



A Social History of Contemporary Democratic Media (Routledge Research in Cultural and Media Studies)

Jesse Drew

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The last few decades have helped dispel the myth that media should remain driven by high-end professionals and market share. This book puts forward the concept of "communications from below" in contrast to the "globalization from above" that characterizes many new developments in international organization and media practices. By examining the social and technological roots that influence current media evolution, Drew allows readers to understand not only the Youtubes and Facebooks of today, but to anticipate the trajectory of the technologies to come.

Beginning with a look at the inherent weaknesses of the U.S. broadcasting model of mass media, Drew outlines the early 1960s and 1970s experiments in grassroots media, where artists and activists began to re-engineer electronic technologies to target local communities and underserved audiences. From these local projects emerged national and international communications projects, creating production models, social networks and citizen expectations that would challenge traditional means of electronic media and cultural production. Drew's perspective puts the social and cultural use of the user at the center, not the particular media form. Thus the structure of the book focuses on the local, the national, and the global desire for communications, regardless of the means.

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