

Returning to the void

By [David Williams](#)

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One of the unanticipated pleasures of my recent trip to the middle of the Pacific Ocean was the complete absence of the Internet.

Oh, the scenery was stunning, and the wildlife—particularly under the surface of the water—was an amazing riot of living beings. The food was delicious and very slightly overabundant.

But what I grew used to, in the seven days at sea, was the complete zeroing out of this medium. No e-mail, no texts. There was no Facebook, no Twitter, no bloggery. The 24-hour news cycle was obliterated.

Day after day the routine of engagement with broader media was throttled back to nothingness. It was also the longest period of time I've completely disengaged from social media in years. Honestly, I didn't miss it.

What did strike me, upon my return, was the degree to which my soul balked at re-engagement with my typical pattern of media engagement. I did what I usually do. Facebook in the morning, and intermittently through the day. Twitter twice, and then time on Buffer to populate my content.

As I populated my content, though, I found myself doing so more reflectively. Here I'd gotten through nearly two weeks of non-content-populating life, and the world trundled on unchanged by my failure to populate it with my carefully crafted content.

As I stared at Facebook, it felt, all of a sudden, slightly intrusive. "Why do I feel compelled to bother with this every day," I thought. It felt like an irritant, an alien object, an itch in my eye.

It felt like a television left on in the morning background, on which plastic people in overbright outfits sit around and feign enthusiasm for some trivial thing they care nothing at all about. They chatter on, endlessly, mercilessly, dead to your presence, like some horridly creative PsyOps exercise at Guantanamo Bay. I do so love

morning television.

Well, not quite like that. Social media felt different. Hungrier.

Social media felt like being in the room with a void, an emptiness that pulls and tugs at you. It felt like a darkly shadowed door in that old abandoned house, inside which something—just out of sight—sparkles as it catches the light.

"Populate me," it glowers, wordlessly. "I have things you can hate. I have reasons to be outraged. I have pictures of kittens. I have quizzes. Or . . . other things you might like."

So, of course, here I am again.

*Originally posted at [Beloved Spear](#)*