



Neil M. Alperstein

Celebrity and Mediated Social Connections

Fans, Friends and Followers in the Digital Age

- Analyzes what happens when media is a constant in daily life, considering how communication that used to be one-way becomes interactive
- Engages with research and methodologies ranging from Communication and Media Studies to Celebrity Studies, Digital Sociology to Media Psychology
- Raises questions on the place of imagination in a world drive by virtual, digital interfaces

Celebrity and Mediated Social Connections is a critical examination of the multiple realities of the mediated culture we traverse, extending from our imaginary inner worlds to the imagined communities of digital media. Chapters explore the dialogic at work when we connect with celebrities and internalize aspects of their personas due to the various social roles they serve within our everyday lives. What might begin as strong identification and internalization within our imaginary worlds, in this digital age, sometimes seeps out as we connect to celebrities, their fans, friends and followers in ways that were not formerly possible. The book contains topics that range from the degradation of micro-celebrities, the role of celebrities in promoting prescription drugs and their role in contemporary social movements. The common thread that runs through the book presents a mediated world that paradoxically allows if not encourages people to daydream, engage in stream of consciousness thinking and fantasize about celebrities, all while concurrently compelling us to engage in a digitally based objective world. The possibility of interaction on and through digital media intensifies the emotional connection between celebrity and fan. The more personal details one gives up, the closer we feel we become—digital intimacy based on the excessive self. Digital media entice us to engage and remain tethered to technology, staying continuously connected so as not to miss the latest post or meme. To suggest we should build a proverbial wall between the two—imaginary and objective worlds—runs counter to the reality of an always on, always connected culture in which we presently live.

1st ed. 2019, XXI, 242 p. 24 illus., 21 illus. in color.

Printed book

Hardcover

69,99 € | £59.99 | \$84.99

^[1]74,89 € (D) | 76,99 € (A) | CHF

82,50

eBook

59,49 € | £47.99 | \$64.99

^[2]59,49 € (D) | 59,49 € (A) | CHF

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