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Book Review: West, D. M. (2014). *Going Mobile: How Wireless Technology is Reshaping Our Lives*. United States: Brookings Institution

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West, D. M. (2014). *Going Mobile: How Wireless Technology is Reshaping Our Lives*. United States: Brookings Institution.

We are used to the claim that we now live in a digital age; however in this entertaining book West enthuses that the growth of the use and availability of mobile technologies (smartphones and tablets) represents a significant change in the nature of the impact of the digital world upon society. Those of us who think the move away from desktops and laptops to mobile devices is 'simply changing platforms' West suggest 'underestimate the fundamental nature of the transformation and how mobile technology alters operations at many different levels.' (127) Mobile devices now outsell desktop computers and subscriptions to mobile internet services significantly outsell fixed broadband connections and as mobile devices are cheaper than desktops this has the potential to democratise the internet with more people being able to access it. It is not simply that more people around the globe are able to access the internet that is good for West though, as he lists numerous examples of the positive practical impact the mobile internet has on people's lives, such as helping entrepreneurs, alleviating poverty, education, healthcare, public outreach and disaster relief. West is strongest outlining the manner in which mobile technology can help alleviate poverty by allowing small businesses across the globe obtain market information and microfinancing, plus how access to information can challenge corruption that prevents economic growth. This book is intended to be a breezy and practical overview of the impact of mobile technology on society and as a result sometimes you were left wanting more analysis. West's section on the political use of mobile technology is very top down, for example, focusing on how politicians or parties can gain votes, adherents, and funding. Nothing is said on how it does (or might) aid citizens to enter the political sphere, the nature of online deliberation or what barriers might still exist to political participation despite the mobile revolution. West is right to point out the growing importance of mobile technologies in education, however whereas generally throughout the book he attempts to take an international perspective, his education examples are drawn solely from the USA which dampens their impact. That said, this is a practical, lucid, and useful overview of the effects of mobile technologies on a variety of sociological sectors which anyone interested in contemporary society will enjoy.