In the fall of 2003 in Toronto, at the annual conference of the Association of Internet Researchers, Steve Jones, president and founder, in a keynote address, outlined a pressing challenge to his diverse, interdisciplinary constituency: Reorient your research lenses from attenuations of textual presence on the Internet to attenuations of networks of people and power; from questions of what constitutes power in the realm of machines to questions of how power is constituted in networks of human activity. Indeed, for Jones, the issue of privileging the Internet over people—of what over how—is a significant tension that plagues and epitomizes the field of Internet-based research today.

Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers’ edited anthology *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*, at least in title, would seem to address this challenge directly, emerging at a moment when the loosely constituted and highly interdisciplinary field of Internet Research is struggling with questions of orientation and identity. Can a theoretical coupling of technological steering and human action serve to constitute the basis of a new field of inquiry? Given the extremities of studying machines versus people, and the complexities of how social action is achieved through technology, can any one term possibly encompass a diverse set of approaches to Internet Research? Indeed, do such names and labels really matter?

David Silver, in the epilogue to *Cyberactivism*, clearly suggests that they do. “As with all new fields of inquiry, we are well advised to begin by defining what we mean by the term ‘cyberactivism’. What are its key characteristics?” (p. 280). Indeed, many of the contributors to *Cyberactivism* dwell extensively on such questions of what: Sandor Vegh, in his chapter “Classifying Forms of Online Activism: The Case of Cyberprotests against the World Bank,” traces cyberactivist tactics, ultimately arranging them in three categories: awareness/advocacy, organization/mobilization, action/reaction. Similarly, Laura J. Gurak and John Logie, in their chapter “Internet Protest, from Text to Web,” use two case studies to describe effective online protests, characterizing cyberactivism as revolving around positives like speed and reach, and negatives like fact checking and credibility. Dorothy Kidd describes experiences in the evolution of Indymedia.org, characterizing its development as the birth of a new communications commons; Michael D. Ayers compares collective identity in online and offline feminist activist communities, asking what kinds of collective identity are possible in cyberspace; Maria Garrido and Alexander Halavais attempt to tease out and map the structure of the online network of support for the Zapatista movement; Joanne Lebert’s case study probes Amnesty International’s use of information and communication technologies extensively, characterizing structural efficiencies and inefficiencies; and finally, both Steven McLaine, in “Ethnic Online Communities: Between Profit and Purpose,” and Joshua Gamson, in “Gay Media, Inc.: Media Structures, the New Gay Conglomerates, and Collective Sexual Identities,” explore the inherent potential for the commodification of online communities, directing our attention to structures of ownership and control, ultimately characterizing and warning against the limitations of activism in an increasingly concentrated and converged media landscape.

*Cyberactivism* well represents the diverse constituency of researchers Jones addressed in his keynote—their propensity to privilege machine/structural presence as well as their often conflicting approaches to Internet Research. From political economic analyses to “Habermasian” elaborations to social movement theory to cultural and media studies, although *Cyberactivism* provides a rich snapshot of the landscape of current Internet Research, it falls short of delimiting a new research field. And the question remains as to why it even attempts to.
Activists have not only incorporated the Internet into their repertoire but also, as this volume shows, have changed substantially what counts as activism, what counts as community, collective identity, democratic space, and political strategy. And online activists challenge us to think about how cyberspace is meant to be used. (McCaughey & Ayers, pp.1-2)

If as McCaughey & Ayers suggest, we are challenged to think about what counts as activism and how cyberspace is meant to be used, then we should be reminded of Foucault’s insistence that any such explorations begin not from definitional questions of what, but from practical questions of how: “rather than asking what, in a given period, is regarded as sanity or insanity, as mental illness or normal behavior, I wanted to ask how these divisions are effected” (Foucault & Faubion, 2000, p. 224). Central to the work of Foucault is the idea that privileging questions of what will only lead to fleeting articulations of techno-social structures, which ultimately shed limited light on practice, people, and power. Fundamental to Foucault’s approach is the idea that deep interrogations of regimes of practice must be enabled as the starting point to any articulation of forces. And even then, Foucault cautions us that the goal of research should not be to unearth a buried stratum of continuity but rather to analyze through a series of research events, regimes of practice according to the multiplicity of processes that constitute them, ultimately constructing “a ‘polyhedron of intelligibility’, the number of whose faces is not given in advance and can never properly be taken as finite” (Foucault & Faubion, 2000, p. 227).

Indeed, Cyberactivism is not without such deep interrogations of practice. In “Identifying with Information,” Wyatt Galusky delves deeply into collective practices surrounding the constitution of expertise in the environmental anti-toxin movement, suggesting that “the issue is not the solution to the problem, but the construction of the problem itself” (p. 199). Similarly, Larry Elin’s interrogation of the practices surrounding “The Radicalization of Zeke Spier” deftly probes the practiced-space-in-between to which Foucault would like us to attenuate our lenses: a deep interrogation of how codes of activism at once govern ways of doing and, at the same time, found, justify, and provide reasons for doing.

Overall, where Cyberactivism does not mark a watershed moment in the field, representing the birth or bifurcation of a new illuminating branch of study, it does provide detailed and rich snapshots of diverse practices surrounding activism, cyberstudies, and social movements. At the same time, it serves as a cautionary reminder of the challenges and limitations surrounding Internet research practices today.

Reference