

Joel Deane on Facebook's hubris

In 2017, Mark Zuckerberg posted a 5,700-word manifesto on Facebook, the social media platform he helped found, vaunting its ability to 'make a global community that works for everyone'. Many commentators noted the presidential overtones of this pronouncement, reading it as a harbinger of a political career in the offing. Yet, as Sheera Frankel and Cecilia Kang recount in *An Ugly Truth*, a recently published account of Facebook's meddling in the 2016 US elections that ushered Donald Trump into the Oval Office, Zuckerberg had in fact already left his mark on the presidency.

In his witty and acerbic review of Frankel and Kang's book, Joel Deane argues that despite Zuckerberg's show of civic-mindedness, Facebook's data-mining enterprise has always been driven by contempt for its users – a manipulable mass of 'dumb fucks', as Zuckerberg once put it. Comparing Facebook's ambitious social engineering to Sealand, a micronation founded by pirate broadcaster Paddy Roy Bates, Deane writes, 'both [are] pirate endeavours built on libertarian ambitions by founders with delusions of grandeur'.

Extract from Joel Deane's article

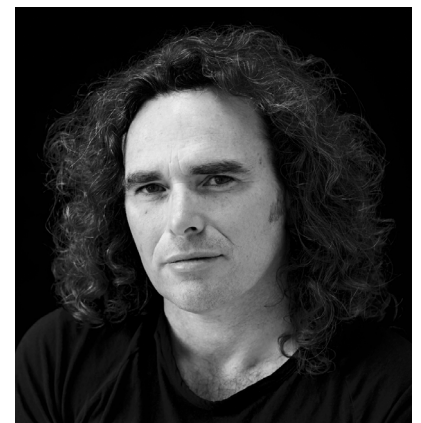
'Facebook was never about hacking computers. It was always about hacking data; bending people instead of software. Its modus operandi is to Hoover up as much digital information as possible about as many people as possible, algorithmically tweak that data to predict and shift human behaviour, and, in the process, make money.'

About Joel Deane

Joel Deane is a speechwriter, novelist and poet. He has worked in newspapers, television, politics, and internet startups in Australia and the United States. His third novel will be published in 2022.

Interviews

Joel Deane is available for interview. Please direct requests to Peter Rose at editor@australianbookreview.com.au | (03) 9699 8822



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