Tobias Olsson (Ed.), **Producing the Internet: Critical Perspective of Social Media**, Gothenburg, Sweden: Nordicom, 2013, 291 pp., $36.51 (paperback).

Reviewed by
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Editor Tobias Olsson's **Producing the Internet: Critical Perspective of Social Media** is a collection of the latest European studies of social media from the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom). The volume's critical perspectives about the production of social media and its culture help to explore valuable questions for both academic research and professional practices. Multimedia producers, journalists and civic organizers as well as entrepreneurs could find the book useful to further their understanding of social media culture. *Producing the Internet* aims to contribute to the understanding and the critical knowledge of contemporary new media culture; it also answer questions about the extent to which social media is participatory and how it empowers its users' activities. The collection focuses on the role of the producer and the production process on social media and the articles also seem to reflect each other's critical analysis The book not only provides some inspiring studies of the relationship between the culture of social media and organizations' producers, but it also illuminates various issues related to the technological impact on organizational communication. It explores how different "prod-users" in the social media—ranging from media producers to civic participators—interact with social media's culture as described by scholars such as Henry Jenkins and Clay Shirky. Contrasting Jenkins' work of new convergence culture and Shirky's optimistic view of democratic participation on the new media, the articles demonstrate alternative cases of organizational culture on social media.
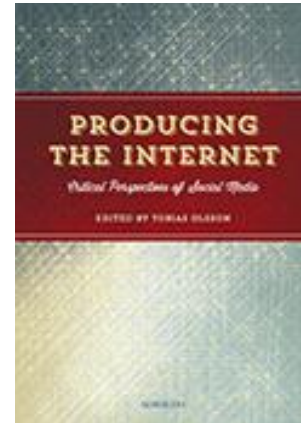
The first chapter starts with a piece that examines the political economy of social media, which provides a critical foundation for other chapters. Fuchs claims that social media is still largely dominated by the market's logic even as it empowers the public and exploits them at the same time. The book's earlier chapters then emphasize how the production of social media is achieved by the mass participation, and it is this user-generated content (UGC) that allows social media to reproduce itself in the marketplace. Technological capitalism has never been as dependent on the usage of technology as it is in the social media era when market revenues mainly originate from data generated by the users. After entering the era of "Big Data," it is foreseeable that not only the market logic of social media will be facilitated by the exponentially growth of the commodities of users' data, but also that social media itself will face a dramatic evolvement of its organizational culture. Dijck believes that social media is always evolving to adapt to the new communication norms of agents in its digital network; this is similar to how the networked connectivity on social media transformed production on the Internet.

In his article, Carpentier holds the more optimistic view that social media does facilitate the democratic influence on organizations, and he argues that social media maximizes the participation in the decision-making process and enlarges the democratic leadership of those networked organizations. He

further claims that many local organizations could maintain their democratic leadership structure and be free from market incorporation after they expand globally.

The second and third chapters provide cases studies of commercial and community organizations' experience on social media. The second chapter specifically examines media organizations' practices on social media and illustrates how these traditional organizations adapted to the new media environment in different ways. In their article, Viscovi and Gustafsson (2013) describe how journalists are functioning increasingly as censors who select UGC for inclusion in social media. UGC provides valuable news sources to social media even as it increases the risk of potential damage: How one selects prod-user content then becomes a major and time-consuming task for journalists and editors. For example, Reddit is a social news and entertainment website where users submit content in the form of links or text posts. The popularity of *Reddit* shows how news production has become increasingly dependent on users, leading to a user-oriented news culture that requires of media organizations a new form of production professionalism. Sjöberg and Rydin's piece raises some questions about public service companies and their practices on social media. They observe that public service companies, like commercial media organizations, also wind up serving the market logic of social media. Social media is merely used as a marketing tool for traditional media production rather than as an entity to foster coproduction with its audience. For instance, *Vilma*, the Swedish television program on social media, shows that its target audience of children is excluded as potential prod-users, and the program fails to use social media to construct an attractive fictitious identification for children. The problem of coordination and management also manifests itself in cross media production as well: Villa's network study of TVC in Spain shows that the organizational structure of cross media production is unpredictable and loosely bonded by a common organizational culture.

Producing the Internet argues that any noncommercial usage of social media needs to strongly consider the market logic dominance of social media culture. The collection's third chapter focuses on the involvement of non-profit organizations in social media and reflects Carpentier's claim that they can maintain their organizational culture without interference from commercial interests. The study of the civil website Bg-mamma in Bulgaria illustrates how that organization maintained the strict regulation of its commercial involvement along with a high standard of civil value simultaneously noted by Bakardjieva. Lund studied *The Stable*, a Swedish website which is organized by young girls who have the same hobby of raising horses, also demonstrates a similar civic potentiality of a professional-based online community, but it does not address how the online community deals with commercial intervention. Although social media seems to empower civil societies and grass root movements, it does not contribute to governmental efforts to produce public goods. Social media is typically used for releasing official information by the government, and few audiences are interested enough to pay attention to them. The Swedish government is famous for using social media in public affairs, but Bengtsson's study of "Malmo in *Second Life*" highlights a governmental failure to engage the public by using a social media platform. The local government failed to account for the market logic of *Second Life* in which users would be turned into vendors and producers; the public service created by the government in cyberspace then would function as products rather than as public goods in the online market. The online public service provided by the government that could be offered commercially proved a failure. The article could not give government any suggestions about how to sell public services on social media.

The fourth chapter details some interesting case studies describing the production of civic websites, among them the official website of the Occupy Wall Street movement and other civic websites in Europe. The authors note in the chapter 4 that public participation on civic websites and on social media poses more problems than it does advantages. The online engagement of the Occupy Wall Street movement's rhetoric and organizational culture appeared more venerable and contradictory when compared to the dominant media culture. Participation in civic websites in Europe remains limited among its citizens; civic sites that are strictly regulated by political elites are also highly exclusive to those who are not considered to be contributative to the political discussions on the websites by the regulaters per Banaji and Buckingham. These cases indicate that social media could decentralize a common organizational culture and problematize the democratic participation of those same organizations. One of the volume's articles describes the production of corporate web pages on Facebook and shows how commercial companies could take advantage of the institutional logic of social media.

Producing the Internet is a comprehensive, critical examination of how social media is produced under the dominion of market logic, yet manages to change organizational culture at the same time. The book studies participation on social media and specifically how this online user participation affects offline organizations and vice-versa. It also addresses social media's impact on the culture of the "bottom-up" participatory organization, as well as on the "top-down" managed organization. It implies, however, an emphasis on the youth who use social media, but despite describing how young people participate on social media, the collection could also have elaborated further on how youthful users might be treated as important producers of social media rather than as mere passive consumers. Further, all the studies in this collection indicate that social media could either contribute to the production of a decentered organizational culture or to a competitive market culture of the organization.

The contributions cannot offset several major flawsof the book. First, the case studies insufficiently address how to respond to corporate domination of social media, so the collection overall barely answers the questions that are raised in its own studies as noted in the first chapter. Second, most of the studies described in *Producing the Internet* apply qualitative methodologies—ethnography, case studies, critical theory, and others—but none of them examines the production process from the perspective of a solid quantitative study. Finally, the book firmly ties the production process of social media to the Marxist political-economy, yet the communication exchange of symbolic values of social media is rarely examined.