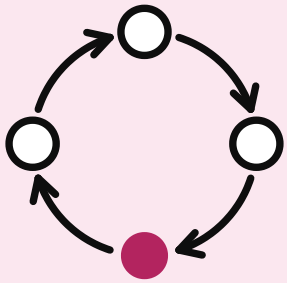
Model

Hook model

A cycle for turning the use of a product into a habit: a trigger leads to a simple action, a reward that varies arrives, and the person leaves something of theirs that will bring them back.



In Spanish
Modelo Hooked

Origin
Eyal and Hoover (2014)

What problem it addresses

It explains how some apps go from needing notifications to being used out of habit, and gives design a guide for building habits, with the risk of building dependence.

Components

Trigger
What leads you to act: first something external, like a notification; over time, something internal, like boredom or a question.

Action
The simplest gesture made in anticipation of a reward, like opening the app or swiping.

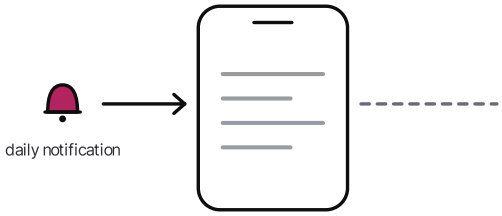
Variable reward
A reward that changes every time, and so makes you want to look again.

Investment
Something the person puts in (data, content, contacts) that makes the product better next time.

An example

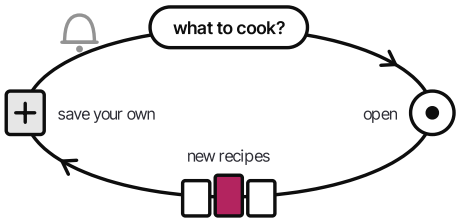
A recipe-saving app wants people to use it every week.

Notifications only



Every day a notification arrives with a recipe. **If the notifications stop, people stop opening it.**

With the full cycle



You open it, discover new recipes from other people and save your own. **When you wonder "what should I cook?", you open it on your own.**

The model aims to move the trigger from outside (a notification) to inside (a question or a feeling). That is why it works just as well to help sustain a habit as to hook people.

How it works

1

A trigger leads to an easy action; if it is hard, the cycle doesn't start;

2

the reward changes every time, and curiosity about the next one makes you want to come back;

3

what the person invests loads the next cycle and makes leaving the product harder.

Applications in design

Use it like this

To understand how a product becomes a habit and to help sustain habits the person does want, like exercising, saving or studying.

Avoid

Random rewards and endless notifications to capture attention in products the person would use less if they thought about it calmly.

Don't fall for it

Would you use your product yourself, and does it improve the life of the person using it? If not, you are building dependence, not value.

18 to 254 days



What the research says

How long it took simple behaviors, repeated daily in the same situation, to become almost automatic, in a study that followed 96 volunteers (Lally et al., 2010).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** It supports one piece of the model, that repetition in the same context builds habit, not the whole model. The study lasted 12 weeks: the longest times are estimates.

Connections

Related to

- Gamification
- Fogg Behavior Model
- Deceptive patterns (dark patterns)

Authors and works

2014	**Nir Eyal and Ryan Hoover**	Presented the cycle in the book Hooked, written for people who build digital products.
2009	**B. J. Fogg**	The action step draws on his model: motivation, ability and a prompt are needed at the same time.
2010	**Phillippa Lally, Cornelia van Jaarsveld, Henry Potts and Jane Wardle**	Tracked day by day how new habits formed outside the lab.

Sources

Original sources

- Eyal, N., & Hoover, R. (2014). Hooked: How to build habit-forming products. Portfolio/Penguin.
- Fogg, B. J. (2009). A behavior model for persuasive design. In Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Persuasive Technology. ACM. View source (https://doi.org/10.1145/1541948.1541999)
- Lally, P., van Jaarsveld, C. H. M., Potts, H. W. W., & Wardle, J. (2010). How are habits formed: Modelling habit formation in the real world. European Journal of Social Psychology, 40(6), 998–1009. View source (https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.674)

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