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The Social Media Reader



Synopsis

With the rise of web 2.0 and social media platforms taking over vast tracts of territory on the internet, the media landscape has shifted drastically in the past 20 years, transforming previously stable relationships between media creators and consumers. The Social Media Reader is the first collection to address the collective transformation with pieces on social media, peer production, copyright politics, and other aspects of contemporary internet culture from all the major thinkers in the field. Culling a broad range and incorporating different styles of scholarship from foundational pieces and published articles to unpublished pieces, journalistic accounts, personal narratives from blogs, and whitepapers, The Social Media Reader promises to be an essential text, with contributions from Lawrence Lessig, Henry Jenkins, Clay Shirky, Tim O'Reilly, Chris Anderson, Yochai Benkler, danah boyd, and Fred von Loehmann, to name a few. It covers a wide-ranging topical terrain, much like the internet itself, with particular emphasis on collaboration and sharing, the politics of social media and social networking, Free Culture and copyright politics, and labor and ownership. Theorizing new models of collaboration, identity, commerce, copyright, ownership, and labor, these essays outline possibilities for cultural democracy that arise when the formerly passive audience becomes active cultural creators, while warning of the dystopian potential of new forms of surveillance and control.

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Customer Reviews

"The book already casts a broad net and brings in many treasures exploring issues around social media in so many fields. It makes for an excellent, vital read and makes a necessary to push into

more thoughtful explorations on the topic."-Hyperallergic.com
Collective intelligence, shareable goods, collaborative learning, demand media: all are explained by this wonderful book, and all are embodied by it. Many of the biggest names in digital and new media studies are here in a tome ready for the classroom that collects both canonical and original work. An outstanding addition to any media scholar or enthusiast's personal library.
-Jonathan Gray, author of Show Sold Separately
The Social Media Reader [is] groundbreaking in both form and content: evidence of the transformative power and potential of social media."-Studies in American Culture

Michael Mandiberg is an artist and Associate Professor of Media Culture at the College of Staten Island/CUNY. He is the co-author of Digital Foundations: an Intro to Media Design and Collaborative Futures.

This was required for a class. I did not find the material in the book at all challenging. It seems to be aimed at a person who understands absolutely nothing about the internet. The essays used are of varying quality: some interesting, some bland. Also, there was a lot of "filler" language used throughout - the same information could have been said in half the space. Overall, the subject presented is interesting, but this book lacks depth and detail.

I teach social media for masters students in media studies, and use it as a required text because it pulls together so many of the fundamental themes related to social media, and contains original and clear works by the acknowledged experts in the field, ranging from dana boyd to Jay Rosen, Clay Shirky, Yochai Benkler, Lawrence Lessig and others. However, because these works are generally some years older and/or able to be reprinted as they are open source, the book does not bring the reader right up to date on the latest thinking and developments either by these experts or others. But that's true for virtually any book on this topic, and if you use this to teach or inform yourself, be sure to supplement it with work in journals, newspapers, recent conferences etc. Overall, though, it was a great idea to pull this together, and is a much needed contribution to the field of social media.

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