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YouTube: Online Video And Participatory Culture



Synopsis

YouTube is one of the most well-known and widely discussed sites of participatory media in the contemporary online environment, and it is the first genuinely mass-popular platform for user-created video. In this timely and comprehensive introduction to how YouTube is being used and why it matters, Burgess and Green discuss the ways that it relates to wider transformations in culture, society and the economy. The book critically examines the public debates surrounding the site, demonstrating how it is central to struggles for authority and control in the new media environment. Drawing on a range of theoretical sources and empirical research, the authors discuss how YouTube is being used by the media industries, by audiences and amateur producers, and by particular communities of interest, and the ways in which these uses challenge existing ideas about cultural 'production' and 'consumption'. Rich with both concrete examples and featuring specially commissioned chapters by Henry Jenkins and John Hartley, the book is essential reading for anyone interested in the contemporary and future implications of online media. It will be particularly valuable for students and scholars in media, communication and cultural studies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Burgess, Jean and Joshua Gree. YouTube: Digital Media and Society Series. Polity Press, 2009, 172 pages. I am reviewing this work for its own sake, and also including comments concerning the applicability of the book for discussions in church (and other non-profit organizations). This concise and focused book in the Digital Media and Society Series [...] brings the tools of sociology and

critical theory to bear on the video-sharing phenomenon YouTube, a site co-created, as Burgess points out, by YouTube Inc., "users who upload content to the site, and audiences who engage that content." [1] The authors conduct their research of YouTube by examining trends in video content that was most favorited, most viewed, most discussed, and most responded during six days of samples in the fall of 2007. Their method of interpretation is an interesting admixture of literary theory, sociological analysis, critical theory, and media studies. [2] Perhaps the most significant change in my thinking after reading the book is to stop thinking of YouTube as just one thing. Instead, I now see how the site as a platform performs a variety of functions, some of which are especially applicable for congregational mission and ministry. YouTube's status as a meta business--the "new category of business that enhances the value of information developed elsewhere and thus benefits the original creators of that information" [3]--is the largest contributing factor in this regard. 1) Cultural archive: Burgess writes, "It is possible to exhaust your own capacity for nostalgia before exhausting the possibilities of the vintage material available on YouTube already..."

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