

# Bit Literacy Summary

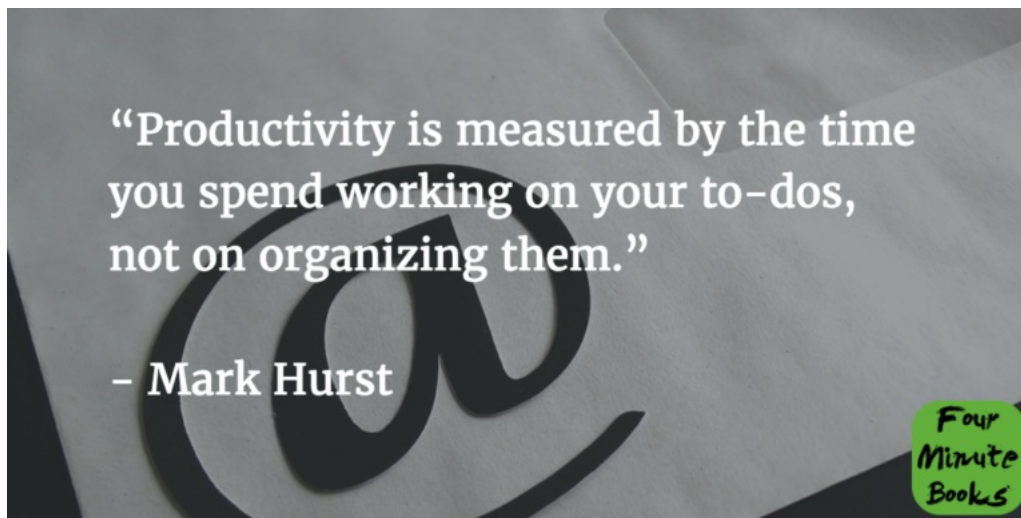
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 [fourminutebooks.com/bit-literacy-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/bit-literacy-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Bit Literacy shows you how to navigate the innumerable streams of digital information that flow towards us every single day and not become paralyzed or a slave to technology, thanks to a few simple systems to manage your media.*

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Less than 20 years ago, you could count your sources of information on one hand. There was the newspaper, the television, the radio, and, depending on how deep you wanted to go: books.

In 2016, I wouldn't even dare you to try and list them all. With over one billion websites online, hundreds of social networks and more and more people choosing themselves and starting podcasts, blogs, self-publishing books, and so on, there seems to be no limit to the number of what Mark Hurst calls "bitstreams" – digital wells of information.

Bits are a great way to store information: they can hold infinite amounts, transcend the physical, geographical and even time itself (a blog post never wears down, like an article on paper does). However, we're starting to crumble under their ubiquitous availability, and that's what *Bit Literacy* tries to help with.

Here are 3 lessons to help you become "bit literate" and not drown in information:

1. All emails must go. Put them in their place based on their content.
2. Ask "Why?" for every single piece of media you consume.
3. Frontload important information to help the recipients of your messages become bit literate as well.

Ready to end the information madness? Let's get bit literate!

## Lesson 1: Your inbox is an intermediary, not a destination. Process all your emails based on content.

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If you're reading this on your phone, take a second to switch to your home screen and look at your email app icon. Is there a red icon with a number of unread messages on it? How many are there? 3? 15? 134?

When emails pile up, there comes a point where it gets demoralizing to even look at the mountain in front of you, and believe it or not, every single one of them takes up space in your brain, because it keeps records on every single "not done with this yet" item in your life.

If this has happened to you, it's likely because **you've treated your inbox like a destination, when it's really just a processing plant**. Obviously, every single email sent to you is meant to make you take action, whether that's reading something, buying something or doing something. So the only way email can truly work for you is if you direct the incoming streams of different content and distribute them accordingly.

Empty your inbox at least once a day and put all emails where they belong. For example, read personal emails closely, move tasks to your to-do list, mark dates in your calendar, save addresses in your contacts, schedule meetings accordingly and read, skim or delete all "FYI" emails (except the 4MB newsletter, of course! :D).

**Note:** If you can afford it, you might even want to batch this to weekly email processing, like I do with 4MB reader emails.

For all to-dos that take just two minutes or less, take care of them right away, and put the rest on your list. All emails must go, and every email can go *somewhere*, so don't give up until you've got a hold of it!

## Lesson 2: Know "why" for every single piece of media you choose to consume.

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No matter what change you're trying to make in your life, it always pays to start with why. With learning and consuming information, it's the same thing. **Each piece of information is only as good as what you use it for.**

One of the most important lessons in Time 2 Read is the media diet, where you cut back your consumption. Ideally, you only want to have a handful of sources, which you read regularly, because they give you everything you need. For example, I read almost zero content online – otherwise I'd never have the time to write so much myself.

My only sources of information are:

- books,
- book summaries on Blinkist,

- 1-2 Youtube videos a day,
- and a few blogs I read very sporadically.

That's it! No news, no TV, no podcasts, no newsletters, no radio, none of that. That's because when I looked at why I consumed those things, I found none of them really gave me value. I didn't do anything with the information, so I quit.

You can assemble your own media source list by simply asking yourself: **"Is this worth my time?"** for every single piece of content. Combine that with knowing what you'll do with it, and you'll have a good grasp of which sources you really need.

### Lesson 3: Help others deal with information overload by frontloading important information in your communication.

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Winning your own battle with information is just one side of the coin, though. If you really want to help solve this problem, you'll have to help others deal with their information overwhelm too. You can do this by **frontloading**.

Frontloading simply means you communicate in an efficient way with others, by getting straight to the point, backing up the information and then ending.

For example, don't title an email "all you need to know about the Chicago fair," when you can label it "Chicago fair: agenda, schedule, instructions" instead and save the recipient's brain precious time and energy.

With frontloading, you'll **always try to order the information from most to least important and create as much context as possible for the recipient**. That means answering the specific questions of who, when, what, where, why and for whom the information is.

Let's make the world a less stressful place by helping each other deal with bitstreams as much as we can, shall we?

### Bit Literacy Review

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The model Mark Hurst has built in *Bit Literacy* is great for understanding the complex world of information of today in simple terms. It's also expandable for whatever additional bitstreams may come in the future, and will help you deal with them a lot better. Good read!

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

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### What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- What bits are exactly and how they work
- Why letting bits go is an important skill
- Which to-do list tool allows you to deal with only today's work and not stress about the future
- How to deal with files and photos with a two-level storing system
- What you can do to deal with bits at the speed of your own thinking

## **Who would I recommend the Bit Literacy summary to?**

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The 27 year old, who feels like his phone handles him, instead of the other way around, the 49 year old, who's given up on smartphones altogether, and anyone who has more than 50 emails sitting in their inbox.