

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910465464503321
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Titolo	The truth of the technological world : essays on the genealogy of presence // Friedrich A. Kittler ; with an afterword by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht ; translated by Erik Butler
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Stanford, California : , : Stanford University Press, , 2013 ©2013
ISBN	0-8047-9262-3
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (400 pages)
Disciplina	302.23
Soggetti	Communication and technology - Philosophy Literature - History and criticism Communication - Philosophy Technology - Philosophy Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- 1. Poet, Mother, Child: On the Romantic Invention of Sexuality -- 2. Nietzsche (1844–1900) -- 3. Lullaby of Birdland -- 4. The God of the Ears -- 5. Flechsig, Schreber, Freud: An Information Network at the Turn of the Century -- 6. Romanticism, Psychoanalysis, Film: A Story of Doubles -- 7. Media and Drugs in Pynchon's Second World War -- 8. Heinrich von Offerdingen as Data Feed -- 9. World-Breath: On Wagner's Media Technology -- 10. The City Is a Medium -- 11. Rock Music: A Misuse of Military Equipment -- 12. Signal-to-Noise Ratio -- 13. The Artificial Intelligence of World War: Alan Turing -- 14. Unconditional Surrender -- 15. Protected Mode -- 16. There Is No Software -- 17. Il fiore delle truppe scelte -- 18. Eros and Aphrodite -- 19. Homer and Writing -- 20. The Alphabet of the Greeks: On the Archeology of Writing -- 21. In the Wake of the Odyssey -- 22. Martin Heidegger, Media, and the Gods of Greece: De-severance Heralds the Approach of the Gods -- 23. Pathos and Ethos: An Aristotelian Observation -- 24. Media History as the Event of Truth: On the Singularity of Friedrich A. Kittler's Works—An Afterword by Hans

Sommario/riassunto

Friedrich Kittler (1943–2011) combined the study of literature, cinema, technology, and philosophy in a manner sufficiently novel to be recognized as a new field of academic endeavor in his native Germany. "Media studies," as Kittler conceived it, meant reflecting on how books operate as films, poetry as computer science, and music as military equipment. This volume collects writings from all stages of the author's prolific career. Exemplary essays illustrate how matters of form and inscription make heterogeneous source material (e.g., literary classics and computer design) interchangeable on the level of function—with far-reaching consequences for our understanding of the humanities and the "hard sciences." Rich in counterintuitive propositions, sly humor, and vast erudition, Kittler's work both challenges the assumptions of positivistic cultural history and exposes the over-abstraction and language games of philosophers such as Heidegger and Derrida. The twenty-three pieces gathered here document the intellectual itinerary of one of the most original thinkers in recent times—sometimes baffling, often controversial, and always stimulating.
