

Selected References and Independent Mentions

Reality Drift, Semantic Fidelity, and Related Work

A. Jacobs - Updated July 2026.

This document records a small selection of independent references to Reality Drift, Semantic Fidelity, *The Age of Drift*, and related writing by A. Jacobs.

The entries include editorial selections, conceptual applications, reader interpretations, reviews, social references, and automated summaries. They are preserved as a record of how the work has circulated beyond its original publications.

This is not intended as a comprehensive press archive. Inclusion does not imply that every source endorses the larger body of work or that every interpretation accurately represents the original material.

Editorial Selections

TLDR Product

“Nothing Is Broken. So Why Does Everything Feel Wrong?”

Type: Editorial selection

Date: May 1, 2026

Publication: TLDR Product

TLDR Product selected “Nothing Is Broken. So Why Does Everything Feel Wrong?” for the miscellaneous section of its May 1, 2026 newsletter.

The newsletter summarized the article as an examination of how systems can continue improving internally while drifting away from real-world conditions. It described the resulting misalignment as something that can make a system feel wrong even when no individual component appears broken.

TLDR Product is a product-management newsletter with more than 410,000 readers.

Source:

<https://tldr.tech/product/2026-05-01>

Ran Prieur

References to Reality Drift and Everyday Complexity

Type: Editorial reference and commentary

Date: June 22, 2026

Publication: Ran Prieur's blog

Writer Ran Prieur linked to two Reality Drift articles:

- “Nothing Is Broken. So Why Does Everything Feel Wrong?”
- “Reality Drift in Everyday Life”

He described the articles as examining how formerly simple tasks have become burdened by unnecessary technological complexity.

Prieur connected the pattern to Joseph Tainter's account of societies accumulating layers of complexity that become increasingly difficult to remove. He also added a personal example involving changes to the software used to maintain his website, where a previously direct process had acquired new editors, login requirements, and opportunities for failure.

The reference extended the articles' observations into a broader discussion of technological complexity, diminishing returns, and the difficulty of simplifying systems once complexity has accumulated.

Source:

<https://www.ranprieur.com/>

Conceptual Applications

Henri Bergius

“Development Dependencies Considered Harmful”

Type: Independent conceptual application

Date: June 21, 2026

Author: Henri Bergius

Software developer Henri Bergius used the concept of reality drift to describe the maintenance burden created by constantly changing development dependencies.

The essay examines how deprecated tools, security warnings, breaking releases, test frameworks, build systems, and other dependencies can consume time that maintainers intended to spend improving the software itself.

Bergius describes this continuous churn as an example of reality drift because the development environment requires increasing attention and maintenance without necessarily improving the underlying work.

The reference applies the concept directly to software infrastructure and open-source maintenance rather than merely summarizing or sharing the original writing.

Source:

<https://bergie.iki.fi/blog/dependency-hell/>

Stephen Moreton

Organizational Drift and the Human Field

Type: Interpretive extension

Date: July 13, 2026

Platform: Substack

Stephen Moreton responded to an article about organizational drift by extending its mechanics through a model of what he calls the human field beneath an organization.

Moreton proposed four related elements:

- **Edge:** Meeting reality without distortion
- **Signal:** Making what matters perceptible to others
- **Integrity:** Maintaining coherence through change
- **Stance:** The underlying condition that supports the other three

His response treats organizational drift not only as a procedural or structural problem, but as a weakening of the human conditions that allow an organization to remain in contact with reality.

Source:

<https://substack.com/@stephenmoreton/note/c-293513741>

Commentary and Reader Interpretation

David Chapman

Commentary on “Reality Drift: Why Modern Life Feels Off”

Type: Independent commentary and recommendation

Date: December 27, 2025

Platform: Substack

Publication: Meaningness

David Chapman highlighted “Reality Drift: Why Modern Life Feels Off” in a Substack note.

Chapman focused on the article’s descriptions of ordinary life-maintenance tasks that have become unnecessarily complicated, exhausting, and difficult to complete.

He connected those examples to two broader institutional patterns. First, organizations use computers to optimize the customer experience primarily for institutional benefit rather than for the benefit of the customer. Second, organizations increasingly transfer administrative work onto users that would previously have been performed internally or left undone.

Source:

<https://substack.com/profile/2269869-david-chapman/note/c-192133960>

Benjamin Stingl

Reference to “Measuring Fidelity Decay”

Type: Social reference

Platform: LinkedIn

Date: 2026

Benjamin Stingl shared “Measuring Fidelity Decay: A Framework for Semantic Drift and Collapse” on LinkedIn.

His post highlighted the paper’s argument that the deeper cultural and technical risk of AI systems is not limited to individual errors. The larger risk is a gradual collapse in which words lose specificity, metaphors flatten, context dissolves, and discourse becomes increasingly filled with semantically coherent but weakly grounded language.

Source:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/benjamin-stingl-b55b88174_measuring-fidelity-decay-a-framework-for-activity-7421179370175655936-Zyt6/

Reviews

Growth Mindset Books

Review of *The Age of Drift*

Type: Independent reader review

Date: 2026

Platform: Reddit

Community: r/GrowthMindsetBooks

A reader published a detailed review of *The Age of Drift: Why Modern Life Feels Fake — and What Reality Drift Reveals About the Modern Mind*.

The reviewer wrote that they discovered the book through the r/FrameworksInAction community and initially expected a conventional framework for managing distraction or burnout.

Instead, the reviewer interpreted the book as an explanation of how technology, social media, artificial intelligence, curated environments, and optimization can reshape perception and produce a growing sense of disconnection from ordinary reality.

The review emphasized the accessibility of the writing and its treatment of digital and physical life as increasingly entangled. It also noted the book's examination of optimized environments that become sterile, artificial, or difficult for the mind to process.

Source:

https://www.reddit.com/r/GrowthMindsetBooks/comments/1skfo5k/the_age_of_drift_by_a_jacobs_book_review/

Automated and Secondary Interpretation

UBOS

“Measuring Fidelity Decay: A New Framework for Semantic Drift and Collapse”

Type: Automated secondary summary

Date: February 1, 2026

Publication: UBOS

UBOS published an article based on “Measuring Fidelity Decay: A Framework for Semantic Drift and Collapse.”

The article describes the paper as a framework for identifying the gradual loss of semantic alignment in artificial-intelligence systems. It distinguishes semantic drift from fidelity decay and presents the concept as an early-warning mechanism for detecting degradation before conventional performance measures reveal a problem.

The article also introduces experiments, numerical thresholds, named research scenarios, institutional claims, and an expert quotation that do not appear to have originated in the source paper. These include descriptions of model experiments, cosine-similarity thresholds, accuracy declines, automated remediation systems, and a quotation attributed to a named scientist.

For that reason, the article is included as evidence of automated discovery and reinterpretation rather than as an authoritative account of the original paper.

Source:

<https://ubos.tech/news/measuring-fidelity-decay-a-new-framework-for-semantic-drift-and-collapse/>

Informal Discussion and Circulation

Early Retirement Extreme Forum

Reader Discussion of Reality Drift

Type: Forum reference

Platform: Early Retirement Extreme Forum

Reality Drift was referenced in a discussion on the Early Retirement Extreme forum.

The entry is retained as evidence of the concept circulating within an independent reader community concerned with work, consumption, self-reliance, institutional complexity, and alternatives to conventional economic life.

Source:

<https://forum.earlyretirementextreme.com/viewtopic.php?p=317983&hilit=reality+drift#p317983>

Hacker News Discussions

1. “Why Do So Many Everyday Systems Feel Harder to Use Now?”

Type: Public discussion and critique

Date: June 2026

Platform: Hacker News

“Why Do So Many Everyday Systems Feel Harder to Use Now?” generated an extended discussion on Hacker News, receiving 16 points and 24 comments.

The thread included responses to the article’s examples of app-only parking, QR-code menus, healthcare administration, printer setup, device migration, data collection, and growing digital complexity. Participants offered additional examples, proposed underlying causes, and debated whether these changes represent genuine structural decline or the accumulation of familiar technological frustrations.

Writer and researcher Gwern also criticized the article’s style, use of AI-generated imagery, evidentiary support, and presentation. The broader thread included both agreement with the article’s central observations and disagreement about how those observations were framed and explained.

The discussion is included as a record of independent attention, criticism, and public engagement with the work.

Source:

<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=48599776>

2. “Measuring Fidelity Decay: A Framework for Semantic Drift and Collapse”

Type: Technical discussion and independent comparison

Date: February 2026

Platform: Hacker News

“Measuring Fidelity Decay: A Framework for Semantic Drift and Collapse” was submitted to Hacker News under the title “LLMs Don’t Hallucinate — They Drift,” generating a discussion about fidelity decay, semantic drift, grounding, measurement, and the limits of accuracy-based evaluation.

Several participants debated whether fidelity decay represents a distinct model-failure category or a broader form of hallucination. Others questioned the paper’s terminology, empirical grounding, and proposed measurement methods.

One commenter described the paper’s emphasis on measuring semantic degradation as a promising direction. Another said the framework closely articulated an agent-stability problem they had spent the previous year addressing through an open-source system called SAFi. They compared the paper’s concepts of fidelity measurement, drift, and ground erosion with mechanisms in their own control-loop architecture.

Source:

<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=46753566>