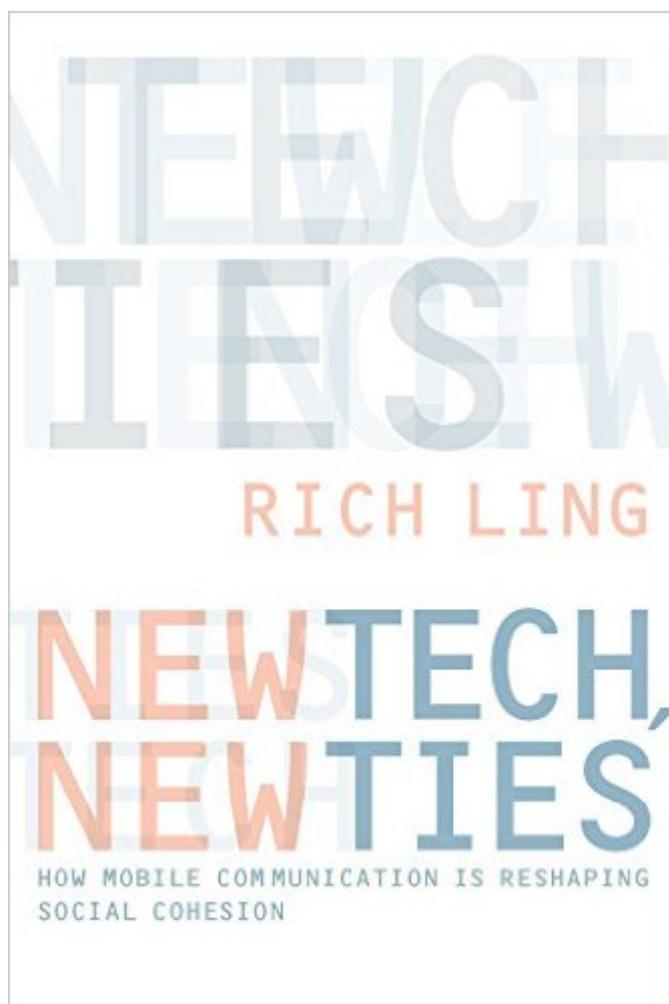


The book was found

# New Tech, New Ties: How Mobile Communication Is Reshaping Social Cohesion (MIT Press)



## Synopsis

The message of this book is simple: the mobile phone strengthens social bonds among family and friends. With a traditional land-line telephone, we place calls to a location and ask hopefully if someone is "there"; with a mobile phone, we have instant and perpetual access to friends and family regardless of where they are. But when we are engaged in these intimate conversations with absent friends, what happens to our relationship with the people who are actually in the same room with us? In *New Tech, New Ties*, Rich Ling examines how the mobile telephone affects both kinds of interactions--those mediated by mobile communication and those that are face to face. Ling finds that through the use of various social rituals the mobile telephone strengthens social ties within the circle of friends and family--sometimes at the expense of interaction with those who are physically present--and creates what he calls "bounded solidarity." Ling argues that mobile communication helps to engender and develop social cohesion within the family and the peer group. Drawing on the work of Emile Durkheim, Erving Goffman, and Randall Collins, Ling shows that ritual interaction is a catalyst for the development of social bonding. From this perspective, he examines how mobile communication affects face-to-face ritual situations and how ritual is used in interaction mediated by mobile communication. He looks at the evidence, including interviews and observations from around the world, that documents the effect of mobile communication on social bonding and also examines some of the other possibly problematic issues raised by tighter social cohesion in small groups. Rich Ling is Senior Researcher at the Norwegian telecommunications company Telenor and Adjunct Research Scientist at the University of Michigan. He is the author of *The Mobile Connection: The Cell Phone's Impact on Society*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This work is honestly not for the non-academic. Rich Ling takes up an interesting question: can mediated interactions - ones that take place through some form of technology rather than face to face - have the same outcomes that we would expect from interaction ritual theory? To begin with, one needs to understand the context of that question and what his claim - that interactions through phones (particularly cellphones) meet the criteria of interaction ritual - and know that he is engaging Randall Collins (and by extension Erving Goffman and Emile Durkheim's work on interactions) theory about what makes up a "successful interaction". By analyzing cellphone conversations (admittedly, his methodology is a little spotty, but not to an extent that undermines his findings) Ling is able to point to how phone conversations still involved the entrainment of the participants and an emotional engagement usually thought to be the product of embodied interaction. At the very least, Ling's book points toward further research questions on how different forms of technology and media affect our social interactions and what that means for emerging social life. I recommend this for those interested in social theory, media, and technology. I DO NOT recommend this to the casual reader unless you are looking for something completely different.

Pros: Cutting edge research  
Great concept and a quick read  
Cons: Reads more like a term paper.

the quick summary is that this book is troubling for many reasons, but my three biggest concerns are:  
1) his sampling methodology  
2) his over reliance on data that was obtained through primarily ethnographic participant observations  
3) his elite normative assumptions of what makes a "successful" ritual of social cohesion  
I have written a full review explaining each of my points here: [...]

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New Tech, New Ties: How Mobile Communication Is Reshaping Social Cohesion (MIT Press) How

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