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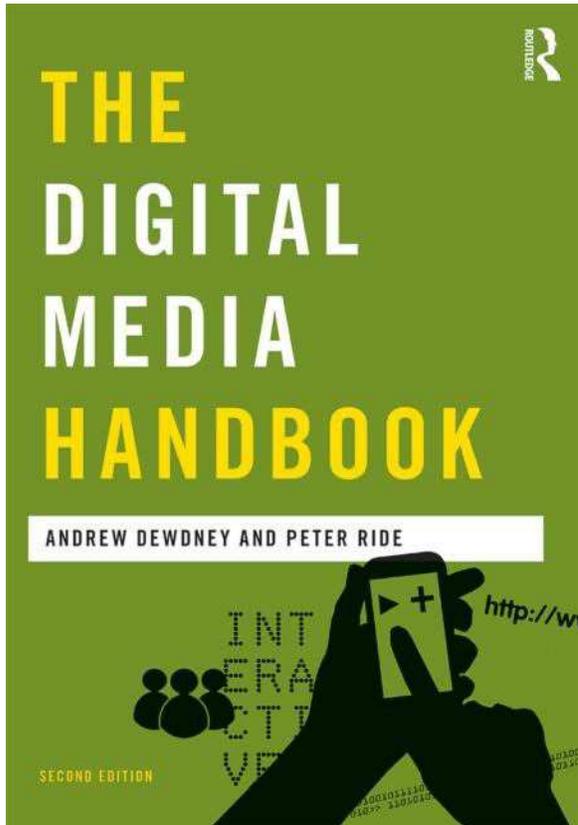
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Book Review

The Digital Media Handbook (2nd Edition)

By Andrew Dewdney and Peter Ride
Abingdon: Routledge, 2014



Reviewed by Rohit K Dasgupta. University of Southampton

The second edition of Dewdney and Ride's Handbook is a very welcome read. Digital Media covers a broad range of topics relating to the convergence of everyday life practices within a networked environment. As the authors have rightly noted over the time as this discipline has evolved so has perceptions about new media systems- the internet as a dawn of creative freedom now replaced by seeing it as a system of exploitation of control (p.2).

This book is a useful guide that charts the complicated nature of the subject taking the reader across several points of interests and relationships between media and the wider public sphere. Ride and Dewdney start with an impressive introduction where they identify the various ways in which professionals and scholars have been debating digital media and chart these debates.

The book is made up of five parts- Networks, convergent media, Creative industries, Digital Media and finally rounding it up with a section on Media histories and theories. The first two sections open up the discussion on networked computing and the concept of a networked society. The authors following the footsteps of Henry Jenkins argue that convergence of previously separate cultural media forms and practices are now coming together and creating a new working environment. It is no longer possible to think about the cultural industries separately from the audience but need to be read through the same prism. This section also introduces some useful terms such as hybridity, medium specificity before moving on to the case studies.

Pedagogically speaking the strength of this book is the way in which the authors deftly bring together their case studies and the theories. It is indeed very useful having the case studies come right after the theoretical grounding that is provided at the start of each section. I was slightly surprised to have the fifth section on Digital media theories where the authors introduce concepts such as postmodernity, Marxism and so on. Whilst this is an important section and provides a strong theoretical scaffolding it felt quite different from the rest of the book both in terms of its tone as well as its structure (unlike the other sections it does not have any case studies). It would have been much more worthwhile if this section preceded the rest of the book instead of ending with it.

To conclude, this is a timely book and scholars and practitioners will welcome its new edition. The authors have written the book in a very approachable language and aimed at a range of readers from undergraduate students to artists and graduate students. As a handbook it is a comprehensive review of the field and offers some interesting ideas for further research.

Rohit K Dasgupta teaches in the University of Southampton.
