

Foreword

To trace software through the figuration of space is to take both in significant new directions with many interesting twists and turns.

Computing's key problem has often been presented as one of time, how fast a complex calculation can be carried out. In part computing has achieved results through the literal compression of space, making work that once took equipment the size of a room happen in the landscape of a chip. *Code/Space* takes another route, by showing how software expands out of the computer, becoming spatially active. In doing so software generates behaviors and opportunities, and traffics in meanings, readings, and interpretations. In assembling this book, the authors also provide a set of means by which computing itself may be opened up to hitherto tricky spaces and understandings—where traditional questions of control, monitoring, and ordering are entangled with power, ethics, and experience.

What *Code/Space* shows is that the ways in which software interpolates, mixes with, and takes part in the generation of new kinds of space is incredibly rich and requires attentive means to understand it. The numerous cases discussed here—from travel, home life, consumption, social control—all emphasize the authors' call for a sustained and differentiated empirical study of software as parts of particular sites, and as something that weaves them together. The way in which software invests the mundane with capacities for logging, tracking, and reporting lacks sustained and detailed attention, and which in turn is experienced differentially according to multiple dimensions of relationality suggest new means of understanding and studying software and its places in contemporary life.

So this is another thing that this book does, if it provides a means of recognizing the spatialities of software—not simply linking the screen, register, and algorithm with roads, rooms, and runways, but showing how such things in turn transduce each other—*Code/Space* brings in turn the social sciences into forceful relation with software studies.

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