



The World's Most Depraved Gadget Designers

Adapted from Inverse.com 2016 By Jordan Zakarin

Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap in the same line. There is an example at the beginning (0).

The near-future technology depicted in Black Mirror can control minds and commit mass murder, but none of the show's (0) *speculative* devices looks all that complicated. The forms are consistently simple, which adds to the horror of the applications. These are the most easily abused weapons imaginable.

When imagining new technologies for Season 3, the show's producers and (1) _____ had to meet very different demands. First and foremost, they had to create gadgets that wouldn't distract from the story. They did this by thinking about consumer tech companies as well as engineering and asking this question: *How would future hardware companies design trojan horse products for the mass market?*

"We try to keep things understated in the technology," show creator and mastermind Charlie Brooker explains. "It has to feel like it works, and it has to feel like it would be a (2) _____ to use. We try to make it have that inherent seductive quality, so it looks like it's pleasant for the people using it."

The six new episodes currently on Netflix continue the Black Mirror tradition of presenting hardware and interfaces with an aesthetic (3) _____ that contradict their terrifying capabilities. The episode *Nosedive*, which Brooker describes as taking place 5 to 10 years from now, imagines a new social media network and set of physical controls used to (4) _____ it. It is similar to *Tinder* (a popular dating app), but for rating literally everything about a person and converting that to merit points that are almost as valuable as money. Joel Collins, the series' production designer, says that idea led to a crucial design question: "How much information do you have on there?"

Collins points out that it had to be a lot more than current social networks, but that there's also a (5) _____ to how much a human can scroll through. It became a balancing act. Collins said he imagined at one point a user being able to scroll three different directions at once, though the network's medium — a thin blue or pink phone — was significantly scaled down.

Then they had to figure out how people would interact with that comforting design. "We had a lot of (6) _____ about the gestures they do, the logic of them," Brooker said. "Sometimes it was a ring you'd wear on your finger, which is visually interesting but you'd say 'I wouldn't use that,' because you'd be worried about it dropping or it snapping."

So a wearable device was out of the question, as was any sensor that required big, bold movements. That's part of the reason they ultimately (7) _____ on something more natural, in this case a smart phone, which made it both easier for the viewer at home to buy into the story, and also for the characters in the story to accept.

"We decided on swipe and casting because there's always a logic to it," Brooker said, describing the subtle (8) _____ that everyone in the episode performs on their phones as they absentmindedly rate their peers. "And at the end, when she doesn't have her phone, she is operating on muscle memory when she tries to swipe and cast."

It may all seem rather far-fetched, but Black Mirror has a solid — and terrifying — track record of predicting the future. "When we started, sometimes Charlie would say, 'What would this tech be like five years from now?'" Collins recalls. Now, 5 years later, a lot of what (9) _____ in the first and second series is starting to feel uncomfortably familiar. And as for the world of politics ... but that's a different story.



(0) SPECULATION

(1) DESIGN

(2) PLEASE

(3) SIMPLE

(4) NAVIGATION

(5) LIMITATION

(6) CONVERSE

(7) DECISION

(8) MOVE

(9) APPEARANCE