texts themselves are well written, intellectually stimulating, challenging, and entertaining. Moreover, the book is nicely illustrated with a series of eight full-color plates and is supplemented with title page transcriptions. The essays of Matthews, a prolific author, combine to create a thought-provoking text that will appeal to librarians, book collectors, and students of book history alike.—*Lois Fischer Black, North Carolina State University.*

West, Cynthia K. *Techno-Human Mesh: The Growing Power of Information Technologies.* Westport, Conn.: Quorum, 2001. 240p. $62.50, alk. paper (ISBN 1567204090). LC 00-037295.

Cynthia West's *Techno-Human Mesh* is a remarkable contribution to the research on the relations between the human body and digital devices. West is a political theorist who works as an independent consultant in the information technology industry. She spent more than ten years in Silicon Valley as a "digerati" researching how information technology (IT) affects, changes, and shapes society and culture globally. By examining the intersection of IT, power, people, and bodies, West demonstrates how new modes of surveillance and control in society and over human bodies are created by IT as it becomes more efficient, productive, and profitable.

Because the emerging technologies integrate bodies and machines through various interfaces, West explores the ways in which human–machine interface technologies, biometric technologies, and surveillance technologies change the way physical bodies are experienced. She analyzes the concepts of "body" and "power" using feminist and postmodern theories, including Donna Haraway's "cyborgs," Katherine Hayles's "embodiment," and Michel Foucault's "power networks." The concept of power networks, Foucault explains, is that "power is not a simple binary relationship of one class over another, but one of complex nonlinear relationships," which "is diffused throughout society, like a network, in a variety of locations, institutions, and practices."

Digerati are defined as those "people who are engaged in designing, developing, marketing, and selling IT products and services" or those with special IT knowledge. West analyzes various factors of digerati identity, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and economic status. The digerati is divided into three classes: first are the A-list digerati consisting of the executive management of IT companies, venture capitalists, and majority stockholders who fund the companies; second are the academic researchers and developers, engineers, and programmers who have special IT knowledge to design, produce, and develop IT; and third are the vice presidents, directors, and senior sales and marketing personnel who require enough IT knowledge to market and sell products. Digerati class is based on a variety of ethnic, racial, economic, and geographic factors. The majority of the digerati are from developed countries, although more and more are hired from developing countries because they will work for lower wages. These classes of digerati have different degrees of power. The people of the A-list have the greatest power through their ownership of companies.

Tracing the evolution of computers, West focuses on human–machine interface technologies. In her view, the progress of computer technology, size (smaller) and running speed (faster) are the major development trends. The smaller digital devices can be worn on human bodies easily and improve workers' flexibility and productivity. They also allow companies to hire less-experienced and minimally trained personnel as surrogate bodies through wireless communication. Through their efforts to merge machines and human bodies, the digerati are now in a good position to create more efficient tools in the name of productivity and profitability.

West believes that for the public good, the public must be engaged in IT development and recommends six levels of ac-

tive participation toward positive change in IT. One level is "resistance." Sometimes it is necessary to resist existing power networks. Another level is "local value influence." The active engagement and participation of individuals in shaping the way technologies are utilized "prior to their implementation, rather than after," is essential. "Technological democratization" is yet another level. IT designers must create technologies that foster democratic participation rather than hinder it. Another level is "toward a code of ethics." The integration of some common ethical principles into a professional code of ethics that applies to the entire IT industry is imperative. At the level of "philosophical leadership," the author makes a poorly articulated call for idealism and vision. Finally, there is the "philosophical paradigm shift," by which West means the development of a "grand theory" that can usefully explain all human–techno interaction while valuing individuals and diversity.

In summary, West's research explores how IT creates greater efficiency, productivity, and profitability, as well as producing more pervasive surveillance and control. She describes what the digital era could achieve and how we should proceed. This is a very valuable book for librarians and all others who want to better understand the broad impact of information technology on our society.—*Chengren Hu, Saint Louis University.*