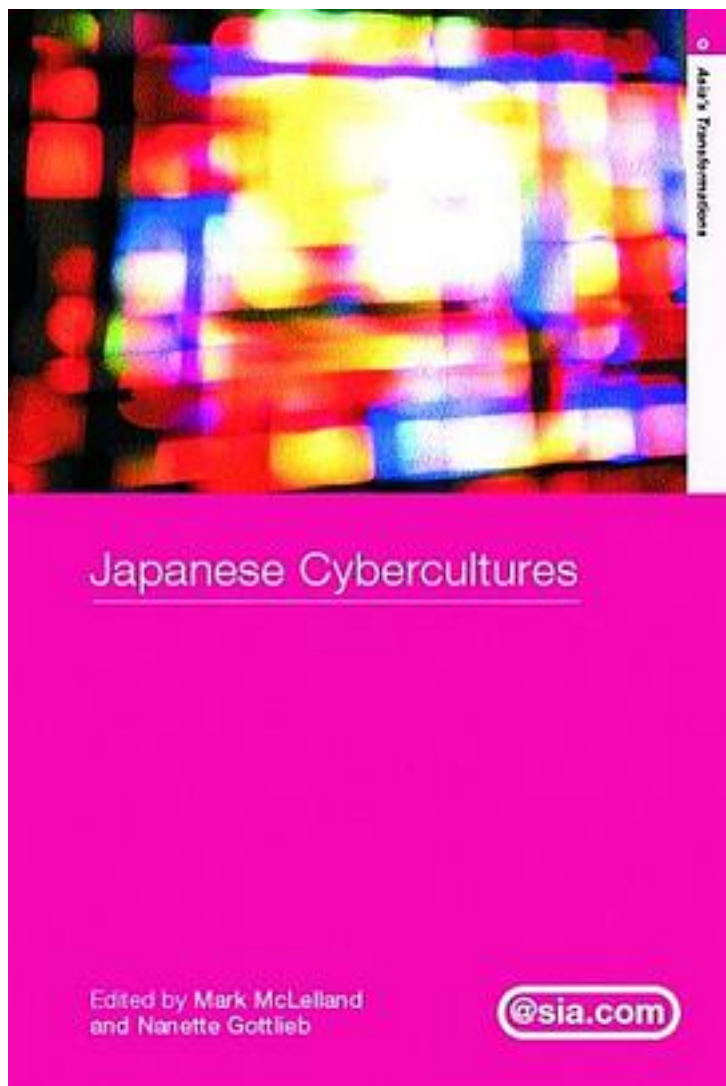


Japanese Cybercultures



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Japanese Cybercultures is the first book to look at the specific dynamics of Japanese internet use. Examined from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives by up-and-coming scholars, this genuinely cutting-edge study analyses the development of the internet in Japan, looking at the particularities of Japanese-language use on the Net and the different ways in which users log on. Unlike the English-speaking world where most people access the internet via computers, in Japan the internet is overwhelmingly accessed via a variety of portable devices, particularly mobile phones, Japan's ubiquitous 'cute culture' has colonized cyberspace, and students are shown to have embraced this technology to the extent that life without mobile internet access would for many be inconceivable. Much internet use in Japan is recreational, and this book considers the role of the internet in different musical settings. But it is equally influential for social and political activism. Women's networks and a growing men's movement are using this technology in an attempt to highlight problems of harassment and bullying for example, otherwise overlooked by mainstream media. Moreover, other marginalized groups and subcultures - including gay men, those living with AIDS, members of many new religious movements and Japan's hereditary sub-casts, the Burakumin have found the internet a valuable tool. It affords increased networking among disenfranchised individuals who now have access to a powerful technology that enables them to represent themselves in their own voice and challenge public misconceptions. At the same time, mainstream organisations and government bodies also use cyberspace to further advance their own agendas, suggesting that in Japan, as elsewhere, the internet is being used as a tool to promote both difference and conformity.

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