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BOOK HACKTIVISM   🐦 f

edited by Linda Kronman, Andreas Zingerle – Behind the Smart World
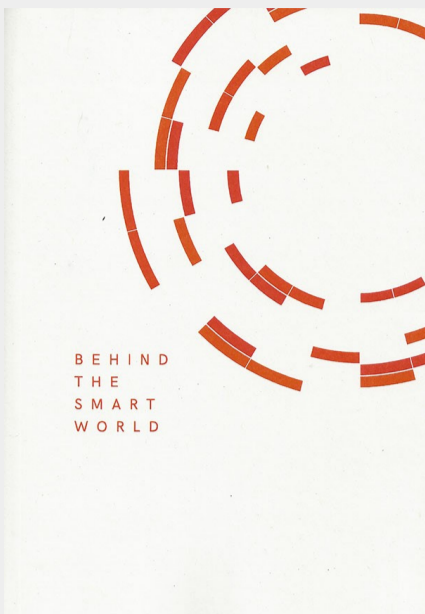
SERVUS.AT, ISBN-13: 978-3950420005, ENGLISH, 160 PAGES, 2015, AUSTRIA

The current trajectories of digital data are appropriately summarized in the editors' introduction: we have simply "lost control" of our digital data. Nevertheless this book is anything but unruly, and articulated in three sections (saving, deleting and resurfacing). Each starts with a theoretical text and follows with artists presenting their respective works, spanning from an investigation of data centers (Veermäe), to "data funeral" performances (Samson). The specific aspect of this collection is the informative balance between speculative theory and artistic intervention. While maintaining a radical perspective towards the topic, it defines the processes in clear terms, such as when Marloes de Valk suggests that "our data bodies are morbidly obese." That perspective is crystallized in the recurrent suggestion of the enormous amount of data contained in a multitude of discarded, eventually malfunctioning, trashed storage devices that can "resurface" if properly handled, with unpredictable consequences. Instead of simply pushing the creepy privacy argument or the apocalyptic e-waste perspective, the authors manage to have a consistent, unifying view centered on the personal production of digital data. From there they depart to the long list of consequences enabled by this simple gesture. The resulting scenario is not obscure, but carefully assembled through the lenses of theory and art. It thoroughly defines the ambiguous temporality of data and its singular duality as both ephemeral and ubiquitous.

AURELIO CIANCIOTTA   28 DEC 2016

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