

increased sophistication of photography, and the ability for multiple exposures in rapid succession, led to a firm 'scientific' link between the human mind and one's external behaviours. By the 1920s, moving cinematic images were produced to provide 'proof' of multiple personality disorders in psychiatric patients. For Beloff, the intrigue lies in how the films 'show little but *tell* everything' (p. 251, her italics), exposing not just the patients' (supposed) conditions, but also the doctors' unfailing belief in the medium.

The works in this important book have been chosen for their ability to further existing discourses on the ways in which we view photographic and filmed images. I found it one of the most engaging and thought-provoking collections I have read for some time.

— Peter C. Pugsley, *Media*,  
University of Adelaide

**Boler, Megan (ed.), *Digital Media and Democracy: Tactics in Hard Times*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2008, ISBN 9 7800 6202 6420 (hb) viii+464 pp., \$A65.00.**

The first point to make about this magnificent collection of 19 very diverse and engaging chapters is that it emerges from a time not so distant when the Bush administration and the neo-cons were very much in the ascendant, the Iraq war was looming and then engaged, and the Western mass media were largely engaged in, and by, the heady triumphalism of those dark times. The book was compiled after the 2004 presidential elections returned Bush and Co. and before Obama and, here in Australia, Rudd seriously appeared as challengers to their respective renewed political hegemonies. How times have apparently changed.

With the clarity of hindsight, and as this collection demonstrates, dark times often provoke especially ingenious, resilient and innovative responses. It would be very mistaken to approach this collection as being wholly reactive to its originating times and principle — largely Northern Hemisphere, developed world,

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technologically connected locations and contexts. Rather, this is a dense, rich and wide-ranging contribution to the political and scholarly analysis of 'new media, democracy, freedom of expression, social movements' and the like.

Dr Boler sets out the broad areas to be covered in her introduction, explaining that the contents are divided into 'The Shape of Publics', 'The Changing Face of New Media' and 'Tactics in Action'.

The second main section focuses largely on the journalistic media — a clumsy term I deploy to differentiate the news, factual, allegedly reportorial content of the mass media from the rest of it — clearly in crisis as older business models disintegrate along with its credibility, and the mainstream struggles to catch up with, emulate or appropriate at least some of the innovations media activists are deploying. The emerging synergies, welcome and not, between 'citizen journalism', tactical media or 'alternative media', and the often bewildered, sometimes resentful mainstream are well explored from several perspectives.

The third section seeks to address the question, 'Well, this is all very interesting, but what are some people *actually doing* with all this so-called "new media"?'

Two chapters appealed to this reviewer's darker side — correctives, as it were to the generally optimistic, upbeat tone of much of the content. Fans of satire, and observers of the fact that autarchies or triumphalists detest being laughed at, would enjoy Graham Meikle's contribution, 'Whacking Bush: Tactical Media as Play', though it is probably impossible to seriously gauge how effective such eruptions may have been. For Meikle, the long tradition of using satire as a mode of resistance extends into new media activism in lively, entertaining but probably peripheral ways. Ronald J. Deibert's 'Black Code Redux: Censorship, Surveillance, and the Militarization of Cyberspace' cautions and warns about the post-9/11 escalation of electronic surveillance, commodification and enclosing of cyberspace by corporations often in direct, or at least tacit, alliances

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with state and out-sourced social control agencies.

By no means is new media activism the preserve of nice people either, as Sophie Statzel warns in her contribution to the third section of *Digital Media and Democracy*, 'Cybersupremacy: The New Face and Form of White Supremacist Activism'. It is amply argued and demonstrated elsewhere in the book that new media amplifies and extends the reach of progressive activists of many varieties, in many locations, but the same needs to be said of some very unpleasant and downright evil activists. The uses of new media by genuine terrorists for propaganda and disruption would extend Statzel's discussion of Stormfront's uses of new media.

Mention of how racist and cyber-Fascist activists can also use new media to promote their loathsome causes leads this reviewer back to our starting point. The valuable essays in this collection emerge from what were, comparatively, 'dark times' in Western politics and media — times which, only a few years later, with a new president and administration in Washington, giving noticeable heart to more civilised or enlightened policies and behaviours, seem to have passed on, even as the wreckages and residues of those 'dark times' still all but defy resolutions or solutions.

*Digital Media and Democracy* is an essential resource for scholars and students of the interfaces, synergies and interstices between democracy, politics, media and activism.

— Mark Hayes,  
*Journalism and Communication,*  
*University of Queensland*

**Burgess, Jean and Green, Joshua, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2009, ISBN 9 7807 4564 4783 (pb), 172 pp., A\$37.95.**

Along with Facebook, Google and Wikipedia, YouTube is one of the new household names of the Noughties — at least to the average internet user. This book examines why YouTube has become near-ubiquitous, and what its role may be in the

future. Burgess and Green state that their aim is to 'work through some of the often competing ideas about just what YouTube is, and what it might or might not turn out to be for'. To achieve this, they combine qualitative and quantitative methods to build a compelling argument that YouTube is whatever its users want it to be.

The book begins by drawing on a survey of YouTube's most popular content. The survey sampled 4,320 videos from lists of the most popular content on YouTube in late 2007. Perhaps the survey's most significant finding is the role of users in defining YouTube. More than half of the material sampled by the survey was user generated, mostly vlogs. The balance of the sample appeared to come from traditional media sources. These were frequently uploaded by users from television broadcasts or DVDs. Traditional media companies, large rights holders, SMEs and independent producers accounted for only a minority of uploaded content.

The survey identifies a striking dichotomy between the roles of users and traditional media players on YouTube. Despite users contributing the majority of uploaded content — both by producing it and copying it from other sources — content from broadcast and mass media sources comprises the majority of the videos listed in YouTube's most popular categories. Within YouTube, content creation is probably less significant than the role of users as content selectors — by uploading, viewing and 'favouriting'.

The remaining chapters of the book are concerned with YouTube's social networking features and its user community, the tension between YouTube as a commercial enterprise and the participatory culture it has fostered, and the future of YouTube. Each chapter draws on research on the media and, more specifically, the internet to position its exploration of YouTube within established academic literature. As a result, the book is rich both in theory and examples — some of them Australian.

The book concludes with two essays commissioned from Henry Jenkins and John Hartley. In some respects, the essays are incidental to the body of the book;