods of the humanities to the subject of computing” rather than vice versa. For Postman was “more interested in asking questions about the computer than getting answers from it.” ProfHacker’s interest, by contrast, lies more in the other direction: with getting answers from computers not asking questions about them. Tellingly, as of this writing, the most popular category on the blog is “Software.”

While ProfHacker occasionally features a post about one structural problem in academe or another, what it never quite gets to is a more complicated and troubling question: Are digital technologies partially responsible for, or at least congruent with, the labor situation in which professors are increasingly asked to use digital technologies? And that’s fine. If it doesn’t want to ask this question, it doesn’t have to. But ProfHacker does seem concerned about academic exploitation and imagines its tips as empowering. Its overall approach, however, suggests a reluctance to think through how technological and economic changes are linked, which is a question I am preoccupied with and feel is important to advance.

Perhaps the closest ProfHacker has gotten to this since I’ve been a reader is a June 11, 2010 post that asked “To what extent are edupunks, DIY faculty, and, heck, we ProfHackers, useful idiots in the destruction of higher education?” The post links to a

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19 Postman, “Virtual Students,” 207. See also the six questions Postman thinks should be asked about any new technology in his Building a Bridge to the 18th Century (New York: Vintage, 2000), 42–53.
post by Jim Groom on his personal blog from the day before.\textsuperscript{21} In his post, Groom is responding to an article by blogger and law professor Glenn Reynolds in which Reynolds expresses enthusiasm for “edupunks” because they’re doing things like teaching students how to code—i.e., in his estimation, giving them skills that might lead to gainful employment. Groom, the coiner of the term “edupunk,” is put off by Reynolds’s careerist thinking. Groom writes: “What we are seeing is the gentrification of higher ed as an impulse to razing public education though the liberatory rhetoric of innovation and efficiency—only to have the process devoured by the wolves of the free market.”\textsuperscript{22} But what seems to irk Groom the most is how Reynolds sees the work of “edupunks.” He writes: “Reynolds understands the ‘edupunks’ as the useful idiots who very well may help bring the public education system down.” Groom, while wanting the term “edupunk” to remain polysemic, takes issue with Reynolds’s interpretation: “an EDUPUNK that devastates public education in service to the unregulated promise of free markets and capital is possibly the worst vision one can imagine.” Basically, Groom is worrying out loud about how a term he coined is being co-opted. “To what degree,” he wonders, “is the dream vision of DIY U a means of further gutting the salaries, rights, and benefits of educational professionals?” By linking to Groom’s piece, ProfHacker is, by extension, asking this question as well, albeit indirectly. ProfHacker has a tendency to link to articles and blog posts that raise similarly thorny questions, but then not answer them. Indeed, ProfHacker does not answer Groom’s question, either in the post that links to it or anywhere else I know of. Nevertheless, this represents a time ProfHacker raised the question of its role in the “destruction of higher education,” and as such, it is important to note.

Frankly, it’s the sort of question I wish ProfHacker would grapple with more. Higher education, especially in public uni-

\textsuperscript{21} Jim Groom, “EDUPUNK or, on Becoming a Useful Idiot,” bravatuesdays (blog), 10 June 2010.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
universities, has been in an increasingly obvious and remarked upon state of crisis since the Great Recession of the late 2000s. This crisis is marked by things such as budget cuts at public universities; the miserable job market for newly minted, debt-ridden PhDs; the adjunctification of faculty; and the erosion of tenure. Collectively, these things are often referred to as the corporatization or neoliberalization of the university. Myriad and growing books, articles, blog posts, and symposia have registered and discussed this shift.

The “collapse” of academe has been marked at the same time by, as I started to sketch out above, a huge investment in technology. We don’t have the money to take care of professors, but we do have the money to take care of computers. How can this be? Or as historian of technology David Noble asks in his 2001 book *Digital Diploma Mills,* “What drives this headlong rush to implement new technology with so little regard for deliberation of the pedagogical and economic costs and at the risk of student and faculty alienation and opposition?” “A short answer,” he writes, “might be the fear of getting left behind, the incessant pressures of ‘progress.’”**23** Yet Noble’s answer here, as much as it would seem to explain the “hack curious” hailed by a blog like ProfHacker, is incomplete. It is not simply a fear of being left behind that explains why ProfHacker continues as a fixture of the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* and similar blogs like GradHacker and HackCollege continue to pump out tip after tip after day after day, week after week, year after year. As Noble writes, “For the universities [in the 1990s] were not simply undergoing a technological transformation. Beneath that change, and camouflaged by it, lies another: the commercialization of higher education. For here as elsewhere technology is but a vehicle and a disarming disguise.”**24**

Noble’s treatment of this issue, though from 2001, is useful precisely because it is historical. His insight is to historicize the

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24 Ibid., 26.
corporatization/neoliberalization—or what he calls the “commercialization”—of academe and connect it back to technology. For him, the crises confronting academe and the technologization of academe are linked. According to Noble, the commercialization of academia happened in two separate but overlapping stages: first research, then instruction. Put differently, first research became something one could profit from, then teaching became something one could profit from. Noble’s framing here gives us, perhaps, a clue as to why so many of Prof-Hacker’s tips and tricks relate to teaching. The commercial potential, it is probably fair to say, of a lot work in the humanities and social sciences is low, but professors in the humanities and social sciences can participate in the commodification of the education function of the university through technology without much difficulty. They can, for instance, offer tech-centric tips on the Chronicle of Higher Education’s website to fellow academics looking to “upgrade” themselves. The Chronicle of Higher Education, in turn, gets more hits on its website. And it’s a vicious cycle because the tips keep coming. There is always another “hack” to learn. As Noble explains, pointing a finger at ed-tech boosters directly:

Ignoring the true sources of the financial debacle—an expensive and low-yielding commercial infrastructure and greatly expanded administrative costs—the champions of computer-based instruction focus their attention rather upon increasing the efficiencies of already overextended teachers. And they ignore as well the fact that their high-tech remedies are bound only to compound the problem, increasing further, rather than reducing, the costs of higher education.25

Noble was writing nearly a decade before ProfHacker launched, but is not ProfHacker in many ways an attempt to use various technologies to increase the efficiencies of already overextended academics? What Noble realized that ProfHacker seems loath

25 Ibid., 28.
to discuss is that by acquiescing to the high-tech, higher-ed paradigm, one becomes weirdly complicit in one’s own obsolescence. ProfHacker is arguably giving prestige to the technologies that are undermining professors. And what is especially ironic is that it does so at precisely the same time professors are trying to avoid being obsolesced. Perhaps the problem is not so much that academics are inadequately hacking themselves; perhaps the problem is with hacks themselves, specifically the various structural pressures that make them seem like the answer, which is how I tended to see them as a graduate student.

It has been said that any discussion of the role of technology in higher education is also a discussion about labor relations. Suffice it to say, ProfHacker does not present its tips as being dictated from on high. Just the opposite. Its tips are presented as stratagems contributors have chosen to employ on their own for the benefit of themselves and their students. ProfHacker does not ask, however, why so many stratagems have to be employed in the first place, or why constant self-improvement along technological lines is put forward as the only reliable insurance against the changes happening in academe. Ultimately, one of the more troubling things to me about ProfHacker is how it has internalized and repackaged for consumption what might be dubbed managerial values as tips and tricks coming from the “bottom up.” Not only are academics being asked to do it themselves, they are being asked to do it to themselves. As Jim Groom’s post suggests, many ProfHacker-adjacent academics — those in digital humanities, advocates of open access publishing, and so on — see themselves on the vanguard of a revolution in higher education. What I am suggesting, however, is that the embrace of technology as a category for solving problems inevitably and regrettably aligns one with neoliberal forces.

Academe as a whole would be better served, in my view, by a more philosophical and skeptical attitude toward technology, one that attempts to think through how structural issues and digital technologies might be connected à la Noble. Insofar as ProfHacker pays lip service to collective action but then turns around and encourages professors, like other professional work-
ers, to see the changes wrought by neoliberalization as problems they have to work out themselves by better managing themselves through computer technology, it undercuts itself. Even if, at some level, everyone acknowledges that much of what we experience as personal problems are in fact deeply rooted and broad-ranging sociocultural ones, individualist, technocratic solutions are still the order of the day. This frustrates me to no end. Constant self-improvement via technology — often coded as “personal/professional development” — is the solution people keep coming back to. ProfHacker can’t help but contribute to this state of affairs with its tips. It presents the needy, desperate, overstressed, and overburdened contemporary academic subject to neoliberal pressures with the apparent opportunity to do things more quickly and more easily. It says, in effect, “Hey, you’ve got all this work you have to do now. Let me show you how to manage it all more easily using this new piece of software.” Now, I will be the first to admit that I used to find this sort of stuff incredibly attractive, and to some extent still do. If I read, for instance, that I should be automating my writing with TextExpander scripts or writing in Markdown or using Zotero as a reference manager, to use three actual examples from ProfHacker that I’ve incorporated into my “academic workflow,” I will think, “Yes, of course I should be doing these things.”26 Every post makes me ask, “Am I being as productive and efficient as I can be?” But while I’m questioning myself, these kind of posts don’t question why academics might be feeling like their tools are inadequate and how such feelings might be related to changing conditions of academic labor, which are mostly structural, not individual, in nature. In this way, a site like ProfHacker contributes to the problems it purports to help solve. By turning the focus inward, away from larger systemic issues and to one’s own habits, it encourages a form of academic navel-gazing

that eclipses more collective worries. After all, who has time to remake academe when they’re busy playing around with their computers all day?

Let me be clear: I’m not saying we should go back to a pre-computerized academia (though that’s an interesting thought experiment), or that we should leave professors looking for advice about how to use computers hanging, or even that Prof-Hacker should close shop, merely that we need to step back from the incessant tips and tricks and ask ourselves the more meta question of why such tips and tricks seem to be so appealing to us. The answer to that question might lead us into a conversation less about how we can use technology better, and into a more Postman-esque one about how technology might be using us, and how we might be able to resist it.
Bibliography


