Unlimited, 2002), with individual chapters for the major social science disciplines, also a collaborative product primarily of librarians at a single institution. Since these books tend to emphasize long-standing resources for the most part, their usefulness is not completely diminished by the fact that they have not been published as recently as this book.—*Marilyn Domas White, University of Maryland.*

Turner, Fred. *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. 327p. alk. paper, $29 (ISBN 0226817415). LC 2005-34149.

For those who were, or are, fans of the *Whole Earth Catalog* (*WEC*), as is this reviewer, it is effortless to conjure up the experience of using the *WEC*: it is printed in a large format, on newsprint; one opens it randomly to any page, reads randomly on the page, reads the snippet of the novel on the right-hand side of the page, flips to the next page, reads a bit more, turns to another random page, maybe following the thread of the novel in a linear way for a while, altogether losing oneself and all track of time in the process. Many of us use the World Wide Web in much the same way. How is it that the process is so similar, and so familiar? The compelling evidence presented by Fred Turner in his recent book, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*, indicates that it is attributable to Stewart Brand and his San Francisco Bay Area associates and their imposition of a cultural approach to both the Whole Earth Catalog and to the World Wide Web. Influenced by his professors at Stanford University, including Paul Ehrlich, author of *The Population Bomb*, Norbert Wiener's *Cybernetics*, the work of anthropologist Gregory Bateson, and by his participation in the famous Trips Festival, Acid Tests, and the Merry Pranksters, Ken Kesey's band of rowdies, Brand saw cultural and social linkages between events both political and technological. As Larry Tesler, from the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) and Apple Computers, observes: "The rest of us are just doing [something]…it's our life. We don't try to put it in some other context. Stewart comes along and observes it as an anthropologist would or as a journalist. He creates some new organization … maybe brings it to the world in a way that it wasn't before. He looks at a thing and sees a missing business or a missing publication."

For those who are unfamiliar or who have forgotten, each edition of the *Whole Earth Catalog* was prefaced by an editorial statement that began with: "We are as gods, and we might as well get good at it." Following this was a statement for that particular edition that set the tone, one that took a cultural approach to technical problems. The specific problems may be beekeeping, waste treatment, or building, but the cultural aspects were never far away. In 1968, Stewart Brand edited the first newsprint edition of the *WEC*, with a group of friends and helpers collecting and reviewing outlets for information—many of which were product catalogs, specifically for the New Communalist movement—and for those who were abandoning society for the supposed refuge of primitive rural life. Successive editions continued the approach through *The Last Whole Earth Catalog*, published in 1971 and winning the National Book Award for that year, and the *Whole Earth Epilog*, published in 1974 and essentially volume 2 of the *Last WEC*. Each issue carried the subtitle of "Access to Tools," and these were tools defined broadly, tools for living a self-sufficient life, a good and rational life, a responsible life.

By 1974, most of the communes, for which Brand compiled the catalog, were defunct, thus undercutting the purpose of the *Whole Earth Catalog*. Influenced by Norbert Wiener's theories of cybernetics and by R. Buckminster Fuller's approach to systems, Brand continued pushing forward, with the unsuccessful *Whole Earth Software Catalog*, which proved too difficult to keep updated due to rapid de-

velopment in the area, the more successful *Whole Earth Review*, and the *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, the former of which is still in publication as *Whole Earth.* What they accomplished, despite the length of print run, was the further gathering in the Bay Area of like minds, a network of minds, who contributed to the various journals and who worked on the staff. The readership was also composed of nontraditional thinkers of great diversity.

As computers progressed from mainframes to time-share computing to early personal computers, those around Brand were at the forefront of the user group, adopting each new technology in turn. At all points, the technology was linked to a *culture of use* through the conscious efforts of Brand and his cohorts. Brand now had associates ranging from former members of communes to social theorists to publishers to technologists from MIT and Stanford. From this open-thinking ferment, with Brand at the center, later came the 1984 Hackers Conference, the highly successful, and still profitable and influential, Global Business Network (GBN), and, eventually, *Wired* magazine. At the Hackers Conference, Brand demonstrated his consideration of information as key to progress in his famous statement: "On the one hand, information wants to be expensive, because it's so valuable. The right information in the right place just changes your life. On the other hand, information wants to be free, because the cost of getting it out is getting lower and lower all the time" (*Whole Earth Review*, May 1985). Though oft-quoted out of context as "Information wants to be free," the entire quotation, including the context, shows a much more thoughtful idea. The impact of information in the "right place," moreover, is at the center of Brand's philosophy.

Brand's colleagues now included, by the early 1980s, individuals such as John Perry Barlow, former lyricist for The Grateful Dead, and Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Computers, and from these colleagues were born the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) and the WELL (the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link), the first Internet forum widely available to early users. Stewart Brand's influence continues to the present day, through this highly disparate group. Another observer, Dennis Allison, founding board member of the People's Computer Company, comments: "Stewart's a very moral guy. My every contact has been that he's trying to move people toward a better place. That's really the secret of Stewart."

Fred Turner has meticulously researched his topic in this book and has written a compelling history of a critical individual and his circle, a group that played an extraordinary, and, perhaps, evolutionary, role in the transition from the prominently agrarian/manufacturing society of post-World War II America to the highly technological society of the early 21st century. Turner's notes are extensive, and the bibliography is simply breathtaking in its depth and breadth. His prose is clear and concise, and he seldom speaks with an academic tone. Turner is clearly intrigued, if not excited by, his subject. For professionals in the field of information dissemination and management, much can be learned by reading this fascinating and highly recommended study.—*Tom Schneiter, Harvard University.*

Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice. Eds. Charlotte Hess and Elinor Ostrom. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007. 367p., $36 (ISBN 0262083574). LC 2006-27385.

For many of us, the term "commons" has a very specific physical connotation. Over the last twenty years, we have been pushed by our administrators and users alike to update our fuddy-duddy image and create glitzy high-tech spaces in our libraries. These spaces have been christened with snazzy names such as "information commons," "knowledge commons," "digital commons," "information arcade," "the hub," and so on. At first blush, it might seem as though this monograph is semantically parsing and deconstructing this