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## The Technology of Nonviolence: Social Media and Violence Prevention by Joseph G. Bock

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**Bock, Joseph G. *The Technology of Nonviolence: Social Media and Violence Prevention*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012. xxi + 288 pages. Cloth, \$32.00.**

For those who wonder whether nonviolent methods can prevail even in moments of chaos, international relations specialist Joseph G. Bock's latest, *The Technology of Nonviolence*, offers an efficient, organized, and thought-provoking argument for the application and theory of violence prevention. This book brings together diverse pieces of a puzzle to instill conflict resolution, diffuse anger, and promote peace while respecting community, culture, and localities. Bock maintains a strong focus on actual violence-prone localities and draws on several case studies to demonstrate a diverse set of nonviolent methods. Bock stresses the importance of technology in building relationships and providing support from within endangered zones. As he argues, when violence threatens to shake the foundations of communities, the use of social media can convey critical data that can stabilize those foundations or even bring forth social change. Such methods, he maintains, can facilitate cooperative communication, which in unstable environments is instrumental for peace keeping.

As this book takes us through a number of early warning and response systems, it lays out a set of actionable theories and cutting-edge technological possibilities. But beyond the technology is the more fundamental need to provide foundations of trust that support peace. For instance, Bock discusses the case of Ahmedabad, India, where St. Xavier's Social Services Society utilized relief, development, and human rights programs as platforms to begin a process of social healing in the context of intense ethno-religious violence. For this case, Bock stresses the importance of mediation for creating safe havens that served to prevent the escalation of conflict, and mentions other non-technological means such as creating a multi-faith staff, performing street plays, holding community meetings, exposing myths, and even at times gaining assistance from the police or military. Another example, the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention, shows how similar approaches worked through five key components: community mobilization (promotion of attitude and behavior changes), youth outreach ("violence interpreters" connected to community and engaged with gangs, public education, religious leadership, and an initiative known as "Cease Fire." It was this final component that used a strong technological component combining crowdsourcing, text messaging, and digital mapping.

As we move forward, we see the application of technology to aid inductive reasoning, and communication via text messages and cellular phones to facilitate in-person dialogues and make collective decisions. For instance, intervention during the ethno-religious violence in Sri Lanka involved research from the Foundation for Co-Existence (FCE). Statistical results demonstrated that violence was preventable most times; other data measured how often violence was prevented and served to predict how long the lull was between a precipitating event and violence. The FCE also developed community connections and anger management through a photojournalism exhibition titled "Paradise of Tears."

This book is highly recommended for decision-makers, practitioners, and all people who seek concrete strategies to peace building and dive deeper into research opportunities. This book is a treasure that once read will leave you richer from the insight and wisdom received to progress in peace.

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