

Preface

This book is about the relationship between design and power. It's about the growing community of designers, developers, technologists, scholars, educators, community organizers, and many others who are working to examine and transform design values, practices, narratives, sites, and pedagogies so that they don't continue to reinforce interlocking systems of structural inequality. It's about design, social justice, and the dynamics of domination and resistance at personal, community, and institutional levels. In essence, it's a call for us to heed the growing critiques of the ways that design (of images, objects, software, algorithms, sociotechnical systems, the built environment, indeed, everything we make) too often contributes to the reproduction of systemic oppression. Most of all, it is an invitation to build a better world, a world where many worlds fit; linked worlds of collective liberation and ecological sustainability.

Popular narratives of design, technology, and social change are dominated by techno-utopian hype about ever-more-powerful personal devices, "intelligent" systems, and "Twitter revolutions," on the one hand, and totalizing, pessimistic accounts of digital surveillance, disinformation, and algorithmic injustice, on the other. This book strives to ground our understanding of design, technology, and social change in the daily practices of activists and community organizers, who have always struggled to amplify the voices of their communities "by any media necessary."¹ As I hope to demonstrate, new information and communication technologies (ICTs) not only take shape in Silicon Valley, they also emerge from marginalized communities and

social movement networks, both during waves of spectacular protest activity and also in everyday life. My broader goal is to advance the growing conversation about the pitfalls and possibilities of design as a tool for social transformation. I'll begin by sharing a story about my own embodied experience of trans* erasure, an experience that I believe contains valuable insights for nearly all design domains.

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Design Justice

Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need

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