

DIY, *Alternative Cultures and Society*

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Aims and Scope

DIY, Alternative Cultures and Society (DIY) is the first academic journal dedicated to the theme of DIY (do-it-yourself) and alternative cultures. It is a fully peer reviewed international journal that publishes original research and review articles focusing on all aspects of DIY and alternative cultural practice and consumption in a global context. The journal caters to a rapidly growing demand from an international community of scholars whose work focuses on a broad range of DIY cultural practices. As this suggests, *DIY, Alternative Cultures and Society* is a strongly multidisciplinary journal. We welcome articles from the global community of scholars working on different facets of DIY and alternative cultures, encompassing alternative cultural economies, in a broad range of academic fields, including, but not limited to: (cultural) sociology, (social) anthropology, urban and rural studies, (social) history, economics, (social, cultural and critical) geography, psychology, cultural studies, media studies, law, politics, (cultural) criminology, languages and linguistics, art and design, fashion studies, film studies, musicology and ethnomusicology, radio and journalism studies, fine arts, sound studies and popular music studies. The journal also welcomes articles drawing on a wide range of conceptual approaches, including (but again not limited to) (post)structuralism, functionalism, social constructionism, conflict theory, behaviourism, homology, semiotics, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, critical theory, post-colonial theory and postmodernism. The journal has a strong focus on empirically informed work, featuring articles based on the various social science and humanities research methodologies ranging across quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods analysis: such methods will include (for example), ethnography and virtual ethnography, archival research, visual analysis, textual analysis, social network analysis, multi-correspondence analysis, multiple regression analysis, diachronic and synchronic analysis, discourse analysis, and linguistic analysis.

DIY, Alternative Cultures and Society is committed to publishing high quality research that explores all aspects of DIY in both contemporary and historical contexts. DIY describes forms of alternative cultural production and practice that are typically pitched against more mainstream, mass produced and commodified forms of culture. Whereas the latter sit within the nexus of profit directed cultural production and consumption that is characteristic of the cultural industries, DIY culture is located in an alternative sphere of cultural production including home studios, maker spaces and venues and other performance and exhibition settings in locations outside of formalised urban 'cultural quarters' or night-time economy infrastructures. Contemporary DIY culture is also characterised by an abundance of craftivist practices. DIY cultural production is frequently aligned with an anti-hegemonic ideology focused upon aesthetic preferences and lifestyles that do not align with mainstream political agendas and their associated societal and cultural values. As such, there are often close ties between forms of DIY cultural

production and consumption and new social movements, activist groups, activist manifestations, and other radical and fringe activities.

As a concept, DIY has a long and established legacy spanning many years. The term DIY was first used at the beginning of the twentieth century with reference to home improvement, although traditions of self-made artefacts, including clothing, furniture, arts and crafts and musical instruments etc. are evident long before this. Later in the twentieth century, both the Dada and Situationist movements drew strongly on DIY principles in their critiques of nationalist sentiment and industrial capitalism. The counter-culture of the late 1960s also drew on DIY principles, for example in the establishing of an underground press and in the back-to-the land philosophy that was integral to the founding of hippie communes, many of which were established in rural areas and adhered to principles of self-sufficiency and sustainability. The definition of DIY, as it is applied today, gained critical *momentum* during the late 1970s with the emergence of punk (an initially Anglo-American but latterly global form of oppositional culture). Punk established the blueprint for many forms of contemporary DIY cultural production, notably in relation to music production, fanzine culture and fashion design. Although indebted to punk and the platform it created for the broader expression of a DIY ethos, today DIY and the alternative forms of cultural production and practice that characterise it go well beyond the association with punk and post-punk. In the context of late modernity, DIY culture is characterised by trans-locally networked scenes and communities encompassing a broad range of activities including music, theatre, dance, cinema, video arts, literature and poetry, fashion, street art, architecture, crafts, art and design, and digital media. DIY has come to describe and encompass a broad and increasingly diverse range of cultural practices that extend to things such as environmental advocacy, human and animal rights, activism and social/spatial justice. Such meta issues are explored and articulated through a range of alternative cultural production and consumption practices based on an ethos of inclusion, tolerance, humanism and sustainability. Over time, a practical community of discussion concerning the relationship between DIY cultures, the arts, political participation, and citizenship has taken root. This community is animated and nurtured by academics, researchers, art critics, but also artists and activists. These distinct modes of contemporary creation, production, mediation and artistic action can be understood from the point of view of activism and, concomitantly, as an alternative means of resistance and social and artistic subversion. This DIY activism was born out of a feeling of indignation on the part of various fringes of the population who, consequently, saw the artistic field as a means of confrontation, expression, and social change. Since the 1990s, however, art with a message has become more prevalent and diverse. Even the most autonomous forces in the art worlds have been forced to acknowledge its existence, and its association with DIY cultures has greatly contributed to this 'recognition'. Examples here include the various forms of protest that took form in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, including the Occupy Movement, and the Arab Spring.

Another salient feature of DIY since the late 1990s has been its significance as the driving force behind a rapidly growing and diversifying form of alternative cultural economy. A number of factors, socio-economic, cultural and technological, underpin this. Post-industrialisation in the western world has led to a radically altered landscape of work and employment opportunities. Aligned with an increasing scarcity of full-time and continuing career pathways, short-term and casual labour has become increasingly the norm, giving rise in turn to the gig economy and portfolio careers. As such, people around the world are increasingly drawing on new skill sets, these often resulting not from formalised training but rather being self-acquired. Such new modes of skilling up have been facilitated in no small part by the emergence and rapid development of digital media tools. In fact, not only have such tools brought creative opportunities within reach of a much larger number of people, they have also made the creation and dissemination of cultural products far more streamlined than was previously possible using analogue equipment. For example, whereas music production or documentary making once necessitated the use of a professional recording studio or editing suite and the hiring in of specialised forms of labour to oversee the creation

of the finished product, today these and other forms of creative practice can be managed ‘inside the box’. Even with access to only a laptop computer and digital interface or video camera, music and documentaries of a highly professional standard can be made, often by one person or a small team instead of the larger division of labour that was once necessary to create and deliver such product. Although not in most cases providing those involved with a living wage, a partial income aligned with creative autonomy serves as a bedrock motivation for many engaged in such alternative career pathways. Such trends can be seen in cities and regions around the world where home studios and communal maker spaces, among other initiatives, contribute to a global DIY cultural infrastructure. Such is the level of activity in this sphere of DIY cultural production that it is quickly coming to rival, and in some cases overtake, more mainstream forms of cultural production. This is notable, for example, in the sphere of music-making where the number of professional recording studios has significantly reduced as a result of home studios and other forms of ‘in-the-box’ music making. Similarly, the amount of DIY content now available on Youtube, though not a threat to professional and film and documentary making at the same level, signifies a critical shift in the way that this and other audio-visual material is now being produced and by whom.

On the other hand, it must also be acknowledged that the capitalist economy and the ways in which it appropriates the ethos and practices of DIY creates in the process an alternative culture that may have dystopian characteristics. This may be particularly observed in the recent reconfiguration of the economy of the Global North, with the emergence of a platform or gig economy, where the acronym GAFAM (Google; Apple; Facebook; Amazon; and Microsoft) demonstrates the power of the world’s major digital platforms. With the platformisation of the economy also came a platformization of cultural production, especially at the level of organisation and distribution of contents that, in turn, promotes and is based on online interactions.

In this way, platformization provides an ideological environment that appropriates DIY values, namely in the area of creative and cultural labour in general, and at the level of streaming. Thus, DIY ends up being transmuted into an entrepreneurial and self-employment narrative that also extends to the increasing prevalence of immaterial labour. This refers to the extension of precariousness and a ‘wageless life’ of creative workers who dedicate a significant amount of time to activities and professions with long periods of precariousness and irregular or non-existent salaries. Activities that can only be maintained when associated with ‘getting by’ strategies, such as portfolio careers (artists who are at the same time editors, DJs, newspaper critics, etc., in order to earn an income) and linked to informal labour practices, such as informal cash-in-hand work, non-monetized barter exchanges or favour-swapping.

Consequently, under the aegis of Web 2.0 and on the affirmation of platformisation, we can question how DIY values come to be used by the capitalist economy in the concealing of an aggressive and controlling ‘dystopian’ economic model. The latter frequently plays out under a guise of ‘flexibility’ and ‘free agency’ which, in turn, gives rise to hyper-capitalising effects of a notion of governability that is founded on the commodification of the data and productions that circulate within these dystopian but massified digital platforms.

Format of the Journal

It is our aim to publish the best international work on a broad range of topics directly relating to DIY and alternative cultures. The articles published in *DIY* will be broad in scope in terms of both theoretical and methodological content in keeping with the journal’s mission to attract submissions from across a range of disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences. With the vast pool of experienced academics that make up the *DIY* Editorial Board, we will commit to a swift (8–12 weeks) turnaround time for reviews of articles submitted to the journal. It will be a requirement that all submissions are in English and that the format of submissions complies with the journal’s contributor guidelines. On receipt, each article will be checked by the Peer Review Assistant for formatting and grammatical content before being sent out for peer review. Articles will each be reviewed by three peer reviewers, with at least one reviewer

who has direct knowledge of the field/topic of the paper while other reviewers will have broader perspectives on the topic. We will publish fully refereed articles, of 6000 to 8000 words. We will occasionally publish review articles and exchanges where they are of substantial length. We will also publish book reviews.

DIY accepts the submission of articles and book reviews under continuous submission. Articles must be original, should not have been published anywhere else, or be under consideration by another journal (even a foreign language journal). The content of articles submitted to *DIY* will be the sole responsibility of authors, who must respect the ethical principles of research and publication adopted by this journal. All articles should be clearly written and grammatically and orthographically well written.

DIY will publish three issues per year. The first volume will be launched in 2023. The journal will be published in an online format. The Editors do not envisage the publication of articles requiring special typographic features or design, but articles may be embellished with illustrations, photographs, tables, etc. authors.

Topic coverage includes (but is not limited to):

- Theoretical and methodological perspectives on DIY
- Work, entrepreneurship and the market in DIY cultures
- Creativity, entrepreneurship and cultural resistance
- DIY lifestyles and alternative careers
- Gender, sexuality and DIY cultures
- Archives, documentation, pedagogy and heritage
- Cities, transformation, activism and intervention
- Regional and rural articulations of DIY and alternative cultures
- Alternative pedagogies and artistic education
- DIY cultures and global challenges
- Hybridism and glocalization
- DIY cultures, migrations and mobilities
- Postcolonial identities and geographies
- Social innovation, creativity, DIY and social inclusion
- DIY culture, space and place
- Aesthetics, bodies and affections
- Audiences, markets and DIY culture
- DIY cultures, health and well-being
- Historical studies of DIY and alternative cultures
- DIY, alternative cultures and dystopias
- Youth and DIY cultures
- DIY, ageing and generation
- Technologies of production in DIY and alternative cultures
- Local, trans-local and digital connectivity in DIY scenes
- Documentary and film narratives of DIY
- DIY, spatial justice and new ways of living
- DIY cultures, sustainability and artistic ecosystems

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