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Profit and Gift in the Digital Economy

Our economy is neither overwhelmingly capitalist, as Marxist political economists argue, nor overwhelmingly a market economy, as mainstream economists assume. Both approaches ignore vast swathes of the economy, including the gift, collaborative and hybrid forms that coexist with more conventional capitalism in the new digital economy. Drawing on economic sociology, anthropology of the gift and heterodox economics, this book proposes a ground-breaking framework for analysing diverse economic systems: a political economy of practices. The framework is used to analyse Apple, Wikipedia, Google, YouTube and Facebook, showing how different complexes of appropriative practices bring about radically different economic outcomes. Innovative and topical, *Profit and Gift in the Digital Economy* focusses on an area of rapid social change while developing a theoretically and politically radical framework that will be of long-term relevance. It will appeal to students, activists and academics in the social sciences.

DAVE ELDER-VASS teaches sociology and digital economies at Loughborough University. Before returning to academic life he was a senior IT manager in the private sector. This book brings together his expertise in digital technology and its use in business with his academic work on economic sociology and particularly the relation of gifts to the conventional economy. His previous publications include *The Causal Power of Social Structures* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) and *The Reality of Social Construction* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

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For Alisa

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