



# Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness by Roy Ascott

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Long before e-mail and the Internet permeated society, Roy Ascott, a pioneering British artist and theorist, coined the term "telematic art" to describe the use of online computer networks as an artistic medium. In *Telematic Embrace* Edward A. Shanken gathers, for the first time, an impressive compilation of more than three decades of Ascott's philosophies on aesthetics, interactivity, and the sense of self and community in the telematic world of cyberspace. This book explores Ascott's ideas on how networked communication has shaped behavior and consciousness within and beyond the realm of what is conventionally defined as art.

Telematics, a powerful marriage of computers and telecommunication, made technologies we now take for granted—such as e-mail and automated teller machines (ATMs)—part of our daily life, and made art a more interactive form of expression. Telematic art challenges traditional relationships between artist, artwork, and audience by allowing nonlocal audiences to influence the emergent qualities of the artwork, which consists of the ebb and flow of electronic information. These essays constitute a unique archaeology of ideas, tracing Ascott's meditations on the formation of consciousness through the intertwined cultural histories of art and technology from the 1960s to the present.

Shanken's introduction situates Ascott's work within a history of ideas in art, technology, and philosophy. Given the increasing role of the Internet and the World Wide Web in the creation of commerce and community at the dawn of this new millennium, scholars, students, laypeople, policymakers, and artists will find this collection informative and thought-provoking.

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