



Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground (NCTE-Routledge Research Series)

Adam J. Banks

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In this book Adam Banks uses the concept of the Digital Divide as a metonym for America's larger racial divide, in an attempt to figure out what meaningful access for African Americans to technologies and the larger American society can or should mean. He argues that African American rhetorical traditions--the traditions of struggle for justice and equitable participation in American society--exhibit complex and nuanced ways of understanding the difficulties inherent in the attempt to navigate through the seemingly impossible contradictions of gaining meaningful access to technological systems with the good they seem to make possible, and at the same time resisting the exploitative impulses that such systems always seem to present.

Banks examines moments in these rhetorical traditions of appeals, warnings, demands, and debates to make explicit the connections between technological issues and African Americans' equal and just participation in American society. He shows that the big questions we must ask of our technologies are exactly the same questions leaders and lay people from Martin Luther King to Malcolm X to slave quilters to Critical Race Theorists to pseudonymous chatters across cyberspace have been asking all along. According to Banks the central ethical questions for the field of rhetoric and composition are technology access and the ability to address questions of race and racism. He uses this book to imagine what writing instruction, technology theory, literacy instruction, and rhetorical education can look like for all of us in a new century.

Just as *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground* is a call for a new orientation among those who study and profess African American rhetoric, it is also a call for those in the fields that make up mainstream English Studies to change their perspectives as well. This volume is intended for researchers, professionals, and students in Rhetoric and Composition, Technical Communication, the History of Science and Society, and African American Studies.

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