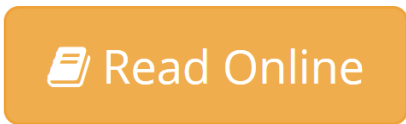




Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work

By Anne Balsamo



Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work By Anne Balsamo

The renowned cultural theorist and media designer Anne Balsamo maintains that technology and culture are inseparable; those who engage in technological innovation are designing the cultures of the future. *Designing Culture* is a call for taking culture seriously in the design and development of innovative technologies. Balsamo contends that the wellspring of technological innovation is the technological imagination, a quality of mind that enables people to think with technology, to transform what is known into what is possible. She describes the technological imagination at work in several multimedia collaborations in which she was involved as a designer or developer. One of these entailed the creation of an interactive documentary for the NGO Forum held in conjunction with the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. (That documentary is included as a DVD in *Designing Culture*.) Balsamo also recounts the development of the interactive museum exhibit *XFR: Experiments in the Future of Reading*, created by the group RED (Research in Experimental Documents) at Xerox PARC. She speculates on what it would mean to cultivate imaginations as ingenious in creating new democratic cultural possibilities as they are in creating new kinds of technologies and digital media. *Designing Culture* is a manifesto for transforming educational programs and developing learning strategies adequate to the task of inspiring culturally attuned technological imaginations.

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Editorial Review

Review

“*Designing Culture* is a *tour de force*, offering a unique vision of the possibilities for a contemporary cultural studies. Refusing to separate research from pedagogy, technology from culture, or innovation from imagination, Anne Balsamo maps the concrete complexities of specific design processes, and opens up new ways of thinking about—and teaching—technocultures in relation to broader socio-political fields. Her book is required reading for anyone working with contemporary cultures.”—**Lawrence Grossberg**, author of *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*

“*Designing Culture* is a road map to the technological imagination, provided by one of our best theorists and practitioners. Anne Balsamo’s architecture of the future rests solidly on her own experiments, inventions, theoretical engagements, pedagogical innovations, and interactive hermeneutics. This is cultural theory at its best, brilliant, bold, and daring.”—**Cathy N. Davidson**, Duke University

“In this sweeping expansion of the classic innovation literature, Anne Balsamo portrays both the necessity and the challenge of cultivating the technological imagination in all of us. Her experiences as a researcher and designer who has worked across cultural domains—as a humanist in the academy, as a research scientist in an industrial innovation center, and as an entrepreneur in Silicon Valley—give her a unique ability to foster conversations among diverse groups of thinkers who want to engage with issues of culture and technological innovation. Balsamo not only describes ways to take culture seriously in the design of new technologies but also elaborates why it is ethically imperative to do so. Her insights into expanding the traditional considerations of socio-technical design to consider issues of culture are coming at a critical time. This is a great book that should be read by anyone interested in creating new technologies of imagination—for enhancing learning in the twenty-first century and creating expressive cultural platforms for the future.”—**John Seely Brown**, former Chief Scientist of Xerox Corporation and Director of Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC)

“*Designing Culture* is a welcome and important intervention into many contemporary approaches to technology, innovation and design that construct technology as a final outcome of a singular imagining, or as a forceful determiner of socio-cultural practices. The book is powerful because of the way Balsamo makes what are crucial and profound interventions seem both obvious and logical. The breadth of topics and examples that she brings to the table to underpin her arguments also demonstrate the pertinence and real need for such a book across a whole set of disciplines, approaches and institutions.”

(Helen Thronham *Culture Machine*)

“The argument pursued throughout the book is coherent and sustained. It makes a valuable intervention in thinking about design and design processes, technocultures and technological innovation. If you want a taster, try the website – <http://designingculture.net>.”

(*European Journal of Communication*)

“This is an erudite yet accessible cross-disciplinary text that makes a substantial contribution to the field of

cultural studies, and also serves as a welcome and timely call to arms not only for scholars and scientists in the humanities and technology, but also for those engaged in educational policy, institutional strategy and innovation.”

(Helen Keegan *Times Higher Education*)

“Balsamo’s passionate concerns with pedagogy, gender equality, and imagining new futures enliven every page... I drew much from Balsamo’s energy and enthusiasm in inviting us to revisit a collection of some of the most ingenious experiments in the history of digital technology—wonderfully original inventions of an extraordinarily creative generation that we have already come to take for granted, or even forgotten.”

(Bonnie Nardi *American Studies*)

About the Author

Anne Balsamo is Dean of the School of Media Studies at The New School. She is a co-founder of Onomy Labs, a Silicon Valley technology design and fabrication company that builds cultural technologies. Previously, she was a member of RED (Research on Experimental Documents), a collaborative research group at Xerox PARC that created experimental reading devices and new media genres. She is the author of *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, also published by Duke University Press.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Luis Garcia:

This *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* are generally reliable for you who want to certainly be a successful person, why. The reason why of this *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* can be on the list of great books you must have is definitely giving you more than just simple examining food but feed anyone with information that perhaps will shock your before knowledge. This book will be handy, you can bring it all over the place and whenever your conditions in e-book and printed people. Beside that this *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* giving you an enormous of experience including rich vocabulary, giving you test of critical thinking that we know it useful in your day activity. So , let's have it and revel in reading.

Shawn Marsh:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The book that recommended for you is *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* this book consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer require to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some analysis when he makes this book. Honestly, that is why this book appropriate all of you.

Jonathan Rodriguez:

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