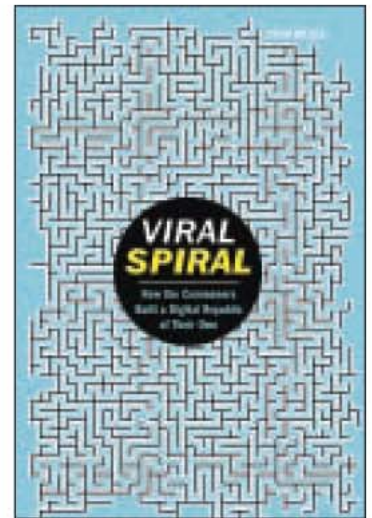


# Viral Spiral

How the Commoners Built a Digital Republic of Their Own

DAVID BOLLIER



A STUNNING NARRATIVE HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF ELECTRONIC “FREE CULTURE,” FROM OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE AND CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSES TO REMIXES AND WEB 2.0—IN THE TRADITION OF LAWRENCE LESSIG’S *FREE CULTURE*

**A world organized around centralized control, strict intellectual property rights, and hierarchies of credentialed experts is under siege. A radically different order of society based on open access, decentralized creativity, collaborative intelligence, and cheap and easy sharing is ascendant.**

—FROM *VIRAL SPIRAL*

From free and open-source software, Creative Commons licenses, Wikipedia, remix music and video mashups, peer production, open science, open education, and open business, the world of digital media has spawned a new “sharing economy” that increasingly competes with entrenched media giants.

Reporting from the heart of this “free culture” movement, journalist and activist David Bollier provides the first comprehensive history of the attempt by a global brigade of techies, lawyers, artists, musicians, scientists, businesspeople, innovators, and geeks of all stripes to create a digital republic committed to freedom and innovation. *Viral Spiral*—the term Bollier coins to describe the almost-magical process by which Internet users can come together to build online commons and tools—brilliantly interweaves the disparate strands of this eclectic movement. The story describes major technological developments and pivotal legal struggles, as well as fascinating profiles of hacker Richard Stallman, copyright scholar Lawrence Lessig, and other colorful figures.

A milestone in reporting on the Internet by one of our leading media critics, *Viral Spiral* is for anyone seeking to take the full measure of the new digital era.

*David Bollier is a journalist, activist, and public policy analyst as well as editor of onthecommons.org and cofounder of Public Knowledge. Senior Fellow at the Norman Lear Center, Bollier is the author of numerous highly praised books, including Brand Name Bullies and Control Culture and Silent Theft. He lives in Amherst, MA.*

**Praise for the work of David Bollier:**

**Hilarious and appalling.**

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (STARRED REVIEW)

**Jaw-dropping stories.**

—CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

**A thought-provoking cautionary tale of where our cultural heritage is rapidly headed, if unchecked.**

—PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

**Provocative. . . Bollier raises issues that almost nobody wants to talk about anymore. If he’s not always right, he’s always on target.**

—NEWSWEEK

**[Bollier] get[s] at . . . the fundamental, primary political issue that can be the underlying value for regenerating progressive politics in our country, and that value is the common good versus private greed.**

—JIM HIGHTOWER, TEXAS OBSERVER

**January**

Hardcover, 978-1-59558-396-3  
\$26.95 / £16.99 / \$29.95 CAN  
5 1/2" x 8 1/4", 320 pages  
Science/Technology