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PROBLEM? RELAX. YOU'VE GOT THIS!

A tongue-in-cheek guide series ;)

Everything Needs an App, and I Just Want to Get Things Done

How to Navigate Everyday Digital Services,
Learn What You Need, and Ask for Help
Without a Degree in Clicking Things



We've got a problem. But relax. It can be solved
– and we'll even have something to laugh about.

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INTRO

Not that long ago, you could walk into a bank, a clinic, a government office, or a shop and simply say, "Hello, I need to get something sorted out." The person on the other side of the counter usually had some idea of what happened next, and if something was missing, they pointed you toward the right form, sent you to desk number seven, or at least showed you which door to use. These days, the answer is increasingly, "You can do that in the app." Nobody necessarily tells you which app, where the option is hidden, why the password that worked three months ago no longer works, or why the button everyone is referring to looks like three tiny dots in the top right corner.

Digital life was supposed to save us time. Sometimes it genuinely does, because we can pay a bill at eleven at night, request a prescription without leaving home, or check a document while standing in line for coffee. The trouble starts when a tool designed to make life easier requires us to learn its own language, menus, icons, notifications, and one-time codes. You want to buy a ticket, and the app first suggests an update, asks for location access, requires an account, sends an email verification, and invites you to review changes to the privacy policy. At that point, walking may start to seem surprisingly efficient.

This book is not here to turn you into a technology expert. We are not going to build a computer, write code, or discuss whether your phone has the right number of processor cores. The goal is much more practical: you should be able to get the things you need done without feeling as though you have accidentally enrolled in an exam for a subject nobody told you

existed. Digital tools are supposed to work for you, not the other way around.

Maybe apps and websites are usually fine for you, but every few months something changes and suddenly the feature you knew how to use has moved somewhere else. Maybe online banking is easy for you, but government portals make you want to develop a new identity and move to a forest. Or perhaps official digital services are no problem, but the moment someone says, "Just scan the QR code," the conversation begins to feel unnecessarily scientific. Digital confidence is not one single skill, and nobody has to be good at every part of it.

The most unpleasant extra layer is shame. There is the feeling that "everyone else already knows this," that "it is supposed to be obvious," or that a younger person completed the same task in seven seconds while replying to a message at the same time. What we rarely see are the moments when those same people cannot find a setting, reset a password twice, enter the wrong code, and eventually contact support. We usually see the finished result, not the five minutes of confusion that came before it.

There is no age at which technology suddenly becomes impossible. More often, the real issue is lack of experience with one particular system, a confusing design, or plain old tiredness. Someone who uses the same program every day at work will naturally move through it faster than a person who opens it twice a year. That does not make them more intelligent. It means they have seen the same buttons more often.

Many digital services are designed as if the user already knows how they work. The developer understands the gear icon, the designer knows the difference between an account,

a profile, and settings, and the testing team has used every screen for months. The ordinary user, meanwhile, arrived for one reason: to download an invoice or change an appointment. It is a little like a restaurant expecting customers to understand the layout of the kitchen before ordering soup.

That is why this book will keep returning to one important principle: start with the task, not the tool. We do not really care about the app itself. We care about what you need to accomplish with it. The moment you replace "How does this app work?" with "What exactly am I trying to do right now?", the situation usually becomes much more manageable.

The second principle is that you do not need to understand the whole system. If you use a banking app only to make transfers, check your balance, and approve payments, there is no rule saying you must study the other twenty-seven features. You can remain completely unaware of the spending analysis, investment section, and card replacement menu until you actually need them. Digital ability does not mean knowing everything. It means being able to find your way to the thing that matters.

The third principle may be the most freeing of all: asking for help is part of using technology. It is not evidence of failure, an admission of incompetence, or an official announcement that "the internet has defeated me." Even people who work professionally with technology ask colleagues, read instructions, search for answers, and contact technical support. The main difference is often that they do it without apologizing for asking the question.

At the same time, sensible caution matters. Asking someone for help does not mean giving them complete access to your phone, bank account, or email. You can ask a person to tell you where to tap while you perform each step

yourself. Do not hand over passwords, authorization codes, or information the helper does not need. Good help should increase your independence rather than create a situation in which you cannot do anything next time without the same person sitting next to you.

In the chapters ahead, we are not going to try to "learn technology." We are going to learn an approach that works whether the task involves a bank, a doctor, a government office, tickets, shopping, parking, prescriptions, messaging, or an app that does not exist yet but will probably be launched next Tuesday. Menus change, labels change, and companies have a remarkable talent for moving a button just when you finally remember where it was. A good method, however, remains useful even when the screen looks different.

You do not have to love digital life. You do not need to become fascinated by every new feature, and you certainly do not have to install everything somebody describes as a "must-have." It is enough to regain the feeling that when something moves into an app, you can still get it done. Without shame, without panic, and without a degree in clicking things.

We've got a problem. But relax. It can be solved - and we'll even have something to laugh about.

Chapter 1 - You Are Not Bad at Technology. You Are Trying to Do One Specific Thing in a System You Did Not Design

Imagine walking for the first time into a huge building containing a bank, a clinic, a government office, a train station, a shop, and a customer service center for everything else. There is no reception desk, and nearly every door looks the same. One has a tiny person icon, another has three lines, and another has a gear symbol. Someone tells you, "It is very intuitive." This is the digital equivalent of wanting to reply, "Wonderful. I am sure my intuition will now explain where the March invoice is."

"Intuitive" is one of the most overused words in technology. Something is intuitive mainly when you have already seen something similar. If you have used smartphones for years, you probably know that three horizontal lines often mean a menu, a magnifying glass usually means search, and a gear usually opens settings. If you have never had a reason to learn those symbols, there is no natural law of the universe saying you should automatically understand them.

This matters because people often interpret a moment of confusion as evidence of personal incompetence. You cannot find an option and think, "I am hopeless at this." You do not understand a message and decide that "technology is not for me." A much more accurate sentence would be: "I do not yet know where this particular system has put that feature."

The word "yet" makes a significant difference. It does not promise that you will become an expert within the hour. It simply means your current lack of knowledge is temporary information, not a personality trait. You were not born knowing the layout of an online banking dashboard, just as nobody is born knowing which platform to use in a city they have never visited.

Digital Confidence Is Not One Subject

We often say that someone is "good with computers" or "bad with technology" as if Technology were one enormous school subject and everyone had a single grade. In reality, you can be excellent with messaging apps, online shopping, and your television while becoming completely lost on a government website. You can pay with your phone without thinking but have no idea how to download a file from cloud storage. These skills overlap, but none of them proves that you should automatically know all the others.

Driving is a useful comparison. A skilled driver does not necessarily know how to repair a gearbox. Someone who knows the route to work perfectly can still get lost in a different city. Nobody sensible says, "Clearly you do not know how to drive at all," because the difficulty concerns one particular task, not the person's entire ability.

It is therefore useful to stop describing yourself as someone who either "can" or "cannot" do technology. Better questions are: "What can I already do on my own?", "Where do I sometimes need guidance?", and "What have I simply never done before?" This way of thinking is less dramatic, but much closer to reality.

You may already perform dozens of digital tasks every day without noticing. You unlock your phone, receive messages,

check the weather, search for an address, take a photo, pay for something, open a link, and reply to someone. Because these actions are familiar, they no longer feel like "technology." Technology tends to mean whatever you happen not to know how to do yet.

Apps Change the Rules While You Are Playing

One source of frustration is that even after you learn something, the app may change. A button that used to be at the bottom moves into a menu after an update. "My Documents" suddenly becomes "File Center." An icon you recognized is replaced because someone in a design meeting decided the new version looked more modern.

It is easy to respond by thinking, "I knew I would never remember this." But you did remember it. The system changed the location, name, or route. If someone rearranged the drawers in your kitchen every few months, you would occasionally open the spice drawer while looking for a fork too.

That is why the most valuable skill is not memorizing the exact location of every button. It is learning how to search. If you need an invoice, you look for words such as invoices, payments, documents, account, or a search icon. If you want to change personal details, you might start with profile, settings, or your name at the top of the screen.

This approach survives updates. The route may move, but the destination usually does not. If you know what you are looking for and what part of the service it probably belongs to, you are not completely dependent on remembering one exact sequence.

Before You Tap Everything, Pause for Three Seconds

When a screen does not make sense, the natural reaction is often random tapping. You open one section, go back, open another, close a window, tap an icon you do not recognize, and within a minute you no longer know how to return to where you started. This is the digital version of searching for your keys by emptying the entire wardrobe onto the floor. It can work, but it usually creates more mess first.

A short pause is much more effective. Look at the screen and read what is actually there instead of immediately pressing the first visible button. Notice headings, labels, icons, and words connected with your goal. Three seconds of looking can save three minutes of backtracking.

It also helps to remember that not everything on the screen is meant for you right now. Apps love to display promotions, new services, messages, suggestions, reminders, and features you did not ask for. The thing you need may be one small option surrounded by everything else. You are not necessarily disorganized. Sometimes the screen is simply trying to have five conversations at once.

Ask yourself one question: "Which part of this screen has anything to do with what I came here to do?" If you want to change an appointment, the advertisement for a new service does not matter. If you want to pay a bill, company news can wait. Ignoring irrelevant elements is one of the most useful digital skills you can develop.

An Error Message Is Not a Personal Evaluation

Technology has a remarkable ability to make ordinary problems sound dramatic. "Authentication error," "Invalid token," "Session expired," "Operation cannot be completed,"