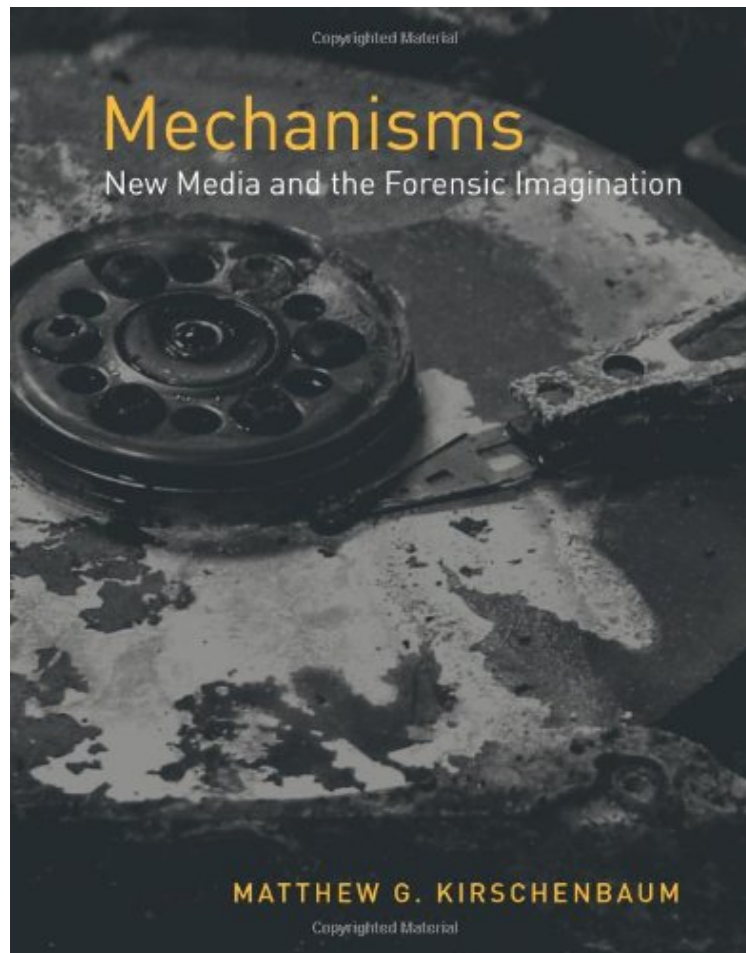


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Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination

Matthew G. Kirschenbaum

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Matthew G. Kirschenbaum : Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. InvisibleBy Frank A. StephensonThe days of eBooks are here, and with that prompts the question: are there differences in electronic writing? The short answer is yes. One of the directions computer forensics is moving is to look at new media in different ways. For example, how different operating systems compiles information, or how specific versions of the same documents appear. How about different devices for storage? Formats? Platforms? But do not stop there; images count, too. A GIF and a JPEG of the same image may look the same on the screen, but they are not the same to what the eye cannot see, at least not until a histogram is produced for each image. Then the differences are visible, but only then. The author of this book is quite advanced in the study of electronic media, and his awards speak volumes. This treatise opened my eyes to what is

invisible and why. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Writing is writing is writing By Kent In my mind, or for what I need this book for, Kirschenbaum's most important argument is that digital recording, like all others, requires a physical substrate that means it is a unique artifact and that it has identifiable provenances. This is important because it allows us to discuss digital technics alongside print technics. A very important book in this regard. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Mechanisms is a Gamechanger By N. Kelber Mechanisms is an excellent introduction into the forensics of computer inscription. Whereas a great deal of digital humanities research has focused upon using computers to study codexes, Kirschenbaum's book seeks to closely examine the "born-digital" world of text. The book offers a forensic perspective into hard drives, file systems, and computer history. How does one examine the laptop of Salman Rushdie? What information is contained within a hard drive using tools like hex editors? Is it appropriate to access information that may be private or sensitive? Mechanisms offers new perspectives in analyzing the "born-digital" but also propels the fields of bibliography and textual criticism into the digital age. This is a must-read for anyone interested in the digital humanities field.

In *Mechanisms*, Matthew Kirschenbaum examines new media and electronic writing against the textual and technological primitives that govern writing, inscription, and textual transmission in all media: erasure, variability, repeatability, and survivability. *Mechanisms* is the first book in its field to devote significant attention to storage--the hard drive in particular--arguing that understanding the affordances of storage devices is essential to understanding new media. Drawing a distinction between "forensic materiality" and "formal materiality," Kirschenbaum uses applied computer forensics techniques in his study of new media works. Just as the humanities discipline of textual studies examines books as physical objects and traces different variants of texts, computer forensics encourage us to perceive new media in terms of specific versions, platforms, systems, and devices. Kirschenbaum demonstrates these techniques in media-specific readings of three landmark works of new media and electronic literature, all from the formative era of personal computing: the interactive fiction game *Mystery House*, Michael Joyce's *Afternoon: A Story*, and William Gibson's electronic poem "Agrippa."

"At last in Kirschenbaum's *Mechanisms* we have our tactical plan for thinking inside the black box of digital media, for moving past 'screen studies' to a new take on electronic media informed by deep understanding of technological practices of inscription and storage. Kirschenbaum introduces a fresh and enlightening dichotomy, that of the interplay of formal and forensic inscription. This dichotomy becomes the raw material for cutting the key to a new critical apparatus for unlocking studies of digital media."--Henry Lowood, Curator for History of Science Technology Collections, Germanic Collections, and Film Media Collections, Stanford University Libraries (Henry Lowood) "Kirschenbaum's book is the most rigorous, cohesive, historically-informed, materially grounded, and theoretically interesting treatment of the nature of text in the age of digital mutation that I have yet encountered. The book introduces completely new materials and unique archival and site-specific research within an innovative methodological framework blending the new textual scholarship with the equally new discipline of digital forensics. In essence, Kirschenbaum argues that digital texts may be strange things, but they are assuredly things soliciting the same level of material and theoretical inquiry that has driven the recent burst of interest in the history of the book and media archaeology. *Mechanisms* is destined to be a landmark work for the field of digital textual studies in the same way that Lev Manovitch's *Language of New Media* was for the digital arts and new media fields."--Alan Liu, Department of English, University of California, Santa Barbara (Alan Liu) About the Author Matthew G. Kirschenbaum is Associate Professor of English and Associate Director, Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH), University of Maryland. He was a 2011 Guggenheim Fellow.