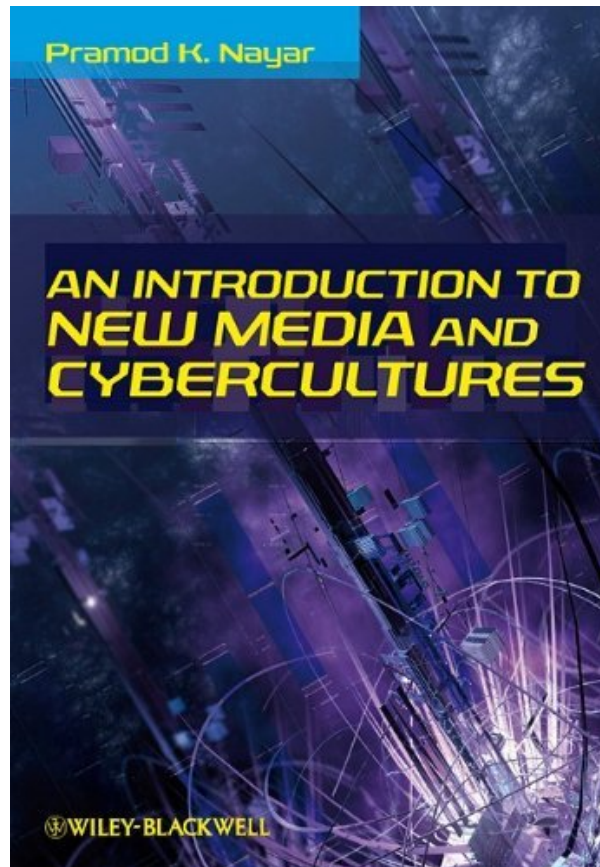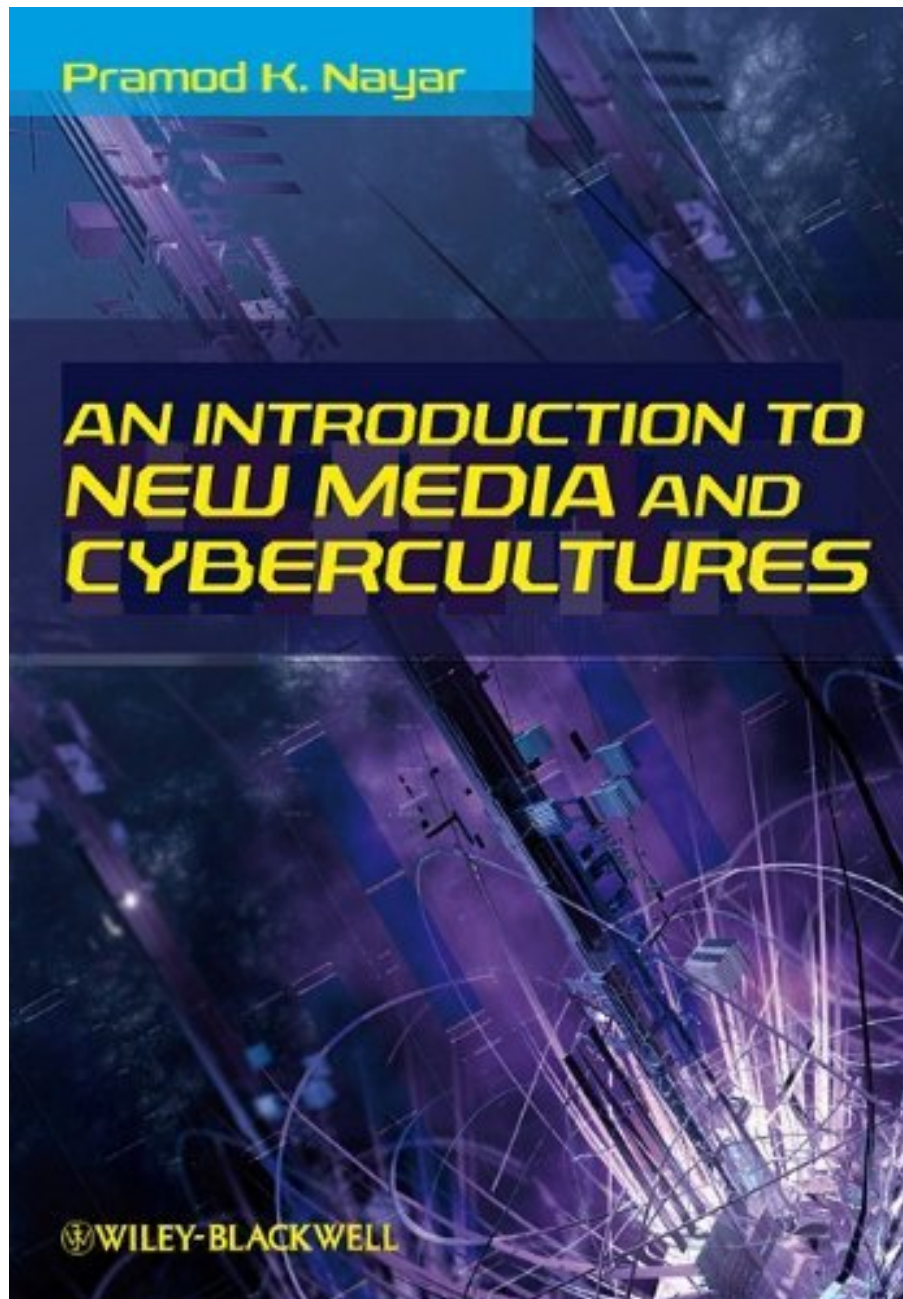# AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW MEDIA AND CYBERCULTURES BY PRAMOD K. NAYAR

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About the Author
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- Considers cyberculture and new media through contemporary race, gender and sexuality studies and postcolonial theory
- Offers a clear analysis of some of the most complex issues in cybercultures, including identity, network societies, new geographies, and connectivity
- Includes discussions of gaming, social networking, geography, net-democracy, aesthetics, popular internet culture, the body, sexuality and politics
- Examines key questions in the political economy, racialization, gendering and governance of cyberculture

- Sales Rank: #1988330 in eBooks
- Published on: 2011-05-18
- Released on: 2011-05-18
- Format: Kindle eBook

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new identities and communities on the net
By W Boudville
One feature of the book is that Nayar takes the reader through a lot of the trendy slang and jargon that has arisen around the Internet. Of these, perhaps the most loaded is hacking. Much space is devoted to explaining a mystique or maybe more accurately a conceit of what makes a 'good' hacker. We see that participants eshew the trendy meaning of intruder. Instead they much prefer the sense of someone smart who mostly harmlessly peers into every nook on the net.

Cyberpunk also gets extensive play. It was first conceived by the science fiction author William Gibson in his 1984 book Neuromancer and readily adopted. Think computer programmers with an attitude! One chapter looks at variants of these, eliding into cyberterrorism, where a talented hacker might sell his destructive abilities to a bidder, or act out of his own beliefs.

The book does a survey of many sociological studies of the Internet, where these studies were often done on the most important subset, the Web. We read of several conclusions as to whether the net truly gives rise to

new public and private spaces, and of the possibility of a person constructing new identities or personas. Moving beyond the individual, there is a discussion about the nature of communities that exist solely on the net, and how real or persistent they can be.

Now if you are not a sociologist, but a computer expert, the book is worth perusing. For it shows how outsiders to the net are parsing your interactions, not at the clickstream level, but at a higher level of social intercourse. Reading this external analysis may also give you a useful and deeper understanding of your customary activities on the net.

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