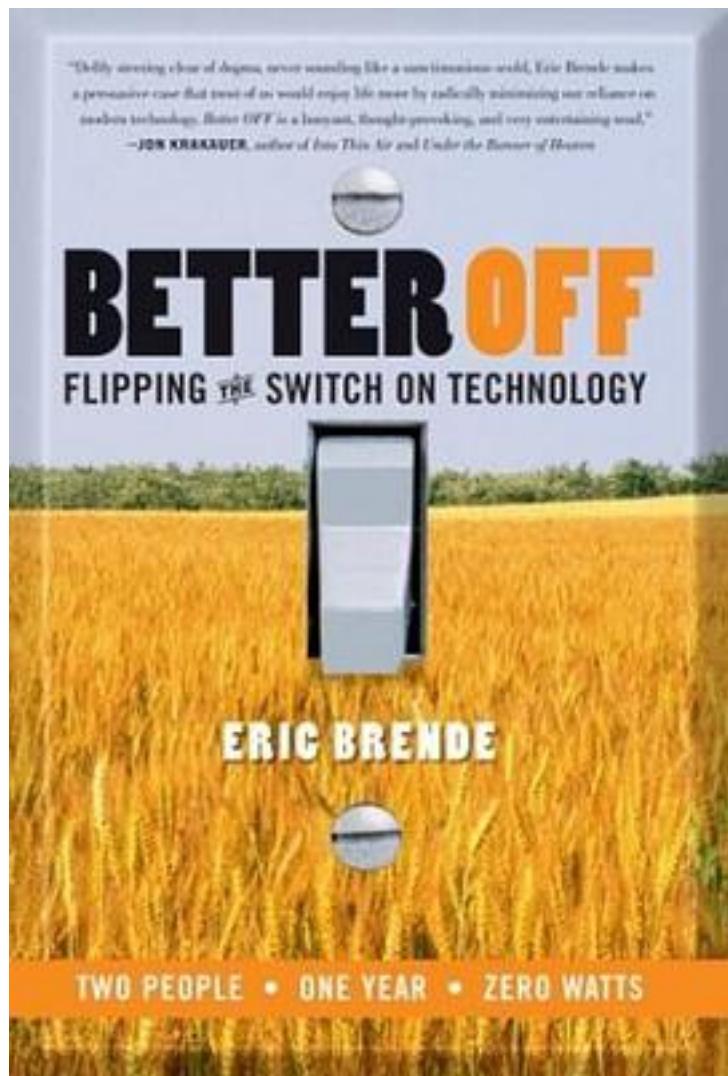


Better Off



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What happens when a graduate of MIT, the bastion of technological advancement, and his bride move to a community so primitive in its technology that even Amish groups consider it antiquated?

Eric Brende conceives a real-life experiment: to see if, in fact, all our cell phones, wide-screen TVs, and SUVs have made life easier and better -- or whether life would be preferable without them. By turns, the query narrows down to a single question: What is the least we need to achieve the most? With this in mind, the Brendes ditch their car, electric stove, refrigerator, running water, and everything else motorized or "hooked to the grid" and begin an eighteen-month trial run -- one that dramatically changes the way they live, and proves entertaining and surprising to readers.

Better OFF is a smart, often comedic, and always riveting book that also mingles scientific analysis with the human story, demonstrating how a world free of technological excess can shrink stress -- and waistlines -- and expand happiness, health, and leisure. Our notion that technophobes are backward gets turned on its head as the Brendes realize that the crucial technological decisions of their adopted Minimite community are made more soberly and deliberately than in the surrounding culture, and the result is greater -- not lesser -- mastery over the conditions of human existence.

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