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The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier

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Found at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10535/18>

PDF

Type: Book
Author: Rheingold, Howard
Publisher: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company
Location: Reading, MA
Date: 1993
URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/10535/18>
Sector: New Commons
Region:

Subject(s): internet
technology

Abstract: From introduction: "Daddy is saying `Holy moly!' to his computer again!" "Those words have become a family code for the way my virtual community has infiltrated our real world. My seven-year-old daughter knows that her father congregates with a family of invisible friends who seem to gather in his computer. Sometimes he talks to them, even if nobody else can see them. And she knows that these invisible friends sometimes show up in the flesh, materializing from the next block or the other side of the planet. "Since the summer of 1985, for an average of two hours a day, seven days a week, I've been plugging my personal computer into my telephone and making contact with the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link)--a computer conferencing system that enables people around the world to carry on public conversations and exchange private electronic mail (e-mail). The idea of a community accessible only via my computer screen sounded cold to me at first, but I learned quickly that people can feel passionately about e-mail and computer conferences. I've become one of them. I care about these people I met through my computer, and I care deeply about the future of the medium that enables us to assemble. "I'm not alone in this emotional attachment to an apparently bloodless technological ritual. Millions of people on every continent also participate in the computer-mediated social groups known as virtual communities, and this population is growing fast. Finding the WELL was like discovering a cozy little world that had been flourishing without me, hidden within the walls of my house; an entire cast of characters welcomed me to the troupe with great merriment as soon as I found the secret door. Like others who fell into the WELL, I soon discovered that I was audience, performer, and scriptwriter, along with my companions, in an ongoing improvisation. A full-scale subculture was growing on the other side of my telephone jack, and they invited me to help create something new."

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Files	Size	Format	View
The_Virtual_Community.pdf	1.224Mb	PDF	View/Open

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