Virtual Knowledge: Experimenting in the Humanities and the Social Sciences (MIT Press)

Paul Wouters, Anne Beaulieu, Andrea Scharnhorst, Sally Wyatt

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Today we are witnessing dramatic changes in the way scientific and scholarly knowledge is created, codified, and communicated. This transformation is connected to the use of digital technologies and the virtualization of knowledge. In this book, scholars from a range of disciplines consider just what, if anything, is new when knowledge is produced in new ways. Does knowledge itself change when the tools of knowledge acquisition, representation, and distribution become digital? Issues of knowledge creation and dissemination go beyond the development and use of new computational tools. The book, which draws on work from the Virtual Knowledge Studio, brings together research on scientific practice, infrastructure, and technology. Focusing on issues of digital scholarship in the humanities and social sciences, the contributors discuss who can be considered legitimate knowledge creators, the value of "invisible" labor, the role of data visualization in policy making, the visualization of uncertainty, the conceptualization of openness in scholarly communication, data floods in the social sciences, and how expectations about future research shape research practices. The contributors combine an appreciation of the transformative power of the virtual with a commitment to the empirical study of practice and use.

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