

## Editorial

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Every contribution in this issue features, or makes reference to, digital technologies and social media platforms. Nick Dyer-Witford and Alessandra Mularoni analyse U.S. media framings of the clash between Big Tech (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple) and an anti-trust movement of disparate strands. Their cross-section of news media publications and sites sampled over two periods between December 2019 and December 2020 captured the entire anti-trust spectrum—corporate oligopolists, light-touch regulators, neo-Brandeisans, right-wing populists and Democratic eco-socialists. Associated issues of concern included business competition, labour conditions, privacy invasion, algorithmic bias and the manipulation of young social media users. Underlying such controversy was a struggle over revenue streams between Big Tech and the largest “legacy” media corporations.

Against the framings of Big Tech and the techno-economic models of platform capitalism, Vangelis Papadimitropoulos explicates digital commons principles such as cooperation, decentralisation, open knowledge, open-source software, participatory budgeting, intercommunity transactions and eco-sustainability. He also locates their intellectual genealogies—liberalism, Marxism, anarcho-syndicalism, critical theory and existential political philosophy. In the process, a major contradiction of the digital commons is uncovered. The fluid, hybrid and mobile identities of individuals in the networked information economy do not mesh with the social equilibrium of settled communities.

Francisco Javier Vidal Bonifaz considers how the concentration and centralisation of capital shape mass media institutions. Thus, the monopolisation of Mexican pay television, as part of broadcast television development, had produced five consortiums by the 1970s. Then, three groups prevailed with the introduction of multi-channel, multi-point distribution services incorporating satellite technology. Ultimately, though, they had to reorganise their operations for the arrival of online audiovisual services based on the internet protocol. In this context, cable companies, with pay TV holdings, have incorporated new streaming services from Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime and HBO Max.

Tarek Cherkaoui’s commentary on Al Jazeera’s first 25 years exemplifies the integration of pan-regional television broadcasting and social media platforms. Al Jazeera Arab and Al Jazeera English together, are the pillars of a multimedia operation with an unmistakable geopolitical presence. Benjamin Birkinbine and Paško Bilić’s commentary reveals that “legacy” communication conglomerates are no longer viable by themselves. Amazon’s absorption of MGM and its content archives merely strengthens the streaming arm of a multi-limbed behemoth which defies regulation. The review essay draws from two important works to ponder the globality, exponential growth and ecological repercussions of AI capitalism.