William H. Dutton (Ed.), **The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies,** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 640 pp., $122.98 (hard cover).

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An excellent work that includes the timely discourse about the Internet, *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies*, edited by William H. Dutton, is an engaging book enriched by thoroughly researched contributions from a team of strong academics from around the globe. With material presented in a comprehensive manner, this handbook offers a critical perspective context on the field of Internet studies and will be of tremendous interest to researchers and scholars in the field and serve as a reference point for future studies.

The exhaustive and insightful volume examines Internet research from both theoretical and practical backdrops and provides a nuanced understanding of the many changes the Internet has brought to everyday life. The contributors—a good 41 in all including the editor—have presented a critical assessment of Internet research in their respective fields of expertise. A tremendous wealth of detail presented by authors from a diverse group of countries including Canada, the United States, Australia, Portugal, Ireland, the UK, China, Hong Kong, and France adds to the range of perspectives offered in the handbook.

Comprising 26 chapters authored by an international team of well-known experts and scholars and divided into five distinctive parts, the handbook opens with a comprehensive introduction by the editor presenting an overview of the subject by outlining the scope of Internet studies as an emerging field. In this chapter, titled "Internet Studies: The Foundations of a Transformative Field," Dutton elaborates on the diverse use of the Internet in social and institutional contexts and highlights recent empirical studies by various researchers on the use of the Internet at home and at work .

The first part, titled the "Perspectives on the Internet and Web as Objects of Study," presents foundational concepts of Internet studies through its four chapters. The spotlight is on the development of the Internet, Web sciences, online media from the 1970s to the present context of Web 2.0, and the interface of society on the Web as well as the "Internet as infrastructure."

Part II, "Living in a Network Society" elaborates the role of the Internet with its audience and includes a discourse on the digital divide while also bringing together a diverse range of rich contributions describing the use of the Internet in everyday life. Chapter 7 in this section, titled "Digital Inequality," maps the literature pertaining to the gap in Internet use and the implications for human and financial capital, social capital, and civic engagement. In the chapter "Sociality through Social Networking Sites," authors Nicole Ellison and danah boyd present a detailed portrayal of the changes in social interaction and
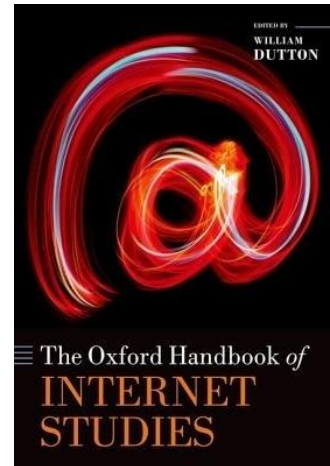
the growth of social networking sites (SNS) as well as the respective challenges in SNS research. The next chapter, "The Study of Online Relationships and Dating," is an overview of online dating behavior and the various approaches to research on the topic conducted in different countries.

Chapter 10 in this section addresses children's spaces with specific reference to gaming, both online and off. This well-written chapter cites key research by experts on children's use of the Internet, including studies from the Kaiser Family Foundation and Whyville, and also highlights the history of video games and the research tradition of gaming from interdisciplinary fields that include communication, psychology, and sociology. In the chapter titled "Cross-national Comparative Perspectives from the World Internet Project," Gustavo Cardoso, Guo Liang, and Tiago Lapa present an elaborate overview of globally networked research on the Internet, including perspectives from Asia and the Middle East, and examine both the methodological opportunities and pitfalls for research teams across the world.

The third part, titled "Creating and Working in a Global Network Economy," speaks about Internet in business, the various models for commercial purposes, and issues of e-governance. Regina Connolly's reflective essay titled "Trust in Commercial and Personal Transactions in the Digital Age" cites research in the UK and United States on online trust and examines directions for future research possibilities. The next chapter, "Government and the Internet," by Paul Henman, presents a concise look at the concept of e-government, its history and evolution, and e-government as an academic discipline. The final chapter in this section focuses on Internet research in the field of education and critically examines research pertaining to both formal and informal learning.

Part IV, titled "Communication, Power, and Influence in a Converging Media World," offers a rich scholarly presentation of theoretical perspectives with the study by Ronald Rice covering broad themes in Internet research over the years and drawing a historical overview of Internet research. Eugenia Mitchelstein and Pablo Boczkowski's chapter addresses research issues in the field of online news production and consumption. The highlight of this section is the chapter "The Internet in Campaigns and Elections," which raises issues about the potential of the Internet for political campaigning, the methodological challenges in political research, and the agenda for the future, in addition to discussing cases of landmark election campaigns. The last chapter in Part IV, "The Internet and Democracy " by Helen Margetts, draws from the work of researchers and reviews alternate models of democracy.

The concluding section, Part V, "Governing and Regulating the Internet," brings together articles on copyright, freedom of expression online, privacy and surveillance, and e-governance. An interesting chapter by Matthew David on copyright issues in the music industry explores the risks brought about by online sharing and their implications. The challenges of research on privacy and surveillance in cyberspace are elaborately discussed by Colin Bennett and Christopher Parsons, followed by Robin Mansell and Edward Steinmueller's chapter addressing the critical examination of ICTs and policy initiatives. Chapter 25, "The Internet and Development: A Critical Perspective" by Tim Unwin, presents a historical outline of the Internet from its beginnings and examines the nature of Internet research. The final chapter by Laura DeNardis raises research questions in the emerging field of Internet governance and gives a broad outline of the key topics in the area.

Relevant to a global audience, *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies* provides a scholarly review of the major research areas associated with the field and sets the agenda for future study in this important and fast-growing discipline. This hardbound edition is clearly organized and well structured, with a smooth transition from one topic to another across the chapters, while the layout and style of presentation enhance readability and are pleasant to the eye. It will definitely complement other handbooks and can be added to the list of scholarly must-have titles in the field of media and communication studies.

Overall, the book is a good read that is very informative and leads to further references and future research pertaining to discourse about the Internet and digital dialogues. William Dutton in his preface states, "a necessary aim of this handbook has been to focus on 'Internet Studies' as an emerging field, rather than provide a collection of studies of the social implications of Internet" (p. V)—and that definitely is a promise well kept.