



Revolutions in Communication

*Media History from
Gutenberg
to the Digital Age*

Slides based on the Bloomsbury book by Bill Kovarik

About Media History -- #3

About Media History

- Social and technical histories of media
 - Especially early media historians
- Four revolutions in mass media
 - And related / competing ideas
- Modern media historians & some analytical tools
 - Walter Lippmann – Four stages of the press
 - Elizabeth Eisenstein – Influence of printing press
 - Harold Innis – Empire and communication
 - Marshall McLuhan – Theories of media change
 - Hot & Cool Media; also the Media Tetrad
 - Sally J. McMillan – Information traffic patterns
 - Arthur Koestler – Theory of the masses

Media History Trends

- From myth to history
- From heroic to insightful histories
- From national to global
- From journalism to all communications
- From political to technical & cultural
- From European male to all - inclusive
- From “great men & machines” to cultural and social histories

Media historians

- *Samuel Palmer*
 - *General History of Printing*
 - *London, 1733*



A GENERAL
History of Printing:

BOOK I.
Of its Origin, Improvement and Progress by
JOHN FAUST from 1440. to 1462.

CHAPTER I.
An Enquiry into the Rise of Printing.



My design is to give an historical account of the authors, discovery, improvement and progress of the Art of Printing; an Art so highly beneficial to mankind, by preserving and transmitting to posterity the treasures of antient and modern learning, that its original has been esteem'd divine. I shall begin with a previous enquiry into the causes and concurrent circumstances, which excited the inventors of it to a discovery, that might answer this end, with more expedition and exactness, than *Transcribing*, the only method known before.

B

THE

Media
historians

**Pierre-Simon
Fournier,**
Manuel Typographique,
1764



Parson Weems' Franklin biography

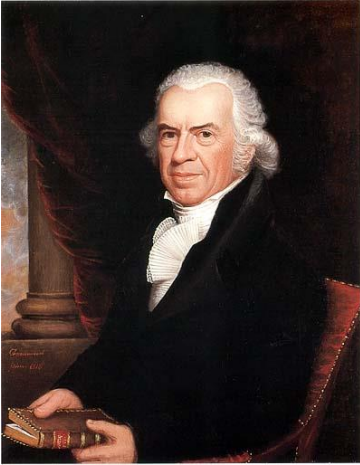


“I saw, in my dream, that he grew up to be a GREAT man; the lightnings of heaven played around his head, and the shape of a kingly crown was beneath his feet ...” - 1822

This is not in Franklin's autobiography, and is likely “cooked up,” as Weems himself said.

Weems is the same pseudo-historian who invented the George Washington cherry tree story.

US Media historians



- **Isaiah Thomas**

- *History of printing in America, 1808*
Dry, factual history

- **James Parton**

- *Life of Horace Greeley, 1855*



- **James Melvin Lee**

- *History of American Journalism, 1917*

Historical approaches

- “Printing did not make the Renaissance; the Renaissance made printing.” said John Rothwell Slater in 1921.
- “The medium is the message,” Marshall McLuhan, 1962.
- The printing revolution took place because of “a complex ensemble of many interrelated changes” in social conditions, said historian Elizabeth Eisenstein in 1978.
- “Gutenberg invented moveable type,” said John Lienhart in 1992. “But, it's no exaggeration to say that Medieval Europe worked for 300 years to invent Gutenberg.”

Sloan's historical approach

- Romantic histories
 - Horace Greeley, Ben Franklin, J.G. Bennett
- Developmental school - focus on professional improvements, objectivity
- Progressive school - struggle between reformers and the privileged classes
- Cultural School – focus on social and economic factors

Wilbur Schramm's approach

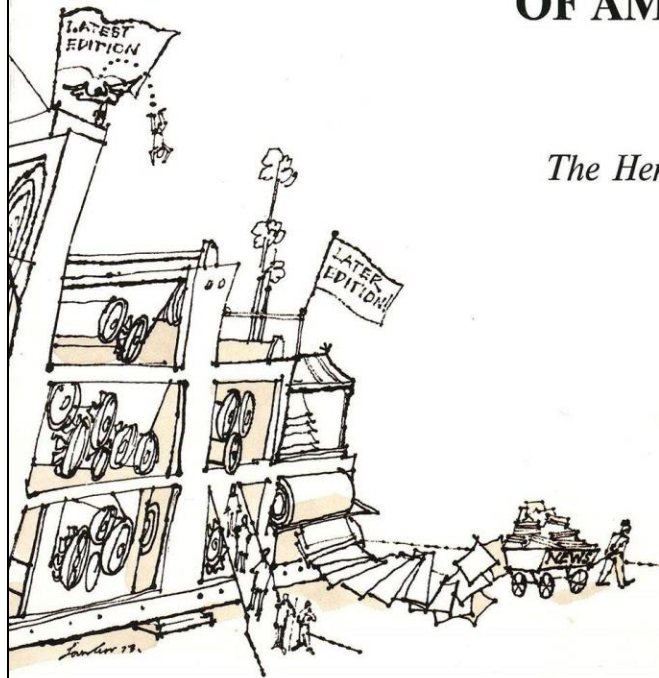
The story of human communication
(Harper Collins 1988)

- Images -- Cave paintings, calendars
- Writing – from symbols to phonetics
- Mass media, news, ads, pr, elite & popular press
- Sound, film, radio, TV, photography, phone
- Microelectronics, satellites

Media history textbooks

- *American Journalism, a History, 1690-1960*
Frank Luther Mott 1962
- *Men & Machines of Am. Journ.* – Marzio, 1973
 - (Basis of a Smithsonian exhibit)
- *The Press and America* – Emery 1976
- *Voices of a Nation* – Folkerts 1988
- *Mainstreams of Am. Media History* – Ward 1990 (Basis of Newseum exhibits)
- *Media in America* – Wm. Sloan 1999
- *3 Centuries of Am. Media* – Chaisson

A narrow
1975-1990
Smithsonian
exhibit on
media
history



THE MEN AND MACHINES OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM

*A Pictorial Essay
from
The Henry R. Luce Hall of News Reporting*

by Peter C. Marzio

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

 OAK KNOLL

What's a revolution?



- A sudden change in the status quo
- Something that profoundly upsets the political, social, or economic order

A communications revolution is

- A social and technical revolution with profound widespread effects
- Taking place over time
- Made possible by changes in
 - Qualities of media technology
 - Such as flexibility, durability, longevity,
 - Speed of communication
 - Cost of communication
 - Carrying capacity of information
 - Expansion of media reach / potential audience
 - Inclusive access to generative technology

Four media revolutions

- **Printing**
 - Moveable type – 1455
 - Associated with religious revolution 1500s – 1700s
 - Industrial scale printing
 - Newspapers associated w/ national political revolutions 1700s – 1900s
 - Lithography, etching bring cultural revolutions
 - Opera become popular in 1840s partly because of lithography
- **Imaging**
 - Printed images lead to photography, then cinema
 - Associated with re-imagining oral cultures, human empathy
 - Ads and PR are image making
 - Ads provide financial foundation, help popularize media
- **Electronic** – telegraph, radio, TV, satellites
 - Associated with nationalization of media
- **Digital** – computers, networks
 - Associated with emerging global cultural revolutions

Alternate approaches ...

- **Language / Human**
 - Natural ability
- **Writing / Literate**
 - Has to be learned
- **Typographic**
- **Hypergraphic**
- **Electronic**
- **Cybernetic**

Four stages of media history



Says **Walter Lippmann**
In the 1922 book
Public Opinion

1 Authoritarian

(\$ from government)

2 Partisan

(\$ from political parties)

3 Commercial / Penny Press

(\$ from advertising)

*Note: Digital revolution broke
this business model*

4 Organized intelligence

Future media model

Elizabeth Eisenstein

(1923–present)

The Printing Press as an Agent of Change (1979 book)

Not well accepted at first

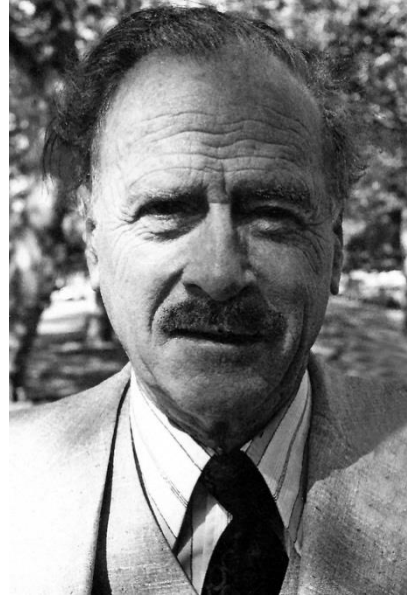
Media technology as a force was something new in history

Effects of printing: dissemination, standardization, and preservation of information

Recovery of previous cultures (Greek, Roman) was the first major task of printing



Innis & McLuhan



Two 20th century historians who expanded our ideas about media technology and communication

Media technology & history

- To what extent is communications media at the center of human history?
- What is the influence of technology?
- How does media technology develop?
- What view do we take of technology --
 - Highly positive (Utopian, optimistic)
 - Highly negative (Luddite, pessimistic)

Useful basic concepts in history

- **Determinism vs social construction**
 - Does the technology advance due to its own properties? Do people have to adapt?
 - Or do social, political and economic forces shape technology? Do people get to choose?
- **Utopians versus Luddites**
 - Will a new technology improve things or will it make them worse?
- **Technological fallacies**
 - Predictions about future uses for technology that turn out to be off base
- **Transmission versus ritual communication**

Harold Innis (1894 – 1952)

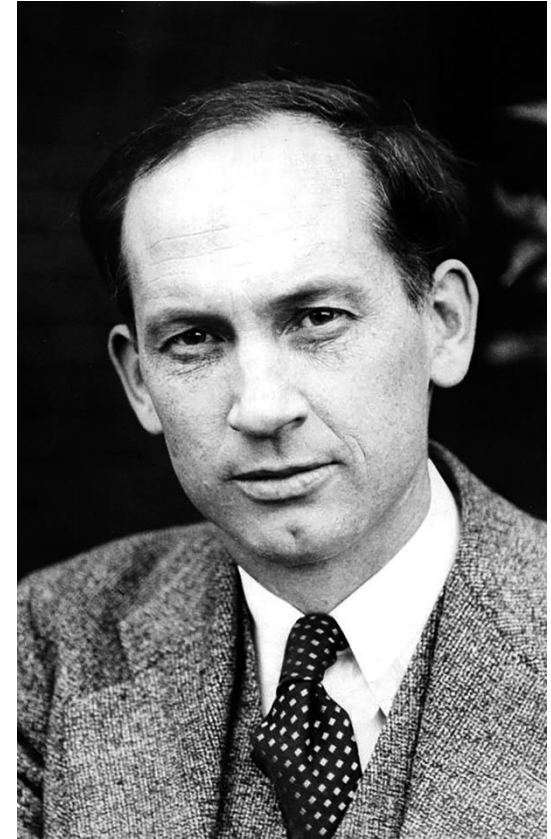
Empire and Communications

Stressed balance between:

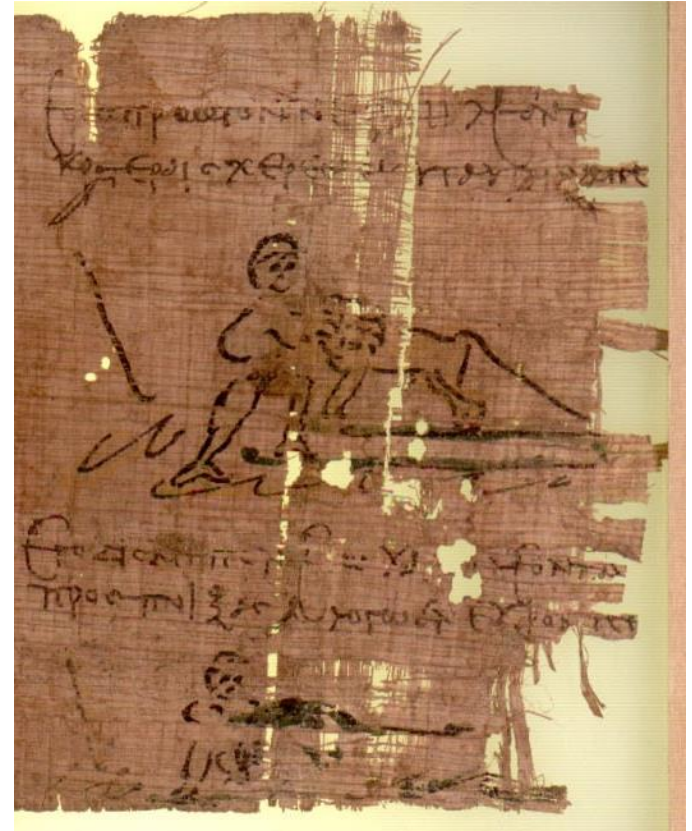
Durable, time – binding media
(including oral culture)

Flexible, space – binding media

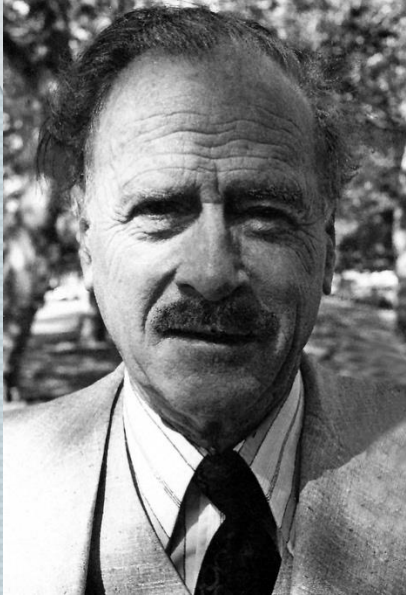
Both needed for “empire building”
but lack of balance led to loss of
empires



Innis: Durable vs Flexible media



Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980)



- Foresaw enormous changes in & with media
- Wrote *Gutenberg Galaxy*, *Understanding Media*
- “Medium is the message”
 - Deterministic view of media type as shaping the content of a message
 - Printing had a huge impact in de-tribalizing people
 - Radio re-tribalized people
- Hot and cool media
 - “Hot” media immerses audience and allows less participation – cinema
 - “Cool” media requires involvement and thought
 - -- printed media, possibly radio

Mapping change in media tech

- Innis' durable – flexible media
- McLuhan – Hot vs Cool media
- McLuhan's Tetrad of media change
- Sally J. McMillan's media traffic quadrant

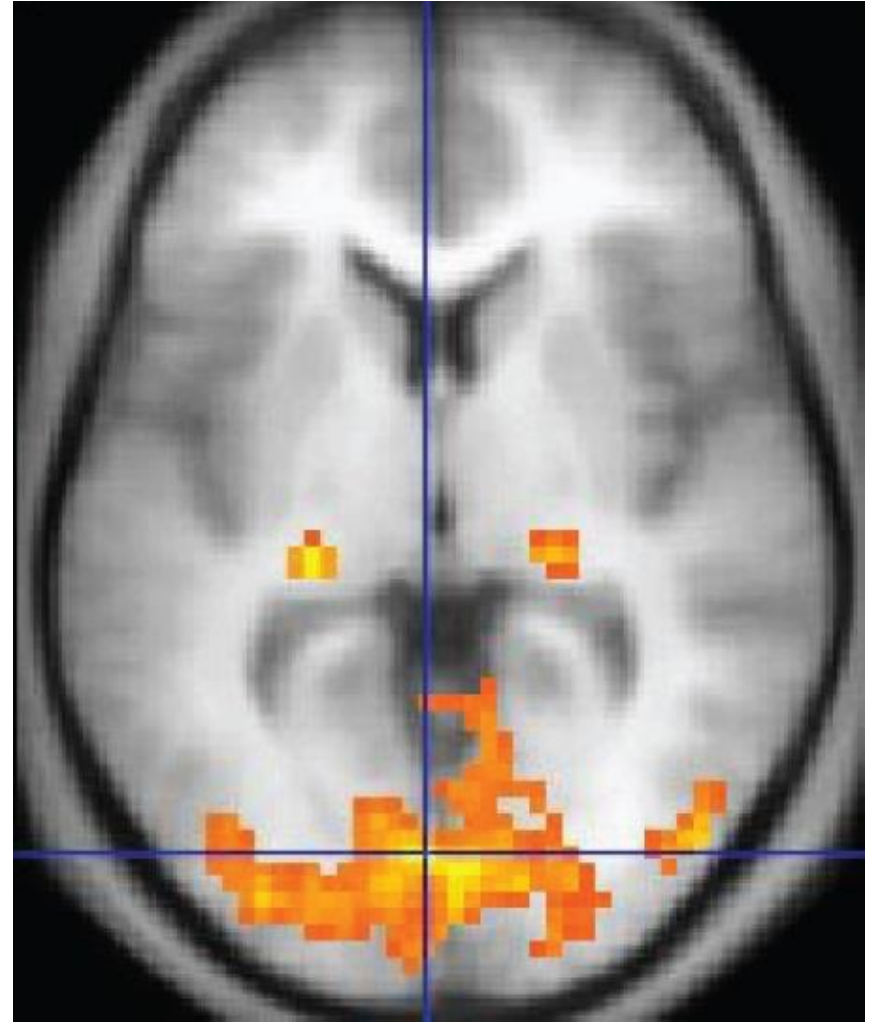
McLuhan: Hot vs Cool media



Hot media are immersive, engaging one sense completely and not requiring much interaction; Cinema is hot
Cool media engages several senses and requires interaction and thought. Print media is cool

MRI and media effects

- “We found significant deactivations in areas related to the default mode network and inhibitory control network ... with problematic internet usage...”



McLuhan's technology tetrad

<p>1. Enhance</p> <p>What does the new medium enhance or amplify?</p>	<p>2. Make obsolete</p> <p>What becomes obsolete or reduced in prominence?</p>
<p>3. Retrieve</p> <p>What is retrieved from an earlier time that had nearly been forgotten?</p>	<p>4. Reverse</p> <p>How does the medium “overheat” or warp under pressure?</p>

Source of Information

central

individual

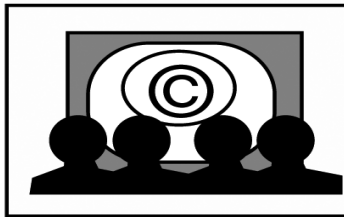
Sally J.
McMillan

Changes
In Media
Traffic
Patterns

Reception time, place
central control

individual control

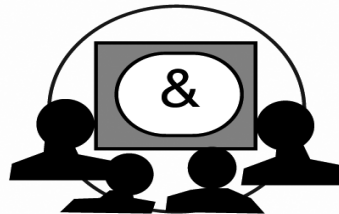
Top-Down Programs
Central source, passive receivers



*Traditional mass media
No user interactivity.*

$S \longrightarrow R$ (source to receiver)

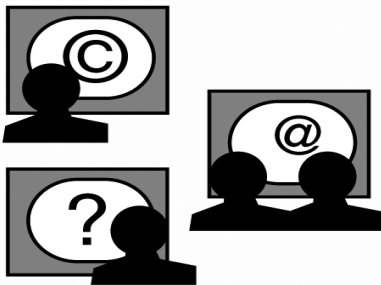
Virtual Market
E-bay, Craigslist



*Individuals are sources,
control & registration are central*

$S R \longleftrightarrow S R$

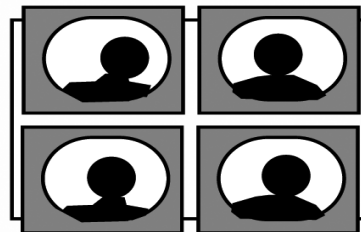
Rich content
Customized information



*Individuals control reception of
centrally produced programs*

$S \longleftrightarrow R$

Social media
Facebook, Twitter



*Individuals produce and
control all information*

$S = R$

Source of Information

central

individual

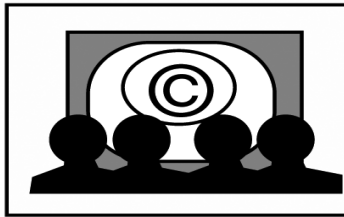
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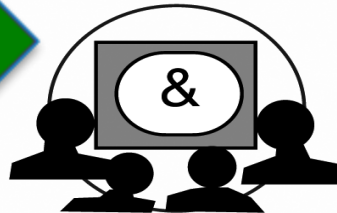
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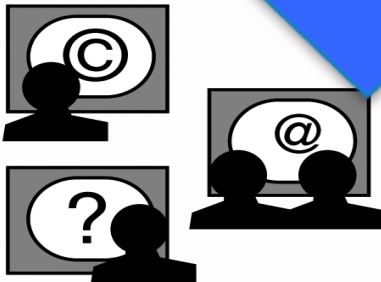
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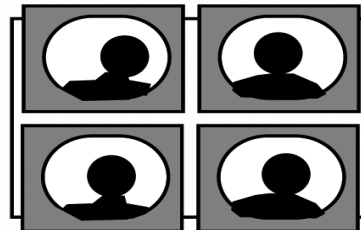
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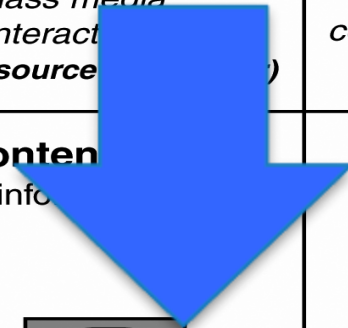
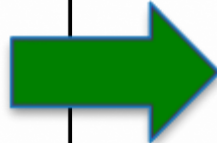
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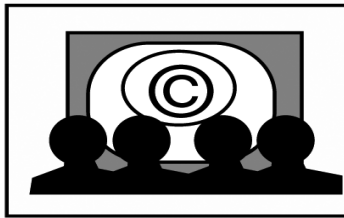
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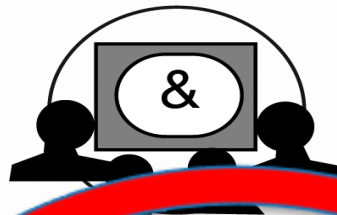
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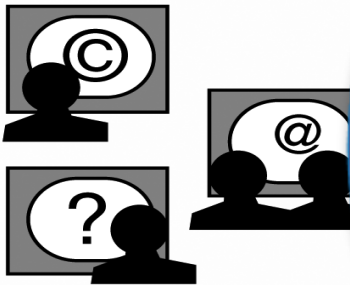
S → R (source to receiver)

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E-bay, Craigslist



*Individuals are sources,
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S R ←→ S R

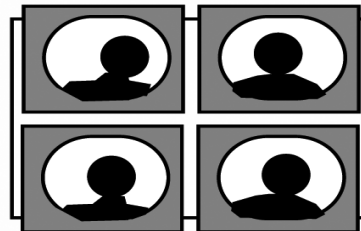
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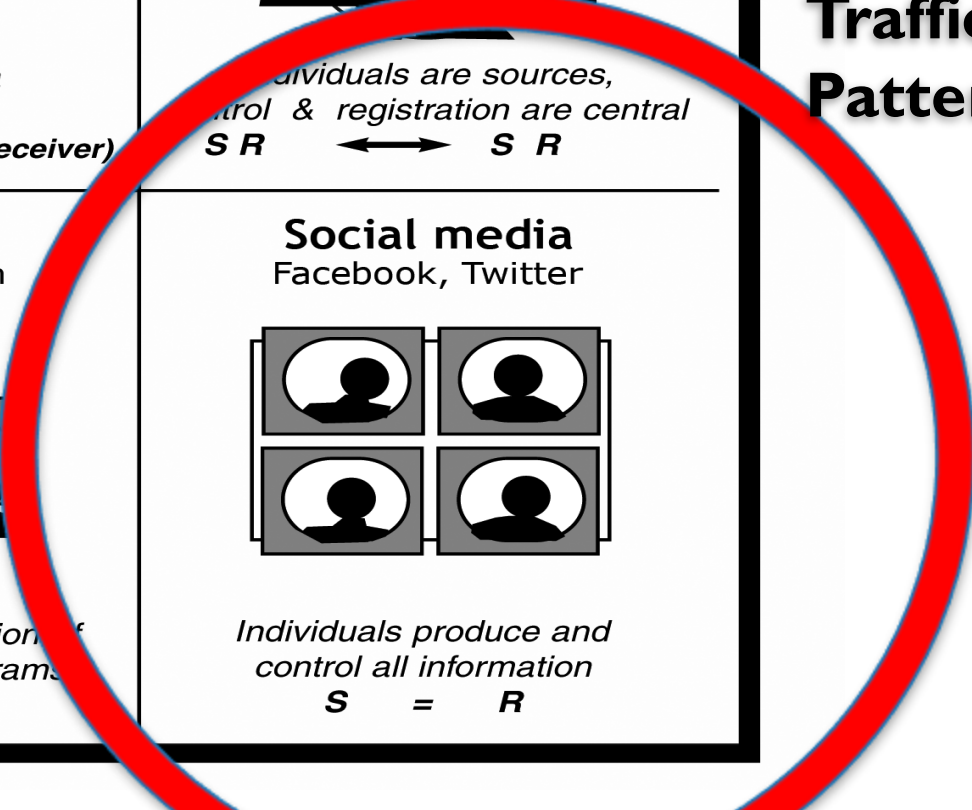
S ↔ R

Social media
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*Individuals produce and
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S = R



WORLD'S FAIR



CHICAGO

1893 - A CENTURY OF PROGRESS - 1893

ADULTS 30¢ MAY 27th to NOVEMBER 1st CHILDREN 25¢

Determinism

Science Finds,
Industry Applies,
Man Conforms.

Social construction of technology

Many believe it is the other way around.

Vannevar Bush, president of MIT and science advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, expressed that opinion in 1948



“In a free country, in a democracy ... [the technical path we take] is the path that public opinion wishes to have pursued, whether it leads to new cures for man’s ills, or new sources of a raised standard of living ... In a dictatorship the path is the one that is dictated, whether the dictator be an individual or part of a self-perpetuating group” (Bush, 1949).

Social historians

- Upton Sinclair -- *The Jungle, The Brass Check, Muckraker, press critic 1900s – 1930s*
- A. J. Liebling -- *New Yorker* media critic 1940s
- I. F. Stone, also George Seldes
 - Independent editors and press critics 1950s – 70s
- Ben Bagdikian – 1970s – 90s
 - *Media Monopoly, press concentration*
- Neil Postman -- 1980s - 90s
 - *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

Critical theories as history

- Sociologists -- Max Weber and Michael Schudson
 - Ideational model helps observe the clash of ideas around social reform
- Communications theorists -- Michel Foucault
 - Discourse analysis to understand the information content and structure of mainstream cultural products and “subjugated knowledge.”
- Critical theorists
 - Frankfurt School -- Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and Jürgen Habermas
 - Conflict of classes / Marxist analysis
 - Mass media is structured to subvert identity and assimilate individuality into the dominant culture
 - Noam Chomsky “libertarian socialist”
 - propaganda model – media supports ruling elites.

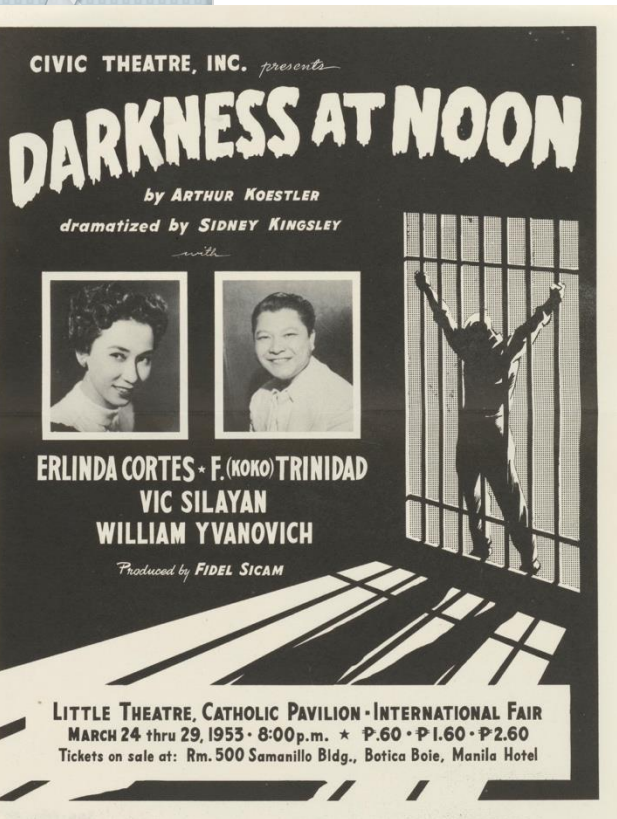
Critic of critical theory

Camille Paglia:

It's just shocking to me that we've had a period over the last 20 years where a bunch of French theorists who know nothing about media have been the dominant God figures of the Ivy League and all other kinds of chic campuses across the country.

It just amazes me because none of the French theorists, none of the experts in post-structuralism know anything about media. Nothing whatever. These are figures that pre-date World War II in their thinking, they were untouched by media in the North American sense, in the kind of all-encompassing, total-immersion sense that we know it here, even the kinds of thinking that you get out of the so-called Frankfurt School, associated with Adorno, dates to the 1930s in Germany!

Arthur Koestler's Theory of Masses



1953 Stage Play
New York

- Every jump of technical progress leaves the relative intellectual development of the masses a step behind, and thus causes a fall in the political-maturity thermometer.
- It takes sometimes tens of years, sometimes generations, for a people's level of understanding gradually to adapt itself to the changed state of affairs, until it has recovered the same capacity for self-government as it had already possessed at a lower stage of civilization. – Darkness at Noon, 1940

MEDIA CONSUMPTION

IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

MEDIA CONSUMPTION IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Due to the frenzy of pandemic-induced quarantines, media consumption has seen a massive increase. But what exactly are people doing, and how are they staying informed?

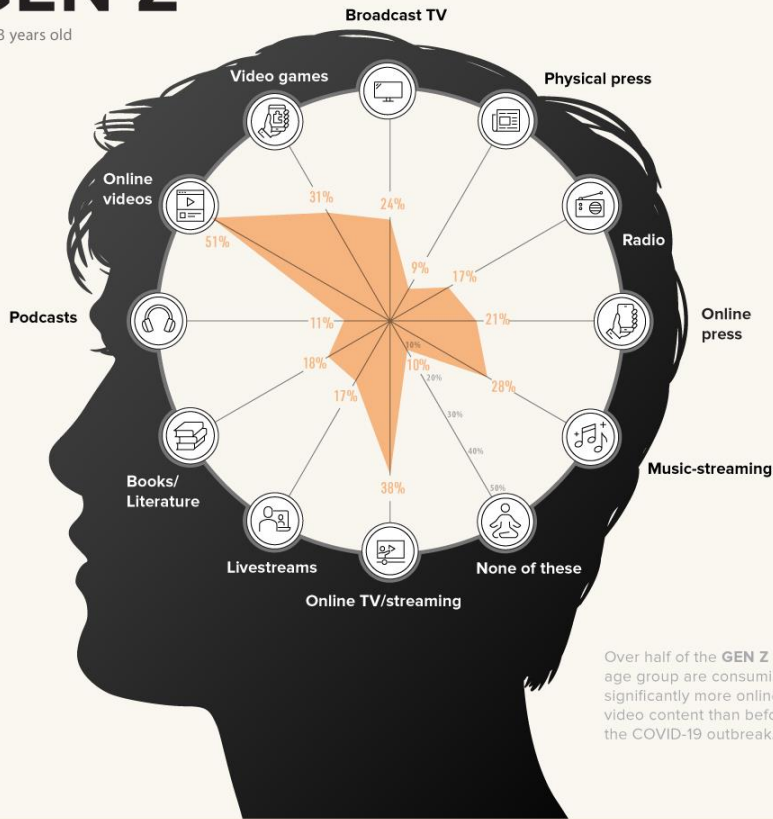
GLOBAL WEB INDEX

surveyed almost 4,000 internet users between the ages of 16-64 across the U.S. and the UK to find out how the COVID-19 outbreak has changed their media consumption.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION GEN Z

% WHO SAY THEY HAVE STARTED CONSUMING OR ARE CONSUMING MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SINCE THE OUTBREAK

16-23 years old



Over half of the GEN Z age group are consuming significantly more online video content than before the COVID-19 outbreak.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION MILLENNIALS

24-37 years old

Broadcast TV

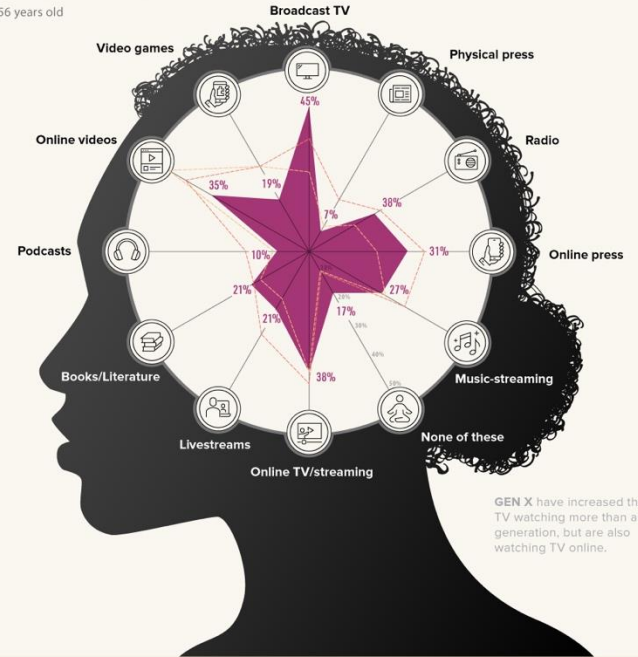
Physical press

● Gen Z ● Millennials

MEDIA CONSUMPTION GEN X

38-56 years old

● Gen Z ● Millennials ● Gen X

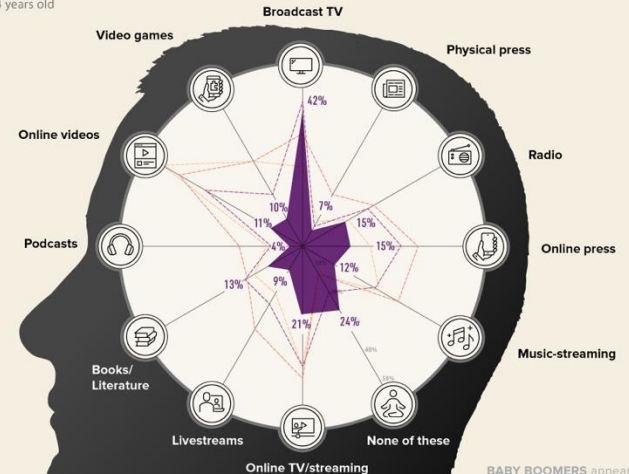


GEN X have increased their TV watching more than any generation, but are also watching TV online.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION BOOMER

57-64 years old

● Gen Z ● Millennials ● Gen X ● Boomers



BABY BOOMERS appear

Next: the printing revolution

