Prometheus Wired: The Hope for Democracy in the Age of Network Technology

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From all sides, we hear that computer technology, with its undeniable power to disseminate information and connect individuals, holds enormous potential for a reinvigoration of political life. But will the Internet really spark a democratic revolution? And will the changes it brings be so profound that past political thought will be of little use in helping us to understand them?

In *Prometheus Wired,* Darin Barney debunks claims that a networked society will provide the infrastructure for a political revolution and shows that the resources we need for understanding and making sound judgments about this new technology are surprisingly close at hand. By looking to thinkers who grappled with the relationship of society and technology, such as Plato, Aristotle, Marx, and Heidegger, Barney critically examines such assertions about the character of digital networks.

Along the way, Barney offers an eye-opening history of digital networks and then explores a wide range of contemporary issues, such as electronic commerce, telecommuting, privacy, virtual community, digital surveillance, and the possibility of sovereign governance in an age of global networks. Ultimately, Barney argues that instead of placing power back in the hands of the public, a networked economy seems to exacerbate the worst features of industrial capitalism, and, in terms of the surveillance and control it exerts, reduces our political freedom.

Of vital interest to politicians, communicators, and anyone concerned about the future of democracy in the digital age, *Prometheus Wired* adds a provocative new voice to the debate swirling around "the Net" and the ways in which it will, or will not, change our political lives.

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