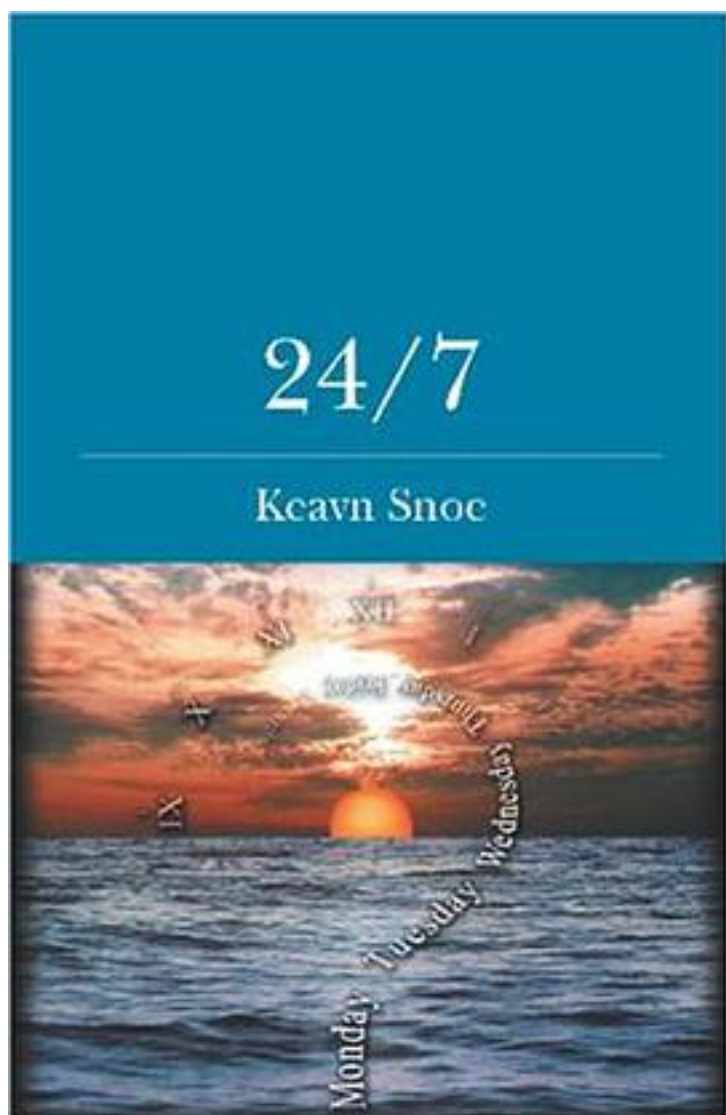


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Just as the automobile radically changed people's lives at the beginning of the 20th century, so too has the revolution in online services (including blogging, podcasting, videogaming, shopping, and social networking) and mobile phone use changed our lives at the turn of the 21st century. In addition, many other services, activities, and devices - including the Palm Pilot, the BlackBerry, the iPod, digital cameras, and phone cameras - have been made possible by the combination of these two technologies. Whereas the automobile allowed people for the first time to work in cities and live comfortably in the suburbs, extending the long commute beyond the limits previously circumscribed by public transportation, the Internet and mobile phone allow us to interact with others from around the world, giving rise to the telecommuting phenomenon and allowing us to stay in touch with friends and families in the new virtual environment. As the author demonstrates in this book, these technologies enable us to work and play 24/7, anytime, anywhere. What does this mean for us as individuals and for society as a whole? What are the social implications of this technological revolution that we have witnessed in the short span of about 20 years? Do people of different generations use these technologies in the same ways, or do they adapt them to support their communication habits formed at different times of their lives? How does the illusion of control provided by these technologies affect the way we think about what is meaningful in our lives? The author discusses these crucial issues, and assesses how social and governmental services are responding to (or running from) the problems posed by these new technologies.

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