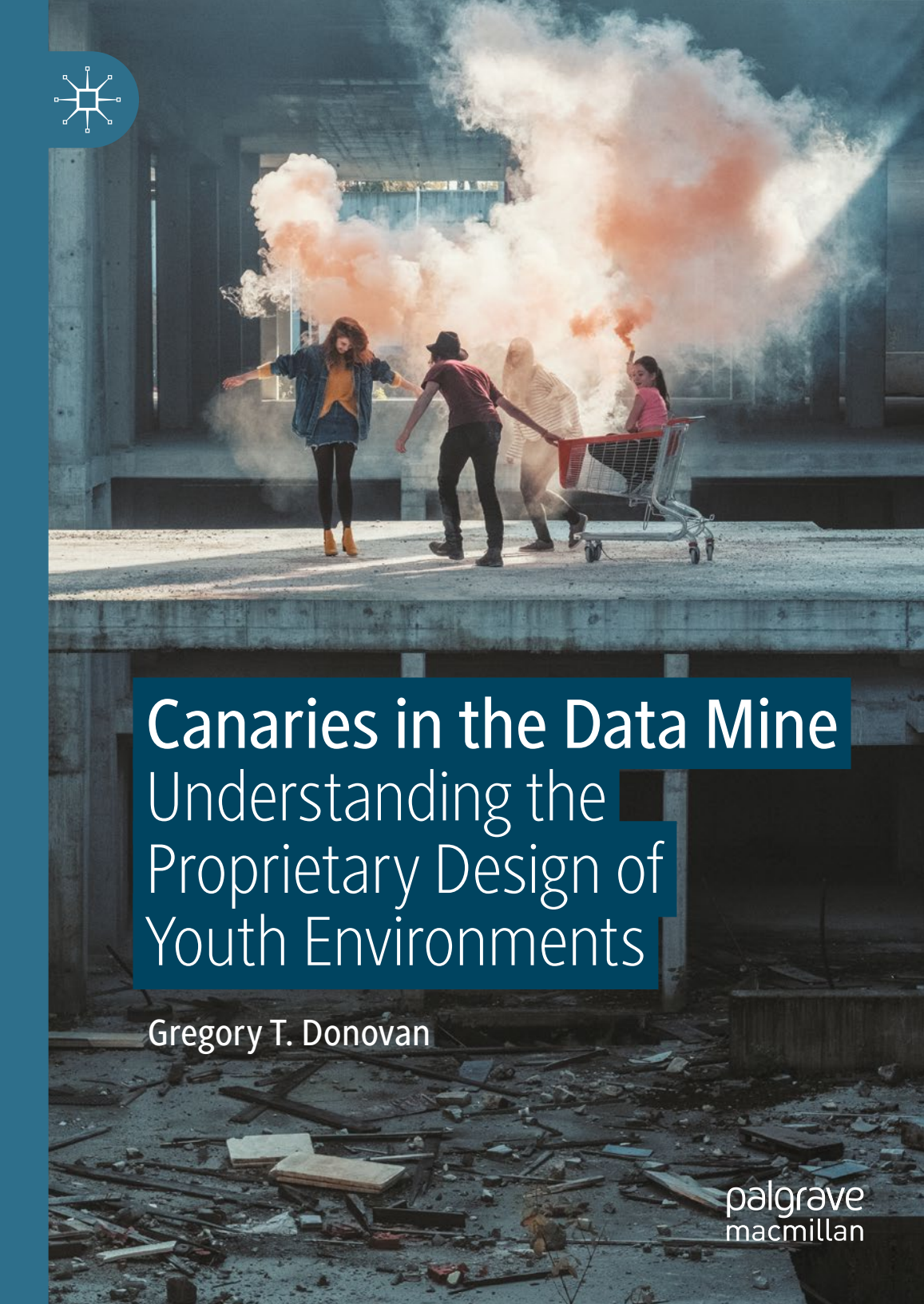




Canaries in the Data Mine

Understanding the Proprietary Design of Youth Environments

Gregory T. Donovan

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Canaries in the Data Mine

“Who’s mining the children? Everybody it turns out. With brilliant insight, Donovan reveals the stealthy, aggressive, and seductive ways that digital environments commodify young people. Exposing information ecologies as cunning arenas of enclosure and dispossession, Canaries cautions that an easily aroused sense of risk around young people encourages and excuses their surveillance, not only fostering kids’ compliance but their ready participation in self-surveillance. Despite the grim possibilities suggested by Donovan’s analysis of internet governance, his lively understanding of digital media and respect for the capacities of young people point to practices of resistance and reformulation that thoroughly charge and animate their interactions, creating exciting fields of civic engagement.”

—Cindi Katz, *author of Growing Up Global*

“If we want to redesign our digital worlds so that they contribute to a more equitable society, we will need not less digital engagement, but more critical awareness about the data and social media infrastructures that increasingly govern our lives. This book makes a compelling case for how, by partnering with young people, we can increase that awareness to challenge cyberdominance, foster new solidarities, and bring about a better future.”

—Lynn Schofield Clark, Ph.D., *President of the Association of Internet Researchers and author, Young People and the Future of News*

“The current technological world is predicated on maximum data extraction for profit and control. Nowhere is this more evident than in the alluring digital platforms encompassing, guiding, and shaping youth today. In this sharp and engaging book, Gregory Donovan collaborates with youth researchers to confront these logics and chart an alternative course, one that mobilizes critical design literacy for empowerment.”

—Torin Monahan, *Professor of Communication, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

“Canaries in the Data Mine is essential reading for anyone navigating the treacherous terrain of digital technology in their everyday lives, which is to say all of us. Provocative and prescient, Donovan offers a lucid account of how the private eyes of technology surveil young people’s intimate lives, while profiting from

their hopes, desires and fears. A call to action, *Canaries in the Data Mine* breaks new ground demystifying the circuits of control, while waking up readers to the possibility of an emancipatory future of critical collective digital engagement.”

—Caitlin Cahill, *Associate Professor of Urban Geography & Politics, Pratt Institute*

“*Canaries in the Data Mine* is a uniquely researched book that offers an important and critical reflection on the ways proprietary social media platforms and practices have developed over the past decade. Donovan offers a poignant analysis of how young people’s perspectives can help us to better understand our contemporary moment and prepare for the future.”

—Dr. Jacqueline Ryan Vickery, *Director of Research, Youth Media Lab, University of North Texas*

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*To McKenna, Caelin, Jack, and Luke—and for all the young people
designing better futures*

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1

Introduction: Proprietary Developments

Canaries in the Data Mine offers an account of the lived experiences and cultural figurations of U.S. youth growing up in environments increasingly owned by others and designed for profit. From wearable baby monitors and “smart” cribs to learning apps for toddlers and teen social media, the geography in which youth now develop is increasingly networked, data-generating, and proprietary. This book tells a story of how their early engagement with emerging media, combined with their own construction as property within U.S. family law, places young people in close proximity to changing norms and expectations around matters such as ownership, consent, responsibility, and surveillance in the twenty-first century. In doing so, I offer readers an interdisciplinary and critical understanding of the ways young people’s technosocial development links up with broader socioeconomic restructuring and how this reciprocity situates youth as sensors capable of alerting society when it is mining in toxic environments.

The growth of data generation, circulation, and consumption in advanced capitalist nations has given way to the popularization of a corporate term often hyped without the slightest connection to its “big brother” and “big government” surveillant connotations: “big data.” The

term is typically used to conjure massive and complex data sets that can be continuously generated on seemingly everything and everyone by way of a deceptively described “cloud.” As Kitchin (2014) notes, this general use of data actually refers to *capta*, or the “elements that are taken” through various forms of measurement (2). A primary aim of corporations and governments alike is to figure out how to efficiently extract or mine social, biometric, and locational data for economic value and hegemonic power. This aim has recently been underscored by the remarks of India’s prime minister Narendra Modi (2018) at the World Economic Forum, where he argued that “data is a real wealth and it is being said that whoever acquires and controls the data will have hegemony in the future.” Such hegemony entails the development of new markets, presupposed by capitalist regimes of property ownership, that enclose data and monetize access to the information and knowledge produced from them (Murakami Wood and Ball 2013; Schiller 2006; Zuboff 2019).¹ This book explores what young people are sensing and learning as they are brought, amidst this mad dash to mine, into the depths of informational production.

At this book’s empirical core is a participatory research and design project that entailed first interviewing New York City teens about their digital interests and concerns and then forming a Youth Design and Research Collective (YDRC) to assist with the epistemological and ontological work of designing the prototypical platform of their time: a social network site. *Canaries in the Data Mine* follows the ways the YDRC gained new perspectives otherwise mystifying to consumers while taking on the role of social network designers. In-depth interviews and design work with teens conducted from 2010 to 2012 are historically situated and analyzed to tell a story of how young people were becoming aware of matters of surveillance, facticity, agency, and unregulated corporate power years before “fake news” became a popular refrain and information companies such as Alphabet and Facebook found themselves on the receiving end of antitrust charges from the European Union to the United States.

Canaries in the Data Mine considers commercial social media as both commodities that are consumed over time and across space and as productive spaces that facilitate modes of commodification with and on their so-called users. This is as much a story of tightly coupled production and

consumption (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010) as it is enclosure (Andrejevic 2007) and dispossession (Harvey 2014). Yet, the means by which society is raising youth to both mine and be mined within this nested restructuring remains largely untold. This book accordingly asks both what is death in the data mine and what it means for society to survive and thrive in such a spatial temporality. Apathy and indifference are explored as potentially “deathly” effects that are fostered by the *design anesthetic* of the data mine. Fostering agitation, affinity, and public responsibility is discussed as pathways to empowerment and social well-being. In considering the findings of this project in the context of teen sociality and broader socioeconomic restructuring, I reveal how involving young people in designing their digital surroundings fosters critical capacities for reworking and resisting the conditions of a rising rentier society.

(Re)Producing Informationalism

The expansion of networked technologies has helped build a sprawling information ecology that enrolls daily routines with market interests and unsettles industrialized demarcations between work/play, consumption/production, and the public/private. Manuel Castells (2000, 2003, 2007) has notably theorized the material infrastructure and social logic of such technologies as representative of an informational mode of capitalist development that has led to a global “network society.” “Informational” has been theorized by Castells (2000) as a historical restructuring of industrial capitalism and as meant to indicate “the attribute of a specific form of social organization in which information generation, processing, and transmission become the fundamental sources of productivity and power” across all “spheres of activity” (21). While I embrace Castells’s formulation of the informational as a field of inquiry, it is important to acknowledge the shortcomings of his broader theorization of a network society. As Fuchs (2009) argues, the concept “obscures domination” and legitimizes structural inequities when “networks are seen as natural organization patterns” (392).

States and corporations have long sought to shape the social reproduction of children and youth (Addams 1909; Thompson 1963; Ewen 1976;

Katz 2008); this book explores how informationalism continues this historical process by opening up additional avenues to track, commodify, and remotely shape “everydayness” (Lefebvre and Levich 1987) for purposes of control and capital accumulation.² I take a Marxist feminist approach to understanding social reproduction as both the provision of traditional care and the iterative development of a labor force (Mitchell et al. 2003) so as to ground an accounting of informationalism in the lived experiences of adolescents negotiating their own role in what developmental psychologist Erik Erikson (1982) has called an “ethos of production.”

I introduce the concept of *informational youth* to consider the ways young people’s state of becoming is inextricably linked with broader socioeconomic conditions and expectations for productivity. Popular representations of teens as charismatic consumers and content producers unencumbered by “dated” notions of privacy or property are problematized and brought into tension with interviewee accounts of feeling guilt and personal responsibility for not better protecting their information. This tension is explored to show how youth are culturally encouraged to freely share data in ways that are profitable to information companies while the responsibility for mitigating the damage of such commercial relations is offloaded onto youth. Such a pairing of youth development and economic development (Katz 2004) allows this work to highlight their reciprocal relations and show how “the global and intimate” (Pratt and Rosner 2006) interact in an informational context.

As the young people I interviewed were keenly aware, the internet and its attendant technologies are not natural phenomena. Information ecologies encompass dynamic and complex systems that are at once materially and socially produced through human activity. Any formulation of the material as distinct from the social plays into a false binary of nature *and* technology and falls short of fully explaining the concerns of young people who sense a naturalization of the internet.³ This fosters an understanding of development that leaves little conceptual room for considering how people and places actively produce and reproduce innovation and technological change. This book thus considers the informationalization of contemporary childhood and youth as a sociomaterial process rooted in a neoliberal history of accumulation by dispossession. Numerous

scholars have pointed to privatization as a primary mode of such accumulation in the contemporary neoliberal state, serving to enclose public goods and consolidate class power (c.f. Low and Smith 2005; Schiller 2014; Pasquale 2016). Harvey (2010) notes that this process is different, but not detached, from accumulation through the exploitation of labor as dispossession produces capital through the privatization of public resources and subsequent regulation of access to such resources. Feminist scholars, in particular, have highlighted how the consequences of this dispossession falls disproportionately along racial and gendered lines—especially among children and youth (Fine and Ruglis 2009; Katz 2004; Cahill 2007).

As Mitchell et al. (2003) argue, the conceptual relegation of social reproduction as a phenomenon distinct from and secondary to the economic realm and the paid labor it constitutes serves to obfuscate the productive yet unpaid labor most often carried out by women, youth, and other “others.” Although a clearly delineated conceptual distinction between reproduction and production was never functional, its dysfunction is laid bare by the data mine, where the ongoing accumulation of data produced through everyday activity doubles as both social relations and commodity relations. In a context where social networks are literally corporations, *Canaries in the Data Mine* outlines how informational modes of (re)production are overtly and dialectically bound. Further, this book issues a call to design platforms and practices that are capable of connecting problems across scale and drawing together neoliberal bifurcations of public and private, self and other, home and elsewhere.

Ecologizing Proprietary Media

This book offers an epistemological and ontological departure from more common explorations of digital youth by analytically elevating both the proprietary and ecological conditions of their routine digital engagements. The collective data-driven relations with and through networked technologies are theorized as a *proprietary ecology*—or an ecosystem of privately owned platforms and practices—so as to foreground the neoliberal relations of (re)production at work. Latour (1998) argues that to

“ecologize” questions, objects, or data is to create “the procedures that make it possible to follow a network of quasi-objects whose relations of subordination remain uncertain and which thus require a new form of political activity adapted to following them.” Such ecologizing also helps situate data as both form and content, or “data as media” as Posner and Klein (2017) have called it, by bringing analytical attention to the histories, contexts, and materiality that give purchase to phenomena such as “big data.” Proprietary ecologies, as a system of data-extracting and aggregating technosocial relations, are neither distinct nor separate from cultural production or the built environment. Rather, they help corporations and governments to occupy the interface between people and places so as to commodify both sociospatial interactions and the data that can be extracted from them. In taking an ecological approach to understanding how capitalist property regimes and relations play out in young people’s digital engagements, this book offers a unique look at how informational subjectivities are socially (re)produced.

Canaries in the Data Mine posits that proprietary ecologies represent both a medium and a method of “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2014) in an informational context and serve not only to extract and enclose, but actively catalyze certain modes of digital engagement while corroding others. Although such an analysis is meant to foreground the property relations and modes of production at work, it does not foreclose a consideration of the radical and empowering potential that can come from the critical use of such media. The breadth and speed of privatization in the U.S. over the past four decades make it a daunting phenomenon to consider. Proprietary, I argue, has become a default setting in the culture, practices, and design associated with most digital media and technology and must be critically considered in order to foster a more responsive and just information ecology.

The homes, schools, and bodies of youth are being retrofitted with networked technologies. As young bodies bond with increasingly mobile and ever-shrinking hardware, their minds mesh with increasingly connective and ever-diffused software. In both cases, the software and hardware are typically produced and owned by a corporate entity. The result is a real-time and reciprocal loop of information production and consumption that expand the reach of private markets into the life

space—what I discuss in Chap. 3 as a “new lease on life.” The reciprocity of this loop tightly couples human development with a transnational informational development that commonly manifests in such everyday forms as intellectual property and data-mining practices. This hybrid development means a generation of young people embodying Donna Haraway’s metaphorical cyborg through their technosocial configuration. Their situated understandings, as well as broader social norms around matters such as privacy, property, and security, are hence developed in hybridity.

The mutual shaping of youth development and informational development within everyday environments calls for considering how proprietary platforms such as YouTube and Facebook can afford empowerment and domination, or both and neither, depending on the situated practices that create and make use of them in different contexts. I therefore look at the technosocial restructuring of youth environments to understand how a neoliberal subjectivity is socially reproduced in an informational context. The digital media we routinely engage with is so often privately owned that the terms of such capitalist ownership tend to come into focus through contradiction when discussing or engaging with free and open-source software or technology.⁴ Further, this aggressive reproduction of proprietary relations, especially with and within youth environments, takes time and space away from networked engagements that encourage participatory, cooperative, or public relations.

Minding the Canaries

The metaphor of the canary finds its origins in a site of resource extraction and production that was critical to the industrial revolution. The storied canary was carried into the coal mines to serve as a sensor for the miners. Should there be toxic gas, it would be evidenced first in an ailing canary and provide the workers with time to evacuate. Though caged and unwaged, the canary, with its sensitivity to its surroundings, served an invaluable and consequential role in sustaining the life of miners and fueling much of industrial production. The stakes for the canaries in this story are less ghastly, yet the metaphor remains analytically potent.

Though any one of them could be at risk, young people are at no more or less risk than adults in an informational society. Instead, as noted by Guinier and Torres (2002), “the miner’s canary” suggests the obvious sensor but also an ability to illuminate hierarchal structures that are illegible to others. I thus take up and extend this metaphorical consideration of youth to examine the ways that young people similarly exist as property, agents of (re)productive possibility, and sensors for detecting how hierarchal power structures maintain dominance.

As the Internet of Things (IoT) steadily envelops homes and schools, most U.S. youth have been at least tangentially, if not entirely, enrolled in a sprawling ecosystem of platforms and practices designed for the ongoing surveillance and monetization of their daily activities. As of 2018, 95 percent of thirteen- to seventeen-year-olds had access to a smartphone, with 45 percent reporting being online “almost constantly” and another 44 percent indicating being online “several times a day” (Anderson and Jiang 2018). While average monthly data consumption has now reached into gigabytes across all age groups, the sheer volume of data entailed in near-constant social media access has become more often discussed by scholars, parents, and journalists in terms of “screen time.” Despite both formal and informal encouragement to use networked technologies for everything from homework to housework, their screen time has instead been looked at as an unfortunate behavior of choice. In a report entitled “Addiction and Unhappiness in America,” Sachs (2019) describes young people’s screen time as both a primary driver of their own unhappiness and one of the principal “addictions” facing the U.S., whereas Twenge has argued that young people’s increasing screen time is a potential contributor to an overall “slowing down of the developmental process” (Twenge et al. 2017) as well as a decrease in subjective well-being (Twenge and Park 2019).

I show how a narrative of screen time as developmentally detrimental to youth represents a moral panic that pathologizes commonly experienced problems in advanced informational societies while individualizing the responsibility for solving them. Further, a myopic focus on the time spent with screens elide the near-constant engagements young people, as well as everyone else, have with networked technologies—both intentionally and unknowingly. The data mine, after all, is constituted by more

than screens and silicone. *Canaries in the Data Mine* therefore looks beyond the screen to consider the broader proprietary logics, politics, and designs of young people's digital engagements. This book offers an ecological look at youth media and argues that understanding what young people are grappling with in their digital environments is an indicator of what is, or will soon be, felt by society at large. Their present concerns, borne thru daily experience, are considered through analyses of interviews and workshops with youth to show how informational capitalism is reproduced at an intimate scale and to offer a roadmap for reorienting such reproduction toward more empowering ends.

Demystifying through Design

Canaries in the Data Mine analyzes the findings of the My Digital Footprint Project (hereafter "My DF Project") and considers how its participatory research and design approach served to involve young people in deconstructing and reimagining the modes of knowledge production at work in their own environments.⁵ The My DF Project combined both participatory action research (PAR) and participatory design (PD). A PAR approach opens up the research process to everyday people in order to collectively produce knowledge that addresses problematic situations in their own lives (Fine et al. 2003; Appadurai 2006). A PD approach opens up the design process to everyday people so as to produce more responsive and democratic objects and built environments (Greenbaum and Loi 2012; Bannon and Ehn 2012). Both PAR and PD consider knowledge to be rooted in social relations and most actionable when collaboratively produced.

The participatory thrust of both approaches is presented as a critical praxis for opening proprietary ecologies. How Facebook chooses to design its user interface is akin to how a social scientist chooses to design a survey protocol. Combining PAR and PD praxis helps to rework the hierarchical power structure of most research and design by challenging who gets to produce knowledge, how, and toward what ends. Through its research and design politics, a participatory action design research (PADR) approach offered a counterweight to the platforms and practices

of information companies. Instead of producing new knowledges through privatized means that are largely mystifying to all but their owners, a participatory approach countered this mode of knowing by reworking regimes of ownership and involving “users” in a means of production.

The My DF Project began with a series of fifteen in-depth and semi-structured interviews with New Yorkers aged fourteen to nineteen so as to compare and contrast their routine experiences with the internet as well as with their privacy, property, and security concerns within such environments.⁶ As Crouch and McKenzie (2006) argue, such a small sample qualitative approach “is therefore clinical, involving as it does careful history-taking, cross-case comparisons, intuitive judgments and reference to extant theoretical knowledge” and “positively calls for a collection of respondents’ ‘states,’ the size of which can be kept in the researcher’s mind as a totality under investigation at all stages of the research” (493). This allowed a more free-flowing exchange where participants were able to talk about something they knew well—their routines—and reflect on why they did them, how they felt about them, and what if anything they found concerning about them.

The period of time in which most interviews occurred saw the national release of *The Social Network*, the eruption of WikiLeaks as a massive news story with the arrest of its founder Julian Assange, the emergence of the Arab Spring in Iran, Egypt, and Libya, and the suicide of a freshman at Rutgers University provoked by his dorm mate “outing” him as gay through social media. These events took place alongside ongoing realities of a post-9/11 security state, a post-No Child Left Behind educational environment, and moral panics around cyberbullying, cat-fishing, sexting, file-sharing, and online predators. Each of these phenomena were directly or indirectly referenced by interviewees when articulating what interested and concerned them about the increasingly networked and data-driven world they were growing up in.

After the interviews, the My DF Project involved five research participants as young co-researchers to further investigate the interests and concerns that emerged from the interviews through the design of an open-source social network site replete with user profiles, activity feeds, instant messaging, and group pages.⁷ These five made up the Youth Design and Research Collective (YDRC) and ranged in age from fifteen

to nineteen, consisted mostly of women, immigrants, or children of immigrants, and were all people of color. The YDRC participated in a series of six Research and Planning workshops over a period of six months, each participant receiving a stipend of \$10 an hour.⁸ For a project considering proprietary relations of knowledge production, paying youth co-researchers for their collective participation afforded reflexive analysis. As I detail in the following chapters, the YDRC reflected on the ways their own “information generation, processing, and transmission” (Castells 2000) were and could be monetarily valued elsewhere. Finally, the workshops began with tutorials on information and network architecture, internet governance, research with human subjects, free and open-source software, and universal access to provide the practical literacies and shared vocabularies necessary to design our own social network.

Outline of the Book

Chapter 2, “Youth (In)Formation,” explores how contemporary youth in advanced capitalist societies exist as both a state of becoming and a site of data mining. To achieve this, young people’s psychosocial *formation*, as well as the privatization and differential valuing of their *information*, is considered in relation to their “everyday” (Lefebvre and Levich 1987) engagements with digital media and networked technologies. In-depth interviews conducted with young people are analyzed to offer a snapshot in time and context of the experiences of young New Yorkers during a stage of their development most concerned with articulating identities and establishing social boundaries (Erikson 1982). In discussing and reflecting upon their own digital routines, interviewees revealed an intimate, if partial, knowledge of the ways digital platforms and social practices were reshaping each other at a historical moment when smartphones and social media were unsettling social, economic, and geographic boundaries writ large.

Scholarship on digital youth (Steeves 2006; Marwick and Boyd 2011; Twenge et al. 2017; Vickery 2017) and the social reproduction of youth in neoliberal societies (Castañeda 2002; Cahill 2006; Monahan 2006; Katz 2001) is reviewed in relation to in-depth interviews so as to consider

the reciprocal relations between youth development and what Castells (2000) has described as transnational “informational development.” This chapter also considers concepts of “social” (Joinson 2008), “participatory” (Albrechtslund 2008), and “lateral” (Andrejevic 2005) surveillance so as to explore the various digital and differential means by which “surveillance as cultural practice” (Monahan 2011) takes place in contemporary youth environments. Of particular interest are the concerns this developmental reciprocity provoked among interviewees around matters of *privacy*, *property*, and *security* and how youth are uniquely situated to both sense toxic changes afoot in social reproduction and make legible the “hierarchical arrangements of power and privilege” that often naturalize such informational toxicity (Guinier and Torres 2002, 259).

Chapter 3, “A New Lease on Life,” reviews the concept of rentier capitalism in the context of informationalism and connects it with the ever-expanding reach of proprietary platforms and services into contemporary geographies of youth. Scholarship on “informational capitalism” (Castells 2000; Jessop 2004; Fuchs 2009), “platform capitalism” (Pasquale 2016; Scholz 2016), and “digital enclosure” (Hunter 2003; Andrejevic 2007; Boyle 2008) is reviewed to argue that proprietary ecologies represent a digital medium and method of dispossession in youth environments. The *circuitous*, *rationalizing*, and *objectifying* logics of such ecologies are theorized in order to explain how private interests seek to format developing bodies, at scale, as sites of data extraction and capital accumulation. The chapter unpacks how, in a globalized knowledge economy, corporations and governments rely on capitalist property models to enclose, own, and control access to various knowledges. This results in increasingly commercial digital platforms and practices, such as data mining, that produce knowledge from people’s daily interactions without giving the human sources of such data much control over the process. This raises important considerations of agency, consent, representation, and power—particularly among U.S. youth who themselves are legally rendered as property, to varying degrees, until eighteen years of age in a legal system steeped in patriarchal and capitalist tradition (Woodhouse 1992).

The chapter also grounds the enclosure and monetization of young people’s digital engagements—and its resultant data—in a historical geography of attritional privatization already at work in the restructuring

of cities, schools, homes, and bodies. Alongside its analog antecedents, this restructuring has contributed to an emerging rentier society that disproportionately disadvantages people according to race, class, and gender (Browne 2015; Noble 2018; Eubanks 2018). Considered in this context, young people's intimate interactions with proprietary media emerge as a neoliberal means of "leasing" relations of (re)production heretofore considered outside the realm of direct commodification (Adair 2010). Interviews with youth are again drawn on to illustrate the ways young people sense, reproduce, and rework the emergent sociomaterial registers of an informational rentier society.

Chapter 4, "The Medium Is the Method," provides a critical consideration of methods that produce knowledge from and on youth for private interests. It then discusses how participatory research and design with youth present methodological challenges that, when met, help build capacities for critiquing and engaging dominant modes of knowledge production (Fine et al. 2003; Appadurai 2006; Bilandzic and Venable 2011; Greenbaum and Loi 2012; Bannon and Ehn 2012). The practical matters of interviewing research "participants" and the subsequent institutional shift to working *with* the YDRC as research "personnel" are unpacked and analyzed in the context of their broader role as research subjects in proprietary ecologies. Further, as young people of color, the YDRC embodied and contributed "intersectional" (Crenshaw 1990) perspectives and counternarratives more often subjected to institutionalized research than empowered in and through processes of research (Bailey et al. 2019; Garcia et al. 2019).

Matters such as obtaining human research certification through a university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) are analyzed as, and in relation to, the "research relationships" (Luttrell 2010) regularly organized by information companies with little oversight from federal commissions such as the FCC or FTC. This chapter also outlines how this participatory approach to social network design entailed identifying gaps in the YDRCs knowledge and then addressing them through the asynchronous video-interviewing of experts rarely encountered in their daily lives.⁹ This chapter concludes by arguing that critical research and design interventions with and within digital platforms, such as those carried out by the YDRC, can help youth interrogate the on-demand and data-driven

promises of informational capitalism as well as surface structural inequities that span global and intimate scales.

Chapter 5, “Designing Use with Youth,” considers the “formal and informal learning” (Roth and Erstad 2013; Mills and Kraftl 2014; Greenhow and Lewin 2016) operating in young people’s digital engagements to discuss how such learning can assist the development of more open and participatory information ecologies. The experience-oriented design process is further unpacked to discuss how broader modes of informational development were reproduced, reworked, and/or resisted by youth co-researchers. Specifically, the U.S. national security doctrine of *cyberdominance* is reviewed to explore the ways a militarized logic of cybernetic “governmentality” (Foucault 1991) was reproduced, reworked, and resisted by interviewees and co-researchers alike. Cyberdominance is considered a territorial project of informational development whereby access to and circulation within proprietary ecologies are regulated by a desire to “securitize” (Buzan et al. 1998) personal, economic, and national boundaries.

This chapter continues to draw on interviews with young people to situate and aerate its consideration of cyberdominance as well as to discuss how such power dynamics were taken up and negotiated by the YDRC over six workshops. For example, by virtue of having to develop a Terms of Use (ToU) for their social network that passed muster with the university’s IRB, youth co-researchers began to reflexively consider the hierarchical terms of use that existed between them and various social media companies. The juxtaposition of common ToU, which are detrimentally time-consuming (McDonald and Cranor 2008) and rarely read (Böhme and Köpsell 2010; Obar and Oeldorf-Hirsch 2018), with our own network’s *terms of participation* served as a consciousness-raising experience for the YDRC. Extrapolating from such research and design interventions, this chapter also discusses how young people and their communities can design digital environments and research relationships that help reproduce what Sarah Ahmed (2019) has described as a “queer use.”

The book’s Conclusion, “Agitation and Affinity in the Data Mine,” offers both a redress of key arguments and, in considering the proprietary state of contemporary youth, poses the question “where do we go from