Series Foreword

Media Origins is a venue for interdisciplinary, humanistically informed research that recovers and interrogates the origin stories of contemporary media technologies. The titles address a range of cultural objects in the history and prehistory of computation. The series explores the politics of design and labor, the role of economics more broadly imagined, and the cultural frameworks of shared meaning making that undergird not only innovation but also maintenance, consumption, and disposal. Such origin stories often examine precomputational precursors to understand the larger social patterns, values, and beliefs behind a given medium's trajectory into the contemporary technological milieu. Volumes in the series may deploy feminist, postcolonial, queer, or antiracist theory to foster deeper conversations about the framing narratives of innovation.

The Media Origins series cautions that, in its obsession with the new, "new media" have developed an alarming ahistoricism that puts media studies at risk of losing valuable and largely undocumented accounts, particularly when cultural memory resides in rapidly aging witnesses or in records that are precariously stored in informal or neglected archives. Rather than reinforce assumptions about the technological survival of the fittest based on market metrics, the series excavates foundational platforms that have been all but ignored due to their perceived lack of commercial success.

Media Origins was launched to counter historical narratives that tend to emphasize the "inventor myth," crediting a lone auteur. Unfortunately, overtelling one origin story usually comes at the expense of often-marginalized groups and participants that were instrumental at inception or adoption. Equally damaging to understanding media origins can be the

reification of artifacts with little attention to the larger discursive contexts of their invention, manufacture, and adoption. In looking at the interactions between actors and objects, books in the Media Origins series may revise existing views about the dynamics of power and control, specialization and distribution of labor practices, or systems of credit.