



# Ambient Commons: Attention in the Age of Embodied Information

*Malcolm McCullough*

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## **Ambient Commons: Attention in the Age of Embodied Information** Malcolm McCullough

The world is filling with ever more kinds of media, in ever more contexts and formats. Glowing rectangles have become part of the scene; screens, large and small, appear everywhere. Physical locations are increasingly tagged and digitally augmented. Amid this flood, your attention practices matter more than ever. You might not be able to tune this world out. So it is worth remembering that underneath all these augmentations and data flows, fixed forms persist, and that to notice them can improve other sensibilities. In *Ambient Commons*, Malcolm McCullough explores the workings of attention through a rediscovery of surroundings. McCullough describes what he calls the Ambient: an increasing tendency to perceive information superabundance whole, where individual signals matter less and at least some mediation assumes inhabitable form. He explores how the fixed forms of architecture and the city play a cognitive role in the flow of ambient information. As a persistently inhabited world, can the Ambient be understood as a shared cultural resource, to be socially curated, voluntarily limited, and self-governed as if a commons? *Ambient Commons* invites you to look past current obsessions with smart phones to rethink attention itself, to care for more situated, often inescapable forms of information.

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