Let Them Eat Data: How Computers Affect Education, Cultural Diversity, and the Prospects of Ecological Sustainability

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Do computers foster cultural diversity? Ecological sustainability? In our age of high-tech euphoria we seem content to leave tough questions like these to the experts. That dangerous inclination is at the heart of this important examination of the commercial and educational trends that have left us so uncritically optimistic about global computing.

Contrary to the attitudes that have been marketed and taught to us, says C. A. Bowers, the fact is that computers operate on a set of Western cultural assumptions and a market economy that drives consumption. Our indoctrination includes the view of global computing innovations as inevitable and on a par with social progress—a perspective dismayingly suggestive of the mindset that engendered the vast cultural and ecological disruptions of the industrial revolution and world colonialism.

In *Let Them Eat Data* Bowers discusses important issues that have fallen into the gap between our perceptions and the realities of global computing, including the misuse of the theory of evolution to justify and legitimate the global spread of computers, and the ecological and cultural implications of unmooring knowledge from its local contexts as it is digitized, commodified, and packaged for global consumption. He also suggests ways that educators can help us think more critically about technology.

Let Them Eat Data is essential reading if we are to begin democratizing technological decisions, conserving true cultural diversity and intergenerational forms of knowledge, and living within the limits and possibilities of the earth's natural systems.

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