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Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture (Postmillennial Pop)

By Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, Joshua Green



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Spreadable Media maps fundamental changes taking place in our contemporary media environment, a space where corporations no longer tightly control media distribution and many of us are directly involved in the circulation of content. It contrasts “stickiness”—aggregating attention in centralized places—with “spreadability”—dispersing content widely through both formal and informal networks, some approved, many unauthorized. Stickiness has been the measure of success in the broadcast era (and has been carried over to the online world), but “spreadability” describes the ways content travels through social media.

Following up on the hugely influential *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, this book challenges some of the prevailing metaphors and frameworks used to describe contemporary media, from biological metaphors like “memes” and “viral” to the concept of “Web 2.0” and the popular notion of “influencers.” *Spreadable Media* examines the nature of audience engagement, the environment of participation, the way appraisal creates value, and the transnational flows at the heart of these phenomena. It delineates the elements that make content more spreadable and highlights emerging media business models built for a world of participatory circulation. The book also explores the internal tensions companies face as they adapt to the new communication reality and argues for the need to shift from “hearing” to “listening” in corporate culture.

Drawing on examples from film, music, games, comics, television, transmedia storytelling, advertising, and public relations industries, among others—from both the U.S. and around the world—the authors illustrate the contours of our current media environment. They highlight the vexing questions content creators must tackle and the responsibilities we all face as citizens in a world where many of us regularly circulate media content. Written for any and all of us who actively create and share media content, *Spreadable Media* provides a clear understanding of how people are spreading ideas and the implications these activities have for business, politics, and everyday life.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Solid analysis and detailed examples to make it sticky enough for the intended readerships of media scholars, media professionals, and fans."-*International Journal of Communication*

"Something new is emerging from the collision of traditional entertainment media, Internet-empowered fan cultures, and the norms of sharing that are encouraged and amplified by social media. *Spreadable Media* is a compelling guide, both entertaining and rigorous, to the new norms, cultures, enterprises, and social phenomena that networked culture is making possible. Read it to understand what your kids are doing, where Hollywood is going, and how online social networks spread cultural productions as a new form of sociality."-Howard Rheingold, author of *Net Smart*

"The best analysis to date of the radically new nature of digital social media as a communication channel. Its insights, based on a deep knowledge of the technology and culture embedded in the digital networks of communication, will reshape our understanding of cultural change for years to come."-Manuel Castells, Wallis Annenberg Chair of Communication Technology and Society, University of Southern California

"Content today, the authors suggest, can travel not only from the top down but also from the inside out. It is a remarkably different terrain than what we have been used to, one they effectively and stridently analyze."-*Publishers Weekly*

"A wide-ranging examination of the contemporary media environment as individuals increasingly control their own creation of content."-*Kirkus*

"In *Spreadable Media*, media theorist Henry Jenkins, formerly of MIT and now at USC, and his coauthors, digital strategists Sam Ford and Joshua Green, make a convincing case that fan involvement in the re-creation and circulation of media content is not just an interesting side effect of man-to-many multimedia networks and smartphone video editing apps, but a significant force for empowerment and exploitation in and of itself...If you are in the music, movie, television, or game business, this book is a must read."-*Strategy and Business*

"It's about time a group of thinkers put the marketing evangelists of the day out to pasture with a thorough look at what makes content move from consumer to consumer, marketer to consumer and consumer to marketer. Instead of latching on to the notion that you can create viral content, Jenkins, Ford, and Green question the assumptions, test theories and call us all to task. *Spreadable Media* pushes our thinking. As a result, we'll become smarter marketers. Why wouldn't you read this book?"-Jason Falls, CEO of Social Media Explorer and co-author of *No Bullshit Social Media*

"Finally, a way of framing modern media creation and consumption that actually reflects reality and allows us to talk about it in a way that makes sense. It's a spreadable world and we are ALL part of it. Useful for anyone who makes media, analyzes it, consumes it, markets it or breathes."-Jane Espenson, writer-producer of *Battlestar Galactica*, *Once Upon a Time*, and *Husbands*

"By critically interrogating the ways in which media artifacts circulate, *Spreadable Media* challenges the

popular notion that digital content magically goes 'viral.' This book brilliantly describes the dynamics that underpin people's engagement with social media in ways that are both theoretically rich and publicly meaningful."-Danah Boyd,*Microsoft Research*

"*Spreadable Media* is an essential read for anyone who wants to understand how media works today."-Deep Media

About the Author

Henry Jenkins is the Provost's Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts and Education at the University of Southern California.

Sam Ford is Director of Digital Strategy with Peppercomm Strategic Communications, an affiliate with the MIT Program in Comparative Media Studies and the Western Kentucky University Popular Culture Studies Program, and a regular contributor to *Fast Company*. He is co-editor of *The Survival of the Soap Opera* (2011).

Joshua Green is a Strategist at digital strategy firm Undercurrent. With a PhD in Media Studies, he has managed research projects at MIT and the University of California. He is author (with Jean Burgess) of *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (2009, Polity Press).

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