The bottom line? Overall the book is not an attempt to communicate with the general reader either in style or in the questions it selects for discussion, nor does it make a convincing case that there is much communication or convergence between the different contributors. If this book is representative of work in the field (if indeed it can be called a field), there is little consensus on the precise form or significance of the 'evolutionary economy'. That is not necessarily bad news—there is plenty of room for further contribution and probably a great need for analytical review of work in the area of the 'evolutionary economy'.

John Howells
Brunel University, UK

Netiquette

Virginia Shea

San Francisco, Albion Books, 1994, 154 pp., $US19.95, ISBN 0-9637025-1-3

Netiquette is an examination of Internet etiquette, or more precisely, E-mail etiquette. Shea's main argument is that Internet etiquette is based on the foundations of 'real world' etiquette. Therefore, netiquette involves a set of normative behaviours that help oil the social wheels for the benefit of everyone. Furthermore, according to Shea, the French origins of the word etiquette imply gaining access, or 'ticket for entry' (p. 19) into a social sphere.

Shea argues that just as there are different sets of accepted etiquette in different cultures or social circles, netiquette involves a number of sets of normative rules for social conduct in different domains in cyberspace (p. 323). So, sending an E-mail message to work colleagues involves a different set of rules to those which may operate if you were to post a message on the alt.jokes.tasteless bulletin board. However, despite the different cyber domains and different behaviours accepted within them, Shea's core rules can be distilled into four major groups: 1) having respect for people's time, privacy and feelings; 2) being aware that etiquette may be different in different Internet domains; 3) acknowledging that sharing knowledge is of prime importance; and 4) being careful to show yourself in a good light by considering what you write—which means always carefully checking your grammar, spelling and message (pp. 32–33).

Netiquette also provides useful information about what the Internet and E-mail are in a technical (but not necessarily technological) sense. For example, it explains the anatomy of an E-mail message, what a header is, how E-mail addresses are constructed, and what carbon copies and filters are. As well, there are other very useful things like a table of emoticons, or :-) smilies, and abbreviations like BTW (By The Way) that other people use but which you never knew or just cannot be bothered to remember (pp. 59–60). It also covers topics like making signatures and tone of voice. Given this kind of content, *Netiquette* can be said to be a kind of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) style guide.

Another practical aspect of *Netiquette* is that a number of specific E-mail use situations are covered. Business netiquette from the perspective of individual users and also from a company E-mail policy perspective are covered. Netiquette at home and school, which also raises the issue of children and the Internet, are given the netiquette treatment too. In addition, love and sex (and pornography) are covered with some interesting ethical scenarios which are resolved for the reader by Shea in light of the netiquette rules.

Finally, the book takes a broad sweep through issues like the illusion of privacy in E-mail, E-mail harassment, copyright and flaming—all issues which are not necessarily given enough *gravitas* in the academic literature.

It is difficult to be critical of this book because it is not written as an academic treatise on the theory of CMC. It is in essence an everyday user's manual or style guide. What I think is important about *Netiquette* from an analytical point of view, is that it has no underlying reliance on, or assumptions derived from a technological determinists perspective. There are, for example, no richness or bandwidth analyses which seek to place limitations on CMC based on the technical characteristics of the black boxes involved. Indeed, the only bandwidth seen as worthy of a concerted discussion by Shea is the bandwidth or information reception ability of people. It is therefore, a welcome reminder that whatever communications happen between people on the Internet, it is ultimately the product of human behaviour, and socially constructed conventions, rather than the machines and computers which after all only mediate that communication.

In making an evaluation of *Netiquette*, it must be kept firmly in mind that it is a book which is really only concerned with the practical issues of written communication via the Internet. As a user's manual or style guide it is very useful, easy to read and understand, and covers a wide range of E-mail communication situations. The appearance of the core rules of netiquette, as Shea sets them out, as being common sense is not surprising given the nature of this kind of publication. However, common sense must not necessarily be taken as a pejorative term because in taking this approach Shea has touched on many interesting and important issues. Despite having no intention of entering into academic debate, *Netiquette* reminds us that it is people and institutions which should be the main topic of discussion and focus of analysis when CMC research is being carried out.

David Rooney
Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane, Australia

On the Cards: Privacy, Identity and Trust in the Age of Smart Technologies

Perri 6 & Ivan Briscoe

London, Demos, 1996, 128 pp., £9.95, ISBN 1-898309-72-8

On the Cards is a relatively short text published by Demos, an independent think-tank based in the United Kingdom that focuses on radical solutions to long-term problems facing the UK and other countries. With this background, *On the Cards* must be seen as a policy advocacy document as opposed to a scholarly book. It concentrates on the British situation but its conclusions are sufficiently broad to be applicable to other countries.

This book is about the smart card and its social, economic and political implications. A smart card is described as 'a tiny computer . . . a portable, credit card-sized device that carries a tiny chip with the capacity not just to store information, but to process it according to instructions' (p. 19). Smart cards are being used by companies and governments at an ever increasing rate to manage information processing aspects in many fields such as shopping, finance, transport and health. The data flows that arise from these information transactions have considerable privacy implications that have not been adequately discussed in public forums in the past. The book argues that the introduction of smart cards will raise serious challenges to data protection law and our