



Book Reviews: 4 Works on Surveillance Cultures

Balkin J.M. and Noveck, B.S. (eds.) (2006) *The State of Play: Law, Games, and Virtual Worlds*. New York and London: New York University Press

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In recent years virtual worlds and computer games have rapidly grown into a major field of research. These studies are interdisciplinary with scholars contributing from many theoretical and empirical points of departure. As virtual worlds and computer games have become widely popular, a number of complicated academic questions have arisen. Among these are: Do in-real-life (IRL) laws apply to virtual worlds? Do computer games have narrative structures? What are the privacy and surveillance consequences for players in computer games and inhabitants of virtual worlds?

Some of these questions are addressed in *State of Play*, which is concerned with virtual worlds and computer games. The collection of articles results from a conference at New York Law School in November, 2003, which primarily focused on law and virtual worlds. The book is made up of seventeen articles and, besides a thorough and very appropriate introduction to the phenomena of virtual worlds, the book is divided into four sections, each covering their distinct area. I will focus on section three "Privacy and Identity in Virtual Worlds," as it seems most relevant in this context, but let us first take a brief look at the other sections.

The first is "Game Gods and Game Players" and deals with the muddy waters of ownership and rules in virtual worlds. The problem is that while players construct social networks and generally domesticate the world, private companies own and control the virtual world via the end-user license agreements. The topics of the articles featured in this section span from the rights of game designers to control the virtual worlds (Richard Bartle) to the opposing view where the focus is on the rights of the players (Raph Koster). A relevant question also dealt with here is how IRL laws and rules could and should apply to virtual worlds. The second section is "Property and Creativity in Virtual Worlds." It is the largest section of the book with five essays dealing with questions about if and how IRL laws and regulations should apply to virtual worlds. This is, of course, an important problem as the virtual worlds grow into communities of exchange similar to IRL communities. Do players/users own their creations? Is it stealing to take other people's

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virtual creations, and should it be punished in the same way as stealing IRL? The final section of the book is “Virtual Worlds and Real-Worlds Power.” It is concerned with the way social life in virtual worlds can have an impact on decisions, actions and relations outside the virtual world. Even though virtual worlds might still be considered something different from the “real” world regarding laws and rights, virtual communities and the types of social interactions they foster might be an integral part of the player’s/user’s (real) life. Thus, virtual worlds can be both playground as well as breeding ground for rules and rights also applicable to the “real” world.

Let us now return to the surveillance-related section: “Privacy and Identity in Virtual Worlds.” The section deals with questions concerning online and IRL identities that arise from the graphic virtual spaces that make up today’s virtual worlds. Moreover, these multiple identities cause new flows of information and, thus, involve issues of privacy. Again, the problem in question is linked to the relation between the “real” world and virtual worlds in the sense that designers and other “game gods” have control of the virtual worlds and therefore also control virtual identities and personal information.

As an example, Tal Zarky’s article “Privacy and Data Collection in Virtual Worlds” details the privacy concerns using the story of Kafka’s Joseph K. Zarky describes how we as users of virtual worlds are in a situation similar to that of Joseph K in what is described as Kafka’s somewhat paranoid literary world. The potential surveillance in virtual worlds is overwhelming and can make Big Brother look like a discreet intimate. Well, almost. In virtual worlds, everything that the avatar does and says can be traced. Complete records of activities, chats, body movements, avatar facial expressions and everything else can be re-established by the people controlling the virtual worlds. This can, of course, be troubling in itself, but the most serious privacy problem has to do with the relation between the avatar as a virtual identity and the IRL person controlling the avatar. Avatar information and IRL personal information flow together, which gives rise to several sources of privacy concerns. Zarky mentions three such sources, namely the government, other users and the game gods.

Government officials can either pose as users in virtual worlds or simply require game controllers to surrender information about IRL identities and avatars in virtual worlds. The former – government officials keeping a presence in virtual worlds – challenges existing privacy laws, because the gathered information is openly available and, as such, does not represent an invasion of privacy. If suspicion arises, government officials will often be able to deduce the IRL identity behind avatars without breaking any laws. If something very suspicious is going on, it is possible that officials can force game controllers to hand over in-world information.

Other users constitute a source of privacy concerns, because they too can deduce IRL identities behind avatars. Privacy can be invaded if users have figured out other users’ identities, coupled with all sorts of personal information, and publish them e.g. on the Internet – or perhaps threaten to do so. Finally, the game controllers themselves can be a source of privacy concerns. They sit on the information linking avatars and IRL identities and have the best starting point for collecting and analyzing data about virtual world users. This information can obviously be used for targeted advertisement as well as discrimination, favoritism, etc., in the virtual world.

A curious story about identity is chronicled in Tracy Spaight's "Who Killed Miss Norway?" This story emphasizes the social networking of virtual worlds, involving issues of friendship, trust and deception. These virtual relationships can be just as important to users as IRL relationships, but virtual worlds contribute to a more complex construction of identities between the real and the fictitious. Spaight traces the story of a Norwegian beauty queen who was part of LegendMUD, a text-based virtual community. She was a frequent user for several years, forming friendships and social relations with numerous other users, but suddenly she apparently passed away (car accident). At least that is what the virtual community thinks, but the identity of Miss Norway turns out to be quite an identity mystery, which I will not reveal here.

The book has excellent articles and it is very much needed, since issues of law, privacy, identity, etc. in virtual worlds and computer games are important matters, which have only received limited attention so far. I also want to highlight the rich eleven-page index of the book; this feature, often lacking or imperfect in this kind of literature, is simply a great help for the reader when navigating among many articles.

While the articles cover many law-related perspectives on virtual worlds and computer games, I would have enjoyed more discussions from the perspective of play and social interaction. Of course, this aspect of the subject is touched on, but a thorough exploration of the enabling potentials would have completed the book. From a surveillance perspective, it could have been very interesting if the discussion went beyond privacy to issues of social sorting, ethics, and so on. However, this may not be fair to demand of *The State of Play*, which is very much grounded in legal theory. So, even though the book does not take the question of privacy and surveillance issues in virtual worlds to its full disclosure, it is useful and interesting for students of surveillance.

Kackman, M. (2005) *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

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American television is not known as a depository of critical awareness about surveillance systems that have crept into every bit and byte of modern life. As the iconic watchful eye of *Big Brother*, the TV screen has played an accommodating role by making surveillance familiar, creepily entertaining and sometimes funny. The commercial TV aesthetic has a history of flying precipitously toward this self-consuming end without an end. It can't even pause to help the innocent kitten whose human made its furry proclivities the subject

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of yet another cruel installation of *America's Funniest Home Videos*. Maybe American TV producers feel like abused pets and this is high-priced therapy they enact to call our attention to their deep-seated sense of humiliation. I could try harder to hear their call for help and feel their pain, if it weren't for all the reality TV producers who would turn a profit on their own mothers if the supply of funny humans ran low. Television's comfortable embrace of an economy of self-display (or voyeurism, for critical-theoretical balance) must be playing some sort of trick on our thinking about surveillance. Has there been a time when any genre on the Yanqui tube didn't press the viewer to accept a life under surveillance?

For Americans (lower 48 Yanquis in dominant anglo-parlante regions), the candidate might be the "classical" American spy show (1950s-1970s). After all, this genre grew up in the Cold War as the authoritative representation of a world of Others made up of Red and swarthy masses, so uncontrollably unlike Us here in the land of Lincoln that we had to call for back up (we also had our TV sheriffs to bring us piece of mind). Those shows turned the machinery of state power outward to police the boundary protecting The Dream for grey-suited suburbanites and sun-baked rubes alike. Americans could tune in to watch faux agents from FBI, Treasury, CIA, et al. in heroic stories inspired by what we now call truthiness (some shows even boasted of having real live agents as consultants). Of course, these shows were more than exercises in Americans' ritual appreciation of NIMBY (not in my backyard) surveillance. Along with the male action adventure series (*77 Sunset Strip, Hawaiian Eye, Bourbon St. Beat, Peter Gunn, Burke's Law, Checkmate, Michael Shayne, Route 66, Follow the Sun, Adventures in Paradise...*), these shows depicted "good guys" in arousing displays of body and style suited to the post-war consumerist notions of masculine/feminine progress. And in doing so they offered ways of seeing past the racial and class anxieties that were consuming society and forward to the day when Black and White could work together as citizen spies.

Examples from this period and genre abound in Michael Kackman's 2005 book, *Citizen Spy*. Here is a book from the field of television studies that shows how close readings of espionage programming in American TV can generate a microhistory of television's impact on popular culture. Kackman aims to show how the television spy or counter-intelligence agent personified the changing sense of national identity in post war American popular culture. His method unpacks the narratives and characterizations in a number of spy shows from the 1950s through the 1970s. *Citizen Spy* chronicles the rapid evolution of the genre and its production techniques through the harrowing years of McCarthyism, civil rights struggles, the Vietnam war.... It provides very revealing and often humorous illustrations from production notes drawn from archival research. And while the book does not pretend to be about surveillance at all (Foucault is mentioned once on the question of historiography), surveillance studies researchers will find valuable resources in Kackman's extensive synopses, primary archival material, and his entertaining dialogue excerpts.

On that note, *Citizen Spy* can be usefully read alongside Toby Miller's *Spyscreen* (Oxford University Press 2003). Kackman's attention to detail regarding American TV programs complements Miller's Foucauldian and intertextual approach to the interplay of film/TV spy narratives and international relations. While they both explain the subject with an eye to elucidating the connections of culture and politics, foreign policy and genre, history

and meaning, their unique emphases provide different points of departure for additional research.

Were I to add to this short curriculum, I would suggest further analysis of the genre within the longer history of commodification of information and informational labor. Espionage is an institutional feature of the information/surveillance society that must be situated within episodic rearrangements of the political economy, and always within the long-term development of informationalized capitalism. That necessitates better understanding of surveillance work, and the changing conditions of that labor over time. Critical writing on popular media representation of espionage can do more in this area. Finally, media and communications studies might also be more candid about its disciplinary history, which reveals close ties between American communication research and US foreign policy in the post-WWII period. We like a good spy story, as long as we're not in it.

Virilio, P. (2007) *The Original Accident*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

120 pp. \$19.95 (US); £12.99 (UK); €23.99 (EU) paperback. ISBN-10: 0745636144, ISBN-13: 978-0745636146

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Paul Virilio's talent lies, arguably, in his unique strategy of defamiliarization, one which might be described as "Delphic theory": the ability to extend familiar insights by transposing them into a highly idiosyncratic version of, what for lack of a better description, might be described as a Gallic oracular idiom. Thus, for example, the form of interactivity-facilitated friction-free capitalism long championed by the likes of Bill Gates gets read by Virilio through an anecdote about the attempt to remove trees alongside French highways to remove the threat posed to speeders. In an era obsessed with instantaneous transmission, the physical world—that which might carry some trace of history—is to be sloughed off and smoothed over. The attempt to eradicate whatever might pose the threat of an accident becomes itself the overarching accident. We destroy ourselves and our environment in the name of eradicating resistance to our own need for speed. In Virilio-speak, "Since we have, seemingly, erased distances, it remains to eliminate the resistance of materials, lithospheric or hydrospheric elements" (p. 88). Waves and mountains alike serve as speed bumps for the new economy and the instantaneous, interactive spectacle by which its appeals are conveyed to us.

It is the compression of this spectacle to a state of incomprehensible timelessness, to an *affect* no longer to be understood in terms of cause and effect, that serves as the target of the frequent polemic passages in *The Original Accident*. Virilio's critique of the era of interactive, converged media feels a bit like diving into a theory blender along with Habermas, Foucault, Debord, and a dash of old-school conservatism. The screen culture

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(TV and computer terminal) and its cult of speed, repetition, and interactivity, is, we are told, attacking “the mind’s ability to anticipate; in other words, it attacks rationality itself” (p. 37). Virilio has not, however, given up on prognostication, and there are overtones of both Habermas and Neil Postman in his pronouncements on the fate of democracy: “Whereas republican opinion rested from the very beginning, on the art of oratory and reading, post-republican emotion rest, for its part, on sound and light” (pp. 62-63). The result of a global, interactive digital enclosure in which all users become networked (the “great Locking Up of the seventeenth century...only, this time, not on the scale of the asylums or the prisons of the Ancien Régime, but on a scale encompassing the entire world” (p. 40), is “nothing less than the progressive strangulation of the legitimate state of representative democracy” (p. 52). It turns out that totalitarianism is equally at home in the era of mass customization as in that of mass society: “the standardization of the industrial age will make way for the synchronization of collective emotion likely to do away with democratic representation...promoting instead a hysteria, a chaos of which certain continents are already the bloody theatre” (p. 69).

Virilio’s own oracular style is perhaps in part a reaction to the problem posed by the media saturated moment—how best to resuscitate a sense of history in a society that “unthinkingly privileges the present, real time, to the detriment of past and future” (p. 23)? And by “detriment,” Virilio is referring not just to our ability to imagine a possible future but by the impact of this failure on the actual future: “How long before we see the abolition of the waves of the high seas...How long before the four seasons are eliminated and replaced by the single temperate climate of a general planet-spanning air conditioning system? How long before the meteorological atmosphere is put under glass...?” (pp. 88-89). Perhaps a bit longer than Virilio implies. This use of the future interrogative comes uncomfortably close to the politics of the manipulation of affect and anxiety that Virilio targets elsewhere. Nevertheless, what remains bracing about his approach in this era of qualified critique and sporadic postmodern euphoria is its relentless pessimism. There is a crankiness about Virilio’s diatribes that recalls the Frankfurt School at its most strident—he channels the paradoxically committed bleakness of the German pioneers of critical theory through his more graceful and essayistic prose.

The recurring themes of this slim and impressionistic volume include a critique of the much-hyped promise of digital interactivity and a welcome challenge to the truism that 9/11 “changed everything.” If anything, the political and media response to the dramatic attacks indicated just how effectively their repeated invocation has become in indefinitely forestalling an effective critical examination of US and British foreign policy. The 9/11 repetition compulsion, both visual and rhetorical served, rather, as an alibi for an unthinking commitment to more of the same in terms of policy and the oil consumption it serves. A telling if trivial anecdote that speaks directly to the intersections of speed, publicity and politics that characterize Virilio’s concerns came during the 2003 Detroit Auto Show, held shortly before the US invasion of Iraq. One commentator noted that despite—or perhaps *because*—of the anxiety posed by impending war and the ongoing blowback from oil-driven US policy in the Middle East, the show demonstrated a defiant resurgence of interest in overpowered “muscle” and luxury vehicles. In part a reflection of increasing economic stratification in the US, the emphasis on over-sized engines was also a stubborn assertion that neither the industry nor its upscale consumers would be cowed by the threat of instability into rethinking their commitment to environmentally and

politically disastrous consumption patterns. As one press account noted, “the trend...speaks to the American mood as the country hunkers down in the shadow of war, terror, and oil-price fears. Some drivers see the gas-guzzling vehicles as an assertion of American self-confidence” (Patton, 2003). One of the top designers for the Ford Motor Company observed of the post-911 proliferation of over-powered vehicles, “Partly it may be a patriotic thing” (Patton, 2003). Partly it may also be an attempt to outrun the consequences of our own acceleration, one more symptom of, “the madness of deliberate blindness to the fatal consequences of our actions” (p. 6).

In contrast to much of the new media orthodoxy, Virilio discerns in the deployment of interactivity a consolidation of the “tyranny...of instantaneity and ubiquity” (p. 58). As a capability that contributes to the perfection of feedback monitoring, interactivity is related to information, Virilio argues, as “radioactivity is to energy—a contaminating and disintegrating capability” (p. 53). It is here that Virilio’s observations speak most directly to the role of surveillance in the globalized information society: the perfection of control is revealed as the generalization of knowledge’s accident, a phantom form of liberation that results in the “great lockdown”: “the globalization of knowledge has not only reduced the field of human activity to nothing thanks to the synchronization of interactivity. It also triggers a historic mutation in the very notion of the accident” (p. 33). The friction-free world is one in which our preferences are anticipated—which to say, engineered—at the moment they manifest themselves. The pernicious aspect of convergence reveals itself in the temporal collapse whereby interactivity forecloses the space for human action. Hyperbole? Certainly—but also a welcome corrective to the equally exaggerated claims for the benefits of interactivity put forth by the celebrants of the digital “revolution.”

This nightmare version of convergence is summarized by Virilio’s formulation of *the* question posed by the synchronized administration of fear in the post-9/11 era: “ACCIDENT or ATTACK?” (p. 21)—or, in the all-too-familiar words of the interactive, If-you-see-something-say-something” Homeland Security campaign, “is that ‘just an abandoned bag...or a bomb’”? The same ambiguity obtains with respect to the accident of knowledge whereby that which would empower humans ends up foreclosing the space for human action. In the era of interactive convergence the distinctions between self-expression and feedback; communication and control; norm and accident; and, finally accident and attack collapse into the instantaneity of interactive information transmission.

All of which is to say is that while *The Original Accident* offers little in the way of specific analyses of monitoring and surveillance practices it is, in typical Virilio fashion, polemically fruitful. There are formulations here begging for interpretation in light of specific examples taken from the realm of surveillance studies. The tone is sweepingly overstated—the type of writing that comes with the luxury conferred by past achievement—but the substance may well be of interest to those looking for some theoretical pronouncements to weave into their analyses of an era in which monitoring and interactivity converge in an “all-out spread of a surveillance—over-vigilance—that surpasses the ‘state of vigilance’ of those not so distant days when ‘people looked at things’...And this merely anticipates the imminent overdone or *super*-humanity that the apostles of Progress are cooking up for us in the secrecy of the laboratories of transgenic genesis” (p. 90). Well, perhaps; but in the meantime there is much to be gained from a consideration not of Virilio’s predictions, but of his diagnosis of the contemporary state of

affairs, an era characterized in part by what he describes as the “fatal bedazzlement” of “censorship by floodlighting” (p. 27). He traces a bleak diagnosis of an era in which the revelation of top-secret surveillance and torture programs by a panoply of media outlets not only fails to mobilize public opposition and outrage, but serves, disconcertingly, as an alibi for such publicly accepted secrets.

Reference

Patton, P (2003) ‘Cultural Studies: A Proud and Primal Roar,’ *The New York Times*, 12 January, Sec. 9: 1.

Fischer, H. (2006) *Digital Shock: Confronting the New Reality*, R. Mullins, trans. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press.

280 pp. \$34.95 (US); £19.99 (UK); €33.50 (EU) hardcover. ISBN-10: 0773531149, ISBN-13: 978-0773531147

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The translation of this book from the French five years after its original publication begs the question: is the so-called new reality of the cyberworld at the millennium’s turn still in some sense shocking? Surely it is not new. And is Fischer’s humanist skepticism about the “brutality” and “barbarian magic” of the digital revolution – its “technological apartheid,” “regression of the imagination,” and erasure of “critical spirit” in its seductive “digital simulacrum” – exchangeable intellectual currency, today? Readers will need to grapple with what happened in the meantime (including updates inserted in order to break up the 90s frame of reference) of this book, between two language cultures, in the shadow of the rise of post-humanism, and, indeed, whether Fischer’s position itself has been accommodated and neutralized by the dreaded hegemon: the digital simulacrum whose promoters (a vague “new middle class”) play at God by enlisting a runaway technoscience to transcend the interpretation of the world for its transformation at the altar of the pseudo-egalitarian binary code.

Fischer undertakes two substantive tasks in *Digital Shock*. First, he resists as he defines the digital simulacrum by formally presenting its thirty paradoxical laws. We do not know why there are thirty; at best they are a “suggestive sampling.” Moreover, Fischer proceeds by the statement of paradox, presented in boxes as numbered laws. I suggest that readers begin this book at its end in chapter 23 with the explanation of paradox – “a paradox is either the registration of crisis, the dialectical engine of change, or the expressions of the societal desires and utopias that we project into the future of the human adventure” (255) – and the list of laws. Fischer could have been a bit clearer about why these are laws and not rules by linking law more explicitly to the formal structure of the digital and universality to a new reality, for example.

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Sometimes there are further formal paradoxes supporting the paradoxical law, as in law twenty-five: “Cyber-pedagogy, which promises to be cheaper and more effective, actually costs more and destroys the foundations of traditional pedagogy” (188). The paradoxes of cyberpedagogy are: i) it is very expensive; ii) its rapidity overshoots the slowness of traditional learning; iii) it teaches old lessons with new tools that are in some ways antithetical to them; iv) superficial edutainment trumps the equation of knowledge with authority. All good points, but they are marshaled in defense of a rather flimsy and unanalyzed principle “save the [retooled] classroom teacher.” What about the misery of underemployment in the contemporary university sector, which is not at all broached, and the fact that the ongoing imposition of cyberpedagogy violates faculty contracts and erodes intellectual property rights, not to mention the surveillance and new analyses of performance that are made possible in the wired classroom. Fischer’s brand of humanism is a paradise of compromises between the old and the new, subject to the techno-myth of improved pedagogical relations, and a perfectly liberal balancing act between knowledge as equally a thing of the mind and market. Here we see the negative effects of paradoxes: they produce bewildering results.

Other paradoxes are not very paradoxical or, better, not paradoxical enough. Compare the eleventh with the twelfth; the former claims that the cyberworld’s tendency to unify at one level permits and even promotes diversification (linguistic and cultural) at another. This straightforward, much-discussed, paradox is, in the latter case, the twelfth, actually dynamic. In the twelfth there is a simple series of statements: “Digital technologies are a powerful agent of cultural and spiritual development. They recover, disseminate, and record all previous cultures. They generate new cultural products and ensure their propagation. Computer language leads to a new aesthetic. The cyberworld comprises and institutionalizes a new cultural space-time that is exceptionally dynamic and communicative” (101). This is a flat summary of mythic themes and its paradoxicality is found in its irony, not in the friction generated by the statement. Consider, for instance, the digital myth about communication (transparent, omnipresent, connectivity), which Fischer exposes as a de-metabolized communication emptied of social fullness, *chez Baudrillard*. It is ironic to revisit the myth (“...exceptionally dynamic and communicative”). The conclusion that may be drawn is that the character of the paradoxes are not uniform, and many diverge from the standard formula – something diminishes or increases at the same time as a correlate diminishes or increases, with both assigned a positive and/or negative value: “First Paradoxical Law: The regression of the human psyche is proportionate to the advance of technological power” (255). It is this kind of tensile and dynamically interesting paradox that best captures Fischer’s project.

As is expected in the cyber-literature, all of the critical topics that have come to identify it – its its avatars, if you will – are rehearsed: speed kills, time flattens, history wanes, memory ephemeralizes, communication negates itself, books hybridize, talking heads virtualize... . Fischer puts his faith, however, in multimedia electronic arts that for him have the ability to “reconcile art with society,” that is, to steer a course between failed avant-gardes and a reductionist art market. Yet there is a danger here as technoscience has busily colonized the imaginary of creation. Fischer invites the arrival of “artist-researchers” with the capacity to create iconic imagery by decoding the digital simulacrum. This very McLuhanesque, very nostalgic vision, quite usefully reminds us of international examples of innovation, but also thrives on promising examples drawn from

Québec which may not be that well-known – like Hexagram, Softimage, Cirque du Soleil, and even more mundane but nonetheless inventive business people like J. Armand Bombardier, and institutions offering support to the cultural industries like the Caisse de depot et placement du Québec. Unfortunately, Fischer does not dig down into the institutional organigrammes and the social and political assemblages that made these ventures exemplary; instead, he opts for a roster of geniuses.

When it comes to political reflection he stays with the macro level opposing poles of libertarian and neo-liberal ideologies that push/pull the cyberworld (simultaneously a space of adventure and intense scrutiny). However, he does take a page out of McLuhan and bend the analysis of the global village in a time of glocalization toward the political question par excellence of Canadian culture: the question of Québec's position within the federal model. It could be 1973, instead of 2006, for Fischer rehearses McLuhan's sympathies (in *Forces*, no less, the journal sponsored by Hydro-Québec) to a tee: glocalization naturalizes Québec's demands for independence. This is not "todaymorrow," Fischer's temporal inflection of glocality, but just "yesterday." And his jibe at Toronto is completely in character.

Fischer's penchant for paradox is often just an expression of ambivalence. His discussion of media convergence – it actually counter-reveals the irreducible differences of media – has one exception: the BlackBerry. But Fisher won't give it the name "convergence," and later complains about the myth of inventing all-powerful "gadgets that we can hold in the palm of the hand, that we imagine can do everything" (127). One wonders if Fischer himself is a CrackBerry user.

Digital Shock is very lightly footnoted – it is not a deeply researched book – and enlists only a few of the leading thinkers of Canadian technoculture like Pierre Lévy and Derrick de Kerckhove, with provisos included. Fischer contributes little to helping define the era of post-McLuhan debate for the emerging generation of scholars born in/of the simulacrum. These are the "0/1" s, for Fischer, whose statistical significance he doubts.

One of the reminders of the Digital Shock's mustiness is the recurring figure of the cathode ray tube – a technology eclipsed by a new generation of flat screens and projection devices.