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Close the Book on the OpenBookcase

by Tech Jerk | @nicole | 1 hr ago



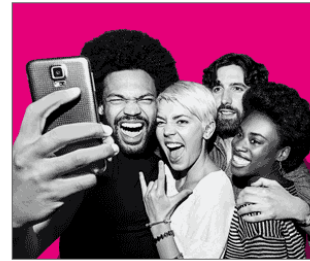
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OpenBookcase, the latest product of Gaplatz Industries, is a connected bookcase that tracks the reading habits of its owner. Utilizing RFID technology, the shelves track whatever tagged object is placed on its shelves. The device uses this data to provide notifications and reminders, foster reading habits with recommendations, and connect the owner to a community of readers with similar tastes. For example, if the bookcase senses that a particular book has never been moved, it provides the user with a timely reminder, letting them know that they might want to read it. If a book is removed from the shelves quite often, the system provides the reader with little known information about the book, and makes recommendations of similar books.

The editors here at Engadget were a bit of loss on this one. It seems to us that this enormous piece of connected furniture epitomizes all this wrong and unproductive with the fabled internet of things. At over \$1500 dollars, this behemoth better provide the solution to some dire problem toot sweet. But rather than do so, the OpenBookcase drowns the user with a multitude of non-essential functions. The OpenBookcase solves that age old dilemma of absolutely needing to know what is in your reading collection while away from the house. And just in case you required even more annoying digital reminders in your life, hogging up all your cognitive resources, your furniture will now nag you about that copy of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* which you've never wanted to crack open. One can't help but wonder why spend this sort of money on capabilities that, for the most part, can just as easily be acquired by manually searching the internet?

To be fair to the creators, Gaplatz Industries envisions their connected bookcase one of many RFID-tracking household furnishings. In a world where everything is connected, the bookcase that tracks its contents does seem like a rational step in that direction. And the use of RFID tags ensure flexibility and thrift when it comes to storing additional items on the shelf. Just about anything could be stored in this way, and the bookcase's computer will look up any information encoded on the tags such as ISBN, ISSN for your books, or UPC codes for your music and video. As the RFID tags slowly displace barcodes to completion, perhaps we'll acquire a new appreciation for this monstrosity.



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