

RECENZII

Robert W. McChesney, *Digital Disconnect. How Capitalism is Turning the Internet against Democracy*, The New Press, New York, 2013.

Digital Disconnect represents the last book of the professor Robert W. McChesney from the Urbana-Champaign University, Illinois, following a very consistent series of six books related with social, economical and political implication of the Internet:

Dollarocracy: How the Money-and-Media-Election Complex is Destroying America (2013); *The Endless Crisis: How Monopoly-Finance Capital Produces Stagnation and Upheaval from the USA to China* (2012); *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution that Will Begin the World Again* (2010); *The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas* (2008); *Communication Revolution: Critical Junctures and the Future of Media* (2007).

The paper is structured in seven chapters: 1. What is the Elephant in the Digital Room? 2. Does Capitalism Equal Democracy, 3. How can the Political Economy of Communication Help us Understand the Internet, 4. The Internet and Capitalism I: Where Dinosaurs Roam? 5. The Internet and Capitalism II: Empire of the Senseless 6. Journalism is Dead! Long Live the Journalism? 7. Revolution in the Digital Revolution?

The entire text has inserted plenty of examples, practical references and statistics, and thus it is very accessible and attractive for large audience. Starting from a classical distinction between the celebrants and the skeptics, the author make a preview of the recent history of the Internet from the early of 1990s with the text based communication, MUD and e-mail, until in present, at the Web2.0 universe, social media and user-generated content. All over these disputes professor McChesney makes an equilibrate approach, with advantages and disadvantages of each of them: “*More generally,*

the global medium of the internet would shrink the universe, promote dialogue between nations, and faster global understanding. In brief, the internet would be an unstoppable force: like the invention of print and gunpowder, it would change society permanently and irrevocably.” (2%)

Of course, all these fundamental changes do not have only positive implication. The voice of skeptics is still present and is based on several very important facts: “*the young people today constitute the dumbest generation, shockingly ignorant of civics, history, geography, science, literature, the works. To Bauerlein, the emergence of digital media is the main culprit in this sudden transformation. Dwelling in a world of puerile banter and coarse images, they are actively cut off from world realities like no other generation*” (Mark Bauerlein, *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future*, New York: Penguin, 2008, apud Robert McChesney (4%).

And, because “you are not a gadget” author stresses that: “skeptics argue that the emergence of Facebook and other social media, ironically enough correlates with a marked increase in loneliness” (5%).

“And it is for young people everywhere, especially in my beloved America. If there is any conclusion to be drawn from what follows, any take away from the digital revolution, it is the heightened importance – indeed the necessity – of the famous slogan from May 1968: *Be realistic, demand the impossible!*” (Robert McChesney, Madison, Wisconsin, September 2012).

The book is available on Amazon in kindle format (at 17 USD) or in hardcover (20 USD).

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