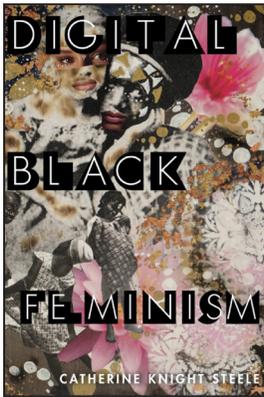


which to view what we call Information Literacy (IL) as a kind of public remembering (or forgetting). He challenges us to interrogate the affordances our mnemonic techné created for those less attuned to memory's infrastructure. To encourage all of us to continually remember anew, to think about the labor of memory: that is Johnson's provocative message.—*Anders Tobiason, Boise State University*

Catherine Knight Steele. *Digital Black Feminism*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2021. 208p. Paperback, \$27.00 (ISBN: 978-1-4798-0838-0).



Catherine Knight Steele's *Digital Black Feminism* is the first scholarly monograph to center the experiences, contributions, and impact of Black women in technology and digital culture studies. Across five chapters, Steele charts the evolution of Black feminism and demonstrates how technology has always been an integral part of Black women's lives in the United States. By interrogating the ways in which Black women and Black feminists have continually engaged with technology, Steele proves that "Black feminist thought work has forever altered digital communication technologies" (8). As a Black feminist with scholarly expertise and experience as both participant and observer in digital Black feminist spaces, Steele is uniquely positioned to make this important contribution.

Steele grounds her study in work set forth by Black feminists like Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, and Joan Morgan, delivering an approachable text that unpacks the important, nuanced ideologies of digital Black feminism.

Chapter 1, "A History of Black Women in Technology, or Badges of Oppression and Positions of Strength," reviews the placement and treatment of Black women as laborers in the United States. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Black women developed the technical expertise required to complete and advance domestic, agricultural, and communicative tasks. This same technological expertise also provided a way for Black women to both navigate and resist the social and political structures in place that were designed to uphold their oppression. Steele traces Black women's use of technology, from material tools to perform field labor and domestic work to oral and written devices used as tools for self-preservation and advocacy, to show that the development of technology cannot be separated from Black women and their interactions with it.

In chapter 2, "Black Feminist Technoculture, or the Virtual Beauty Shop," Steele introduces the idea of the virtual beauty shop to describe Black feminist technoculture as well as the relationship between Black women and technology. As a metaphor, the virtual beauty shop creates space to explore Black women's use of technology on its own terms, and within a context that is designed by and for Black women—just like Black beauty shops. Steele highlights the features, or technologies, of the virtual shop using a framework of hair care, entrepreneurs, and shoptalk. Through the use of this metaphor, Steele points directly to the rhetorical, entrepreneurial, and survival technologies used to move Black women to the center from the margins. Recognizing the relationships between Black women and technology creates space to consider the long and often complicated history of Black women's technology use, and the impact of digital technology on Black feminist discourse.

Chapter 3, "Principles for a Digital Black Feminism, or Blogging While Black," underscores the significance of the Black blogosphere and the possibilities it has created for Black

feminist thought and activity. Steele examines blogging as the foundation for social media and contemporary methods of digital communication. In this way, she articulates how blogs continue to serve as sites of Black digital expression, or virtual beauty shops, and Black feminist technoculture. Steele argues that Black feminist possibilities are achieved in these spaces through principles of agency, the right to self-identify, gender nonbinary spaces of discourse, complicated allegiances, and dialectic of self and community interests.

Steele uses chapter 4, "Digital Black Feminist Praxis, or Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing," to explore the development of tools, strategies, and processes of Black feminist digital culture. The presence of the internet and a burgeoning digital culture in Black feminists' lives has had an important impact on the evolution of Black feminist thought. Steele suggests a praxis of digital Black feminism to illustrate the dynamic relationships that exist between Black feminists, the tools at their disposal, and their work. To achieve this, Steele focuses on Zora Neale Hurston, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Feminista Jones, Jamilah Lemieux, and Luvvie Ajayi. Considered within a framework of capturing, publishing, and threading and stitching, Steele discusses how, over time, Black women have navigated the conflation of public and private selves in the process of producing Black feminist work.

Chapter 5, "Digital Black Feminism as Product, or 'It's Funny How Money Change a Situation,'" considers how the work of digital Black feminists has come to be rendered as commercially valuable. Steele uses a framework that includes branding, selling the goods, and prototypes to unpack how digital tools create new ways of exploring Black feminist thought and praxis. Engaging these tools with methods like signifyin' and self-naming allows digital Black feminists to create culturally specific content and manage their identities. Through their practice, digital Black feminists are able to resist both the challenges that are associated with commodification as well as the flattening of deeply nuanced and personalized ideologies that are central to Black feminist practice.

Steele concludes by imagining a digital Black feminist future. She notes the care and ethical considerations required to study and understand digital Black feminism. Demonstrating by example, Steele's work proves that Black women and Black feminist thought must not be left out of technological and digital discourse. *Digital Black Feminism* is an important publication with wide appeal and relevance for anyone in media studies, information studies, women and gender studies, Black studies, or seeking liberation.—Rachel E. Winston, *The University of Texas at Austin*