



The Exploit: A Theory of Networks

Alexander R. Galloway , Eugene Thacker

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“The Exploit is that rare thing: a book with a clear grasp of how networks operate that also understands the political implications of this emerging form of power. It cuts through the nonsense about how 'free' and 'democratic' networks supposedly are, and it offers a rich analysis of how network protocols create a new kind of control. Essential reading for all theorists, artists, activists, techheads, and hackers of the Net.”

—McKenzie Wark, author of *A Hacker Manifesto*

The network has become the core organizational structure for postmodern politics, culture, and life, replacing the modern era's hierarchical systems. From peer-to-peer file sharing and massive multiplayer online games to contagion vectors of digital or biological viruses and global affiliations of terrorist organizations, the network form has become so invasive that nearly every aspect of contemporary society can be located within it.

Borrowing their title from the hacker term for a program that takes advantage of a flaw in a network system, Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker challenge the widespread assumption that networks are inherently egalitarian. Instead, they contend that there exist new modes of control entirely native to networks, modes that are at once highly centralized and dispersed, corporate and subversive.

In this provocative book-length essay, Galloway and Thacker argue that a whole new topology must be invented to resist and reshape the network form, one that is as asymmetrical in relationship to networks as the network is in relation to hierarchy.

Alexander R. Galloway is associate professor of culture and communications at New York University and the author of *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* (Minnesota, 2006) and *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*.

Eugene Thacker is associate professor of new media at the Georgia Institute of Technology and the author of *Biomedica* (Minnesota, 2004) and *The Global Genome: Biotechnology, Politics, and Culture*.

The Exploit: A Theory of Networks Details

Date : Published October 1st 2007 by Univ Of Minnesota Press (first published 2007)

ISBN : 9780816650446

Author : Alexander R. Galloway , Eugene Thacker

Format : Paperback 196 pages

Genre : Philosophy, Theory, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review The Exploit: A Theory of Networks for online ebook

Brice says

A little postmodern for my tastes, but the look at graph theory was dead on and I appreciated the context of asymmetrical warfare. Quick read.

Shiny nickel says

From Alan DeNiro: "Anyone with any interest in social networking should read this book (how they are just another form of control)"

Burck says

A great exploration of the connection between control and technology. This might be one of the clearest explanations of network theory and philosophy that I have read. It is helpful to have a minimal background in network technology and philosophy from the likes of Deleuze or Foucault, but the concrete and illustrative examples given in the book should help the laymen understand the complex and intriguing questions posited by the authors. The writing style, which is more aphorism than exposition, was distracting at times and left one feeling that there was so much more to explore, but as a whole, the argument is clear and well maintained. A great book for anyone interesting in the connection of politics and technology. In particular, extended prologue should be mandatory reading for any aspiring politician.

Jessica says

This book is absolutely fascinating if you're at all interested in politics, the globalizing effects of technology and the net, and/or network theory. I definitely recommend it.

Andrew says

Galloway and Thacker offer a prefatory note in which they suggest that the reader skim the first part of the book, reading only the sections that have been italicized. Having done so in my first half hour of reading this book has reminds me of McLuhan's seminal texts, "The Medium is the Message," "War and Peace in the Global Village," and "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man," as well as Debord's treatise on modernity, "The Society of the Spectacle," in the sense this rhetorical strategy presents a series of theses which will form the backbone of Galloway and Thacker's argument. Looking forward to delving more deeply into the book after my initial cursory foray.

Ellen says

This book is a struggle to read. The guys are clearly brilliant, but it's tough for a general reader to get handle on their argument.

Mjhancock says

Galloway and Thacker argue for a theory of networks that is at once broader and more nuanced than those commonly supported by scholars in the philosophy of technology area. More specifically, they see networks as the basic organizational form of our current age, structures that are not as egalitarian as they're often portrayed, but not dystopian either. Rather, there's a great deal of degrees and nuances in networks, and they seek to better articulate what networks have to offer. It's an exuberantly multidisciplinary book, borrowing from health sciences, microbiology, cybernetics, communication, political theory, and mathematical graph theory, among many others. This variety is occasionally to the book's discredit, as it sometimes seems to drift in terms of the connection of the argument at hand to the argument as a whole. But in general, it's pretty significant reading for anyone in the general area of digital media (and at least interesting reading for political theory, especially those following Negri and Hardt), and an articulate refusal to anyone who would use the term "network" in theoretical discussion casually, without a consideration of what the term implies.

Donia Al-Issa says

Read for my Advanced Theories of Communication course.

I felt very woke after I read this, and learnt so many things I didn't know that I didn't know (unknown unknown as Galloway and Thacker call it).
