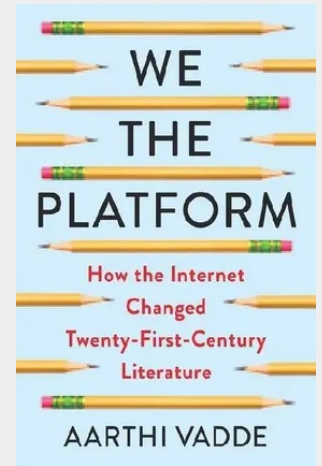


We the Platform

How the Internet Changed Twenty-First-Century Literature

Web 2.0 gave us the online world as we know it today. Popularized in 2004, it redefined the internet as social, a "platform" for self-expression and data gathering. The ensuing proliferation of user-generated content such as social media posts, fan fiction, self-published novels, and Instagram poetry has spurred a host of anxieties about the end of literature. Yet contemporary literary fiction is deeply indebted to the folk forms that Web 2.0 cultivated, even when it is sharply critical of the platform business models behind them. *We the Platform* is a groundbreaking account of mass writing in the twenty-first century, identifying rarely recognized forms of literary possibility amid the profound upheavals in traditional publishing. Aarthi Vadde examines the explosion of textuality across digital platforms: countless writers, diverse publishing formats, and vast communities of readers responding to stories publicly and instantly. Countering ubiquitous decline narratives, she offers powerful examples of literary innovation, adaptation, and survival. Among them are Jonathan Lethem and Lauren Oyler's challenges to individualist ideas of authorship, the Twitter fiction of Jennifer Egan and Teju Cole, Margaret Atwood and Naomi Alderman's collaborative writing on Wattpad, conceptual projects like *Book from the Ground*, and the experimental use of chatbots by authors including Sheila Heti. Through nuanced and illuminating readings, this book shows how platform-based writing has altered cornerstone concepts of authorship, aesthetic form, and craft, delivering a bold new understanding of literature now.

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37,50 €

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vorbestellbar, Erscheinungstermin ca. Juni 2026

Artikelnummer: 9780231219709

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-0-231-21970-9

Verlag: Columbia University Press

Erscheinungstermin: 30.06.2026

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2026

Serie: Literature Now

Produktform: Kartoniert

Gewicht: 378 g

Seiten: 304

Format (B x H): 215 x 138 mm

