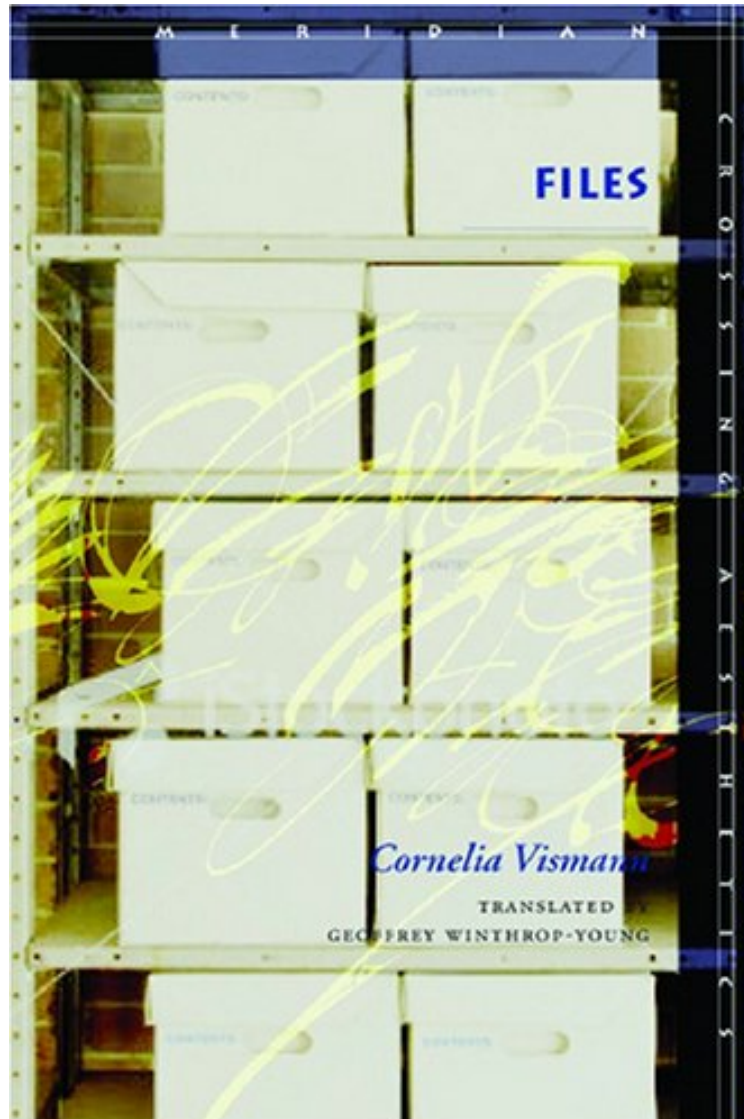


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Files: Law and Media Technology (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)

Cornelia Vismann

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#1438937 in Books Stanford University Press 2008-04-07 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .60 x 6.00l, .73 #File Name: 080475151X216 pages | File size: 68.Mb

Cornelia Vismann : Files: Law and Media Technology (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Files: Law and Media Technology (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Archive Fever! By Orson Welles I've taught this book twice in classes n the archive. Vismann begins by disagreeing with Derrida's critique of Levi-Strauss' "Writing Lesson" in Tristes-Tropiques and then proceeds to a quite brilliant juxtaposition of Kafka's "Before the Law" and Melville's "Bartleby the

Scrivener." Vismann is Derrida friendly (I paired her book with *Archive Fever*), and she writes incredibly pellucid prose. The translation is superb. I was saddened to learn that Vismann met such an untimely death.

Quod non est in actis, non est in mundo. (What is not on file is not in the world.) Once files are reduced to the status of stylized icons on computer screens, the reign of paper files appears to be over. With the epoch of files coming to an end, we are free to examine its fundamental influence on Western institutions. From a media-theoretical point of view, subject, state, and law reveal themselves to be effects of specific record-keeping and filing practices. Files are not simply administrative tools; they mediate and process legal systems. The genealogy of the law described in Vismann's *Files* ranges from the work of the Roman magistrates to the concern over one's own file, as expressed in the context of the files kept by the East German State Security. The book concludes with a look at the computer architecture in which all the stacks, files, and registers that had already created order in medieval and early modern administrations make their reappearance.

"Vismann's *Files* is a highly original and theoretical project that combines the thinking of Derrida (on law and its enforcement) and Foucault (on juridical discourse and 'gouvernementalit') with specific motifs of German media theory as developed by Friedrich Kittler. The book is a state-of-the-art contribution to the analysis of culture that allows us to envision a truly new interrelation between historical research and a comprehensive philosophy of culture that is yet to come." (Rdiger Campe)"Vismann's erudite and attentive analysis shows clear awareness of the danger of both a perfect order (where everything is registered, recorded) and that of a deconstruction possible turning into an order of its own kind with potentially its own para-judicial legend." (Thanos Zartaloudis)"Cornelia Vismann's extraordinary *Files* . . . presents a methodology for addressing the relationship between media technologies and politics that is often absent, or at least shadowy, in materialist media theory of the Kittlerian style." (Seb Franklin *The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory*)About the AuthorCornelia Vismann is currently a researcher at the Max-Planck-Institute for European Legal History in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. She worked for many years previously as a lawyer in Berlin and the former East Berlin.