

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910815205203321
Autore	Agar Nicholas
Titolo	The sceptical optimist : why technology isn't the answer to everything / / Nicholas Agar
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New York, New York : , : Oxford University Press, , 2015 ©2015
ISBN	0-19-102662-X
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (222 p.)
Disciplina	303.483
Soggetti	Technology - Psychological aspects Technology - Social aspects Technology - Philosophy
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Includes index.
Nota di contenuto	<p>""COVER""; ""THE SCEPTICAL OPTIMIST: WHY TECHNOLOGY ISN'T THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING""; ""COPYRIGHT""; ""DEDICATION""; ""ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS""; ""CONTENTS""; ""LIST OF FIGURES""; ""INTRODUCTION""; ""An outline of the book""; ""1: RADICAL OPTIMISM AND THE TECHNOLOGY BIAS""; ""Does technological progress increase subjective well-being?""; ""Radically optimistic forecasts""; ""How should we prioritize technological progress?""; ""Concluding comments""; ""2: IS THERE A LAW OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS?""; ""Moore's Law, Kryder's Law, and exponential technological improvement"" ""Two questions about exponential technological progress"" ""Exponential technological improvement as a conditional law""; ""What went wrong with cancer?""; ""Kurzweil's evolutionary explanation of exponential technological progress""; ""The difference between reflexive and passive improvement""; ""Exponential technological improvement is infectious""; ""Concluding comments""; ""3: DOES TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS MAKE US HAPPIER?""; ""The traditional paradox of progress""; ""How we hedonically adapt to new well-being technologies""; ""Complete or incomplete hedonic adaptation?"" ""Concluding comments"" ""4: THE NEW PARADOX OF PROGRESS""; ""Gibbon versus Ridley on historical happiness""; ""The perils of attitudinal time travel""; ""Hedonic normalization""; ""How to make</p>

comparisons that best reveal the effects of technological progress";
"Complete or incomplete hedonic normalization"; "Why hedonic
normalization is probably incomplete"; "The new paradox of
technological progress"; "Concluding comments"; "5: WE NEED
TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS EXPERIMENTS"; "Technological progress
traps"; "Two ideals of technological progress"; "The fear of falling
behind"
"How is progress dangerous?" "Rehabilitating the idea of technology
experiments"; "Jared Diamond on the natural experiments of
traditional societies"; "Creating and nurturing variation in
technological progress"; "A nuclear power progress experiment";
"Why should the winners share with the losers?"; "A progress
experiment on genetically modified crops"; "The future of
technological progress"; "Concluding comments"; "6: WHY
TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS WON'T END POVERTY"; "Poverty and
well-being"; "Ordinary and emergency circumstances of poverty"
"Radically optimistic solutions to poverty" "Were there poor people in
the Pleistocene?"; "How poverty affects life satisfaction";
"Misunderstanding the happiness of the Sun King"; "Evidence from
status competitions for the relevance of social context"; "Economic
and technological trickledown"; "Concluding comments"; "7:
CHOOSING A TEMPO OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS"; "Comparing
different tempos of progress"; "Technological progress makes
diminishing marginal contributions to well-being"; "Mobile phones
and cancer therapies"
"The importance of subjectively positive technological progress"

Sommario/riassunto

The rapid developments in technologies -- especially computing and the advent of many 'smart' devices, as well as rapid and perpetual communication via the Internet -- has led to a frequently voiced view which Nicholas Agar describes as 'radical optimism'. Radical optimists claim that accelerating technical progress will soon end poverty, disease, and ignorance, and improve our happiness and well-being. Agar disputes the claim that technological progress will automatically produce great improvements in subjective well-being. He argues that radical optimism 'assigns to technological progress an
