

## Review of André Vitalis, *The Uncertain Digital Revolution* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2016), 118pp.

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André Vitalis is an emeritus professor at the University of Bordeaux, and his newest book, *The Uncertain Digital Revolution*, is one of many examinations of the impact that various technologies have had on the human condition and on contemporary society. Vitalis has also taught at the University of Nantes and the University of Rennes. He has been a consultant to the National Commission for Informatics and Civil Liberties, and to the Council of Europe, thus bringing the experience that he has gained in the classroom to the public forum. He brings an interdisciplinary approach to his work, and *The Uncertain Digital Revolution* presents the reader not only with his own thinking but also with ideas and suggestions from a number of philosophers who will certainly be familiar to readers of the *Ellul Forum*, such as Ivan Illich and Jürgen Habermas.

*The Uncertain Digital Revolution* is not a book about Ellul *per se*, but the book itself is an example of a style of inquiry that one finds in Ellul's work. Chapters such as "Security over Liberty" and "Digitalization and Revolution" give the reader an opportunity to engage with ideas from a scholar who has approached these important topics with the Ellulian dialectic at the forefront. Jacques Ellul himself is mentioned in the book, but this is André Vitalis's own evaluation of the digital phenomenon. Vitalis notes, "Ellul, known for his technical analyses, has always paid great attention to IT by progressively making successive evaluations as the phenomenon has advanced" (100). Vitalis takes this successive evaluation and continues with it, leading the study of this critical component of *technique* and advancing it in the same spirit as one would have found from Ellul or McLuhan.

A short book, *The Uncertain Digital Revolution* is highly recommended to Ellul scholars and those with an interest in his work, as well as to general readers. One will come away with an appreciation for the pros and cons of the rapid strides that digital technologies have had and continue to have in areas such as privacy and security. André Vitalis has written extensively on this topic, and I highly recommend his work to those seeking to think critically about the human condition in the twenty-first century.

### About the Author

Jeff Shaw is Adjunct Professor in the humanities department at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island. He is the author of *Illusions of Freedom: Thomas Merton and Jacques Ellul on Technology and the Human Condition*, published by Wipf & Stock.