



Off the Network: Disrupting the Digital World (Electronic Mediations)

Ulises Ali Mejias

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The digital world profoundly shapes how we work and consume and also how we play, socialize, create identities, and engage in politics and civic life. Indeed, we are so enmeshed in digital networks—from social media to cell phones—that it is hard to conceive of them from the outside or to imagine an alternative, let alone defy their seemingly inescapable power and logic. Yes, it is (sort of) possible to quit Facebook. But is it possible to disconnect from the digital network—and why might we want to?

Off the Network is a fresh and authoritative examination of how the hidden logic of the Internet, social media, and the digital network is changing users' understanding of the world—and why that should worry us. Ulises Ali Mejias also suggests how we might begin to rethink the logic of the network and question its ascendancy. Touted as consensual, inclusive, and pleasurable, the digital network is also, Mejias says, monopolizing and threatening in its capacity to determine, commodify, and commercialize so many aspects of our lives. He shows how the network broadens participation yet also exacerbates disparity—and how it excludes more of society than it includes.

Uniquely, Mejias makes the case that it is not only necessary to challenge the privatized and commercialized modes of social and civic life offered by corporate-controlled spaces such as Facebook and Twitter, but that such confrontations can be mounted from both within and outside the network. The result is an uncompromising, sophisticated, and accessible critique of the digital world that increasingly dominates our lives.



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