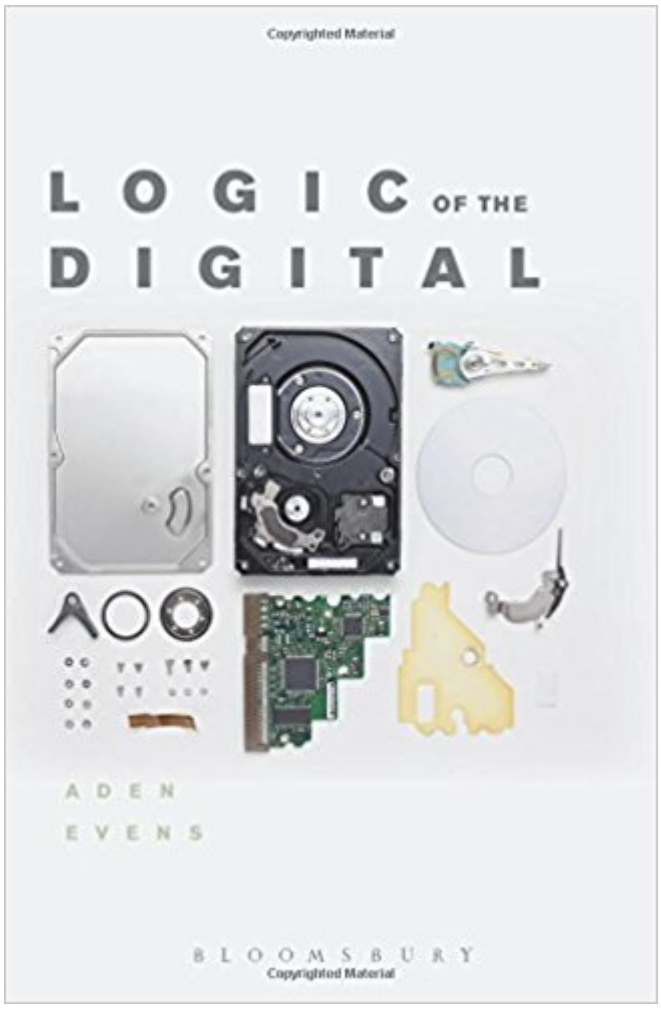
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Logic Of The Digital



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Synopsis

Building a foundational understanding of the digital, Logic of the Digital reveals a unique digital ontology. Beginning from formal and technical characteristics, especially the binary code at the core of all digital technologies, Aden Evens traces the pathways along which the digital domain of abstract logic encounters the material, human world. How does a code using only 0s and 1s give rise to the vast range of applications and information that constitutes a great and growing portion of our world?Evens' analysis shows how any encounter between the actual and the digital must cross an ontological divide, a gap between the productive materiality of the human world and the reductive abstraction of the binary code. Logic of the Digital examines the distortions of this ontological crossing, considering the formal abstraction that persists in exemplary digital technologies and techniques such as the mouse, the Web, the graphical user interface, and the development of software. One crucial motive for this research lies in the paradoxical issue of creativity in relation to digital technologies: the ontology of abstraction leaves little room for the unpredictable or accidental that is essential to creativity, but digital technologies are nevertheless patently creative. Evens inquires into the mechanisms by which the ostensibly sterile binary code can lend itself to such fecund cultural production. Through clarification of the digital's ontological foundation, Evens points to a significant threat to creativity lurking in the nature of the digital and so generates a basis for an ethics of digital practice. Examining the bits that give the digital its ontology, exploring the potentials and limitations of programming, and using gaming as an ideal test of digital possibility, Logic of the Digital guides future practices and shapes academic research in the digital.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages
Publisher: Bloomsbury Academic; Reprint edition (March 23, 2017)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 1350027472
ISBN-13: 978-1350027473
Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.4 x 233.9 inches
Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item
Best Sellers Rank: #1,141,138 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #47 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Analytic Philosophy #533 inÃ Â Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Philosophy > Logic #1186 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Logic &

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Customer Reviews

In pointing a finger at the digital, Aden Evens is neither skeptical nor enthusiastic, but offers a careful tracking of the logic described in his title. Careful in the meticulous and informed argument, written in lucid and downright enjoyable prose; but also careful in how far to lament or grieve future outcomes, and here Evens is reasoned and balanced in weighing the potentials of the digital; and finally, care in assessing the burden or weight of the digital on us - how much care we need to take. In this, Evens pulls off the feat of arguing the digital is defined by its abstraction and showing this abstraction in the most pragmatic and everyday ways possible. We feel the digital's weight in all we do today, and Evens' book is a wise and necessary guide.CHOICEEvens (Dartmouth College) argues that something is lost in our interactions with digital technologies. Clearly, much is changed, but is the loss more than the gain? Evens ... develops the argument ... as a critique of abstraction, an etymological deconstruction of language used to talk about abstraction, and prescriptive critical analyses of Smalltalk, the user interface, and the World Wide Web. ... It may well be that digital objects have a more austere logic than physical objects, but this makes it even more important to understand how they have nevertheless transformed human activity and experience so rapidly and thoroughly. Useful for graduate students, primarily to provoke critical discussions about digital technology. Summing Up: Recommended. Graduate students.

Aden Evens is Associate Professor of English at Dartmouth College, USA.

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