Media Communication, Convergence and Literacy

Media Communication, Convergence and Literacy

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Introduction

Introduction

The field of media communication is continuously evolving with the introduction of new media technologies and innovative professional and consumer practices. Although this is a good thing, it also creates the challenge of having access to up-to-date textbooks for teaching in this subject area. The continuous changes in the media industry have rendered available open educational resources a bit dated. The dynamic nature of the media industry calls for a similarly dynamic open textbook or OER that utilizes multimedia and technological interactivity and allows for regular updates to reflect changes in the field. Introduction to Media Communication (MCOM 1307) teaches students the importance of mass media and the essential roles they play in daily personal and professional lives as well as contributing to responsible global citizenship. In today's age of information overload, misinformation and disinformation, a course like MCOM 1307 that emphasizes media and digital literacy, and responsible media use provides college students with an important tool and skill-set that equips them now and for future professional roles in diverse industries and fields. There is the need for an open textbook that includes media and digital literacy education components to help students develop critical thinking skills, communication skills, as well as

personal and social responsibility as media consumers and information and content creators.

Media literacy education can help students develop and apply critical thinking skills by teaching students to apply critical thinking to media messages – identify credible information and sources and assess the influence of messages in their daily interaction with all forms of media. Media literacy training also ensures students develop communication skills by giving them the ability to use media to create effective messages and distribute these messages responsibly. Students develop personal and social responsibility through media literacy education that teaches them skills they can use to monitor and be critical of what they share on social media and empowers them to engage responsibly in the global media environment. College students and graduates need strong media and digital literacy skills to help navigate the overwhelming media landscape of our current and future world.

Our goal is to develop a quality open textbook and create OER online course materials for MCOM 1307 that is timely, current, and relevant with instructional materials that cover all course objectives. This is important because our experience teaching the course for many years using different textbooks and a review of available OER shows that textbooks on the market do not always cover all the key components of what a course teaching an overview of media communication and media literacy education needs. Our OER will address those missing components of what a media communication course incorporating media and digital literacy skills ought to cover. Students enrolled in the course will receive a holistic education about media communication and media literacy using a comprehensive learning tool in the form of our proposed open textbook and OER online course materials rather than depending on multiple textbooks and resources.

Adopted OER

OER TEXTBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapters and sections were adapted from the the following OER textbooks. Adopting these resources made it possible to get this OER ready for instructors and students to use within the specified time frame. Thank you to these authors who shared their work and provide this OER textbook with a diversity of voices.

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- How the Invention of the Printing Press Helped in Shaping the Future World by Carla Adams

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- Chapter 9.2 The Influence of Advertising

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- Chapter 1 The Netflix Nexus by Maya Frame
- Chapter 13 Acting Performance in Quality Television by

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- Chapter 15.1 Technological Advances: From the Printing Press to the iPhone
- Chapter 15.3 Mass Communication and Ethics

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- Chapter 1 Media, Society, Culture and You
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PART I

MASS COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA TEXTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe the evolving media industry and identify key changes
- Discuss how commercial factors influence media organizations
- Appreciate roles as media consumers and audience
- Explain the different forms of communication and distinguish between mediated and non-mediated communication
- Evaluate the influence of culture on mass communication and the impact of mass communication on culture
- Define media text and genre

Media, Society, Culture and You

THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN SOCIETY

Bronze bust of John Dewey sculpted by Jacob Epstein, 1927. Photo by user known as Cliff, CCBY. Source: Flickr.

More than one hundred years ago, John Dewey wrote in *Democracy and Education* that society is not only supported by various forms of communication but also enveloped in communication. Dewey reiterated what philosophers and scholars had noted for centuries: small groups, larger communities and vast institutions — all the things that make up a **society** — function in relation to how communication flows within and between groups.

There are different forms of communication. At the broadest level, **communication** is an exchange of meaning between people using symbols. The most common symbols we use are verbal and written words, but there are also many forms of nonverbal communication such as American Sign Language. What sign language, verbal communication and written communication have

in common is the use of abstract symbols to convey meaning. Whether you say “thank you” in face-to-face communication, send someone a card with the words “thank you” written on it, or use nonverbal cues to express thanks, the meaning is the same.

Interpersonal communication generally refers to the exchange of meaning between two or more people on a personal, often one-on-one, level. Interpersonal communication can be verbal or nonverbal. Most often, it happens in face-to-face settings. It differs from **mass communication**, which involves sharing meaning through symbolic messages to a wide audience from one source to many receivers. Sometimes, particularly in **computer-mediated communication**, messages conveyed using computers, it can be difficult to tell the difference between interpersonal communication and mass communication because individuals can send messages intended only for other individuals that might quickly reach large numbers of people. Social media platforms are often structured in ways that allow interpersonal messages to “go viral” and become mass messages whether the original sender intended to address a mass audience or not.

It is not the type of message that determines interpersonal or mass communication. It is the way the message is distributed and the relationships between sender and receiver(s). This text will continue to grapple with the overlap of interpersonal communication and mass communication structures on networked communication platforms, but first, another form of communication commonly studied in academic settings should be introduced.

Organizational communication is the symbolic exchange of messages carrying specific meaning for members belonging to formal organizations. In practical terms, it is the internal communication that helps governments, businesses, schools and hospitals to run.

People working together in organizations get usually things done by communicating directly with one another or in small groups.

Organizations cannot function without communication. Organizational communication effectiveness can influence the success or failure of businesses and other social institutions. Thus, communication does not merely happen within organizations; it is an essential part of the way they are structured. Organizational communication is a separate field of study, introduced well in this YouTube video.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=177#oembed-1

Successful communication, whether intended for personal use, for use within an organization, or for a wide audience, can help people to understand each other and to get things done.

If good organizational communication is necessary for groups to function with a formal purpose, mass communication is essential for societies to function. Societies are made up of formal organizations of various sizes. Usually, the larger the group, the more complex its communication structures.

Communication structure refers to a combination of information and communication technologies (ICTs), guidelines for using those technologies, and professional workers dedicated to managing information and messages. In the mass communication field, communication structures are more than computers and transmission networks. The guidelines for using networks to create and distribute messages for mass consumption are a matter of corporate policy as well as law.

It has been noted that a society is made up of small groups, larger communities, and vast institutions. A more complete definition of the term comes from the field of sociology. A **society** is a very large group of people organized into institutions held together over time through formalized relationships. Nations, for example, are made up of formal institutions organized by law. Governments of different size, economic institutions, educational institutions and others all come together to form a society.

By comparison, **culture** — the knowledge, beliefs, and practices of groups large and small — is not necessarily formalized. Culture is necessary for enjoying and making sense of the human experience, but there are few formalized rules governing culture.

Mass communication influences both society and culture. Different societies have different media systems, and the way they are set up by law influences how the society works. Different forms of communication, including messages in the mass media, give shape and structure to society. Additionally, mass media outlets can spread cultural knowledge and artistic works around the globe. People exercise cultural preferences when it comes to consuming media, but mass media corporations often decide which stories to tell and which to promote, particularly when it comes to forms of mass media that are costly to produce such as major motion pictures, major video game releases and global news products.

More than any other, the field of mass communication transmits culture. At the same time, it helps institutional society try to understand itself and whether its structures are working.

The Mass Media Dynamic

The mass media system is an institution itself. What sets it apart is its potential to influence the thinking of massive numbers of individuals. In fact, the ideas exchanged in organizational communication and interpersonal communication are often established, reinforced or negated by messages in the mass media.

This is what it means for societies "to exist in transmission, in communication." Different types of communication influence each other.

But the mass media are also shaped and influenced by social groups and institutions. This is the nature of the mass media dynamic.

Individuals and groups in society influence what mass media organizations produce through their creativity on the input side and their consumption habits on the output side. It is not accurate to say that society exists within the mass media or under mass media "control." Social structures are too powerful for mass media to completely govern how they operate. But neither is it accurate to say that the mass media are contained within societies. Many mass media products transcend social structures to influence multiple societies, and even in societies that heavily censor their mass media the news of scandals and corruption can get out. The mass media and society are bound together and shape each other.

Almost everything you read, see and hear is framed within a mass media context; however, mere familiarity is no guarantee of success. Products in the mass media that fail to resonate with audiences do not last long, even if they seem in tune with current tastes and trends.

The Mass Communication Origin Story

In his book, John notes how, in the early 20th century, the mass media were beginning to connect large institutions in new ways. The production of mass media messages accelerated with the development of the telegraph and the popular newspaper. The spread of telegraph technology that began in the mid-1800s continued through the early 1900s to network the globe with a nearly instantaneous information transmission system. Much of the growth of newspapers occurred as a result of improvements in telegraph technology.

Thus, a primary function of the global mass communication system is to save time. People have a need to understand what is going on in the world, and they desire entertainment. Global electronic telecommunication networks collapse space by transmitting messages in much less time than the older, physical delivery systems.

The dynamic between society and mass media that is so prevalent today developed throughout the 20th century. Starting near the end of the 1800s, communication flows began to move at electronic speeds. More people knew *about* more things than ever before, but scholars are quick to point out that communication is not synonymous with understanding.

Dewey wanted to focus on educating people so that they could live and work well in societies heavily shaped by global telecommunication networks. For him, education was the meaning of life and the global information and communication system needed to be molded into an educational tool. Many of us still hold out hope for Dewey's educational goals, but as ICTs have advanced over the past century or two, it has become clear that the mere existence of global mass communication networks does not ensure that societies will learn to coexist and thrive.

This can be difficult for people to acknowledge. Shortly after the widespread dissemination of the telegraph, the radio, broadcast television and public internet access, some form of communication utopia was imagined or even expected. The telegraph collapsed space. Radio enabled instantaneous mass communication. Television brought live images from one side of the globe to the other for even larger mass audiences, and internet access gave individuals the power to be information senders, not just receivers. At each step hope and imagination flourished, but social and cultural clashes persisted. Communication systems can be used as weapons. The evolution of mass communication tools is the story of increased capacity to do the same good and evil things people have always done in societies and between them.

Looking beyond technological utopianism — the idea that new technologies (particularly ICTs) will lead to greater social understanding and better conditions for the global population — we are left with a tedious but massively meaningful project. We must find ways to coexist with other societies even as we are constantly aware of our differences and of possible threats that may have existed before but now are much easier to see.

Perhaps if we are to make the best of our digital global communication network, it would help to track the evolution of different forms of mass communication. This text very briefly touched on the continuum from telegraph to widespread internet adoption, but the first mass medium was ink on paper.

The First Mass Medium

The first global medium, besides the spoken word, was neither the internet nor the telegraph. In fact, it was not a mass medium at all. It was paper. Via trade routes, messages in the form of letters moved around the world in a matter of weeks or months. It was global communication, but it was slow.

The development of a global telegraph network made it possible for messages to spread in minutes. When the telegraph was wed to mass-consumed newspapers, the world saw the rise of *fast, global, mass* communication that had the power to potentially influence large groups of people at once.

Books transmitted messages widely and inspired literacy, but they did not establish a channel for consistent, timely communication meant for mass audiences. After the Gutenberg printing press was developed around 1440, the Gutenberg Bible was slowly mass produced and disseminated around the Western world. It opened up access to sacred texts that had been bound up for centuries by large institutions like the Roman Catholic Church, and its dissemination helped fuel the Protestant Reformation. Still, it was an outlier. Most other books, even those that were mass

produced from around the 1500s to the 1800s were not disseminated as widely as the Gutenberg Bible. They were simply too expensive.

Nevertheless, mass literacy slowly paved the way for mass newspaper readership to emerge in the 20th century. After the telegraph was invented and developed for wide-scale use and after the cost of printing newspapers dropped, publishers could share news from around the globe with mass audiences. The newspaper, specifically the penny press, was the first mass medium.


THE PENNY PAPER.

The front page of the Cincinnati Penny Paper from Monday, May 16, 1881. From: George Edward Stevens' article "From Penny Paper to Post and Times-Star: Mr. Scripps' First Link" in the Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin No. 27, 1969, public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

What distinguished the **penny press** was affordability. These papers were published in tabloid format, which used small-sized pages and was cheaper to produce. Penny papers were written for and read by working class audiences starting in about the 1830s. They covered all manner of current events. Soon, major institutions such as political parties and unions developed their own papers to cover the topics that suited their agendas and to promote the cultural values that they held dear.

Mass Media Growth and Consolidation

As mass production of all sorts of manufactured goods grew during the 20th century, so did advertising budgets and the concept of brands. Brand advertising became fuel for the mass media, and as profitability rose, newspapers were bought up and organized into

chains throughout the 20th century. Many newspapers grew their audience as they merged.

Partisan papers gave way to a brand of news that strived for objectivity. The profit motive mostly drove the change. To attract a mass audience, newspapers had to represent various points of view. This pushed some of the most opinionated citizens, particularly strong advocates for workers, to the fringes of mass discourse. Some advocates developed alternative media offerings. Others went mostly unheard or plied their craft directly in politics.

At the same, throughout much of the 20th century, the journalism workforce became more professionalized. Professional **norms**, that is the written and unwritten rules guiding behavior decided on by people in a given field, evolved. Many full-time, paid professional journalists stressed and continue to stress the need to remain detached from the people they cover so that journalists can maintain the practice and appearance of objectivity. Journalists emphasized objectivity in order to remain autonomous and to be perceived as truthful. The norm of objective reporting still strongly influences news coverage in newspapers as well as on most mainstream radio and television news networks.

That being said, the practice of maintaining objectivity is being called into question in our current hyper-partisan political media environment. Other strategies for demonstrating truthfulness require journalists to be transparent about how they do their work, about who owns their media outlets, and about what investments and personal views they may have. Chapter 9 covers news norms and their evolution in greater detail.

At the heart of the ethical discussion for professional journalists is a sort of battle between the need to be autonomous to cover news accurately with minimal bias and the need to be socially responsible. **Social responsibility** in the study of journalism ethics is a specific concept referring to the need for media organizations to be responsible for the possible repercussions of the news they

produce. The debate goes on even as more and more platforms for mass communication are developed.

Beyond advancements in ink-on-paper newspapers (including the development of color offset printing), technological developments have contributed to the diversification of mass media products. Photography evolved throughout the 20th century as did motion picture film, radio and television technology. Other mass media presented challenges and competition for newspapers. Still, newspapers were quite a profitable business. They grew to their greatest readership levels in the middle-to-late 20th century, and their value was at its high point around the turn of the 21st century. Then came the internet.

Stewing in our Own Juices

With the rise of global computer networks, particularly high-speed broadband and mobile communication technologies, individuals gained the ability to publish their own work and to comment on mass media messages more easily than ever before. If mass communication in the 20th century was best characterized as a one-to-many system where publishers and broadcasters reached waiting audiences, the mass media made possible by digital information networks in the twenty-first have taken on a many-to-many format.

For example, YouTube has millions of producers who themselves are also consumers. None of the social media giants such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Qzone and Weibo (in China), Twitter, Reddit or Pinterest is primarily known for producing content. Instead, they provide platforms for users to submit their own content and to share what mass media news and entertainment companies produce. The result is that the process of deciding what people should be interested in is much more decentralized in the digital network mass media environment than it was in the days of an analog one-to-many mass media system.

The process of making meaning in society — that is, the process of telling many smaller stories that add up to a narrative shared by mass audiences — is now much more collaborative than it was in the 20th century because more people are consuming news in networked platforms than through the channels managed by **gatekeepers**. A mass media gatekeeper is someone, professional or not, who decides what information to share with mass audiences and what information to leave out.

Fiction or non-fiction, every story leaves something out, and the same is true for shows made up of several stories, such as news broadcasts and heavily edited reality television. Gatekeepers select what mass audiences see, and then edit or disregard the rest. The power of gatekeepers may be diminished in networks where people can decide for themselves what topics they care most about, but there is still an important gatekeeping function in the mass media since much of what is ultimately shared on social media platforms originates in the offices and studios of major media corporations.

On social media platforms, media consumers have the ability to add their input and criticism, and this is an important function for users. Not only do we have a say as audience members in the content we would like to see, read and hear, but we also have an important role to play in society as voting citizens holding their elected officials accountable.

If social media platforms were only filled with mass media content, individual user comments, and their own homegrown content, digitally networked communication would be complex enough, but there are other forces at work. Rogue individuals, hacker networks and **botnets** — computers programmed to create false social media accounts, websites and other digital properties — can contribute content alongside messages produced by professionals and legitimate online community members. False presences on social media channels can amplify hate and

misinformation and can stoke animosity between groups in a hyper-partisan media age.

Around the world, societies have democratized mass communication, but in many ways, agreeing on a shared narrative or even a shared list of facts is more difficult than ever. Users create **filter bubbles** for themselves where they mostly hear the voices and information that they want to hear. This has the potential to create opposing worldviews where users with different viewpoints not only have differing opinions, but they also have in mind completely different sets of facts creating different images about what is happening in the world and how society should operate.

When users feel the need to defend their filtered worldviews, it is quite harmful to society.

De-massification

The infiltration of bots on common platforms is one issue challenging people working in good faith to produce accurate and entertaining content and to make meaning in the mass media. De-massification is another. Professionals working on mass-market media products now must fight to hold onto mass audiences. **De-massification** signifies the breakdown of mass media audiences. As the amount of information being produced and the number of channels on which news and other content can be disseminated grows exponentially, ready-made audiences are in decline.

In the future, it is anticipated that audiences, or fan bases, must be built rather than tapped into. One path to growing audiences in digital networks is to take an extreme point of view. Producers of news and entertainment information on the right and left of the political spectrum often rail against mainstream media as they promote points of view which are more or less biased. This kind of polarization along with the tendency of social media platforms to allow and even encourage people to organize along political

lines likely contributes to de-massification as people organize into factions.

The future of some mass communication channels as regular providers of shared meaning for very large audiences is in question. That said, claims that any specific medium is "dead" are overblown. For example, newspaper readership, advertising revenue and employment numbers have been declining for about 25 years, but as of 2018, there are still more than 30 million newspaper subscribers. Mass audiences are shrinking and shifting, but they can still be developed.

Convergence

As mass audiences are breaking up and voices from the fringe are garnering outsized influence, the various types of media (audio, video, text, animation and the industries they are tied to) have come together on global computer and mobile network platforms in a process called **convergence**.

It is as though all media content is being tossed into a huge stew, one that surrounds and composes societies and cultures, and within this stew of information, people are re-organizing themselves according to the cultural and social concerns they hold most dear.

According to one hypothesis, in a society dominated by digital communication networks, people gather around the information they recognize and want to believe because making sense of the vast amount of information now available is impossible.

This text covers several mass media channels including social media, film, radio, television, music recording and podcasting, digital gaming, news, advertising, public relations and propaganda because these are still viable industries even as the content they produce appears more and more often on converged media platforms.

What we see emerging in networked spaces is a single mass

media channel with a spectrum of possible text, photo, audio, video, graphic and game elements; however, the sites of professional production still mostly identify as one particular industry (such as radio and recorded music, film, television, cable television, advertising, PR, digital advertising or social media). Some of these are "legacy" media that have existed as analog industries prior to convergence, while others originated in digital media environments.

For the foreseeable future, we should expect legacy media producers to continue to hold formidable power as elements of larger media conglomerates, which acquired many media companies as a result of industry deregulation. We should also expect audiences to continue to fragment and digital media start-ups trying to build audiences out of fragmented communities to be common even if they are difficult to sustain.

What this means for social structures and for cultural production is disruption, limited perhaps by legacy media traditions and corporate power.

Melding Theories

The world of mass media has witnessed the convergence of media content on digital platforms, the ability of individuals to engage in one-to-many communication as though they were major broadcasters, and the emergence of structures that allow for many-to-many communication. These developments force us to rethink how separate interpersonal, organizational and mass communication truly are.

From a theoretical standpoint, these are well-established approaches to thinking about communication, but in practice, certain messages might fit into multiple categories. For example, a YouTube video made for a few friends might reach millions if it goes viral. Is it interpersonal communication, mass communication or both? Viral videos and memes spread to vast numbers of people

but might start out as in-jokes between internet friends or trolls. The message's original meaning is often lost in this process. In a networked society, it can be difficult to differentiate between interpersonal and mass communication. For our purposes, it will be helpful to consider the message creator's intent.

As a user, it is essential to realize the possibility that interpersonal messages may be shared widely. As professionals, it also helps to realize that you cannot force a messge to go viral, although most social media platforms now engage in various kinds of paid promotion where brands and influential users can pay to have their content spread more widely more quickly.

Two women discuss a record album selection in a music shop in Amora, Portugal. Photo by Pedro Ribeiro Simões, CCBY. Source: Flikr.

We must also understand that advertisers treat digital communication platforms much the same way whether they appear to users to be interpersonal or mass media environments. Users can be targeted down to the individual on either type of platform, and advertisers (with the help of platform creators), can access mass audiences, even when users are intending only to participate on a platform for purposes of interpersonal communication.

Scholars are still working to define how these platforms mix aspects of interpersonal and mass communication. Here is one takeaway: If you are not paying to use a platform like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube (Google), Instagram or Snapchat, *you* are the product. It is your attention that is being sold to advertisers.

The Big Picture

Society functions when the mass media work well, and we tend not to think about the technologies or the professionals who make it all possible. Interpersonal communication can function with or without a massive technological apparatus. It is more convenient, though, to be able to text each another. When interpersonal communication breaks down, we have problems in our relationships. When organizational communication breaks down, it creates problems for groups and companies. But when mass communication breaks down, society breaks down.

Cultural Production

There is another way of looking at the mass media that needs to be mentioned after looking in some depth at the structural changes going on in and around the field of mass communication. Mass media channels are also huge engines of cultural production. That is, they make the entertainment that helps us define who we are as large and small groups of people. To quote from *Dead Poets Society*: "We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race, and the human race is filled with passion. Medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for." If you replace "reading and writing poetry" with "creating culture," you get a sense of the importance of cultural production. We can define culture as a collection of our knowledge, beliefs and practices. In practice, culture it how we express ourselves and enjoy life's experiences.

In media, there are three main types of cultural works, those associated with "high" culture, popular culture and folk culture. (Some scholars discuss "low" culture, but it is argued here that "low culture" is just another way of describing the low end of pop culture.)

High culture is arguably the best cultural material a society has to offer. Economic class often comes into play in defining what is "high culture" and what is not.

Pop culture is the vast array of cultural products that appeal to the masses.

Folk culture refers to cultural products borne out of everyday life identifiable because they usually have practical uses as well as artistic value. It is often associated with prehistoric cultures, but that is because the folk culture, pop culture and high culture of prehistoric peoples were often one and the same. Their best art may also have been an everyday object like a bowl or a basket or a doll or a mask. Don't confuse prehistoric art with modern folk art.

Modern folk art has the specific quality of trying to capture what is both beautiful *and useful* in everyday life.

Folk music tends to rely on "traditional" sounds and instruments. Topically, it focuses on the value of everyday existence. Folk music is often built around narratives that carry morals much the same way fairy tales do. Fairy tales are probably the best example of folk literature.

So much of the interpretation and the value of cultural production is culturally relative. This means that an object or work's value is determined by perceptions of people in different cultural groups.

In modern society, mass media often drive our perceptions. It is important to recognize that different cultures have different moral values and to acknowledge that some practices should be universally abhorred and stopped, even if they are partially or wholly accepted in other cultures.

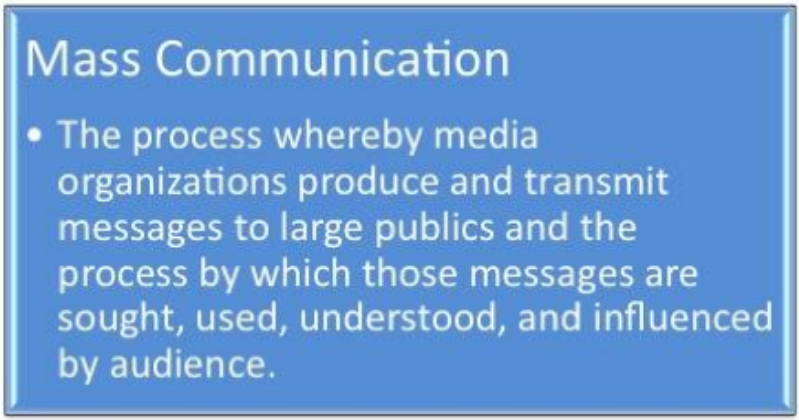
The relationship between culture and mass media is complex; it is difficult to distinguish modern culture from how it appears in the various mass media. Culture in the developed world is spread through mass media channels. Just as society forms and is formed in part by messages in the mass media, so it goes with culture. Cultural products and their popularity can influence which media

channels people prefer. Conversely, changes in media and ICTs can lead to changes in how we produce culture.

When we discuss digital culture, we will continue to break down different levels of culture and the relationship between cultural forms and mass communication in the networked communication age. To begin to understand the mass media, their role in society and how they shape culture and are shaped by cultural preferences, it helps to think about how the mass media may influence you.

Defining Mass Communication

Littlejohn and Foss define **mass communication** as *"the process whereby media organizations produce and transmit messages to large publics and the process by which those messages are sought, used, understood, and influenced by audience"* (333). McQuail states that mass communication is, *"only one of the processes of communication operating at the society-wide level, readily identified by its institutional characteristics"* (7). Simply put, mass communication is the public transfer of messages through media or technology-driven channels to a large number of recipients from an entity, usually involving some type of cost or fee (advertising) for the user. "The sender often is a person in some large media organization, the messages are public, and the audience tends to be large and varied" (Berger 121). However, with the advent of outlets like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and text messaging, these definitions do not account for the increased opportunities individuals now have to send messages to large audiences through mediated channels.



Nevertheless, most mass communication comes from large organizations that influence culture on a large scale. Schramm refers to this as a "working group organizer" (115). Today the working groups that control most mass communication are large conglomerates such as Viacom, NewsCorp, Disney, ComCast, Time Warner, and CBS. In 2012, these conglomerates controlled 90% of American Media and mergers continue to consolidate ownership even more. An example of an attempt at such a takeover of power occurred throughout 2014 with Comcast and Time Warner pursuing a merger for $45 billion. If successful, this will be one of the biggest mergers in history.

Remember our definition of communication study: "who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results" (Smith, Lasswell & Casey 121)? When examining mass communication, we are interested in who has control over what content, for what audience, using what medium, and what are the results? Media critic Robert McChesney said we should be worried about the increasingly concentrated control of mass communication that results when just a handful of large organizations control most mass communication. Both McChesney and Ben Bagdikian warn about the implications of having so few organizations controlling the majority of our information and

communication. Perhaps this is the reason new media outlets like Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and Facebook have consistently grown in popularity as they offer alternative voices to the large corporations that control most mass communication.

To understand mass communication one must first be aware of some of the key factors that distinguish it from other forms of communication. First, is the dependence on a media channel to convey a message to a large audience. Second, the audience tends to be distant, diverse, and varies in size depending on the medium and message. Third, mass communication is most often profit driven, and feedback is limited. Fourth, because of the impersonal nature of mass communication, participants are not equally present during the process.

Mass communication continues to become more integrated into our lives at an increasingly rapid pace. This "metamorphosis" is representative by the convergence occurring (Fidler) between ourselves and technology, where we are not as distanced from mass communication as in the past. Increasingly, we have more opportunities to use mediated communication to fulfill interpersonal and social needs. O'Sullivan refers to this new use of mass communication to foster our personal lives as **"masspersonal communication"** where *(a) traditional mass communication channels are used for interpersonal communication, (b) traditionally interpersonal communication channels are used for mass communication, and (c) traditional mass communication and traditional interpersonal communication occur simultaneously."* Over time, more and more overlap occurs. "Innovations in communication technologies have begun to make the barriers between mass and interpersonal communication theory more permeable than ever" (O'Sullivan). Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram are great examples of new mass communication platforms we use to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships.

As more mass communication mediums develop, Marshall

McLuhan states that we can understand media as either hot or cold depending on the amount of information available to the user, as well as the degree of participation. A **hot medium** *"extends one single sense in high definition"* (McCluhan 22). Examples of hot media include photographs or music (Spotify, radio, etc.) because the message is mostly interpreted using one sense and requires little participation by participants. An audience is more passive with hot media because there is less to filter. Television is considered a **cold medium** because of the *large amount of multisensory information.* Berg Nellis states "Virtual reality, the simulation of actual environment complete with tactile sensory input, might be the extreme in cold media...This and other cutting edge technologies seem to point to increasingly cold media as we move into the digital communication future" (256). Think about online video games, such as the military sci-fi game, Halo. Games like this can be played in teams but the players do not necessarily have to be in close proximity. Simply by logging onto the server gamers can connect, interact, communicate through microphones and play as a team. These games have become so involved and realistic that they represent cold mediums because of the vast amount of sensory input and participation they require.

Perhaps we are turning into a "global village" through our interdependence with mass communication. Suddenly, "across the ocean" has become "around the corner." McLuhan predicted this would happen because of mass communication's ability to unify people around the globe. Are you a player in what Hagermas calls the "public sphere" that mass communication creates by posting information about yourself on public sites? If so, be careful about what you post about yourself, or allow others to "tag" you in, as many employers are googling potential employees to look into their personal lives before making decisions about hiring them. As we continue our discussion of mass communication we want to note that mass communication does not include every communication technology. As our definition states, mass

communication is communication that potentially reaches large audiences.

PART II

MEDIA COMMUNICATION AND LITERACY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe the major functions of mass communication
- Evaluate the influence of culture on mass communication and the impact of mass communication on culture
- Explain the mass/media communication process and identify key components and roles
- Distinguish between traditional literacy and media literacy
- Identify the major principles of media literacy and explain key skills associated with media literacy

Why Media? What Do Media Do for Us?

Even a brief history of media can leave one breathless. The speed, reach, and power of the technology are humbling. The evolution can seem almost natural and inevitable, but it is important to stop and ask a basic question: Why? Why do media seem to play such an important role in our lives and our culture? With reflection, we can see that media fulfill several basic roles.

One obvious role is *entertainment*. Media can act as a springboard for our imaginations, a source of fantasy, and an outlet for escapism. In the 19th century, Victorian readers, disillusioned by the grimness of the Industrial Revolution, found themselves drawn into books that offered fantastic worlds of fairies and other unreal beings. In the first decade of the 21st century, American television viewers could relax at the end of a day by watching singers, both wonderful and terrible, compete to be idols or watch two football teams do battle. Media entertain and distract us in the midst of busy and hard lives.

Media can also provide *information* and *education*. Information can come in many forms, and often blurs the line with entertainment. Today, newspapers and news-oriented television and radio programs make available stories from across the globe, allowing readers or viewers in London to have access to voices and videos from Baghdad, Tokyo, or Buenos Aires. Books and

magazines provide a more in-depth look at a wide range of subjects. Online encyclopedias have articles on topics from presidential nicknames to child prodigies to tongue-twisters in various languages. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has posted free lecture notes, exams, and audio and video recordings of classes on its OpenCourseWare website, allowing anyone with an Internet connection access to world-class professors.

Another useful aspect of media is its ability to act as a public forum for the discussion of important issues. In newspapers or other periodicals, letters to the editor allow readers to respond to journalists, or voice their opinions on the issues of the day. These letters have been an important part of U.S. newspapers even when the nation was a British colony, and they have served as a means of public discourse ever since. Blogs, discussion boards, and online comments are modern forums. Indeed, the Internet can be seen as a fundamentally democratic medium that allows people who can get online the ability to put their voices out there—though whether anyone will hear is another question.

Media can also serve to *monitor government, business, and other institutions*. Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle* exposed the miserable conditions in the turn-of-the-century meatpacking industry. In the early 1970s, *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncovered evidence of the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up, which eventually led to the resignation of then-president Richard Nixon. Online journalists today try to uphold the "watchdog" role of the media.

Thinking more deeply, we can recognize that certain media are better at certain roles. Media have characteristics that influence how we use them. While some forms of mass media are better suited to entertainment, others make more sense as a venue for spreading information. For example, in terms of print media, books are durable and able to contain lots of information, but are relatively slow and expensive to produce. In contrast, newspapers

are comparatively cheaper and quicker to create, making them a better medium for the quick turnover of daily news. Television provides vastly more visual information than radio, and is more dynamic than a static printed page; it can also be used to broadcast live events to a nationwide audience, as in the annual State of the Union addresses given by the U.S. president. However, it is also a one-way medium—that is, it allows for very little direct person-to-person communication. In contrast, the Internet encourages public discussion of issues and allows nearly everyone who wants a voice to have one. However, the Internet is also largely unmoderated and uncurated. Users may have to wade through thousands of inane comments or misinformed amateur opinions in order to find quality information.

In the 1960s media theorist Marshall McLuhan took these ideas one step further, with the phrase "the medium is the message." McLuhan emphasized that each medium delivers information in a different way and that content is fundamentally shaped by that medium. For example, although television news has the advantage of offering video and live coverage, making a story come vividly alive, it is also a faster-paced medium. That means stories get reported in different ways than print. A story told on television will often be more visual, have less information, and be able to offer less history and context than the same story covered in a monthly magazine. This feature of media technology leads to interesting arguments. For example, some people claim that television presents "dumbed down" information. Others disagree. In an essay about television's effects on contemporary fiction, writer David Foster Wallace scoffed at the "reactionaries who regard TV as some malignancy visited on an innocent populace, sapping IQs and compromising SAT scores while we all sit there on ever fatter bottoms with little mesmerized spirals revolving in our eyes...Treating television as evil is just as reductive and silly as treating it like a toaster with pictures."David Foster Wallace, *A*

Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again (New York: Little Brown, 1997).

We do not have to cast value judgments but can affirm: People who get the majority of their news from a particular medium will have a particular view of the world shaped not just by the *content* of what they watch but also by its *medium*. Or, as computer scientist Alan Kay put it, "Each medium has a special way of representing ideas that emphasize particular ways of thinking and de-emphasize others" (Alan Kay, "The Infobahn is Not the Answer," *Wired*, May 1994). The Internet has made this discussion even richer because it seems to hold all other media within it—print, radio, film, television and more. If indeed the medium is the message, the Internet provides us with an extremely interesting message to consider.

Functions of Mass Communication

Mass communication doesn't exist for a single purpose. With its evolution, more and more uses have developed and the role it plays in our lives has increased greatly. Wright characterizes seven functions of mass communication that offer insight into its role in our lives.

- **Surveillance**. The first function of mass communication is to serve as the eyes and ears for those seeking information about the world. The internet, televisions, and newspapers are the main sources for finding out what's going around you. Society relies on mass communication for news and information about our daily lives, it reports the weather, current issues, the latest celebrity gossip and even start times for games. Do you remember the Boston Marathon Bombing that happened in 2013? How did you hear about it? Thanks to the internet and smart phones instant access to information is at the users fingertips. News apps have made mass communication surveillance instantly accessible by sending notifications to smartphones with the latest news.

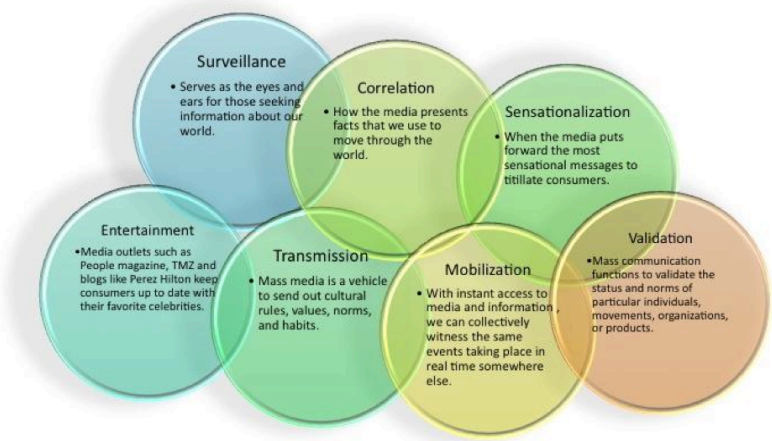
- **Correlation**. Correlation addresses how the media

presents facts that we use to move through the world. The information received through mass communication is not objective and without bias. People ironically state "it must be true if it's on the internet." However, we don't think that in generations past people must have without a doubt stated it "has to be true" because it was on the radio. This statement begs the question, how credible are the media? Can we consume media without questioning motive and agenda? Someone selects, arranges, interprets, edits, and critiques the information used in the media. If you ask anyone who works for a major reality TV show if what we see if a fair representation of what really happens, the person would probably tell you "no."

- **Sensationalization**. There is an old saying in the news industry "if it bleeds, it leads," which highlights the idea of Sensationalization. Sensationalization is when the media puts forward the most sensational messages to titillate consumers. Elliot observes, "Media managers think in terms of consumers rather than citizens. Good journalism sells, but unfortunately, bad journalism sells as well. And, bad journalism-stories that simply repeat government claims or that reinforce what the public wants to hear instead of offering independent reporting -is cheaper and easier to produce" (35).

- **Entertainment**. Media outlets such as People Magazine, TMZ, and entertainment blogs such as Perez Hilton keep us up to date on the daily comings and goings of our favorite celebrities. We use technology to watch sports, go to the movies, play video games, watch YouTube videos, and listen to iPods on a daily basis. Most mass communication simultaneously entertains and informs. People often turn to media during our leisure time to provide an escape from boredom and relief from the

predictability of our everyday lives. We rely on media to take us places we could not afford to go or imagine, acquaints us with bits of culture, and make us laugh, think or cry. Entertainment can have the secondary effect of providing companionship and/or catharsis through the media we consume.



Functions of media

- **Transmission**. Mass media is a vehicle to transmit cultural norms, values, rules, and habits. Consider how you learned about what's fashionable in clothes or music. Mass media plays a significant role in the socialization process. We look for role models to display appropriate cultural norms, but all too often, not recognizing their inappropriate or stereotypical behavior. Mainstream society starts shopping, dressing, smelling, walking, and talking like the person in the music video, commercial, or movies. Why would soft drink companies pay Kim Kardashian or Taylor Swift millions of dollars to sell their products? Have you ever bought a pair of shoes or

changed your hairstyle because of something you encountered in the media? Obviously, culture, age, type of media, and other cultural variables factor into how mass communication influences how we learn and perceive our culture.

- **Mobilization**. Mass communication functions to mobilize people during times of crisis (McQuail, 1994). Think back to the Boston Marathon Bombing. Regardless of your association to the incident, Americans felt the attack as a nation and people followed the news until they found the perpetrators. With instant access to media and information, we can collectively witness the same events taking place in real time somewhere else, thus mobilizing a large population of people around a particular event. The online community Reddit.com is a key example of the internet's proactivity. While the FBI was investigating the bombing, the Reddit community was posting witness's photos and trying to help identify the culprits. People felt they were making a difference.

- **Validation**. Mass communication functions to validate the status and norms of particular individuals, movements, organizations, or products. The validation of particular people or groups serves to enforce social norms (Lazarsfeld & Merton). If you think about most television dramas and sitcoms, who are the primary characters? What gender and ethnicity are the majority of the stars? What gender and ethnicity are those that play criminals or those considered abnormal? The media validates particular cultural norms while diminishing differences and variations from those norms. A great deal of criticism focuses on how certain groups are promoted, and others marginalized by how they are portrayed in mass media.

Defining Communication

For decades communication professionals have had difficulty coming to any consensus about how to define the term communication (Hovland; Morris; Nilsen; Sapir; Schramm; Stevens). Even today, there is no single agreed-upon definition of communication. In 1970 and 1984 Frank Dance looked at 126 published definitions of communication in our literature and said that the task of trying to develop a single definition of communication that everyone likes is like trying to nail jello to a wall. Years later, defining communication still feels like nailing jello to a wall.

We recognize that there are countless good definitions of communication, but we feel it's important to provide you with our definition so that you understand how we approach each chapter in this book. We are not arguing that this definition of communication is the only one you should consider viable, but you will understand the content of this text better if you understand how we have come to define communication. For the purpose of this text we define **communication** as *the process of using symbols to exchange meaning*.

Let's examine two models of communication to help you further grasp this definition. Shannon and Weaver proposed a Mathematical Model of Communication (often called the Linear Model) that serves as a basic model of communication. This model suggests that communication is simply the transmission of a

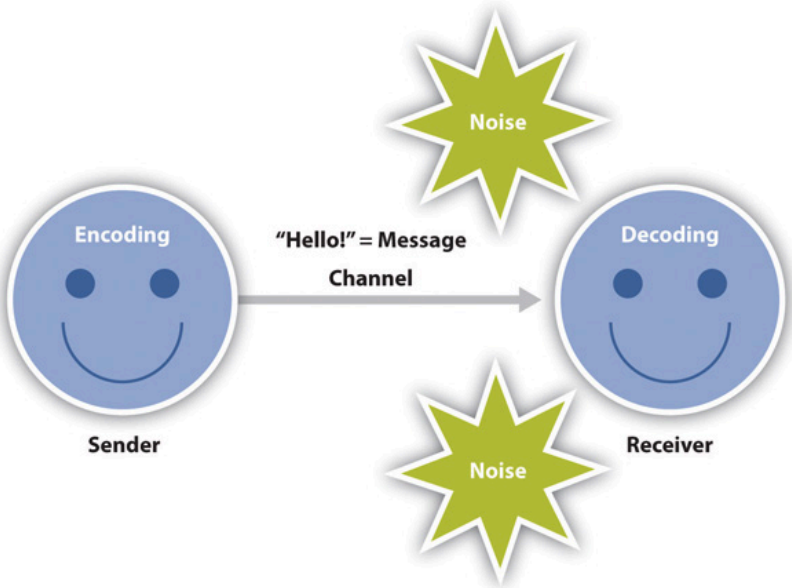
message from one source to another. Watching YouTube videos serves as an example of this. You act as the receiver when you watch videos, receiving messages from the source (the YouTube video). To better understand this, let's break down each part of this model.

The **Linear Model of Communication** is a model that suggests communication moves only in one direction. The **Sender** encodes a **Message**, then uses a certain **Channel** (verbal/nonverbal communication) to send it to a **Receiver** who decodes (interprets) the message. **Noise** is anything that interferes with, or changes, the original encoded message.

• A **sender** is *someone who encodes and sends a message to a receiver through a particular channel*. The sender is the initiator of communication. For example, when you text a friend, ask a teacher a question, or wave to someone you are the sender of a message.

• A **receiver** is *the recipient of a message*. Receivers must decode (interpret) messages in ways that are meaningful for them. For example, if you see your friend make eye contact, smile, wave, and say "hello" as you pass, you are receiving a message intended for you. When this happens you must decode the verbal and nonverbal communication in ways that are meaningful to you.

• A **message** is *the particular meaning or content the sender wishes the receiver to understand*. The message can be intentional or unintentional, written or spoken, verbal or nonverbal, or any combination of these. For example, as you walk across campus you may see a friend walking toward you. When you make eye contact, wave, smile, and say "hello," you are offering a message that is intentional, spoken, verbal and nonverbal.



Linear Model of Communication by Andy Schmitz

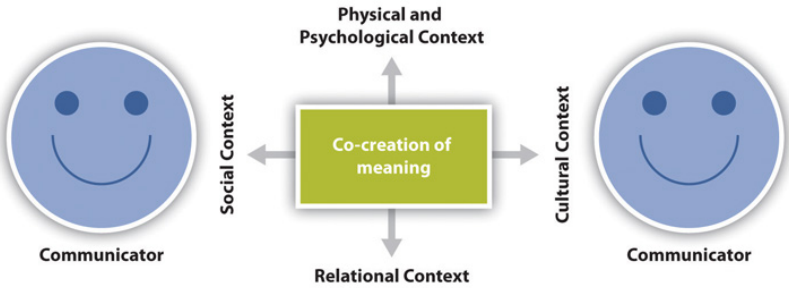
• A **channel** is *the method a sender uses to send a message to a receiver*. The most common channels humans use are verbal and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication relies on language and includes speaking, writing, and sign language. Nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, paralanguage, and touch. We also use communication channels that are mediated (such as television or the computer) which may utilize both verbal and nonverbal communication. Using the greeting example above, the channels of communication include both verbal and nonverbal communication.

• **Noise** is *anything that interferes with the sending or receiving of a message*. Noise is external (a jack hammer outside your apartment window or loud music in a nightclub), and internal (physical pain, psychological stress, or nervousness about an upcoming test). External and internal noise make encoding and decoding messages

more difficult. Using our ongoing example, if you are on your way to lunch and listening to music on your phone when your friend greets you, you may not hear your friend say “hello,” and you may not wish to chat because you are hungry. In this case, both internal and external noise influenced the communication exchange. Noise is in every communication context, and therefore, NO message is received exactly as it is transmitted by a sender because noise distorts it in one way or another.

A major criticism of the Linear Model of Communication is that it suggests communication only occurs in one direction. It also does not show how context, or our personal experiences, impact communication. Television serves as a good example of the linear model. Have you ever talked back to your television while you were watching it? Maybe you were watching a sporting event or a dramatic show and you talked at the people in the television. Did they respond to you? We’re sure they did not. Television works in one direction. No matter how much you talk to the television it will not respond to you. Now apply this idea to the communication in your relationships. It seems ridiculous to think that this is how we would communicate with each other on a regular basis. This example shows the limits of the linear model for understanding communication, particularly human to human communication.

Given the limitations of the Linear Model, Barnlund adapted the model to more fully represent what occurs in most human communication exchanges. The Transactional Model demonstrates that communication participants act as senders AND receivers simultaneously, creating reality through their interactions. Communication is not a simple one-way transmission of a message: The personal filters and experiences of the participants impact each communication exchange. The Transactional Model demonstrates that we are simultaneously senders and receivers, and that noise and personal filters always influence the outcomes of every communication exchange.



Transactional Model of Communication by Andy Schmitz

The Transactional Model of Communication adds to the Linear Model by suggesting that *both parties in a communication exchange act as both sender and receiver simultaneously, encoding and decoding messages to and from each other at the same time*.

While these models are overly simplistic representations of communication, they illustrate some of the complexities of defining and studying communication. Going back to Smith, Lasswell, and Casey, as Communication scholars we may choose to focus on one, all, or a combination of the following: senders of communication, receivers of communication, channels of communication, messages, noise, context, and/or the outcome of communication. We hope you recognize that studying communication is simultaneously detail-oriented (looking at small parts of human communication), and far-reaching (examining a broad range of communication exchanges).

Developing Media Literacy

Media literacy involves our ability to critique and analyze the potential impact of the media. The word *literacy* refers to our ability to read and comprehend written language, but just as we need literacy to be able to read, write, and function in our society, we also need to be able to read media messages. To be media literate, we must develop a particular skill set that is unfortunately not taught in a systematic way like reading and writing. The quest to make a more media-literate society is not new. You may be surprised, as I was, to learn that the media-literacy movement began in the 1930s when a chapter of the American Association of University Women in Madison, Wisconsin, created a newspaper column and a radio program called "Broadcast on Broadcasts" that reviewed and evaluated current media messages and practices (Dunlop, & Kymnes, 2007). Despite the fact that this movement has been around for eighty years now, many people still don't know about it.

Media literacy isn't meant to censor or blame the media, nor does it advocate for us to limit or change our engagement with the media in any particular way. Instead, media literacy ties in with critical thinking and listening, which we have learned about throughout this book already. Media-literacy skills are important because media outlets are "culture makers," meaning they reflect much of current society but also reshape and influence sociocultural reality and real-life practices. Some may mistakenly

believe that frequent exposure to media or that growing up in a media-saturated environment leads to media literacy. Knowing how to use technology to find and use media is different from knowing how to analyze it. Like other critical thinking skills, media literacy doesn't just develop; it must be taught, learned, practiced, and reflected on.

Media-literacy skills teach us to analyze the media and to realize the following:

- All media messages are constructed (even "objective" news stories are filmed, edited, and introduced in ways that frame and influence their meaning).
- Media structures and policies affect message construction (which means we need to also learn about how media ownership and distribution function in our society—a growing concern that we discussed earlier in this section).
- Each medium has different characteristics and affects messages differently (e.g., a story presented on *The Colbert Report* will likely be less complete and more dramatized than a story presented on a blog focused on that topic).
- Media messages are constructed for particular purposes (many messages are constructed to gain profit or power, some messages promote change, and some try to maintain the status quo).
- All media messages are embedded with values and beliefs (the myth of objectivity helps mask the underlying bias or misrepresentation in some messages).
- Media messages influence our beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors, including how we perceive and interact with others and how we participate in larger society.
- Media messages can prevent change (intentionally

presenting manipulated or selectively chosen content to inhibit change).

We learn much through the media that we do not have direct experience with, and communication and media scholars theorize that we tend to believe media portrayals are accurate representations of life. However, the media represents race, gender, sexuality, ability, and other cultural identities in biased and stereotypical ways that often favor dominant identities (Allen, 2011). Since the media influences our beliefs, attitudes, and expectations about difference, it is important to be able to critically evaluate the mediated messages that we receive. The goal of media literacy is not to teach you what to think but to teach you how you can engage with, interpret, and evaluate media in a more informed manner. Media literacy is also reflective in that we are asked to be accountable for those choices we make in regards to media by reflecting on and being prepared to articulate how those choices fit in with our own belief and value systems.

There are some standard questions that you can ask yourself to help you get started in your media criticism and analysis. There are no "true" or "right/wrong" answers to many of the questions we ask during the critical thinking process. Engaging in media literacy is more about expanding our understanding and perspective rather than arriving at definitive answers. The following questions will help you hone your media-literacy skills (Allen, 2011):

1. Who created this message? What did they hope to accomplish? What are their primary belief systems?
2. What is my interpretation of this message? How and why might different people understand this message differently than me? What can I learn about myself based on my interpretation and how it may differ from others'?
3. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented or omitted in this message? What does this tell me about

how other people live and believe? Does this message leave anything or anyone out?

4. Why was this message sent? Who sent it? Is it trying to tell me something? To sell me something?

After asking these questions, media-literate people should be able to use well-reasoned arguments and evidence (not just opinion) to support their evaluations. People with media-literacy skills also know that their evaluations may not be definitive. Although this may seem like a place of uncertainty, media-literate people actually have more control over how they interact with media messages, which allows them to use media to their advantage, whether that is to become better informed or to just enjoy their media experience.

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Media Literacy Skills

Studying how we use and consume mass communication allows us to scrutinize the conflicts, contradictions, problems, or even positive outcomes in our use of mass communication. With so much to learn about mass communication, how informed are you? Our consciousness of our media consumption is vital to understanding its effects on us as members of society. **Media literacy** is *our awareness regarding our mediated environment or consumption of mass communication. It is our ability to responsibly comprehend, access, and use mass communication in our personal and professional lives.* Potter states that we should maintain cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral awareness as we interact with media. Baran suggests a number of skills we can develop in order to be media literate.

- **Understand and respect the power of mass communication messages**. An important skill for media literacy is to acknowledge just how dominant mass communication is in our lives and around the globe. Through mass communication, media shape, entertain, inform, represent, reflect, create, move, educate, and affect our behaviors, attitudes, values, and habits in direct and indirect ways. Virtually everyone in the world has been touched in some way by mass communication, and has made personal and professional decisions largely

based on representations of reality portrayed though mass communication. We must understand and respect the power media have in our lives and understand how we make sense of certain meanings.

- **Understand content by paying attention and filtering out noise**. Anything that hinders communication is noise. Much of the noise in mass communication originates with our consumption behaviors. How often do you do something other than pay complete attention to the media that you're accessing? Do you listen to music while you drive, watch videos while you eat, or text friends while you're in class? When it comes to mass communication we tend to multitask, an act that acts as noise and impacts the quality of the messages and our understanding of their meanings. We often turn ourselves into passive consumers, not really paying attention to the messages we receive as we perform other tasks while consuming media.

- **Understand emotional versus reasoned reactions to mass communication content in order to act accordingly**. A great deal of mass communication content is intended to touch us on an emotional level. Therefore, it's important to understand our emotional reactions to mass communication. Advertising often appeals to our emotions in order to sell products (Jhally). "Sex sells" is an old advertising adage, but one that highlights how often we make decisions based on emotional reactions, versus reasoned actions. Glance through magazines like Maxim or Glamour and you'll quickly realize how the emotions associated with sex are used to sell products of all kinds. Reasoned actions require us to think critically about the mass communication we consume before we come to

conclusions simply based on our emotional responses.

- **Develop heightened expectations of mass communication content**. Would you consider yourself an informed consumer of mass communication? Do you expect a lot from mass communication? You may like a mystery novel because it's "fun," or a movie might take your mind off of reality for a few hours. However, Baran challenges us to require more from the media we consume. "When we expect little from the content before us, we tend to give meaning making little effort and attention" (57). It depends upon you what you're willing to accept as quality. Some people may watch fewer and fewer mainstream movies because they think the current movies in theaters are low culture or are aimed at less educated audiences. They may begin to look for more foreign films, independent films, and documentaries rather than go to see the popular movies released by Hollywood. We've even seen a backlash against television programming in general. With the rise of services like Netflix, Hulu and Amazon On-Demand, many media consumers have chosen to become what's known as "cord cutters" and cancel their cable subscriptions. These new services often offer popular tv shows and sometimes even the most current episodes available to watch at your own leisure.

- **Understand genre conventions and recognize when they are being mixed**. All media have their own unique characteristics or "certain distinctive, standardized style elements" that mark them as a category or genre (Baran 57). We expect certain things from different forms of mass communication. Most of us believe, for example, that we are able to tell the difference between news and entertainment. But, are we? Television news shows often

recreate parts of a story to fill in missing video of an event. Do you always catch the "re-enactment" disclaimer? Shows such as *The Daily Show* or *Last Week Tonight* effectively blurred the lines between comedy and news, and both became recognized as credible sources for news information. Even eighty years ago, Walter Lippmann recognized that media are so invasive in our lives that we might have difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is manipulated by the media. The "reality tv" genre is now blurring these lines even more. Another example is the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor of California. He, and others, often referred to him as the "governator," a blurring of his fictional role as the Terminator and his real role as California's governor.

- **Think critically about mass communication messages, no matter how credible their source**. It is essential that we critically consider the source of all mass communication messages. No matter how credible a media source, we can't always believe everything we see or hear because all mass communication is motivated by political, profit, or personal factors. Publicists, editors, and publishers present the information from their perspective–informed by their experiences and agendas. Even if the motive is pure or the spin is minimal, we tend to selectively interpret meanings based on our own lived experiences. Audiences do not always hold similar perceptions regarding mediated messages.

- **Understand the internal language of mass communication to understand its effects, no matter how complex**. This skill requires us to develop sensitivity to what is going on in the media. This doesn't just refer to whether you can program a DVR or surf the internet. This means being familiar with the intent or motivation behind

the action or message. "Each medium has its own specific internal language. This language is expressed in production values–the choice of lighting, editing, special effects, music, camera angle, location on the page, and size and placement of headline. To be able to read a media text, you must understand its language" (Baran 58). What effect do these have on your interpretive or sense making abilities? Most news coverage of the Iraq war included background symbols of American flags, eagles, as well as words like "Freedom," and "Liberation." What is the impact of using these symbols in "objective" coverage of something like war? Shows like *Scandal* makes editorial choices to glamorize and demoralize politics while making it appear provocatively thrilling. On the surface, we might not realize the amount of effort that goes into dealing with political scandals, but shows like Scandal shed a light on these unspoken issues.

CASE IN POINT

The Tao of Media Literacy

How do media affect us? Are we media literate? Werner Heisenberg in *The Physicist's Conception of Nature* relates a timeless, allegorical story about the role of technology in our lives and questions if our interactions are mindful or thoughtless in regards to change. In Heisenberg's analogy,

the wise old, Chinese sage warns us about the delicate balance between humans, nature, and technology.

In this connection it has often been said that the far-reaching changes in our environment and in our way of life wrought by this technical age have also changed dangerously our ways of thinking, and that here lie the roots of the crises, which have shaken our times and which, for instance, are also expressed in modern art. True, this objection's much older than modern technology and science, the use of implements going back to our earliest beginnings. Thus, two and a half thousand years ago, the Chinese sage Chuang-Tzu spoke of the danger of the machine when he said: As Tzu-Gung was [traveling] through the regions north of the river Han, he saw an old man working in his vegetable garden. He had dug an irrigation ditch. The man would descend into the well, fetch up a vessel of water in his arms and pour it out into the ditch. While his efforts were tremendous the results appeared to be very [meager]. Tzu-Gung said, "There is a way whereby you can irrigate a hundred ditches in one day, and whereby you can do much with little effort. Would you not like to hear of it?" Then the gardener stood up, looked at him and said, "And what would that be?" Tzu-Gung replied, "You take a wooden lever, weighted at the back and light in front. In this way you can bring up water so quickly that it just gushes out. This is called a draw-well." Then anger rose up on the old man's face, and he said, "I have heard my teacher say that whoever uses machines does all his work like a machine. He who does his work like a machine grows a heart like a machine, and he who carries the heart of a machine in his breast loses his simplicity. He who has lost his simplicity becomes unsure in the strivings of his soul. Uncertainty in the strivings of the soul is something which does not agree with honest sense. It is not that I do not know of such things: I am ashamed to use them."

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PART III

CONVERGENCE AND DIGITAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define convergence and describe the main types of convergence
- Define digital media and explain how digital media have transformed media production, distribution and consumption
- Assess changing roles of audiences from consumers to content creators in digital media landscape
- Identify significant milestones in the development of the Internet and the World Wide Web
- Explain the differences between traditional media and social media
- Describe the key characteristics and functions of different

types of social media

- Compare the effects of the Internet, digital media and social media on culture and media communication
- Discuss major legal and ethical issues with digital and social media use

Convergence

Media convergence is the process by which previously distinct technologies come to share tasks and resources. A cell phone that also takes pictures and video is an example of the convergence of digital photography, digital video, and cellular telephone technologies. A smartphone is an example of technological convergence which combines the functions of previously distinct technology and is the device through which many of us receive all our news, information, entertainment, and social interaction. The most extreme example of technological convergence would be one machine that controlled every media function.

KINDS OF CONVERGENCE

But convergence isn't just limited to technology. Media theorist Henry Jenkins argues that convergence isn't an end result (as is the hypothetical black box), but instead a process that changes how media is both consumed and produced. Jenkins breaks convergence down into five categories:

1. Economic convergence occurs when a company controls several products or services within the same industry. For example, in the entertainment industry a single company may have interests across many kinds of media. For example, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation is involved

in book publishing (HarperCollins), newspapers (*New York Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*), sports (Colorado Rockies), broadcast television (Fox), cable television (FX, National Geographic Channel), film (20th Century Fox), Internet (MySpace), and many other media.

2. Organic convergence is what happens when someone is watching a television show online while exchanging text messages with a friend and also listening to music in the background—the "natural" outcome of a diverse media world.
3. Cultural convergence has several aspects. Stories flowing across several kinds of media platforms is one component—for example, novels that become television series (*True Blood*); radio dramas that become comic strips (*The Shadow*); even amusement park rides that become film franchises (*Pirates of the Caribbean*). The character Harry Potter exists in books, films, toys, and amusement park rides. Another aspect of cultural convergence is participatory culture—that is, the way media consumers are able to annotate, comment on, remix, and otherwise influence culture in unprecedented ways. The video-sharing website YouTube is a prime example of participatory culture. YouTube gives anyone with a video camera and an Internet connection the opportunity to communicate with people around the world and create and shape cultural trends.
4. Global convergence is the process of geographically distant cultures influencing one another despite the distance that physically separates them. Nigeria's cinema industry, nicknamed Nollywood, takes its cues from India's Bollywood, which is in turn inspired by Hollywood in the United States. *Tom and Jerry* cartoons are popular on Arab satellite television channels. Successful American

horror movies *The Ring* and *The Grudge* are remakes of Japanese hits. The advantage of global convergence is access to a wealth of cultural influence; its downside, some critics posit, is the threat of cultural imperialism, defined by Herbert Schiller as the way developing countries are "attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system (White, 2001)." Cultural imperialism can be a formal policy or can happen more subtly, as with the spread of outside influence through television, movies, and other cultural projects.

5. Technological convergence is the merging of technologies such as the ability to watch TV shows online on sites like Hulu or to play video games on mobile phones like the Apple iPhone. When more and more different kinds of media are transformed into digital content, as Jenkins notes, "we expand the potential relationships between them and enable them to flow across platforms (Jenkins, 2001)."

Can you define convergence as it relates to mass media and provide some examples of convergence you've observed in your life?

EFFECTS OF CONVERGENCE

Jenkins's concept of organic convergence is perhaps the most telling. To many people, especially those who grew up in a world dominated by so-called old media, there is nothing organic about today's media-dominated world. But modern American culture is plugged in as never before, and today's high school students have never known a world where the Internet didn't exist. Such a cultural

sea change causes a significant generation gap between those who grew up with new media and those who didn't.

National and global statistics on how much time people spend on their media devices highlight some of the aspects of the new digital model of media consumption: participation and multitasking. Today's teenagers aren't passively sitting in front of screens, quietly absorbing information. Instead, they are sending text messages to friends, linking news articles on Facebook, commenting on YouTube videos, writing reviews of television episodes to post online, and generally engaging with the culture they consume. Convergence has also made multitasking much easier, as many devices allow users to surf the Internet, listen to music, watch videos, play games, and reply to e-mails on the same machine.

However, it's still difficult to predict how media convergence and immersion are affecting culture, society, and individual brains. In his 2005 book *Everything Bad Is Good for You*, Steven Johnson argues that today's television and video games are mentally stimulating, in that they pose a cognitive challenge and invite active engagement and problem solving. Poking fun at alarmists who see every new technology as making children stupider, Johnson jokingly cautions readers against the dangers of book reading: It "chronically understimulates the senses" and is "tragically isolating." Even worse, books "follow a fixed linear path. You can't control their narratives in any fashion—you simply sit back and have the story dictated to you.... This risks instilling a general passivity in our children, making them feel as though they're powerless to change their circumstances. Reading is not an active, participatory process; it's a submissive one (Johnson, 2005)."

A 2010 book by Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* is more pessimistic. Carr worries that the vast array of interlinked information available through the Internet is eroding attention spans and making contemporary minds distracted and less capable of deep, thoughtful engagement with complex ideas and arguments. "Once I was a scuba diver in a sea

of words," Carr reflects ruefully. "Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski (Carr, 2010)." Carr cites neuroscience studies showing that when people try to do two things at once, they give less attention to each and perform the tasks less carefully. In other words, multitasking makes us do a greater number of things poorly. Whatever the ultimate cognitive, social, or technological results, convergence is changing the way we relate to media today.

There is still debate on how these different types of convergence affects people on an individual and societal level. Some theorists believe that convergence and new-media technologies make people smarter by requiring them to make decisions and interact with the media they're consuming; others fear the digital age is giving us access to more information but leaving us shallower.

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The Internet and Digital Media

The "Internet and digital media age" began in 1990 and continues today. Whereas media used to be defined by their delivery systems, digital media are all similarly constructed with digital, binary code made up of ones and zeros. Instead of paper being the medium for books, radio waves being the medium for sound broadcasting, and cables being the medium for cable television, a person can now read a book, listen to the radio, and access many cable television shows on the Internet. In short, digital media read, write, and store data (text, images, sound, and video) using numerical code, which revolutionized media more quickly than ever before (Biagi, 2007).

Just as technological advances made radio and television possible, the Internet would not have been possible without some key breakthroughs. The Internet is a decentralized communications and information network that relies on the transmission of digital signals through cables, phone lines, and satellites, which are then relayed through network servers, modems, and computer processors. The development of digital code was the first innovation that made way for the Internet and all digital media. Surprisingly, this innovation occurred in the 1940s, leading to the development of the first computers. Second, in 1971, microprocessors capable of reading and storing electronic signals helped make the room-sized computers of the past much smaller and more affordable for individuals. Last, the development of fiber-optic cables in the mid-1980s allowed for the transmission of large

amounts of information, including video and sound, using lasers to create pulses of light. These cables began to replace the copper cables used by telephone, television, cable, and satellite companies. Because of these advances, information now travels all around us in the form of light pulses representing digits (digital code) instead of the old electrical pulses Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2007).

The information that speeds around us through fiber-optic cables, satellites, and wireless signals is made up of binary code—also called digital code because it is made up of zeros and ones.

The birth of the Internet can be traced back to when government scientists were tasked with creating a means of sharing information over a network that could not be interrupted, accidentally or intentionally. More than thirty years ago, those government scientists created an Internet that was much different from what we think of as the Internet today. The original Internet was used as a means of sharing information among researchers, educators, and government officials. That remained its main purpose until the Cold War began to fade and the closely guarded information network was opened up to others. At this time, only a small group

of computer enthusiasts and amateur hackers made use of the Internet, because it was still not accessible to most people. Some more technological advances had to occur for the Internet to become the mass medium that it is today.

Tim Berners-Lee is the man who made the Internet functional for the masses. In 1989, Berners-Lee created new computer-programming codes that fixed some problems that were limiting the growth of the Internet as a mass medium (Biagi, 2007). The main problem was that there wasn't a common language that all computers could recognize and use to communicate and connect. He solved this problem with the creation of the hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP), which allows people to make electronic connections or links to information on other computers or servers. He also invented hypertext markup language (HTML), which gave users a common language with which to create and design online content. I actually remember learning HTML code and creating my first (very simple by today's standards) website in 1996. Learning HTML code wasn't something that the masses were going to rush to do, but new software programs and webpage building programs emerged that allowed people to build web content without having to know the code. As if inventing HTTP and HTML wasn't enough, Berners-Lee also invented the first browser, which allowed people to search out information and navigate the growing number of interconnections among computers. Berners-Lee named his new network the "World Wide Web," and he put all his inventions into the public domain so that anyone could use and adapt them for free, which undoubtedly contributed to the web's exploding size. The growing web was navigable using available browsers, but it was sometimes like navigating in the ocean with no compass, a problem that led to the creation of search engines. Yahoo! launched in 1995 and became an instant phenomenon. I remember thinking how cool I was when I got my first yahoo.com e-mail address in 1996! Yahoo's success spawned many more tech companies and the beginning of the "tech bubble" of the late 1990s and early

2000s. The following timeline provides an overview of some of the key developments related to the Internet:

Timeline of Developments in the Internet

- **Late 1960s.** The US Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) begins to develop a communications network called ARPAnet ("the Net" for short) with numerous points of connection (rather than a message coming from one place and going to many) for military and research use that was not as vulnerable to failure related to a technical malfunction, natural disaster, or planned attack.
- **1970–82.** The Net is in its developmental stage, being used primarily by academic and government researchers to send text-based information using e-mail and bulletin boards. Bulletin boards contained information on specific topics such as computer programs, historical events, and health issues (Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2007).
- **1982–93.** The Net is in its entrepreneurial stage after an investment by the National Science Foundation is used to create a high-speed communications network with connection points all across the country. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s brings an end to the military uses of ARPAnet. By that time people with computer know-how outside of the military had already begun to create many thousands of new connections on the Net, which meant ARPAnet couldn't ever be turned off (finally fulfilling its original purpose).
- **1993.** The Net has now developed to the point that pictures, video, and sound (in addition to text) can be transmitted. The rapid growth of the Internet during this time is something that none of the developers could have imagined. The number of Internet users doubled each

year during the 1990s.

- **2005.** Web 2.0 is realized as the Internet use becomes more social and communal, as evidenced by the popularity of such platforms and websites as Flickr, YouTube, Wikipedia, and Facebook that encourage and enable the creation and sharing of user-generated content.

From the beginning, the Internet was a mass medium like none other. The majority of the content was user generated and the programs needed to create and navigate online content were in the public domain. This fusing of free access to information and user creativity still forms the basis of digital "new media" that are much more user controlled and personal. Demand for Internet access and more user-friendly programs created the consumer side of the net, and old media companies and regular people saw the web as another revenue generator.

A major source of revenue generated by the Internet goes to Internet service providers (ISPs), who charge customers for Internet access. The more reliable and fast the connection, the more expensive the service. Interestingly, old media providers like cable companies (who were competing against satellite companies) and phone companies (who were also struggling after the growth of cell phone and e-mail communication) are the largest providers of high-speed Internet access.

Many others make money from the web through traditional exchanges of goods or services for money or by selling space to advertisers. These methods of commerce are not new for any mass media, as they were used in print, radio, and television. Online auction sites like eBay and online stores like Amazon simply moved a traditional commercial exchange to the realm of cyberspace. Advertising online, however, is quite different from advertising in other media. Old media advertisers measure their success with ads based on a corresponding increase or decrease in sales—a

method that is not very precise or immediate. Online advertisers, on the other hand, can know exactly how many people see their ads based on the number of site visitors, and they can measure how effective their ad is by how many people click on it. This can allow them to revise, pull, or buy more of an ad quickly based on the feedback. Additionally, certain online environments provide even more user data to advertisers, which allows them to target advertisements. If you, for example, search for "vacation rentals on Lake Michigan" using a search engine, ads for lake houses or vacation spots may also show up. The social networks that people create on the Internet also create potential for revenue generation. In fact, many people take advantage of this potential by monetizing their personal or social media sites, which you can read more about in the "Getting Real" box.

"Getting Real"

Monetizing the Web: Entrepreneurship and Digital/Social Media

The "Getting Real" box focuses on how the concepts we are learning relate to specific careers. Although you might not make a whole career out of being a web entrepreneur, many people are turning to the Internet as an extra source of income. People have been making money off the web for decades now, but sites like eBay really opened people's eyes, for the first time, to the possibility of spinning something you already have or already do into some extra cash.

Anyone can establish a web presence now, whether it's through starting your own website, building a profile on an existing website like a blog-hosting service, or using a space you already have like your Facebook or Twitter account. Next, you need to think about what it is you're offering and who it is that might want it. For example, if you have a blog that attracts a regular stream of readers because they like your posts about the weekend party scene in your city, you might be able to utilize a service like Google's AdSense to advertise on your page and hope that some of your readers click the ads. In this case, you're offering content that attracts readers to advertisers. This is a pretty traditional way of making money through advertising just as with newspapers and billboards.

Less conventional means of monetizing the web involve harnessing the power of social media. In this capacity, you can extend your brand or the brand of something/someone else. To extend your brand, you first have to brand yourself. Determine what you can offer people—consulting in your area of expertise such as voice lessons, entertainment such as singing at weddings, delivering speeches or writing about your area of expertise, and so on. Then create a web presence that you can direct people back to through your social media promotion. If you have a large number of followers on Twitter, for example, other brands may want to tap into your ability to access that audience to have you promote their product or service. If you follow any celebrities on Twitter, you are well aware that many of their tweets link to a product that they say they love or a website that's offering a special deal.

Media Literacy Challenge

1. How do you think your friends would react if you started posting messages that were meant to make you money rather than connect with them?
2. Do you have a talent, service, or area of expertise that you

think you could spin into some sort of profit using social or digital media?

3. What are some potential ethical challenges that might arise from celebrities using their social media sites for monetary gain? What about for people in general?

Internet access is also following people away from their home and work computers, just as radio followed people into their cars. Smartphones and the development of cell phone networks capable of handling data traffic allowed cell phone providers to profit from the web. The convergence of the Internet with personal electronics like smartphones and the use of the Internet for social purposes are key parts of the discussion of personal media and social media

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Old to New Media

A MILLENNIAL SHIFT: WEB 2.0 AS USER CONTRIBUTIONS

It is with traditional media in mind that New York University Journalism professor Jay Rosen wrote The People Formerly Known as the Audience in 2006. He claimed that these people were taking over the media by using social media, and that his statement was their "collective manifesto." He claimed the people were speaking out to resist "being at the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak."

Today's media exist in a different era from the turn of the millennium. Rosen reminds us that broadcasters used to refer to viewers as "eyeballs." Think about what that metaphor means. An eyeball has only two powers: To look, and to look away. There are plenty of media content creators who still only care about whether or not people are looking. But far more now allow users to "take part, debate, create, communicate, [and] share." It increases their viewership, for one thing. And whereas the traditional media model involved advertising to the individual, the new model involves persuading the individual to advertise your product to their contacts.

The term Web 2.0 refers to sites that afford user contributions, such as likes and votes. O'Reilly Media coined the term Web 2.0 in 2004; you can read about that here. They were referring to social

media sites popping up all over the web at that time. These new sites were different than the static sites of the 1990s and 2000s, the "Web 1.0" era. Web 1.0 sites would provide information or maybe some entertainment, but would not allow user contributions. You might say they were designed for eyeballs only – although creative users found ways to connect on Web 1.0.

Web 2.0 sites that emerged in the early 2000s offered new capabilities, or affordances, to users. With Web 2.0 affordances, users can weigh in with likes and votes. They can comment or write their own posts. They can upload content, like images and videos. They can connect with others, and offer their own profiles and content to connect to.

MAY WE HAVE YOUR ATTENTION: FIRST SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERIENCES

Student Content, Fall 2020

At what age should a child have social media?

In today's society it is impossible to go out in public, and not see someone looking down at their phones. Our phones are the first thing we look at in the morning, and the last at night. We have become so glued to them, it can be difficult to hold a simple conversation. We even use our phones for the sole purpose of not having to interact with others in public. When we use our phones out in public just to avoid conversing with other people we are not only being very anti social, but we are practicing civil inattention. Everyone always says it's teens who use their phones the most, and maybe that's true, but why is that the case? Is it because we have more social media accounts, or more followers? Or is it because we choose to use our phones to distract us from the real world? I believe this is true for a number of reasons but the main one being, we've never known any different.

iPhones were first released when today's teens were very young, and many of us acquired our first phone before we even hit our teenage years. It seems kids today are on social media at a much younger age, and now even elementary school kids have cell

phones. The childhood experience is so different from what it used to be, but now so is the normal adulthood experience. Before iPhones we all had to get our news from broadcast media, and now we check our social media for updates on the world.

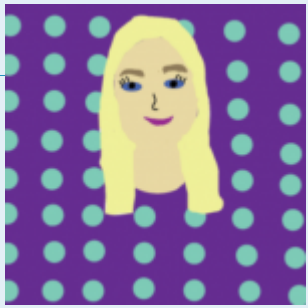
So what age is too young for a social media presence? I interviewed a Freshman at The University of Arizona to share her first experiences with social media, and get her take on how young is too young.

Amara (a pseudonym) is 18 years old, and has an iPhone just like every other college student her age, but the difference between her, and many other of these students is that she didn't even have a phone until she was 16 in her Sophomore year of high school. Amara's parents were very strict about phones and didn't want their only child active on social media at such a young age, and since the only phone she wanted was an iphone, where it is extremely easy to access social media, she was not allowed a phone until she turned 16. This was difficult for Amara for a few reasons, the first being she couldn't contact her parents after school when they needed to pick her up, she couldn't talk to her friends outside of school, and she always felt very out of the loop. Vine was very big the year all of Amara's friends started getting phones and when they would all talk about the latest videos she couldn't participate in any of the conversations. Amara's parents valued their young daughter's privacy over her social life, and at the time this upset Amara very much, but now as she's older she feels happy that she had different experiences than her classmates.

While other kids talked only through their phones, Amara had to meet up with her friends in person, and she had to have the childhood experiences her classmates never would. She played outside, and did normal kids stuff. This is why I believe that parents should wait as long as possible to get their kids phones, because every child should have those experiences of making plans with friend's in person, and playing together outside of school. Kids need the experience of being kids, before they should have any presence on social media. Amara's parents were also worried of any harm that may have come to their daughter if she had had a phone at a younger age. Cyberbullying is so common, and it is so easy for kids to be mean behind a screen. Younger kids especially think it's ok to say hurtful things over the phone because they can't see the other person, so they think it's no big deal. Kids should not be active on social media until they are mature enough to use it properly. Kids should enjoy their childhood while it lasts, and then enjoy all the good of social media when they are old enough to appreciate it.

About the Author

May Otzen is a student at the University of Arizona. She spends her days watching Netflix, and using various social media apps like Instagram, Tik Tok, and Snapchat. She loves spending time with her friends, and playing with her cat, Bruce.



TOOLS OF CHANGE: ONLINE CULTURES

The result of Web 2.0 is sites that are shaped by user cultures. Culture is a concept encompassing all the norms, values, and related behaviors that people who have interacted in a social group over time agree on and perpetuate. Think about the Web 2.0-enabled social media spaces you frequent. Perhaps when you spend time on Tumblr, you see that people talk about their emotions, and you talk about your own. Meanwhile, in League of Legends chat you don't talk about your emotions because you know you will get attacked if you do. On Facebook and LinkedIn, you might wear a high-buttoned shirt, as you have seen is the norm; but you might appear in a robe on Snapchat, or a bikini on Instagram. Culture encompasses how users talk to each other, present themselves for one another, and take cues from and influence each other as they collectively decide what's in and what's out.

Software platform developers do influence culture in their user designs. For example, Facebook has its own shirt buttoned up rather high, with its plain white background and limitations on user customization of profiles. Online cultures do take some cues from developers, and users are restricted or guided by their affordances. But users have a lot of agency as they develop and share cultures within these sites.

DOMINATING TODAY: THE PLATFORM ECONOMY

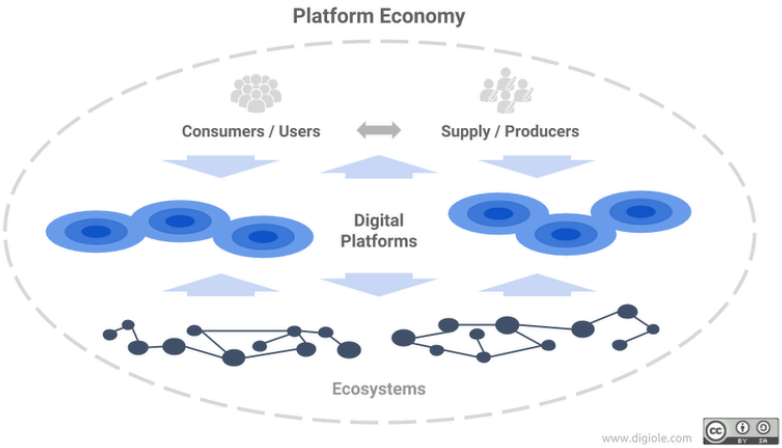
> ...we are in the middle of a contest to define the contours of what we call the "platform society": a global conglomerate of all kinds of platforms, which interdependencies are structured by a common set of mechanisms."

– José Van Dijck and Thomas Poell, Social Media and the Transformation of Public Space. Social Media + Society, July-December 2015: 1.

Human-to-human connection is what social media is supposed to be about. This belief, this *hope*, was an impetus for this book when I began writing it in 2016. Historically, human-to-human connection was also what the internet itself reached for, at least in the dreams of its creators. This Web 1.0 or the "read-only" web as it would later be called was quite limited in its reach compared to today. And yet...that potentially infinite web of networks was still a wonder, and a site of international connections and information wars.

Then what happened? Well on the surface, the web simply became more social. By the early 2000s with Web 2.0 and the "read/write web," great excitement and euphoria surrounded the participatory cultures that blossomed on Web 2.0 sites. The wonder of the web refracted across our lives, as we marveled at how easily we could connect with one another. This world of connections broadened our human imaginations and expectations in irreversible ways. And many were overjoyed when, by 2009, all this human connection grew teeth – which is to say viability in the form of real currency exchange – with the "sharing economy" that enabled regular folk to share services and goods with one another. Platforms that began as tiny businesses with few assets gained tremendous value as the places to go to socialize online, with family, with customers, with friends, with influencers. The more real or potential network connections we had who used a platform, the more certain we became that we had to use it too.

In the platform economy, the more, the merrier. These network effects continue to drive audiences to platforms at dizzying rates, rapidly eclipsing product pipelines and business models that dominated in times past.



Behind the visible connections, all this sociality also marked the beginning of voracious – yet invisible – intermediaries. We were giddily giving up our data in exchange for the peer-to-peer exchange of services, a backroom exchange with implications few would recognize for nearly another decade.

And today? Welcome to the "platform society," in which we are connected to one another, but only through platforms that derive immense power from and over our human connections.

What are platforms?

I define a platform as follows:

> Platform: An ecosystem that connects people and companies while retaining control over the terms of these connections and ownership of connection byproducts such as data.

Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon: These are the major

platforms that José Van Dijck argues have defined how society and both public and private life function today. These platforms reach deeply into human lives worldwide, with their publicly understood purposes forming only a fraction of their activities and profits. And rippling from these big four platforms are smaller ones, which emulate their models in various ways. These platforms and their stakeholders transform not just what we buy and enjoy but what we need to live and thrive: how we educate, how we govern and are governed, and how we structure our societies.

> The impact of globally operating platforms on local and state economies and cultures is immense, as they force all societal actors—including the mass media, civil society organizations, and state institutions—to reconsider and recalibrate their position in public space. (Van Dijk and Poell, 1.)

Platforms have a profound effect on how societal life is organized. Airbnb has changed not just the hospitality sector, but also neighborhood dynamics and social life. Uber has not only affected the taxi industry; it has affected the construction of roads and public transportation services. We do not yet vote through platforms, yet they have had irreversible effects on our elections. Today almost every sector of public life has become platformized: Higher Education. News and Journalism. Fitness and Health. Hospitality. Transportation. And in these platforms, transactions that are visible to consumers are undergirded by other transactions in which consumers become unwitting producers, their data a form of currency that subsidizes the transactions the chose to engage in in the first place.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN THE ONLINE WORLD

With so much human activity and cultural expression enabled in Web 2.0, what is Web 3.0? Look this up on the web and you will find no shortage of responses. There is no consensus – no agreement

among experts or among users. We don't even know if we are already using Web 3.0, because it is hard to know where Web 2.0 ends.

Surely one valuable perspective on the present and the future of the internet would come from Tim Berners-Lee, who invented the internet in 1989. (It was released to the public in the 1990s; read more of that history here.)

Today Tim Berners-Lee has a new mission – to make sure we really are connected by the internet. He describes what drove him to pursue this mission this way:

> "Now people feel very disempowered, because the end result is that they're telling their computer who their friends are, and who's in the photographs, and planning things and designing things — and those plans and designs and friendships are sucked up and held by these social networks. And they're not really social networks, they're silos."

The data you create as you move across online spaces is often controlled and owned by those spaces. Berners-Lee is now working to develop new methods of linking data across virtual space without relying upon governments, corporations, or the many others with an interest in controlling that data. You can read more about this new mission in this TechCrunch article.

"Right now we have the worst of both worlds, in which people not only cannot control their data, but also can't really use it," Berners-Lee said in the project's announcement last year. "Our goal is to develop a web architecture that gives users ownership over their data."

What Is Social Media?

The term *media* is the plural form of *medium*, which is anything through which impressions or force are transmitted to affect things on the other side. *Social* describes the kind of media we are talking about, because they relate to people interacting. The term social media usually refers to digital technologies that help people interact. So it's technically correct to write "Social media are [awesome, stupid, elemental, detrimental, whatever]." But it's also acceptable if you write "Social media is [changing the world, turning my friends into zombies, etc]" because the singular form is in common usage. I will use the term "social media" as both plural and singular in this book.

This is the thing about social media: it is grounded in how people talk and behave, not in rules set by any authorities. Almost any standards at work in social media can be changed by users if enough of us start pushing against those standards. We create social media. Tech developers respond to us as they create software apps, also known as software platforms. Then we tweak their apps, using them in ways that developers never planned because these unforeseen uses fit our lifestyles. Or we choose other apps that fit us better. And then those developers respond to us again.

And yes, social media does influence us too. But it can be surprising how much of what we do online was in practice in our society before social media became "a thing," and how societal and

cultural phenomena independent of technologies weave their ways into our online behaviors. Unpacking these influences requires explorations of history and theories in communication, sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

Student Content

Social Media: In my eyes

What is Social Media? In reality, that question can be answered very quickly by most; by just saying "Oh you mean like instagram?" or "snapchat?". But "social media" is much more than just "instagram and snapchat"; much more any of those apps.

To break it down more through my eyes, "social media" is an internet based application of social interaction, widely used by the entirety of the world as a virtual playground for getting ones feelings, thoughts, and ideas out to the public. This source of interaction is new to most, as it is constantly evolving into something more and more unfamiliar, just to become familiar to everyone once again so quickly. Constantly "refreshing", both by the user and by the producer; allowing us to never get old of our new pocket sized virtual world.

When on any these social interacting platforms, you are constantly connected to other people using that same platform. These people could be your family, friends, celebrities, random people around the world or even now a days... dogs. These people pretty much can be anyone, and they all come together around you as the "public" of that platform; just like we have the public around us outside of social media. Except this public is much different than the one in the real world, as they are on the platform for only two specific reasons, to share their experiences and to watch other peoples. They are drawn to the daily doing of other peoples lives, and in specific, your life.

When you first create a profile on one of these social media platforms, you soon form a following out of people in this "public". The "public" sees everything you put out onto this platform, and then uses what they see as a reflection of the type of person you really are.

Because of this, people usually tend to form a specific persona on the platform they are using; as other people using this platform can only get an idea of who you are through what they see on your profile, and not who you are in person. This layout has multiple design flaws, as one can never truly tell who someone really is through what they see on their screen. It is simply impossible. Not only that, people allow this layout to take over their life.

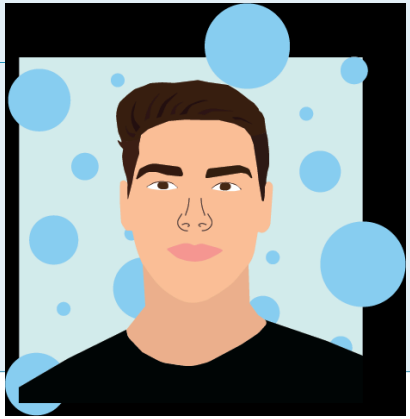
Now this next part doesn't apply to all using social media; but I feel as if it does to most. See with the power to produce any "impression" on anyone who views you by creating the "perfect you" or the "you" that you want to make as who people recognize you as is a dangerous thing. On social media, people will only post things that they want people to recognize them by, or only post things that fit the certain persona that they have displayed on their profile to their "public". This is done because of the underlying obsession people have with virtual impressions. Impressions go hand and hand with public, as both are created by the same thing; the viewing of your virtual profile. Although impressions are something that you can't see, it can sometimes be interpreted as something you can see, being "likes" and "comments" but these are simply just interactions, which is just a sub form of impressions. Impressions is much more of the "what if" question of social media, the "what if *blank* saw this?"

Impressions are all about the viewing of your profile, what people see and ultimately what people's first "impression" is about you. With this people will become addicted with trying to create the ultimate persona for themselves on their social media profiles, in order to satisfy the "first impression" in which they want to receive. Some people do this without even realizing, and I am sure you do as well. Because no one just doesn't care what they put out on social media, and if you, that just means you actually do care. As you're creating that impression on the people who view your profile, whether you realize it or not.

So in the end, to answer the question, social media has no "true" definition. Sure you could categorize what could be defined as "social media", but that doesn't really answer the question. Theres no "key phrase" or "app", that can truly define what social media is; as social media more relies on you to create that definition. For yourself and for everyone else around you within this "pocket sized virtual world". So that now leaves us with a better question, "what is social media to you?"

About the author

My name is Cameron Monteferrante, I am from Scottsdale, Arizona and when writing this I was a first semester freshman here at the University of Arizona. I am a Pre-Business Major, and plan to go into the marketing field at the end of the road!



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Human behavior today can appear utterly transformed by digital technologies. When we look more closely, there are many moments today that echo behaviors of the past before digital technology played a key role. And there are many societal changes that have a variety of causes, some playing much larger roles than technology. Still, people love to claim that a technology has transformed society, perhaps because they benefit from the claim, or because it makes changing the world look easy with the proper tools. It isn't.

The impacts of social media in our world are complicated. Misunderstandings around these technological platforms and practices in our world are common outcomes of flawed thinking or fallacies about this new force in our lives. In this section, we will break down some of these fallacies behind simplistic and exaggerated claims about social media in our world.

Utopian and dystopian thinking are among the most fallacies in thinking around social media. We are all familiar with utopian visions of social media – as though entering the golden gates of

social media means leaving behind all the troubled communication practices that came before. A utopia is an idealized or perfect imaginary view of society. The utopian view sometimes imagines social media as a miracle disconnected from all prior human communication; other times, social media represents a more evolved social media world, where we have moved beyond all bias. The media theorist Clay Shirky conjures utopias as he describes social media's effects on how we organize, as though they might connect everyone in the world.

Conversely, it is also common to find social media use viewed as the downfall of society – a dystopia, or imagined society where everything is terrible. The increasing reliance of our society on social media for everyday communications looks nightmarish to some. Teens never look up from their phones. Computers make life-or-death decisions or at least remove humans from making them. Our brains are rewiring to cut out human emotions like compassion as we become robotically trained to pursue likes and connect with people we never see. Such dystopian thinking can make people jump to conclusions, and even deploy data and scientific research as hasty "proof" of their extreme conclusions, leading to moral panics or fears spread among many people about a threat to society at large.

PART IV

PRINT AND DIGITAL PUBLISHING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify significant milestones in the development of print media and differentiate between communication before and after Gutenberg
- Describe the different categories of books, newspapers and magazines and identify the key functions and affordances of specific print media
- Identify the differences between traditional and digital publishing and discuss the impact of media convergence on the publishing industry
- Explain current business models and economic factors affecting book, newspaper and magazine publishing
- Discuss contemporary publishing and related media law

The First Mass Medium

PRINT MASS MEDIA

The printing press and subsequent technological advances related to paper manufacturing and distribution led to the establishment of print as the first mass medium. While the ability to handwrite manuscripts and even reproduce them existed before the print revolution, such processes took considerable time and skill, making books and manuscripts too expensive for nearly anyone in society except the most privileged and/or powerful to possess. And despite the advent of many other forms of mass media, print is still important as a channel for information and as an industry. For example, in the United States, about 3.1 billion books, 1,400 daily newspapers, and 19,000 magazines are published a year (Poe, 2011). Let's now look back at how we progressed from writing to print and trace the birth of the first mass medium.

The "manuscript age" is the period in human history that immediately predated the advent of mass media and began around 3500 BCE with the introduction of written texts and lasted until the printing revolution of 1450 CE (Poe, 2011). Of course, before writing emerged as a form of expression, humans drew cave paintings and made sculptures, pottery, jewelry, and other forms of visual expression. The spread of writing, however, as a means of documenting philosophy, daily life, government, laws, and business transactions was a necessary precursor to the print revolution.

Physical and technical limitations of the time prevented the written word from becoming a mass medium, as texts were painstakingly reproduced by hand or reproduced slowly using rudimentary printing technology such as wood cutouts. The high price of these texts and the fact that most people could not read or write further limited the spread of print.

The German blacksmith and printer Johannes Gutenberg, often cited as the inventor of the printing press, didn't actually invent much, as most of the technology needed to print, such as movable type, already existed and had been in use for many years. In fact, the mass reproduction and distribution of texts began in East Asia around 700 CE, more than 700 years before Gutenberg, as the Chinese used a wood-block printing method to mass produce short Buddhist texts (Poe, 2011). However, Gutenberg's use of a press to mash the paper against the typeset, as opposed to the Chinese method of manually rubbing the paper against the typeset, made the process faster and more effective. Additionally, the rise of printing in East Asia didn't become a "print revolution," because the audience for the texts was so limited, given low literacy rates.

Although the technology needed to print mass quantities of text had existed for many years, increasing literacy rates in Europe created more of a demand for printed text, which led to the "print revolution."

Mighty June – wood letter blocks – CC BY 2.0.

Increasing literacy rates in Europe in the two centuries before Gutenberg undoubtedly contributed to the success of his printing efforts, since literacy creates a market for printed texts. The impact of the printing press, as introduced to Europe by Gutenberg starting with his first printing shop in 1439, should not be underestimated. His press helped usher in the Age of Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution that swept Europe during the 1600s. This spread was aided by aristocratic and religious leaders who turned to the printing press as a way to both spread Christian thought and seek to improve society by educating individuals. In 1454, Guttenberg's famous forty-two-line Bible was the first book that was mass produced by modern methods and not transcribed by hand, which had been the practice for thousands of

years. With this, the “print age” began, which extended from 1450 to 1850 and marked the birth and rise of the first mass medium (Poe, 2011).

BOOKS

The explosion of printing following 1450 definitely proves that print was the first mass medium. Books of the time were often shorter than today, but they were still the earliest form of communication to be distributed to the masses, which led to significant cultural and social transformation. Between 1454 and 1500, 30,000 books and pamphlets were published in Europe. In the 1500s, between 150,000 and 200,000 separate titles were printed. Remember, these numbers represent each separate book and not the total copies of each of those titles that were printed. The total number of copies is much more staggering. Between 1450 and 1500, 20 million individual books were printed. During the 1600s, between 150 and 200 million books were printed in Europe. Given that Europe’s population at the time was only 78 million, that’s about three books for each person (Poe, 2011). Of course, books weren’t evenly distributed, since most people couldn’t read or write and had no use for them. At the same time, though, cheaper, shorter materials were printed that included content that catered more to the “common” person. These early publications were similar to tabloids in that they were sold as news items but featured stories about miracles, monsters, and other sensational or fantastical events. Although not regarded for their content or positive effect on society, these publications quickly grew into what we would recognize today as newspapers and magazines, which we will discuss later.

The printing and distribution of books led to cultural transformation, just as radio, television, and the Internet did. The rise of literacy and the availability of literature, religious texts, dictionaries, and other reference books allowed people to learn

things for themselves, distinguish themselves from others by what they read and what they knew, and figuratively travel beyond their highly localized lives to other lands and time periods. Before this, people relied on storytellers, clergy, teachers, or other leaders for information. In this way, people may only be exposed to a few sources of information throughout their lives and the information conveyed by these sources could be limited and distorted. Remember, only a select group of people, usually elites, had access to manuscripts and the ability to read them. Publishers still acted as gatekeepers, just as mass media outlets do today, which limited the content and voices that circulated on the new medium. But despite that, the world was opened up for many in a way it had never before been.

Demand for books quickly expanded in the United States in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Technological advances in the manufacturing of paper and cheaper materials for binding books—for example, using cloth covers instead of leather—helped reduce the cost of books. Dime novels were very popular in the United States in the mid to late 1800s. These books, also called pulp fiction, had content that was appealing to mass audiences who enjoyed dramatic, short fiction stories. During this time, publishing became more competitive and profit driven—characteristics that still apply to the industry today. While radio and magazines flourished in the first half of the twentieth century, the book industry didn't fare as well. Many people turned to these new media over books, since radio and magazines were generally cheaper and provided more timely information about major world events like the World Wars and the Great Depression.

How the Printing Press Helped in Shaping the Future

Since the start of 21st century, technology has been developing at a really fast pace. Every year there is a new invention and an upgrade in the old ones. This continuous progress has been of incredible help to mankind. A lot of painstakingly long tasks are now done by machines in a fraction of the time as compared to manual labor.

Most of these technologies can be linked back to the industrial revolution in the 18th century. People shifted from their traditional yarning methods to machines and from that onward, machines have been consistently gone through drastic transformations.

The case for printing press is rather different as it was invented more than 500 years ago. Prior to that, printing blocks were used to print imagery on clothes, which dates back to 200 AD. This method was used in China and a similar method in use by the Indians in the 4th century AD. The modern printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century, which then helped in mass production of books and consequently in the spreading of knowledge. It helped create a more uniform language and made the prices of books become considerably lower and more affordable for the masses. This process was the basis of further human advancement. Let's look at the some of the things that have transformed the world through printing press.

Minimized Errors

Before the printing press, monks were in charge of copying and approving the writer's work. This meant that there was a huge margin of human error. This would affect the outcome of the books a lot and made the written content inaccurate to a high degree. Printing press minimized that error and reduced it to the lowest possibility. This meant that the information provided in the books could be trusted and cited as a reference when needed.

Education

The press gave birth to facts and ideas which meant that a writer could publish his work more freely. A researcher could print and publicize his finding and make it available to people to learn from. This also gave rise to multiple protection rights that we have today. Copyright content, plagiarism and intellectual property rights were established to protect the writers of any content or creative works. These rights to this date continue to be implemented and take artists, creators and writers under their protection. Due to the availability of more books and the writer's work being defended by laws, people educated themselves with the provided knowledge and thus became more civilized as a result. This newfound knowledge also helped the schooling system improve.

More Collaboration

As previously mentioned, books became free of human error. This resulted in scientists and researchers collaborating on their findings and proving their hypothesis either to be factually correct or wrong. This process led to the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment which changed the face of Europe and the way they subsequently impacted the world.

Industrial revolution

Just in the middle of the Industrial Revolution, the mechanical printing press was invented. This invention could print thousands of pages on an hourly basis. The machine was powered by steam, just like the steam engine, steam boats and many other machines belonging to that era. This made a lot of impact on the speed of the news. Newspaper printing was done at fast pace and latest gossips

and happenings started reaching people a lot quicker. Any new information could be made available for people within a matter of days of its occurrence. Now the techniques have been improved even further and newspapers are printed daily. Now the printing method is not just relegated to only the printing presses, but can also be done at home. The printing press was the basis on which technological marvels of the current world were developed of which the most prominent one that morphed out was the 3d Printing industry which has impacted the construction, medical and equipment industry heavily.

Economic effect

People got more educated and were able to apply their new found knowledge due to the availability of books. The cities became the epicenters of knowledge, wealth and business. All these business flourished due to the newly provided information and reduced prices of books. Not only the cities were benefitting with abundant business opportunities but almanacs were published to let the farmers help with their farming. These farmers could coordinate better with more reliable almanacs and hence their methods became more profitable.

Printing press no doubt has changed the world and made it a lot more informed. It has played its part in the world's economic, technological and informational growth. It is certainly not an understatement when the invention of the first printing press is compared with the industrial revolution. Printing press has surely made an impact in our lives and will continue to do so.

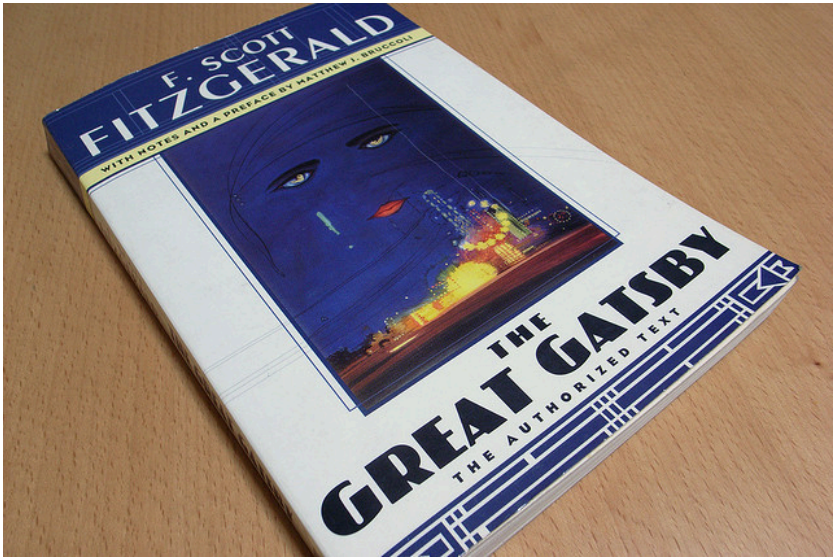
Major Book Formats

From ancient Egyptian papyrus scrolls to scrollable 21st-century e-books, a book can come in many different formats. However, in some ways, it seems like the more things change, the more they stay the same. In the same way that early printed books were painstakingly illuminated to look more like medieval books, today's e-books use e-paper technology to mimic the look of a printed page. Even the hardcover books we're familiar with today are direct descendants of the ancient codex.

HARDCOVER

While the first codices enclosed bound papers between wooden covers (the word *codex* means *block of wood* in Latin), contemporary hardcover book covers are usually made of cardboard sheathed in cloth, paper, or leather. The printed pages of the book are either sewn or glued to the cover. Until the early 1800s, most books were sold unbound. A buyer would purchase a sheath of printed papers that would be bound either by the bookseller or by a commissioned bindery. British publisher William Pickering is considered the first publisher to issue books in uniform cloth bindings in 1820. About a decade later, dust jackets, the detachable outer covers that sheathe most hardback books today, arrived on the scene. Dust jackets were initially meant only as a protective covering for the binding,

but soon they became a place where designers could create a colorful and distinctive cover for a book.



Original dust jackets are especially important for book collectors—a first edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* without the dust jacket sells for around $3000; with the dust jacket intact, it can go for more than $30,000.

yoppy – The Great Gatsby – CC BY 2.0.

The durability of hardcover books makes them attractive to both authors and book purchasers. However, the competitive economics of today's publishing industry means that some books are never issued in hardcover. Because hardcover books are more expensive to produce and almost always cost more than their paperback equivalents, publishers tend to reserve the format for books that they expect will sell well.

Based on projected sales, publishers must decide how big of a print run to order for a new hardcover book. A book's print run refers to all the copies made in one setup of the printing apparatus. A failed book may only have one, while a successful book may have 50 or more printings. Figuring out how many copies of a book to

print is an inexact science, as publishers must essentially guess how well a book will sell. There is no standard size for a print run. The U.K. edition of the first *Harry Potter* book had an initial print run of only 500 copies; the U.S. print run of the seventh and final book in the series was a record-breaking 12 million. When an initial print run is sold out, the book is either reprinted (these copies are considered a second printing) or is considered out of print. The contemporary publishing industry will often issue a first-run hardcover printing, followed by subsequent paperback editions.

PAPERBACK

Inexpensive paper-bound books have been around for centuries in formats like the chapbook, the British penny dreadful, and the American dime novel. However, the hardcover book, whether as an ancient codex or its contemporary equivalent, was the dominant format in the book world for thousands of years. The introduction of a new format in the 1930s, the paperback, was considered revolutionary. The so-called paperback revolution began during the Great Depression, when paperbacks were marketed as inexpensive alternatives to hardcover editions. Penguin Books, Ltd., the first majorly successful paperback publishing company, kept prices low by ordering large print runs and selling books in nontraditional retailers, such as Woolworth's drugstores. Penguin also broke the traditional paperback mold by avoiding pulp fiction entertainment novels and instead printing books that were both cheap and intellectually stimulating. Donald Porter Geddes, the editor of Pocket Books, the first paperback publishing house in the United States, spelled out this new approach to bookselling in 1944: "The best books apparently have the greatest appeal to the greatest number of people...the larger American public need no longer suffer from the delusion that it is intellectually inferior, or, from a literary point of view, lacking in any aspect in good taste, judgment, and appetite (Ogle, 1960)." By 1960, when paperback books first

outsold hardcovers, these early paperback innovators were proved right.

While paperback publishing first issued only reprints of books that had already been issued in hardcover, paperback originals, books that had their initial print run as a paperback edition, emerged in the 1950s. Paperback originals were another step in helping to remove the stigma from the paperback book. In 1999, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Interpreter of Maladies* was the first paperback original to win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Today's books published in paperback are traditionally divided into two broad categories: mass-market paperbacks and trade paperbacks. Mass-market paperbacks are small, inexpensive editions that are sometimes issued after a hardcover edition, although many genre novels are printed only in mass-market paperback editions. Trade paperbacks are larger and generally of better quality. They're often printed on higher-quality paper (sometimes acid-free paper). If the trade paperback follows a hardcover release, the paperback will be the same size as the hardcover and will have the same pagination and page layout as the hardcover edition.

Traditionally, hardcover books have been seen as more prestigious than paperbacks, though that stereotype may be beginning to change. In recent years, some publishers of literary fiction were seeing 50 to 75 percent of the hardcover books they shipped to bookstores returned to them unsold. As a response, certain publishers opted to release books with uncertain sales potential as trade paperbacks, bypassing the hardcover format entirely. "Getting somebody to spend $22 on a book by an author who they've never heard of is hard, but getting them to spend $13.95 on a paperback is much easier," Random House's Jane von Mehren told *The New York Times* in 2006 (Wyatt, 2006). Some publishers are concerned that book reviewers don't take trade paperback editions as seriously, but that too may be slowly changing. Another publishing strategy is to release hardcover and

trade paperback editions simultaneously rather than delaying the paperback edition for several months (or even years, in the case of exceptionally popular books). Such a technique is intended to drive up sales, taking advantage of initial publicity to capture readers who may be unwilling to pay the full hardcover price for a book.

Whatever the concerns that publishers may have about issuing paperbacks, the format is still dominant in the U.S. publishing industry. According to the American Association of Publishers (AAP), 35 percent of the books sold in 2009 were trade paperbacks; 35 percent hardcovers; 21 percent mass market paperbacks; 2 percent audio books; 2 percent e-books; and 5 percent "other (Eco-Libris)."

E-BOOKS

The hardcover book's expensive, durable binding seemed to say that it was an object intended for posterity. If paperback books disrupted the traditional concept of books by making them cheaper and more portable, then the e-book is poised to cause an even greater change in how readers interact with a text. E-books, also known as electronic or digital books, are the digital media equivalent of printed books. That is, they are books read on the screen of an electronic device, whether a cell phone, personal computer, or dedicated e-book reader.

E-books differ from their print equivalents in many significant ways. For one, there's no physical production cost, which means that e-books are generally less expensive than traditional books. There's also no cost to store or transport e-books. Because an e-book's publisher doesn't need to order a set print run, a text issued as an e-book doesn't ever have to go out of print. E-books also appeal to readers who want instant gratification. Instead of having to travel to a brick-and-mortar bookstore or wait for a delivery, a reader can download an e-book in a matter of minutes.

Early e-books were mostly technical manuals or digitized

versions of works in the public domain. As the Internet took off and as electronic devices became increasingly mobile, book publishers began to issue digital editions of their works. In the first decade of the 21st century, various companies began issuing software and hardware platforms for electronic books, each competing for dominance in this emerging market.

Although e-books make up only a small percentage of total book sales, that number is growing. Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol*, the follow up to his massively popular novel *The Da Vinci Code*, sold more copies as a Kindle e-book than as a hardcover in the first few days after its September 2009 release. However, e-book successes have led to a threat that faces many kinds of digital content: online piracy. Only a few days after its initial release, Brown's novel had been illegally downloaded more than 100,000 times. Some authors and publishers are concerned that Internet users expect free content and will find a way around spending money on e-books. American novelist Sherman Alexie recently voiced some of these anxieties, "With the open-source culture on the Internet, the idea of ownership—of artistic ownership—goes away (Frisch, 2010)." Other prominent authors have reacted to the e-book in various ways. In 2000, Stephen King published his novella *Riding the Bullet* as a digital file that could only be read on a computer; in contrast, J. K. Rowling has stated that the *Harry Potter* novels won't ever be released as e-books (McHugh, 2005). However, piracy has struck Rowling's novels as well. Every *Harry Potter* novel is available in pirated form, either as a scanned copy or one that was manually typed out by fans.

Another concern with e-books is the possibility of digital decay. All an e-book is, after all, is a collection of data saved to a disk. It turns out that digital formats tend to decay much faster than their physical counterparts (Bollacker, 2010). The swift turnover of digital devices is another concern; the possibility exists that a book bought on a Kindle device in 2010 will be not be compatible with an equivalent device in 2035 or even 2015.

E-book sales still make up a small part of the overall book market, 3 to 5 percent by most estimates, but their sales increased by 177 percent in 2009. *The New Yorker* cites a projection that e-books will someday account for between 25 and 50 percent of all book sales (Auletta, 2010). And with newer models of e-book readers, such as the iPad, boasting full color screens and the ability to embed web links and video in a book's text, e-books may fundamentally reshape how people read in the future.

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History of Newspapers

Over the course of its long and complex history, the newspaper has undergone many transformations. Examining newspapers' historical roots can help shed some light on how and why the newspaper has evolved into the multifaceted medium that it is today. Scholars commonly credit the ancient Romans with publishing the first newspaper, *Acta Diurna*, or *daily doings*, in 59 BCE. Although no copies of this paper have survived, it is widely believed to have published chronicles of events, assemblies, births, deaths, and daily gossip.

In 1566, another ancestor of the modern newspaper appeared in Venice, Italy. These *avisi*, or gazettes, were handwritten and focused on politics and military conflicts. However, the absence of printing-press technology greatly limited the circulation for both the *Acta Diurna* and the Venetian papers.

THE BIRTH OF THE PRINTING PRESS

Johannes Gutenberg's printing press exponentially increased the rate at which printed materials could be reproduced.

Milestoned – Printing press – CC BY 2.0.

Johannes Gutenberg's printing press drastically changed the face of publishing. In 1440, Gutenberg invented a movable-type press that permitted the high-quality reproduction of printed materials at a rate of nearly 4,000 pages per day, or 1,000 times more than could be done by a scribe by hand. This innovation drove down the price of printed materials and, for the first time, made them accessible to a mass market. Overnight, the new printing press transformed the scope and reach of the newspaper, paving the way for modern-day journalism.

EUROPEAN ROOTS

The first weekly newspapers to employ Gutenberg's press emerged in 1609. Although the papers—*Relations: Aller Furnemmen*, printed by Johann Carolus, and *Aviso Relations over Zeitung*, printed by Lucas Schulte—did not name the cities in which they were printed to avoid government persecution, their approximate location can be identified because of their use of the German language. Despite

these concerns over persecution, the papers were a success, and newspapers quickly spread throughout Central Europe. Over the next 5 years, weeklies popped up in Basel, Frankfurt, Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin, and Amsterdam. In 1621, England printed its first paper under the title *Corante, or weekely newes from Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, France and the Low Countreys*. By 1641, a newspaper was printed in almost every country in Europe as publication spread to France, Italy, and Spain.


Ain treue ermanung/das ain yeder Christ selbs zů seiner seel hail sehe/vñ das schwert (das ist die hailig geschrifft) auch selbs zů seinen handen neme/sich der feind damit were/auff das er nit mit falscher leer überwunden vñ verfüret werde

Durch aiñ layen Cunrad Distelmair von Arberg gethon.
1523.

Newspapers are the descendants of the Dutch *corantos* and the German pamphlets of the 1600s.

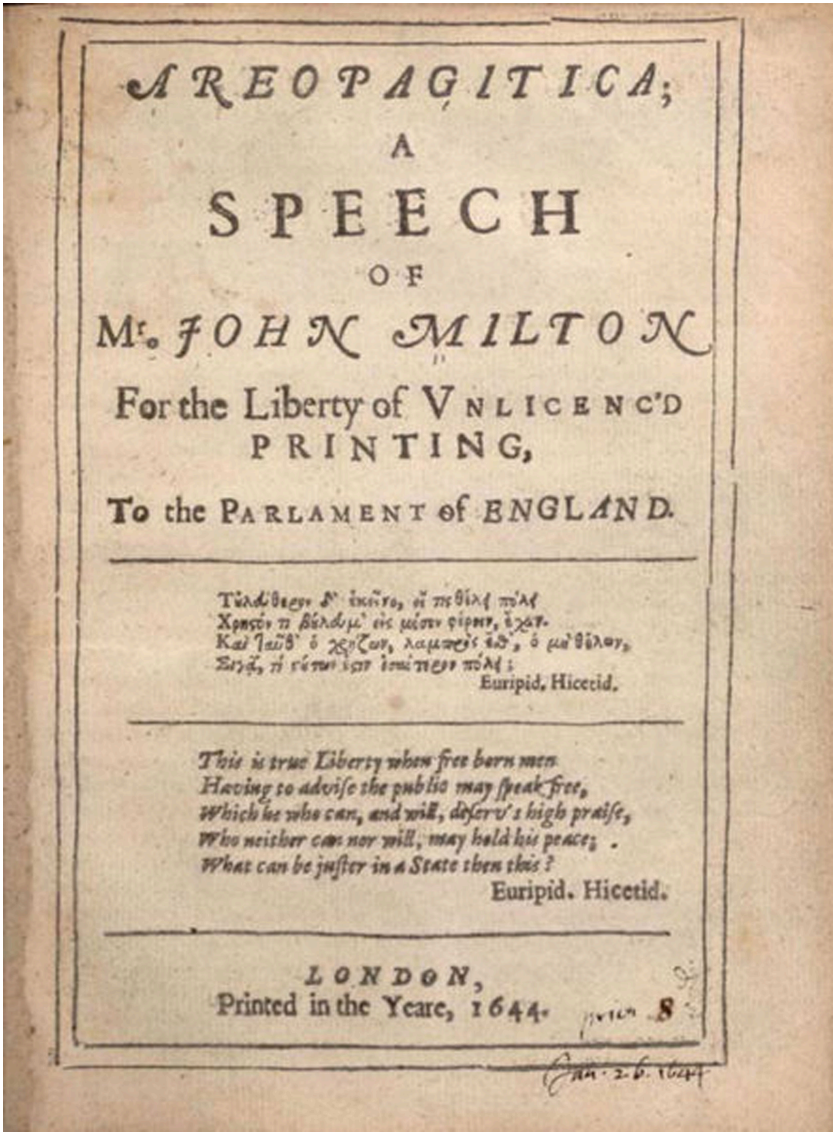
POP – Ms. foliation? and pamphlet number – CC BY 2.0.

These early newspapers followed one of two major formats. The

first was the Dutch-style *corantos*, a densely packed two- to four-page paper, while the second was the German-style pamphlet, a more expansive 8- to 24-page paper. Many publishers began printing in the Dutch format, but as their popularity grew, they changed to the larger German style.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Because many of these early publications were regulated by the government, they did not report on local news or events. However, when civil war broke out in England in 1641, as Oliver Cromwell and Parliament threatened and eventually overthrew King Charles I, citizens turned to local papers for coverage of these major events. In November 1641, a weekly paper titled *The Heads of Severall Proceedings in This Present Parliament* began focusing on domestic news (Goff, 2007). The paper fueled a discussion about the freedom of the press that was later articulated in 1644 by John Milton in his famous treatise *Areopagitica*.



AREOPAGITICA;

A

SPEECH

OF

Mr. JOHN MILTON

For the Liberty of VNLICENC'D PRINTING,

To the PARLAMENT of ENGLAND.

Τὰ δ' ἐκεῖνο, εἴ τις θέλοι πολὺ
Χρηστόν τι βουλεύειν εἰς μέσον φέρων, ἔχοι.
Καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ χρῄζων, λαμπρὸς ἐστ', ὁ μὴ θέλων,
Σιγᾷ, τί τούτου ἐστὶν ἰσοπολιτικώτερον;

Euripid. Hicetid.

This is true Liberty when free born men
Having to advise the public may speak free,
Which he who can, and will, deserv's high praise,
Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;
What can be juster in a State then this?

Euripid. Hicetid.

LONDON,
Printed in the Yeare, 1644.

John Milton's 1644 *Areopagitica*, which criticized the British Parliament's role in regulating texts and helped pave the way for the freedom of the press.

Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

Although the *Areopagitica* focused primarily on Parliament's ban on certain books, it also addressed newspapers. Milton criticized the tight regulations on their content by stating, "Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye (Milton, 1644)." Despite Milton's emphasis on texts rather than on newspapers, the treatise had a major effect on printing regulations. In England, newspapers were freed from government control, and people began to understand the power of free press.

Papers took advantage of this newfound freedom and began publishing more frequently. With biweekly publications, papers had additional space to run advertisements and market reports. This changed the role of journalists from simple observers to active players in commerce, as business owners and investors grew to rely on the papers to market their products and to help them predict business developments. Once publishers noticed the growing popularity and profit potential of newspapers, they founded daily publications. In 1650, a German publisher began printing the world's oldest surviving daily paper, *Einkommende Zeitung*, and an English publisher followed suit in 1702 with London's *Daily Courant*. Such daily publications, which employed the relatively new format of headlines and the embellishment of illustrations, turned papers into vital fixtures in the everyday lives of citizens.

COLONIAL AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

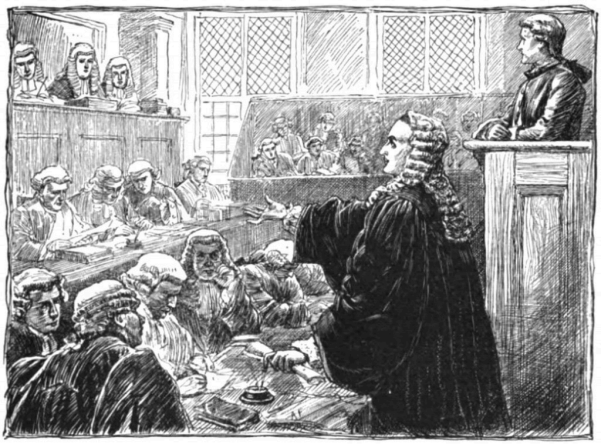
Newspapers did not come to the American colonies until September 25, 1690, when Benjamin Harris printed *Public Occurrences, Both FORREIGN and DOMESTICK*. Before fleeing to America for publishing an article about a purported Catholic plot against England, Harris had been a newspaper editor in England. The first article printed in his new colonial paper stated, "The Christianized Indians in some parts of Plimouth, have newly

appointed a day of thanksgiving to God for his Mercy (Harris, 1690)." The other articles in *Public Occurrences*, however, were in line with Harris's previously more controversial style, and the publication folded after just one issue.

Fourteen years passed before the next American newspaper, *The Boston News-Letter*, launched. Fifteen years after that, *The Boston Gazette* began publication, followed immediately by the *American Weekly Mercury* in Philadelphia. Trying to avoid following in Harris's footsteps, these early papers carefully eschewed political discussion to avoid offending colonial authorities. After a lengthy absence, politics reentered American papers in 1721, when James Franklin published a criticism of smallpox inoculations in the *New England Courant*. The following year, the paper accused the colonial government of failing to protect its citizens from pirates, which landed Franklin in jail.

After Franklin offended authorities once again for mocking religion, a court dictated that he was forbidden "to print or publish *The New England Courant*, or any other Pamphlet or Paper of the like Nature, except it be first Supervised by the Secretary of this Province (Massachusetts Historical Society)." Immediately following this order, Franklin turned over the paper to his younger brother, Benjamin. Benjamin Franklin, who went on to become a famous statesman and who played a major role in the American Revolution, also had a substantial impact on the printing industry as publisher of *The Pennsylvania Gazette* and the conceiver of subscription libraries.

THE TRIAL OF JOHN PETER ZENGER



The New York Weekly Journal founder John Peter Zenger brought controversial political discussion to the New York press.

Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

Boston was not the only city in which a newspaper discussed politics. In 1733, John Peter Zenger founded *The New York Weekly Journal*. Zenger's paper soon began criticizing the newly appointed colonial governor, William Cosby, who had replaced members of the New York Supreme Court when he could not control them. In late 1734, Cosby had Zenger arrested, claiming that his paper contained "divers scandalous, virulent, false and seditious reflections (Archiving Early America)." Eight months later, prominent Philadelphia lawyer Andrew Hamilton defended Zenger in an important trial. Hamilton compelled the jury to consider the truth and whether or not what was printed was a fact. Ignoring the wishes of the judge, who disapproved of Zenger and his actions, the jury returned a not guilty verdict to the courtroom after only a short deliberation. Zenger's trial resulted in two significant movements in the march toward freedom of the press. First, the trial demonstrated to the papers that they could potentially print honest criticism of the government without fear of retribution. Second, the British became afraid that an American jury would never convict an American journalist.

With Zenger's verdict providing more freedom to the press and as some began to call for emancipation from England, newspapers became a conduit for political discussion. More conflicts between the British and the colonists forced papers to pick a side to support. While a majority of American papers challenged governmental authorities, a small number of Loyalist papers, such as James Rivington's *New York Gazetteer*, gave voice to the pro-British side. Throughout the war, newspapers continued to publish information representing opposing viewpoints, and the partisan press was born. After the revolution, two opposing political parties—the Federalists and the Republicans—emerged, giving rise to partisan newspapers for each side.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN THE EARLY UNITED STATES

In 1791, the nascent United States of America adopted the First Amendment as part of the Bill of Rights. This act states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceable to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances (Cornell University Law School)." In this one sentence, U.S. law formally guaranteed freedom of press.

However, as a reaction to harsh partisan writing, in 1798, Congress passed the Sedition Act, which declared that "writing, printing, uttering, or publishing any false, scandalous and malicious writing or writings against the government of the United States" was punishable by fine and imprisonment (Constitution Society, 1798). When Thomas Jefferson was elected president in 1800, he allowed the Sedition Act to lapse, claiming that he was lending himself to "a great experiment…to demonstrate the falsehood of the pretext that freedom of the press is incompatible with orderly government (University of Virginia)." This free-press experiment has continued to modern times.

NEWSPAPERS AS A FORM OF MASS MEDIA

As late as the early 1800s, newspapers were still quite expensive to print. Although daily papers had become more common and gave merchants up-to-date, vital trading information, most were priced at about 6 cents a copy—well above what artisans and other working-class citizens could afford. As such, newspaper readership was limited to the elite.

THE PENNY PRESS

All that changed in September 1833 when Benjamin Day created *The Sun*. Printed on small, letter-sized pages, *The Sun* sold for just a penny. With the Industrial Revolution in full swing, Day employed the new steam-driven, two-cylinder press to print *The Sun*. While the old printing press was capable of printing approximately 125 papers per hour, this technologically improved version printed approximately 18,000 copies per hour. As he reached out to new readers, Day knew that he wanted to alter the way news was presented. He printed the paper's motto at the top of every front page of *The Sun*: "The object of this paper is to lay before the public, at a price within the means of every one, all the news of the day, and at the same time offer an advantageous medium for advertisements (Starr, 2004)."

The *Sun* sought out stories that would appeal to the new mainstream consumer. As such, the paper primarily published human-interest stories and police reports. Additionally, Day left ample room for advertisements. Day's adoption of this new format and industrialized method of printing was a huge success. The *Sun* became the first paper to be printed by what became known as the penny press. Prior to the emergence of the penny press, the most popular paper, New York City's *Courier and Enquirer*, had sold 4,500 copies per day. By 1835, *The Sun* sold 15,000 copies per day.

THE SUN.

NUMBER 384.] NEW-YORK, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1833. [PRICE ONE CENT.

PUBLISHED DAILY
BY BENJ. H. DAY & GEORGE W. WISNER,
[OFFICE 222 WILLIAM STREET.]

[From the Mirror of Fashion.]

LES RAMASTIQUES.

The Ramastiques are vagrants, who, like many others of the same genus, owe their success solely to the ingenuity of their shapes. The exercise of their industry implies no association of their persons, or at least one. This is their mode of proceeding, when they seek to appropriate to themselves the property of another. Four depart they go and commence their observation on the road, near some of the barriers, and then examine very carefully all comers and goers, until they pounce upon one of those individuals whose physiognomy and costume betray excessive simplicity. These men is a credulous and avaricious fellow; whether country man or not, such a man, whether coming or going, is always the individual they would fain get hold of, always persuading that he is not in want of money. If they meet down a bad of this fellow, one of them, generally the most insinuating of the three, accosts him, and pumps him in that neat and delicate way, that, by the application of some half dozen questions, brings them to the desirable knowledge of what may be the state of the financial department, the exchequer, of the unsuspicious fool. This information obtained, a telegraphic dispatch informs the confederates of the state of things. If they be favorable, a second stopper, who has gone on forward, lets fall a bite, a purse, a parcel, in such a way that the stranger cannot help remarking the circumstance. He makes his comment out aloud, but at the moment when he stoops to pick up his new acquisition—exit—vanish." They stop to see is what contains the treasure—it is generally a precious jewel, a rich ring, brilliant silver buttons, earrings, &c. A writing always accompanies the gem; what does it contain? The pocket-robber knows how to read, and of course his "new fledged comrade" knows no better than himself, and yet the paper may contain some necessary and useful information, but on whom to address it? they fear to commit any indiscretion. In the mean time they continue waiting, and suddenly, as a matter of a sweet, they see a man reading the printing bills, and nothing could be better for their purpose.

"Parbleu," says the comrade, we could not have met with a better person; here is a gentleman who will relieve us from our embarrassment, show him the paper, he will tell us the meaning of it; but let us be particularly careful not to speak to him of what we have found for he might put in his claim to a share."

The stranger is delighted, promises prudence, and they go up to the reader, who, with much complaisance, complies with the request, and reads:

"Stayed most your stay set with fresh brilliants, for which your servant has paid me two thousand seven hundred and twenty-five francs, for which this is a receipt.

"RAMASTIQUE, *Jeweller.*"

Two thousand seven hundred and twenty-five francs! My way judge how the sound of such a sum, the half of which was to come to him, sounds musically in the ramastic's ear. The obliging reader (who in the third accomplice) does not fail to explicate the figures; they thank him for his complaisance, and pay on their way.

The next step to be taken is on the subject of the jewel: that they return off certainly not. If it belonged to a poor fool, all very well; but whenever any particular diamonds is rich man, and what to a rich man are two thousand seven hundred and twenty-five francs?—a trifle, which he cares nothing about losing. If they will not return it, it is plain that they will keep it—but in any case they will retain it to speak—that where can they sell it? at a jeweller's! perhaps the proprietor of the jewel has already give alarm! handbills, and then some jeweller's set to fastidious; the best way will be not to sell it for some time—The rustic conquistends all these reasons perfectly. If it were possible, they would fetch it on the spot and part good friends, but a division is impossible, and yet each wishes to go on his business. Finally, the situation begins to be quite unpleasant, and on both sides they begin to search their heads to produce an idea.

"If I had money," says the Ramastique, "I would willingly give it to you, but I have not a penny.—What can we do?"—then pausing for a moment, he resumes.

"Listen, you seem a good honest fellow, and I think I can trust you, advance to me a few hundred francs, and no! when you have sold the thing, you can hand me over the residue, of course keeping back the interest of the sum you may advance to me. Of course you will leave me your address."

A proposition of the kind it rarely refused—the rustic, endeared by the appearance of a gain, of which he considers the other thought, surprise his purse with pleasure; if it be not sufficiently rocked, does not hesitate to add his watch. There are some who had given all, even to the buckles of their shoes. The bargain concluded, they separate with a promise to see each other again, although they have scarcely determined not to do anything of the kind if they can avoid it. Out of twenty countryman thus deceived, eighteen at least give a false name and a false address; and we cannot be astonished, because in this case, to be made a dupe, it is necessary first to be a rogue.

The Ramastiques are most frequently Jews, whose wives also follow this line of business. They usually frequent markets, where they prey on the credulity of women and cooks, who come fresh from the purchases, and have not robbed all the coins of Louis Philippe. Sometimes well girl, as so to be with difficulty known from the real mortal, compares the object with which they handles the corresponding fists. One of the victims, a cooke-Mot, some time by to the police-office to make her complaint; they had stopped her of all her money, her ear-rings, her shawl, and her basket, containing the day's provisions, but as the guarantee of fifteen francs, which she was to take to them. As she was in earnest, she hastened back to keep her promise; but on her return she found neither women, basket, nor provisions. Then only she had her suspicions aroused, which the conclusion of a quadrupeds, convicted too late, fully confirmed.

As a certain epoch, the Ramastiques were so numerous that they should themselves at once in all quarters of the city. I have received on the same morning one and with, who came to complain of having been duped by Ramastiques, the hundred in the Faubourg Saint-Honore, the wife in the market of the Innocents.

"Never was such a fool as you," said the head of the family, the lord and master, to his unfortunate mate, "to give your gold chain and ten francs for a copper chain."

"You are a bigger fool yourself! You have certainly a right to talk! go and take your pin to the Rue de Poitou a lot of vagrant plants and if you please, my gentleman, you were not content with giving the money which you had about you, but must return to the house to get sixty francs, which were all we possessed, two table spoons and your watch."

"I did when I thought it to be a chance of return."

"But it is not the last time that you have been gulled."

"Gulled, gulled! very fine, madam: I have not always allowed myself to be gulled by gaugers, and had you not been gossiping according to custom—"

"If you had passed on your way, without stopping to chatter with the dame—"

"I chatter! you I chatter about my affairs and you!—"

"Ah! your affairs are well attended to."

"As well as yours, I hope. Go away with you; when you get a gold chain again it shall do your eyes good. Years was not that most three times round him. I gave it you for your birth-day present, too, and you ought to be content with it; but you shall ring the one three times before you get it."

"How well off we shall be when we want to leave the house!"

"Hold your tongue, you are a fool!"

"Ah, that's very fine! very fine, indeed! They caught you; so much the better, my dear! I only regret one thing, and that is, that they did not get more out of you."

"Pardon! you only tell me what I have before! It is not only that I have not perceived that you cared very little about the interest of the house."

The couple left the office quarrelling. I know not how long the dispute lasted, but it is only reasonable to suppose that reflection terminated their mutual reproaches. Heaven forbid that, in leaving the transaction, they have not been compelled to come to blows!

When three Ramastiques are together, each of them has a costume adapted to the part he has to play. The one who accosts, is generally clad as a workman, a mason, bootmaker, carpenter; sometimes he affects the German or Italian accent, and appears to experience himself in French with some difficulty. If he is old, he is jolly fellow; if young, he is a coquette. The first partner (leader of the false gem) is to be distinguished by the length and width of his trowsers, one of the legs of which serve as the conductor of the object to make it reach the ground. The reader is generally more respectably dressed than the two others: it is he who puts on the black coat and velvet collar, and is decked in a long cropped hat.

For a long time the Ramastiques were handed over to the correctional police, and the sentences of punishment which they underwent was five years' imprisonment. It seems to me that some distinction should be made with them, and that, when the swindling had been effected by aid of a forged writing, the offence assumed a graver character, and fell under the cognizance of the Court of Assizes.

I determined on availing myself of the first opportunity to present to the judicial authorities some observations on this head, and it was not slow to present itself. I opposed to the two oldest prisoners of the Ramastique set, Balme, alias Marquis, and his accomplice. When I first gave my opinion, it was disregarded: they persisted in wishing to pass sentence upon the offenders according to the custom which time had consecrated; but I answered to the charge with vigor, and the two sharpers, taken before a jury, were convicted, as forgers, to military imprisonment, and to be branded.

Diseases and Physicians.—An observer remarks that there are in France 20,000 physicians, and by another no less exact calculation, he has found the sick 1,800,000 in number. Again, there are 1,000,000 adventurers, and only 900,000 causes to plead; whence he concludes that unless the 900,000 unemployed adventurers fall sick for want of work, there would be 300,000 physicians obliged to so with their arms crossed.

Fashions.—In part of Tartary the widows of rank are distinguished by wearing a flat tiara on the shoulder slung round their necks. The indians hence think that their dress is complete when they have a tail of fashionable hair, their wives or the tail of some animal. In the reign of Charles the Sixth of France, Queen Isabel of Bavaria, young and beautiful, displayed a luxury unknown in former times; no queen had ever before proved so richly dressed. She first introduced the fashion of naked shoulders and neck; least always bonnets were then in vogue; the two opposite extremities of the head were gradually lengthened; 60, at last, they formed a kind of horns. Journal des Universes, on this subject, "the women are into great extremities; the horns were some of wonderful length and size, leaning on either side, one of such monstrous dimensions that it was impossible for them to pass through a door with them. A friar of that time, Clemmiche Clamor, a celebrated preacher, vociferated his sermons against these horns. The wife of the house continued increasing, and, to accommodate the dame women, the door ways were widened and heightened.

Benjamin Day's *Sun*, the first penny paper. The emergence of the penny press helped turn newspapers into a truly mass medium.

Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

Another early successful penny paper was James Gordon Bennett's *New York Morning Herald*, which was first published in 1835. Bennett made his mark on the publishing industry by offering nonpartisan political reporting. He also introduced more aggressive methods for gathering news, hiring both interviewers and foreign correspondents. His paper was the first to send a reporter to a crime scene to witness an investigation. In the 1860s, Bennett hired 63 war reporters to cover the U.S. Civil War. Although the *Herald*

initially emphasized sensational news, it later became one of the country's most respected papers for its accurate reporting.

GROWTH OF WIRE SERVICES

Another major historical technological breakthrough for newspapers came when Samuel Morse invented the telegraph. Newspapers turned to emerging telegraph companies to receive up-to-date news briefs from cities across the globe. The significant expense of this service led to the formation of the Associated Press (AP) in 1846 as a cooperative arrangement of five major New York papers: the *New York Sun*, the *Journal of Commerce*, the *Courier and Enquirer*, the *New York Herald*, and the *Express*. The success of the Associated Press led to the development of wire services between major cities. According to the AP, this meant that editors were able to "actively collect news as it [broke], rather than gather already published news (Associated Press)." This collaboration between papers allowed for more reliable reporting, and the increased breadth of subject matter lent subscribing newspapers mass appeal for not only upper- but also middle- and working-class readers.

YELLOW JOURNALISM

In the late 1800s, *New York World* publisher Joseph Pulitzer developed a new journalistic style that relied on an intensified use of sensationalism—stories focused on crime, violence, emotion, and sex. Although he made major strides in the newspaper industry by creating an expanded section focusing on women and by pioneering the use of advertisements as news, Pulitzer relied largely on violence and sex in his headlines to sell more copies. Ironically, journalism's most prestigious award is named for him. His *New York World* became famous for such headlines as "Baptized in Blood" and "Little Lotta's Lovers (Fang, 1997)." This sensationalist

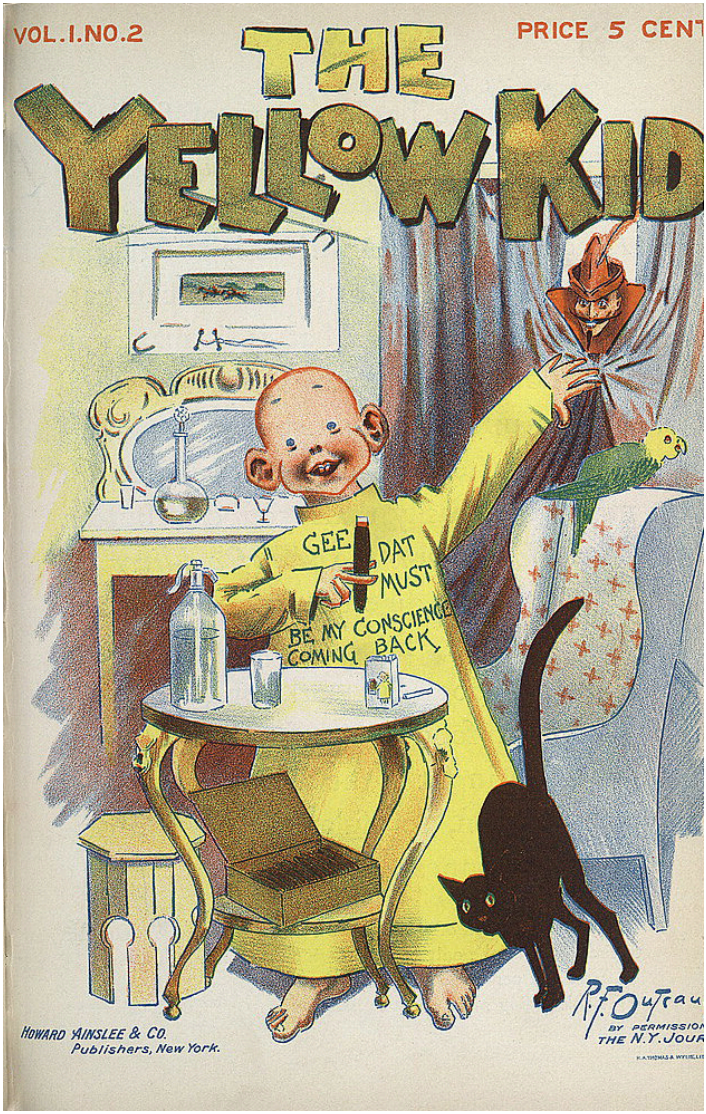
style served as the forerunner for today's tabloids. Editors relied on shocking headlines to sell their papers, and although investigative journalism was predominant, editors often took liberties with how the story was told. Newspapers often printed an editor's interpretation of the story without maintaining objectivity.

At the same time Pulitzer was establishing the *New York World*, William Randolph Hearst—an admirer and principal competitor of Pulitzer—took over the *New York Journal*. Hearst's life partially inspired the 1941 classic film *Citizen Kane*. The battle between these two major New York newspapers escalated as Pulitzer and Hearst attempted to outsell one another. The papers slashed their prices back down to a penny, stole editors and reporters from each other, and filled their papers with outrageous, sensationalist headlines. One conflict that inspired particularly sensationalized headlines was the Spanish-American War. Both Hearst and Pulitzer filled their papers with huge front-page headlines and gave bloody—if sometimes inaccurate—accounts of the war. As historian Richard K. Hines writes, "The American Press, especially 'yellow presses' such as William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* [and] Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* … sensationalized the brutality of the reconcentrado and the threat to American business interests. Journalists frequently embellished Spanish atrocities and invented others (Hines, 2002)."

COMICS AND STUNT JOURNALISM

As the publishers vied for readership, an entertaining new element was introduced to newspapers: the comic strip. In 1896, Hearst's *New York Journal* published R. F. Outcault's the *Yellow Kid* in an attempt to "attract immigrant readers who otherwise might not have bought an English-language paper (Yaszek, 1994)." Readers rushed to buy papers featuring the successful yellow-nightshirt-wearing character. The cartoon "provoked a wave of 'gentle hysteria,' and was soon appearing on buttons, cracker tins,

cigarette packs, and ladies' fans—and even as a character in a Broadway play (Yaszek, 1994)." Another effect of the cartoon's popularity was the creation of the term *yellow journalism* to describe the types of papers in which it appeared.



R. F. Outcault's the *Yellow Kid*, first published in William Randolf Hearst's *New York Journal* in 1896.

Pulitzer responded to the success of the *Yellow Kid* by introducing stunt journalism. The publisher hired journalist Elizabeth Cochrane,

who wrote under the name Nellie Bly, to report on aspects of life that had previously been ignored by the publishing industry. Her first article focused on the New York City Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell Island. Bly feigned insanity and had herself committed to the infamous asylum. She recounted her experience in her first article, "Ten Days in a Madhouse." "It was a brilliant move. Her madhouse performance inaugurated the performative tactic that would become her trademark reporting style (Lutes, 2002)." Such articles brought Bly much notoriety and fame, and she became known as the first stunt journalist. Although stunts such as these were considered lowbrow entertainment and female stunt reporters were often criticized by more traditional journalists, Pulitzer's decision to hire Bly was a huge step for women in the newspaper business. Bly and her fellow stunt reporters "were the first newspaperwomen to move, as a group, from the women's pages to the front page, from society news into political and criminal news (Lutes, 2002)."

Despite the sometimes questionable tactics of both Hearst and Pulitzer, each man made significant contributions to the growing journalism industry. By 1922, Hearst, a ruthless publisher, had created the country's largest media-holding company. At that time, he owned 20 daily papers, 11 Sunday papers, 2 wire services, 6 magazines, and a newsreel company. Likewise, toward the end of his life, Pulitzer turned his focus to establishing a school of journalism. In 1912, a year after his death and 10 years after Pulitzer had begun his educational campaign, classes opened at the Columbia University School of Journalism. At the time of its opening, the school had approximately 100 students from 21 countries. Additionally, in 1917, the first Pulitzer Prize was awarded for excellence in journalism.

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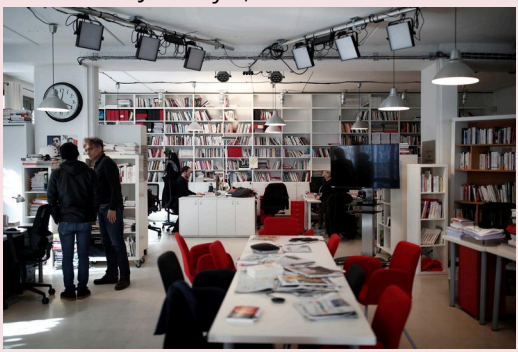
Newspaper Industry Perspective

BUILDING THE BUSINESS WE WANT

This forward looking essay by Rasmus Kleis Nielsen supplements the Journalism, Media and Technology Trends and Predictions 2020 report.

Post by Rasmus Kleis Nielsen Director, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism on January 9, 2020



Journalists stand in the newsroom of the free and independent online media outlet Mediapart in Paris, France, March 12, 2019. REUTERS/Benoit Tessier

Publishers in 2020 will increasingly accept that building the business we want is more important than to rage, rage against the dying of the business that we had.

I take the confidence a clear majority of the digital leaders we have surveyed express in the future of their company as reflecting a determination to make digital work for their editorial ambitions and the business that powers those ambitions.

I take the fact that less than half of our respondents are confident in the future prospects of journalism more generally as a realistic recognition that business as usual is over and that many won't make the transition from past to future.

It has been clear for some time that the large and lucrative mass media news business is fading as its ageing and dwindling audience face the close of day.

I expect global news industry revenues to continue to decline for at least another decade as profitable print products die out with their readers, broadcast is disrupted, and digital growth, real as it is, in most cases will not deliver the same revenues or profit margins.

But a shrinking industry is not the same as a dying industry. Sometimes, a sense of loss and the sheer scale of the legacy businesses fading away can blind us to important, encouraging signs that a future digital business of news is developing in a very challenging and very competitive media environment.

For those more interested in the business we want than the business we had, it is increasingly clear that a smaller, leaner, sustainable digital media news business is emerging, built across advertising revenues, reader revenues, and other sources of income.

Publishers as different as AMedia, Brut, *Dagens Nyheter*, *Dennik N*, *eldiario.es*, *The Lincolnite*, *MediaPart*, *VG*, and many more are examples of how publishers who combine editorial ideals with hard-nosed commercial realism are successfully developing their own digital journalism and the business behind it.

None of this is easy.

Publishers used to capture a large share of people's attention, and consequently a large

share of advertising. Online, news captures just a few percent of people's attention,[1] and faced with large platform competitors who offer advertisers low prices, high reach, and precise targeting, publishers thus draw only a few percent of advertising. But with the global digital ad spend estimated to reach $385bn in 2020,[2] a few percent is still billions of dollars.

Publishers used to be able to sell bundled products that solved all sorts of different problems for all sorts of different people, but online, many of these problems are solved more efficiently by others, and faced with near-limitless competition for attention and the fact that the majority of major media still offer news free at the point of consumption,[3] it is still only a minority who are willing to pay for online news,[4] and most will only subscribe to one or two publications. But even this minority is on track to generate billions of dollars.

Legacy revenues and profits reflected the news media's dominant position in an offline media environment where audiences had low choice and publishers had high market power over advertisers.

Digital revenues and profits will reflect the news media's much more marginal position in an online media environment where audiences have high choice and publishers have little market power over advertisers.

This is a much tougher market. But it is not an impossible one for those who offer distinct, valuable journalism and maintain a lean and nimble operation. And the – always precarious, sometimes piecemeal, and rarely linear – success of a growing number of news media in this environment is a lot more encouraging than the asset stripping, cost-cutting and consolidation, and continued reliance on print products in terminal decline that we see in much of the legacy industry (or than the clickbait and desperate 'pivots' to the latest fad that some of the more rudderless digital-born sites resort to).

Many trying to make the transition from offline to online will not succeed. Often, those trying to build something new will fail. Some of those who succeed will still fall short of

1. https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691159263/the-internet-trap
2. https://www.emarketer.com/content/global-digital-ad-spending-2019
3. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/Paymodels_for_Online_News_FINAL_1.pdf
4. https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2019/paying-for-news-and-the-limits-of-subscription/

their hopes and aspirations. Very few will generate anything like the revenues or profits we saw in the past.

But that was then. This is now. A younger generation of journalists, media leaders, and – most importantly – members of the public won't be served by fond reminiscences about the past or by those who burn and rage against the present, and the future of the news media that we all rely on won't be secured by sentimentalism or by short-term thinking focusing on cost-cutting. It will require a long-term bet on reorganising to focus on the future. We know this is hard. But we also know it is possible. And if we value independent professional journalism and believe in its continued purpose and importance, we will also have to develop businesses that will sustain it at scale – in most countries, realistically, nothing else will, not politicians, not philanthropy, and not platform companies.

Those fighting rearguard battles will point out that the new digital businesses of news we see emerging won't replace what we had. What they say is true, but it is also irrelevant.

Nothing will replace what we had, and if we continue to define the problem in those terms, we will continue to fail. What matters is that these businesses provide the foundation of what we will be, the resources with which various vanguards will define the future of digital journalism.

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History of Magazine Publishing

HISTORY OF MAGAZINE PUBLISHING

Like the newspaper, the magazine has a complex history shaped by the cultures in which it developed. Examining the industry's roots and its transformation over time can contribute to a better understanding of the modern industry.

EARLY MAGAZINES

After the printing press became prevalent in Europe, early publishers began to conceptualize the magazine. Forerunners of the familiar modern magazine first appeared during the 17th century in the form of brochures, pamphlets, and almanacs. Soon, publishers realized that irregular publication schedules required too much time and energy. A gradual shift then occurred as publishers sought regular readers with specific interests. But the early magazine was unlike any other previous publication. It was not enough of a news source to be a newspaper, but it could not be considered pleasure reading either. Instead, early magazines occupied the middle ground between the two (Encyclopedia Britannica).

GERMANY, FRANCE, AND THE NETHERLANDS LEAD THE

German theologian and poet Johann Rist published the first true magazine between 1663 and 1668. Titled *Erbauliche Monaths-Unterredungen*, or *Edifying Monthly Discussions*, Rist's publication inspired a number of others to begin printing literary journals across Europe: Denis de Sallo's French *Journal des Sçavans* (1665), the Royal Society's English *Philosophical Transactions* (1665), and Francesco Nazzari's Italian *Giomale de'letterati* (1668). In 1684, exiled Frenchman Pierre Bayle published *Novelles de la République des Lettres* in the Netherlands to escape French censorship. Profoundly affected by a general revival of learning during the 1600s, the publications inspired enthusiasm for education.

Another Frenchman, Jean Donneau de Vizé, published the first "periodical of amusement," *Le Mercure Galant* (later renamed *Mercure de France*), in 1672, which contained news, short stories, and poetry. This combination of news and pleasurable reading became incredibly popular, causing other publications to imitate the magazine (Encyclopedia Britannica). This lighter magazine catered to a different reader than did the other, more intellectual publications of the day, offering articles for entertainment and enjoyment rather than for education.

With the arrival of the 18th century came an increase in literacy. Women, who enjoyed a considerable rise in literacy rates, began reading in record numbers. This growth affected the literary world as a whole, inspiring a large number of female writers to publish novels for female readers (Wolf). This influx of female readers also helped magazines flourish as more women sought out the publications as a source of knowledge and entertainment. In fact, many magazines jumped at the chance to reach out to women. The *Athenian Mercury*, the first magazine written specifically for women, appeared in 1693.

BRITISH MAGAZINES APPEAR

Much as in newspaper publication, Great Britain closely followed continental Europe's lead in producing magazines. During the early 18th century, three major influential magazines published regularly in Great Britain: *Robinson Crusoe* author Daniel Defoe's the *Review*, Sir Richard Steele's the *Tatler*, and Joseph Addison and Steele's the *Spectator*.

All three of these publications were published either daily or several times a week. While they were supplied as frequently as newspapers, their content was closer to that of magazines. The *Review* focused primarily on domestic and foreign affairs and featured opinion-based political articles. The *Spectator* replaced the *Tatler*, which published from 1709 to 1711. Both *Tatler* and *Spectator* emphasized living and culture and frequently used humor to promote virtuous behavior (Wolf). *Tatler* and *Spectator*, in particular, drew a large number of female readers, and both magazines eventually added female-targeted publications: *Female Tatler* in 1709 and *Female Spectator* in 1744.

AMERICAN MAGAZINES

The first American magazines debuted in 1741, when Andrew Bradford's *American Magazine* and Benjamin Franklin's *General Magazine* began publication in Philadelphia a mere 3 days apart from each other. Neither magazine lasted long, however; *American Magazine* folded after only 3 months and *General Magazine* after 6. The short-lived nature of the publications likely had less to do with the outlets themselves and more to do with the fact that they were "limited by too few readers with leisure time to read, high costs of publishing, and expensive distribution systems (Straubbhaar, et. al., 2009)." Regardless of this early setback, magazines began to flourish during the latter half of the 18th century, and by the end of the 1700s, more than 100 magazines had appeared in the

nascent United States. Despite this large publication figure, typical colonial magazines still recorded low circulation figures and were considered highbrow.

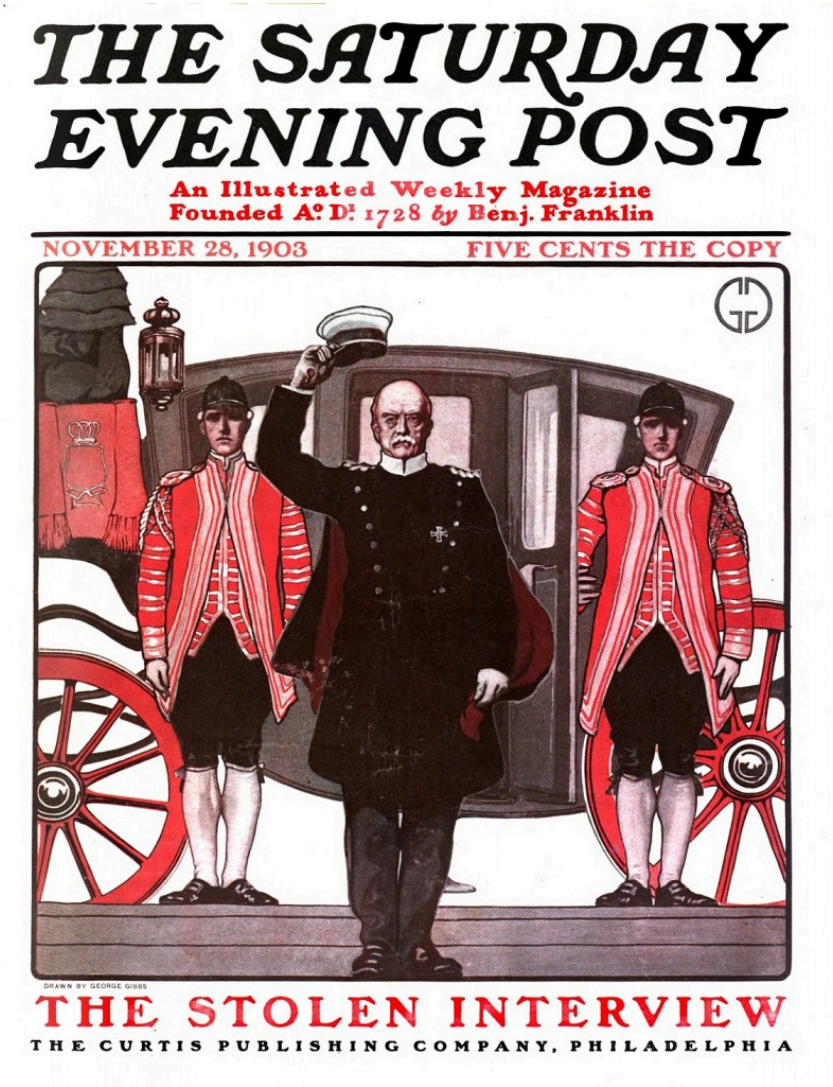
MASS-APPEAL MAGAZINES

All this changed during the 1830s when publishers began taking advantage of a general decline in the cost of printing and mailing publications and started producing less-expensive magazines with a wider audience in mind. Magazine style also transformed. While early magazines focused on improvement and reason, later versions focused on amusement. No longer were magazines focused on the elite class. Publishers took advantage of their freshly expanded audience and began offering family magazines, children's magazines, and women's magazines. Women's publications again proved to be a highly lucrative market. One of the earliest American women's magazines was *Godey's Lady's Book*, a Philadelphia-based monthly that printed between 1830 and 1898. This particular magazine reached out to female readers by employing nearly 150 women.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

The first truly successful mass circulation magazine in the United States was *The Saturday Evening Post*. This weekly magazine first began printing in 1821 and remained in regular print production until 1969, when it briefly ceased circulation. However, in 1971 a new owner remodeled the magazine to focus on health and medical breakthroughs. From the time of its first publication in the early 1800s, *The Saturday Evening Post* quickly grew in popularity; by 1855, it had a circulation of 90,000 copies per year (Saturday Evening Post). Widely recognized for transforming the look of the magazine, the publication was the first to put artwork on its cover, a decision that *The Saturday Evening Post* has said "connected readers

intimately with the magazine as a whole (Saturday Evening Post)." Certainly, *The Saturday Evening Post* took advantage of the format by featuring the work of famous artists such as Norman Rockwell. Using such recognizable artists boosted circulation as "Americans everywhere recognized the art of the *Post* and eagerly awaited the next issue because of it (Saturday Evening Post)."



The Saturday Evening Post popularized the use of artwork on its cover, setting a standard for other publications to follow.

Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

But *The Saturday Evening Post* did not only feature famous artists; it also published works by famous authors including F. Scott

Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, and Ring Lardner. The popularity of these writers contributed to the continuing success of the magazine.

YOUTH'S COMPANION

Another early U.S. mass magazine was *Youth's Companion*, which published between 1827 and 1929 when it merged with *The American Boy*. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, this periodical featured fairly religious content and developed a reputation as a wholesome magazine that encouraged young readers to be virtuous and pious. Eventually, the magazine sought to reach a larger, adult audience by including tame entertainment pieces. Nevertheless, the magazine in time began featuring the work of prominent writers for both children and adults and became "a literary force to be reckoned with (Nineteenth-Century American Children and What They Read)."

PRICE DECREASES ATTRACT LARGER AUDIENCES

While magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Youth's Companion* were fairly popular, the industry still struggled to achieve widespread circulation. Most publications cost the then-hefty sum of 25 or 35 cents per issue, limiting readership to the relative few who could afford them. This all changed in 1893 when Samuel Sidney McClure began selling *McClure's Magazine*, originally a literary and political magazine, at the bargain price of only 15 cents per issue. The trend caught on. Soon, *Cosmopolitan* (founded 1886) began selling for 12.5 cents, while *Munsey Magazine* (1886–1929) sold for only 10 cents. All three of these periodicals were widely successful. Frank A. Munsey, owner of *Munsey Magazine*, estimated that between 1893 and 1899 "the ten-cent magazine increased the magazine-buying public from 250,000 to 750,000 persons (Encycopaedia Britannica)." For the first time, magazines could be sold for less than they cost to produce.

Because of greater circulation, publications could charge more for advertising space and decrease the cost to the customer.

By 1900, advertising had become a crucial component of the magazine business. In the early days of the industry, many publications attempted to keep advertisements out of their issues because of publishers' natural fondness toward literature and writing (Encycopaedia Britannica). However, once circulation increased, advertisers sought out space in magazines to reach the larger audience. Magazines responded by raising advertising rates, ultimately increasing their profitability. By the turn of the 20th century, advertising became the norm in magazines, particularly in some women's magazines, where advertisements accounted for nearly half of all content.

EARLY 20TH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

The arrival of the 20th century brought with it new types of magazines, including news, business, and picture magazines. In time, these types of publications came to dominate the industry and attract vast readerships.

NEWSMAGAZINES

As publishers became interested in succinctly presenting the fresh increase of worldwide information that technology made available during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they designed the newsmagazine. In 1923, *Time* became the first newsmagazine that focused on world news. *Time* first began publication with the proposition that "people are uninformed because no publication has adapted itself to the time which busy men are able to spend simply keeping informed (Encyclopaedia Britannica)." Although the periodical struggled during its early years, *Time* hit its stride in 1928 and its readership grew. The magazine's signature style of

well-researched news presented in a succinct manner contributed greatly to its eventual success.

Several other newsmagazines came onto the market during this era as well. *Business Week* was founded in 1929 with a focus on the global market. *Forbes*, currently one of the most popular financial magazines, began printing in 1917 as a biweekly publication. In 1933, a former *Time* foreign editor founded *Newsweek*, which now has a circulation of nearly 4 million readers. Today, *Newsweek* and *Time* continue to compete with each other, furthering a trend that began in the early years of *Newsweek*.

PICTURE MAGAZINES

Photojournalism, or the telling of stories through photography, also became popular during the early 20th century. Although magazines had been running illustrations since the 19th century, as photography grew in popularity so did picture magazines. The most influential picture magazine was Henry Luce's *Life*, which regularly published between 1936 and 1972. Within weeks of its initial publication, *Life* had a circulation of 1 million. In Luce's words, the publication aimed "to see life; to see the world; to witness great events; to watch the faces of the poor and the gestures of the proud; to see strange things (Encycopaedia Britannica)." It did not disappoint. Widely credited with establishing photojournalism, *Life* captured the attention of many on first read. With 96 large-format glossy pages, even the inaugural issue sold out. The opening photograph depicted an obstetrician holding a newborn baby with the caption "Life begins."

While *Life* was the most influential picture magazine, it was certainly not the only photo-centric publication. Popular biweekly picture magazine *Look* printed between 1937 and 1971, claiming to compete with *Life* by reaching out to a larger audience. Although *Look* offered *Life* stiff competition during their almost identical print runs, the latter magazine is widely considered to have a greater

legacy. Several other photo magazines—including *Focus*, *Peek*, *Foto*, *Pic*, and *Click*—also took their inspiration from *Life*.

INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

During the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the advent of online technology began to greatly affect both the magazine industry and the print media as a whole. Much like newspaper publishers, magazine publishers have had to rethink their structure to reach out to an increasingly online market.

Specialization of Magazines

Over the last century, magazines have slowly moved into more specialized, fragmented groupings. This transformation from general-interest to niche publications began with the popularization of television. To survive the threat posed by the success of broadcast media, print publications worked to stand out from their competitors by developing market niches. During this transition, magazine editors found that by specializing they were also appealing to advertisers hoping to reach specific audiences. From the medical field to the auto industry, specialization has become necessary to compete in an ever-growing market. Yet the trend is perhaps most obvious in mass media and in the publishing industry in particular. The wide variety of niche publications reflect the increasing specificity of markets and audiences.

PROFESSIONAL TRADE PUBLICATIONS

Nearly every trade group produces some sort of professional publication for its members. Many trade organizations even have their own libraries that house publications solely dedicated to their specific groups. For example, if a person wishes to find information on agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting organizations, the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland, near Washington, DC, might offer a starting point. This library is one of four national libraries of the United States and has one of the

world's largest agricultural information collections and links a nationwide network of state land-grant and U.S. Department of Agriculture field libraries (Career Resource Library). This is but one example of the array of trade-group publications available.

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

Academic journals have, in some form, been around since the early years of magazine publication. During the 17th century, the *Universal Historical Bibliothèque* became the first journal to invite scholarly contributions. Today, hundreds of scholarly journals exist, such as the *American Economic Review* and *The Journal of Marriage and Families*, and every academic field has its own array of journals to which scholars can contribute. Most university libraries allow students and faculty access to these journals via library databases.

In every academic field, journals are ranked based on the types of articles they publish and on their selectiveness. Most academic journals use a peer-reviewing process to determine which articles are printed. During this process, a panel of readers reviews an anonymous article and then decides whether to accept the paper, accept with changes, or reject it altogether. Scholarly publication is essential for graduate students and university faculty members alike as they seek to disseminate their ideas and progress in their careers.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

With faith at the center of many individuals' lives, it is hardly surprising that there are hundreds of magazines dedicated to religious groups. From *Christianity Today* to *Catholic Digest*, Christian publications make up the largest group of religious magazines. But Christianity is not the only faith represented in periodicals. *Kashrus Magazine* targets the Jewish community, and *Shambhala Sun* is affiliated with the Buddhist faith. Additionally, certain

magazines, such as *CrossCurrents*, are designed for people of all faiths. The magazine's publishers state that *CrossCurrents* "connects the wisdom of the heart with the life of the mind and the experiences of the body (Cross Currents)."

HOBBY AND INTEREST MAGAZINES

Perhaps the most populated classification is that of hobby and special-interest magazines, a reflection of the wide array of hobbies and interests that different individuals enjoy. Within this classification of journals, one can find magazines on such topics as sports (*Sports Illustrated*), wellness (*Health)*, cooking (*Bon Appétit*), home decoration and renovation (*This Old House*), and travel and geography (*National Geographic*).

Readers interested in specific hobbies can generally find a magazine that caters to them. Photographers, for example, can subscribe to the *British Journal of Photography*, the world's longest-running photography magazine, in publication since 1854. This journal prints "profiles of emerging talent alongside star names, a picture-led Portfolio section, business analysis and detailed technology reviews (British Journal of Photography)." Music enthusiasts can choose from an array of publications ranging from more general ones such as *Spin* and the *International Early Music Review* to highly specific such as the *Journal of the International Double Reed Society* and *Just Jazz Guitar*. There are also magazines entirely devoted to crafting, such as *Creating Keepsakes* for scrapbook enthusiasts, and for pet ownership, such as the appropriately named *Pet*.

Fashion has provided a highly lucrative and visible interest magazine market. Founded in 1892, the most famous fashion magazine is *Vogue*. "*Vogue* has been America's cultural barometer, putting fashion in the context of the larger world we live in—how we dress, live, socialize; what we eat, listen to, watch; who leads and inspires us (Vogue)." Despite *Vogue*'s high circulation, most

special-interest magazines have a smaller readership. This can be worrisome for editors charged with adding more subscriptions to make a larger profit. However, the appeal of such specific audiences generates more revenue from advertisers, who can purchase magazine space knowing that their ads are reaching a targeted audience.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER FORMATS

Magazines control the public's access to information in a variety of ways. Like the newspaper industry, the magazine industry not only dictates which stories get told, but also how those stories are presented. Although significant similarities between the newspaper and magazine industries' control over information exist, some notable differences within the industries themselves deserve exploration.

FORMAT

In general, the format of most magazines allows for a more in-depth discussion of a topic than is possible in the relatively constrained space available in newspapers. Most large newspapers, such as *The Washington Post* or the *Los Angeles Times*, generally cap even their longest articles at 1,000 words (State of the Media, 2004). Magazines, however, frequently allow for double that word count when publishing articles of great interest (State of the Media, 2004). Length, however, varies from magazine to magazine and story to story.

CHOICE TO PUBLISH

Just as newspapers do, magazines control which stories reach the public by deciding which articles to include in their publications. As

might be expected, the choice of stories depends on the political climate and on global events.

Leading newsmagazines *Time* and *Newsweek* both underwent major transitions in their content during the late 20th century. Between the 1970s and 1990s, both greatly increased science articles, entertainment articles, and stories on personal health. Interestingly, despite both publications' stated commitment to news, a dramatic decrease took place in articles on domestic- and foreign-government affairs. Whether these changes reflected a change in reader interest or an alteration in the editors' perspectives remains unclear; however, these shifts demonstrate that what is published is entirely up to the magazine and its editorial staff, as they are the ones who have the final word.

ADVERTISERS' INFLUENCE

Magazines depend on advertisers, subscriptions and newsstand sales for revenue. Advertisers have a large stake in the magazine industry and can play a major role in deciding which stories are printed. Because magazines are so dependent on advertisers for their revenue, they are cautious about the content they place in their pages. Magazines tend to shy away from controversial content that can turn off advertisers. The balance that magazines must maintain to keep advertisers happy is a delicate one. With ad prices driving the magazine industry, many publications are forced to satisfy advertisers by avoiding potentially controversial stories.

While advertisers may exhibit some control over stories, they also have a lot at stake. As online media grows, today many advertisers are pulling their expensive print ads in favor of cheaper, web-based advertisements (Knarr). Advertising revenue has decreased steadily since the 1990s, mirroring the rise in online readership (HighBeam Business). This drop in advertising may, in fact, force magazines to give advertisers more control over their content to avoid losing further funding. While it may be difficult

to precisely pin down the level of influence advertisers exert over magazine content, evidence suggests they do exert some control.

EDITORIAL LEANINGS

Each magazine has its own editorial slant, which helps determine which stories get published and how those stories are presented. A 2003 study examining leading newsmagazines *Time*, *Newsweek*, *and U.S. News & World Report* verified these differences by demonstrating variations in how the publications presented their articles to the reading public.

U.S. News & World Report...is the most information-laden, the most likely to publish highly traditional hard news topics and the most likely to report in a neutral manner—a more straightforward accounting of the facts of events with less of a writer's "take" or opinion on what those events mean. *Newsweek* is lighter, more oriented toward lifestyle and celebrity coverage, and more likely to publish stories that contain an emotional component. *Time* magazine is something of a hybrid between the two. Its content is more like *U.S. News*'—neutral and information driven. Its covers, on the other hand, look a good deal more like *Newsweek*'s—highlighting lifestyle and entertainment(State of the Media).

These distinctions among the three publications may seem slight, but they have an effect on the information contained between their covers. However, these editorial leanings do not make one magazine more prestigious or valid than the others; *U.S. News & World Report* may offer facts and figures about a particular event, while *Newsweek* may provide the human side of the story. Readers should understand, though, that several variables affect the articles that they see in each publication.

ONLINE NEWS SOURCES

The Internet has significantly changed the way that the public receives information. The advent of online news sources has somewhat lessened the control that magazines have over information. Today, several online-only magazines provide, for little to no cost, news and coverage that would have previously been available only through print publications. Online-only magazines include *Slate*, which offers a daily digest of information from newspapers around the globe, and *Salon*, which provides readers many stories for free and more in-depth coverage for a subscription cost. Like their print counterparts, online magazines rely on revenue from advertisers, but because that advertising is less costly, advertisers may have less of a stake in online content. All these factors contribute to changing perspectives on the way that information is being controlled in the journalism industry.

Major Magazine Formats

Magazines have evolved significantly since their inception. Magazines have affected the world by bringing news, entertainment, literature, and photography to their readers. Additionally, the magazine industry has profoundly affected U.S. popular culture. As magazines have developed over time, individual publications have targeted specific groups and have found particular niches. This section explores a number of popular periodicals and their effect on their target audiences.

HIGH-CIRCULATION MAGAZINES

The top 10 highest circulating magazines in the United States differ greatly in style and audience. From *AARP* to *Better Homes and Gardens*, from *National Geographic* to *Southern Living*, the list demonstrates the wide pool of readers and interests attracted to the medium. This section will explore some of the top ten publications

AARP The Magazine

Some may be surprised to learn that the magazine with the highest circulation in the United States is not one readily available to buy at a newsstand or grocery store: *AARP The Magazine*. Published by the nonprofit organization AARP (formerly known as the American

Association of Retired Persons), the magazine is automatically sent to the organization's more than 38 million members.

A bimonthly publication that is "geared exclusively towards 50+ Americans seeking to enhance their quality of life as they age (AARP)," *AARP The Magazine* publishes lifestyle articles and includes sections dedicated to health, money, work, relationships, and travel, among others. Its mission statement reads:

> *AARP The Magazine* provides three editorial versions targeted to different life stages (50–59, 60–69, 70+) to empower readers with editorial written just for them. Annual editorial packages, strong service journalism, and celebrity profiles will be presented in a warm, vibrant and inviting format to encourage readers to reflect, engage and enjoy (AARP).

AARP also publishes *AARP Bulletin*, which is "a monthly news publication that reaches influential consumers and policymakers (AARP)." Rather than presenting lifestyle stories, this publication focuses on news stories of interest to its target audience.

> *AARP Bulletin* chronicles and interprets important social issues that affect 50+ Americans. News, balanced analysis and concise stories, in an accessible format, motivates these influential readers to engage in public policy on health care, financial well-being and consumer protection (AARP).

Reader's Digest

Reader's Digest was first published in 1922 as a "digest of condensed articles of topical interest and entertainment value taken from other periodicals (Encyclopaedia Britannica)," this famous pocket-sized journal was first produced on a low budget by a husband and wife team who believed the magazine would sell despite numerous rejections from magazine publishers (Encyclopaedia Britannica). They were right. *Reader's Digest* was an almost immediate success and now regularly outsells competitors. The monthly magazine has subscribers around the globe and seeks to "create products that

inform, enrich, entertain and inspire people of all ages and cultures around the world (Reader's Digest)."

NEWS MAGAZINES

News magazines became popular during the 1920s. Today, news magazines make up a large portion of magazine sales, with multiple news periodicals ranking in the top 30 for circulation. Over time, a number of news magazines have established themselves in the industry, including *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*.

Time

Time has remained an influential publication during the decades since its inception. Today, the publication prides itself on its "rare convergence of incisive reporting, lively writing and world-renowned photography," which combined have earned it the praise of being "journalism at its best (Time)." The magazine is divided into four main sections: Briefing, The Well, Life, and Arts. Briefing includes concise stories on major news events in the United States and other countries. The Well section features longer articles, including the cover story and articles on world and business. Life contains stories on health, science, technology, and the environment. Finally, Arts consists of reviews of theater, film, literature, music, exhibits, and architecture. Like *Newsweek*, *Time* has won numerous awards and prides itself on being "the guide through chaos" in an era of information overload (Time).

U.S. News & World Report

Created through the merger of a newspaper and a magazine, *U.S. News & World Report* has gained great prestige over the years. In 1933—the same year that *Newsweek* debuted—journalist David Lawrence began publishing a weekly newspaper called the *United*

States News. Six years later, he founded a weekly magazine titled *World Report*. In 1948, the two weeklies merged to create the new *U.S. News & World Report*. The magazine's focus is similar to those of *Time* and *Newsweek*, but *U.S. News & World Report* concentrates more on political, economic, health, and education stories, perhaps in part because it is based in Washington, DC. Although for most of its long history the magazine published weekly, in 2008 it announced its transition to a monthly printing schedule, vowing to concentrate on its website.

The magazine is perhaps best known for its annual ranking of U.S. colleges. This ranking began in 1983 and has since evolved to include newsstand books of *America's Best Colleges* and *America's Best Graduate Schools*. Since the ranking system began, students turn to the publication for information about the strengths and weaknesses of institutions of higher learning.

WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

Female readers have been important to the magazine industry since the early 19th century, initially because women were not traditionally part of the workforce and were believed to have more leisure time to read. This lucrative market has only grown over time. In an increasingly online era, many magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Good Housekeeping*, have sought ways to expand their scope to reach a larger audience. These two periodicals are part of the "Seven Sisters," a group of magazines traditionally targeted at women.

Better Homes and Gardens

Making its print debut in 1922, *Better Homes and Gardens* entered the industry later than its counterparts. Currently, the magazine is ranked fifth in circulation in the United States with a readership of more than 7.6 million (Echo Media). Since its inception, the

publication has focused on home and gardening style and decorations. Its positioning statement reads:

For the woman who reads *Better Homes and Gardens*, home is where she creates her life story. It's her haven, where she raises her family, entertains friends, and celebrates life's big—and small—accomplishments. It's where she indulges her dreams and builds a world of her own. Home is her emotional center—it's where life happens. *Better Homes and Gardens* recognizes this and inspires her with infinite possibilities for creativity and self-expression. Each issue delivers smart, approachable editorial on design and individual style, decorating and gardening, food and entertaining, and personal and family well-being. *Better Homes and Gardens* helps her bridge the gap between dreaming and doing (Meredith).

The monthly magazine is divided into six sections: Food and Nutrition, Home, Health, Family, Gardening, and Lifestyle.

Good Housekeeping

In May of 1885, *Good Housekeeping* began publishing with the intention of providing "information about running a home, a broad range of literary offerings, and opportunities for reader input (Library of Congress)." Fifteen years later, the magazine founded the Good Housekeeping Research Institute. The research institute includes a product-evaluation laboratory where a staff of scientists, engineers, nutritionists, and researchers evaluate a wide variety of products. The magazine then reports their findings to its readers to "improve the lives of consumers and their families through education and product evaluation (Good Housekeeping)." The magazine describes mission statement as: "A world of possibility.Tested for you. Goodhousekeeping presents a world of beautiful, enticing posibility, made easier by our genius solutions – all backed by the GH Labs."

> Devoted to contemporary women. Monthly articles focus on food, fitness, beauty, and childcare using the resources of the Good Housekeeping Institute. From human interest stories and social issues to money management and travel, the magazine will encourage positive living for today's woman (Good Housekeeping Magazine, 2010).

Cosmopolitan

First published in 1886, the female-targeted *Cosmopolitan* has changed dramatically over time from its original intent of being a "first-class family magazine (Mott, 1957)." In the first issue, the editor told readers that "there will be a department devoted exclusively to the interests of women, with articles on fashions, on household decoration, on cooking, and the care and management of children, etc., also a department for the younger members of the family (Mott, 1957)." Just 2 years later, however, the original publishing company went out of business, and after several publisher changes *Cosmopolitan* was eventually purchased by newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst in 1905.

The magazine became more successful during the 1960s when Helen Gurley Brown "transformed an antiquated general-interest mag called *Cosmopolitan* into the must-read for young, sexy single chicks (Benjamin)." Brown transformed the magazine from the family-focused publication it was to the somewhat controversial read with an emphasis on sex, work, and fashion that it is today. The magazine describes the transformation saying:

> Over the years, *Cosmo* has not only become the number-one-selling monthly magazine on the newsstand, but it has also served as an agent for social change, encouraging women everywhere to go after what they want (whether it be in the boardroom or the bedroom) (Benjamin).

In 1965, *Cosmopolitan* revamped its journal with Brown's vision in mind. The first retooled issue had an article about birth-control

pills, then a relatively new and controversial innovation. The magazine's provocative articles attracted a large readership, but many found it offensive. Conservatives believed that the content was too racy, while some feminists thought it was too focused on beauty and pleasing men (Benjamin). Yet the publishers of *Cosmopolitan* believed that they were introducing a new form of feminism (Benjamin). Brown argued that "*Cosmo* is feminist in that we believe women are just as smart and capable as men are and can achieve anything men can. But it also acknowledges that while work is important, men are too. The *Cosmo* girl absolutely loves men (Benjamin)!"

Today, *Cosmopolitan* continues to attract readers by maintaining the same ideals that Brown put forth in the 1960s. Nearly 30 percent of every issue is dedicated to relationships, sex especially. The rest provides articles on beauty, fashion, entertainment, health and fitness, and self-improvement.

CELEBRITY MAGAZINES

Despite being criticized at times for their less-than-sophisticated approach to journalism, celebrity magazines bring in enormous profits and help shape U.S. pop culture, fueling the obsession some Americans have with the mundane day-to-day details of the lives of celebrities. Two of the most prominent celebrity magazines currently publishing are *People*, and *Us Weekly*.

People

Since it first began publishing as a spin-off of *Time* magazine's "People" section in 1974, *People* has been a leading celebrity magazine. The publication sets itself apart from other celebrity gossip magazines by publishing human-interest stories alongside photos and articles about celebrities. The publishers of *People* state that they avoid pure Hollywood gossip articles and they refuse

to publish stories without some sort of verification (Moni). This editorial slant is unique among celebrity magazines, and, as such, the publication frequently receives exclusive interviews and photo shoots with celebrities. The somewhat more respectful relationship between the publishers and some celebrities has helped *People* become the most popular celebrity magazine in circulation.

Us Weekly

Founded in 1977, *Us Weekly* followed the format of a bimonthly entertainment news and review magazine until 2000, when it switched formats to become a weekly leader in celebrity news and style. The publication "delivers a mass audience of young, educated, and affluent adults who are compelled by breaking celebrity news, Hollywood style and the best in entertainment (Us Weekly)." *Us Weekly* has become known for its fashion sections such as "Who Wore It Best?," a reader poll comparing two celebrities wearing the same outfit, and "Fashion Police," in which comedians comment on celebrity fashion mishaps and successes. *Us Weekly* prides itself on being a leader in the celebrity magazine industry (Us Weekly).

SPORTS MAGAZINES

Sports Illustrated

When *Time* cocreator Henry Luce launched *Sports Illustrated* in 1954, his staff was doubtful about its chances. Spectator sports had not yet reached the level of popularity they have today, and the new magazine failed to make a profit for its first 12 years of publication. As television brought spectator sports to the growing suburbs, however, their popularity quickly rose, and *Sports Illustrated* became a success. Managing editor Andre Laguerre

assembled a staff of talented, loyal writers and instituted the extensive use of color photographs, developing the basis for the format the magazine still uses.

In 1964, Laguerre initiated the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Edition as a way of increasing sales during the winter months when there are fewer developments in sports. Putting model Babette March on the cover in a bikini helped the magazine sell, and the swimsuit edition became an annual tradition. Filled with pictures of models in revealing swimwear, the issue generates its share of controversy but is consistently the best-selling issue of the magazine each year.

Popular, Scholarly and Trade Magazines

TELLING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POPULAR, SCHOLARLY AND TRADE MAGAZINES

Journals and magazines have different purposes and audiences and can be divided into three broad categories: scholarly, popular, and trade based on the characteristics such as purpose, audience, authorship, and content. Below are selected key differences between between popular, scholarly, and trade publications.

- **Popular magazine** articles are typically written by journalists to entertain or inform a general audience,
- **Scholarly** articles are written by researchers or experts in a particular field. They use specialized vocabulary, have extensive citations, and are often peer-reviewed.

- **Trade publications** may be written by experts in a certain industry, but they are not considered scholarly, as they share general news, trends, and opinions, rather than advanced research, and are not peer-reviewed.

The physical appearance of print sources can help you identify the type of source as well. Popular magazines and trade publications are usually glossy with many photos. Scholarly journals are usually smaller and thicker with plain covers and images, In electronic sources you can check for bibliographies and author credentials or affiliations as potential indicators of scholarly sources.

	Popular Magazines	Scholarly (including peer-reviewed)	Trade Publications
Content	Current events; general interest articles	Research results/ reports; reviews of research (review articles); book reviews	Articles about a certain business or industry
Purpose	To inform, entertain, or elicit an emotional response	To share research or scholarship with the academic community	To inform about business or industry news, trends, or products
Author	Staff writers, journalists, freelancers	Scholars/researchers	Staff writers, business/industry professionals
Audience	General public	Scholars, researchers, students	Business/ industry professionals
Review	Staff editor	Editorial board made up of other scholars and researchers. Some articles are peer-reviewed	Staff editor
Citations	May not have citations, or may be informal (ex. according to... or links)	Bibliographies, references, endnotes, footnotes	Few, may or may not have any
Frequency	Weekly/monthly	Quarterly or semi-annually	Weekly/monthly
Ads	Numerous ads for a variety of products	Minimal, usually only for scholarly products like books	Ads are for products geared toward specific industry

	Popular Magazines	Scholarly (including peer-reviewed)	Trade Publications
Examples on Publisher Site	*Time*; *Vogue*; *Rolling Stone*; *New Yorker*	*Journal of Southern History*; *Developmental Psychology*; *American Literature*; *New England Journal of Medicine*	*Pharmacy Times*; *Oil and Gas Investor Magazine*

PART V

SOUND RECORDING AND POPULAR MUSIC

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify significant milestones in the development of sound recording
- Explain the nature, functions and affordances of sound recording and popular music
- Describe the different genres and cultural expressions found in recorded music as creative products
- Define the roles of record labels in the music industry
- Explain current business models, economic factors and other forces affecting the music industry
- Evaluate the impact of media convergence, digital media and social media on the marketing and distribution of popular music

- Describe the cultural and personal impact of recorded music
- Discuss key ethical and legal issues related to contemporary recorded music

Technology and Listening to Music

APPLE'S IPOD CAME OUT TWO DECADES AGO AND CHANGED HOW WE LISTEN TO MUSIC. WHERE ARE WE HEADED NOW?

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Stuart James, *Edith Cowan University*

On October 23, 2001, Apple released the iPod — a portable media player that promised to overshadow the clunky design and low storage capacity of MP3 players introduced in the mid-1990s.

The iPod boasted the ability to "hold 1,000 songs in your pocket". Its personalized listening format revolutionized the way we consume music. And with more than 400 million units sold since its release, there's no doubt it was a success.

Yet, two decades later, the digital music landscape continues to rapidly evolve.

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Steve Jobs, then-chief executive of Apple, introducing the iPod in 2001.

A MARKET SUCCESS

The iPod expanded listening beyond the constraints of the home stereo system, allowing the user to plug into not only their headphones, but also their car radio, their computer at work, or their hi-fi system at home. It made it easier to entwine these disparate spaces into a single personalised soundtrack throughout the day.

There were several preconditions that led to the iPod's success. For one, it contributed to the end of an era in which people listened to relatively fixed music collections, such as mixtapes, or albums

in their running order. The iPod (and MP3 players more generally) normalised having random collections of individual tracks.

It might seem clunky now, but the original iPod was much sleeker than older portable cassette devices such as the Sony Walkman. Shutterstock

Then during the 1990s, an MP3 encoding algorithm developed at the Fraunhofer Institute in Germany allowed unprecedented audio data compression ratios. In simple terms, this made music files much smaller than before, hugely increasing the quantity of music that could be stored on a device.

Then came peer-to-peer file-sharing services such as Napster, Limewire and BitTorrent, released in 1999, 2000 and 2001, respectively. These furthered the democratisation of the internet for the end user (with Napster garnering 80 million users in three years). The result was a fast-changing digital landscape where music piracy ran rife.

The accessibility of music significantly changed the relationship between listener and musician. In 2003, Apple responded to the

music piracy crisis by launching its iTunes store, creating an attractive model for copyright-protected content.

Meanwhile, the iPod continued to sell, year after year. It was designed to do one thing, and did it well. But this would change around 2007 with the release of the touchscreen iPhone and Android smartphones.

COMPUTER IN YOUR POCKET

The rise of touchscreen smartphones ultimately led to the iPod's downfall. Interestingly, the music app on the original iPhone was called "iPod".

The iPod's functions were essentially reappropriated and absorbed into the iPhone. The iPhone was a flexible and multifunctional device: an iPod, a phone and an internet communicator all in one — a computer in your pocket.

And by making the development tools for their products freely available, Apple and Google allowed third-party developers to create apps for their new platforms in the thousands.

It was a game-changer for the mobile industry. And the future line of tablets, such as Apple's iPad released in 2010, continued this trend. In 2011, iPhone sales overtook the iPod, and in 2014 the iPod Classic was discontinued.

Unlike the Apple Watch, which serves as a companion to smartphones, single-purpose devices such as the iPod Classic are now seen as antiquated and obsolete.

MUSIC STREAMING AND THE ROLE OF THE WEB

As of this year, mobile devices are responsible for 54.8% of web traffic worldwide. And while music piracy still exists, its influence has been significantly reduced by the arrival of streaming services such as Spotify and YouTube.

These platforms have had a profound effect on how we engage

with music as active and passive listeners. Spotify supports an online community-based approach to music sharing, with curated playlists.

Based on our listening habits, it uses our activity data and a range of machine-learning techniques to generate automatic recommendations for us. Both Spotify and YouTube have also embraced sponsored content, which boosts the visibility of certain labels and artists.

And while we may want to bypass popular music recommendations — especially to support new generations of musicians who lack visibility — the reality is we're faced with a quantity of music we can't possibly contend with. As of February this year, more than 60,000 tracks were being uploaded to Spotify each day.

According to Statista, Spotify had 165 million premium subscribers worldwide as of the second quarter of 2021.
Shutterstock

WHAT'S NEXT?

The experience of listening to music will become increasingly immersive with time, and we'll only find more ways to seamlessly integrate it into our lives. Some signs of this include:

- Gen Z's growing obsession with platforms such as TikTok, which is a huge promotional tool for artists lucky enough to have their track attached to a viral trend
- new interactive tools for music exploration, such as Radio Garden (which lets you tune into radio stations from across the globe), the Eternal Jukebox for Spotify and Instrudive
- the use of wearables, such as Bose's audio sunglasses and bone-conduction headphones, which allow you to listen to music while interacting with the world rather than being closed off, and
- the surge in virtual music performances during the COVID pandemic, which suggests virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality will become increasingly accepted as spaces for experiencing music performances.

The industry is also increasingly adopting immersive audio. Apple has incorporated Dolby Atmos 3D spatial audio into both its Logic Pro music production software and music on the iTunes store. With spatial audio capabilities, the listener can experience surround sound with the convenience of portable headphones.

As for algorithms, we can assume more sophisticated machine learning will emerge. In the future, it may recommend music based on our feelings. For example, MoodPlay is a music recommendation system that lets users explore music through mood-based filtering.

Some advanced listening devices even adapt to our physiology. The Australian-designed Nura headphones can pick up information

about how a specific listener's ears respond to different sound frequencies. They purport to automatically adjust the sound to perfectly suit that listener.

Such technologies are taking "personalised listening" to a whole new level, and advances in this space are set to continue. If the digital music landscape has changed so rapidly within the past 20 years, we can only assume it will continue to change over the next two decades, too.

Stuart James, Lecturer and Research Scholar in Composition and Music Technology, *Edith Cowan University*

On-Demand Music Streaming

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Thanks to the advent of the Internet and ever-improving digital technology over the last decade, the digital music industry has gained significant momentum. A wide range of digital platforms—streaming services, downloads, digital media players, webcasters, and more—have grown and consolidated to become major players in an entirely new sector of the music industry. Streaming is one of the most popular digital formats among digital music listeners, with an estimated 92.2 million U.S. streaming users in 2016, according to Statista, an online market data portal.

The trend does not appear to be slowing any time soon. Streaming has taken over as the main source of digital music in the United States. Data from the Recording Industry of America Association (RIAA) shows that total revenues from streaming music grew 19.9% to $8.8 billion in 2019 accounting for 79.5% of all

recorded music revenues. Not only is streaming the most popular digital music format in the U.S.–it is also the most profitable.

Americans spent roughly 6.7 billion hours listening to digital music *per month* in 2016. According to Statista, among the most popular music genres, dance/electronic, R&B/Hip-Hop, and Latin music were more likely to be consumed via streaming services than on physical albums. These numbers continue to rise.

Music industry standards in relation to on-demand music streaming are changing in real time as major players reach various agreements with each other and address the challenges and opportunities of new sources of digital media.

The Meaning of "On-Demand"

On-demand music streaming contrasts with non-interactive webcasting because it is an *interactive* service, meaning the user is able to listen to any song in the Digital Service Provider (DSP)'s database without any restrictions on time or playback capabilities. The user can pause, skip, rewind, and create playlists—but not copy the digital file.

Popular on-demand music streaming services include Spotify, Tidal, SoundCloud, Apple Music, and Bandcamp. In the world of computing, such DSPs are considered "cloud servers," meaning they operate via remote servers which store data and allow users to access them wherever there is access to the internet.

To date, two tiers of on-demand music streaming exist:

- **Advertiser-Supported/"Freemium":** The on-demand digital service provided is free to the listener and supported by advertisements.
- **Subscription/Premium:** The on-demand digital service provider charges a monthly subscription fee to users, who can listen without advertisements.

Performance Royalties for the Master

The Digital Performance Right in Sound Recordings Act of 1995 instituted a public performance royalty for artists and record labels when certain sound recordings are performed through digital audio transmissions, opening a world of royalty revenue previously only available to songwriters and music publishers.

The 1995 Act only refers to subscription-based on-demand music streaming. However, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 extended this right to webcasters offering non-interactive streaming (to learn more about this, visit Non-Interactive Streaming). License rates and terms between DSPs and master copyright owners are decided by voluntary negotiation or compulsory arbitration.

FROM THE DSP TO THE RECORD LABEL TO THE RECORDING ARTIST

On-demand music streaming deals between record labels and Digital Service Providers (e.g. between Sony Music Entertainment and Spotify) typically award the record labels a large percentage of the DSP's advertising revenue and/or subscription fees, multiplied by the fraction of plays for each master over the number of plays that occur in total on the DSP.

It is important to note that these deals do not occur on a person-to-person basis; a record label will negotiate with a DSP for royalty rates that apply to every artist on its roster. A recording artist may negotiate for better terms separately with the record label in his or her recording contract, but is it highly unlikely that an artist will negotiate directly with a DSP.

Rethinking Musical Genres

MUSICAL GENRES ARE OUT OF DATE – BUT THIS NEW SYSTEM EXPLAINS WHY YOU MIGHT LIKE BOTH JAZZ AND HIP HOP

99624358@N00/flickr, CC BY-SA

David M. Greenberg, *University of Cambridge*

It's hard to pinpoint the exact time in history when genre labels were used to classify music, but the fact is that over the past century, and certainly still today, genre labels dominate. Whether

organizing your iTunes library, receiving music recommendations from apps like Spotify, or buying CDs at a record store, genre is the first way in which we navigate the music we like.

However, technological advances have now put millions of songs at our fingertips through mobile devices. Not only do we have access to more music than ever before, but more music is being produced. Places like SoundCloud have made it possible for anyone to record and publish music for others to hear. With this increased diversity in music that we are exposed to, the lines separating genres have become even more blurred than they were previously.

Genre labels are problematic for several reasons. First, they are broad umbrella terms that are used to describe music that vary greatly in their characteristics. If a person says they are a fan of "rock" music, there is no way of knowing whether they are referring to The Beatles, Bob Dylan, or Jimi Hendrix — but all three vary greatly in style. Or if a person tells you that they are a fan of pop music, how do you know if they are referring to Michael Jackson or Justin Bieber?

Where to start?
Ollyy/Shutterstock.com

Genre labels are also often socially driven with little to do with the actual characteristics of the music. They are labels stamped onto artists and albums by record companies with the intent of targeting a particularly type of audience or age group.

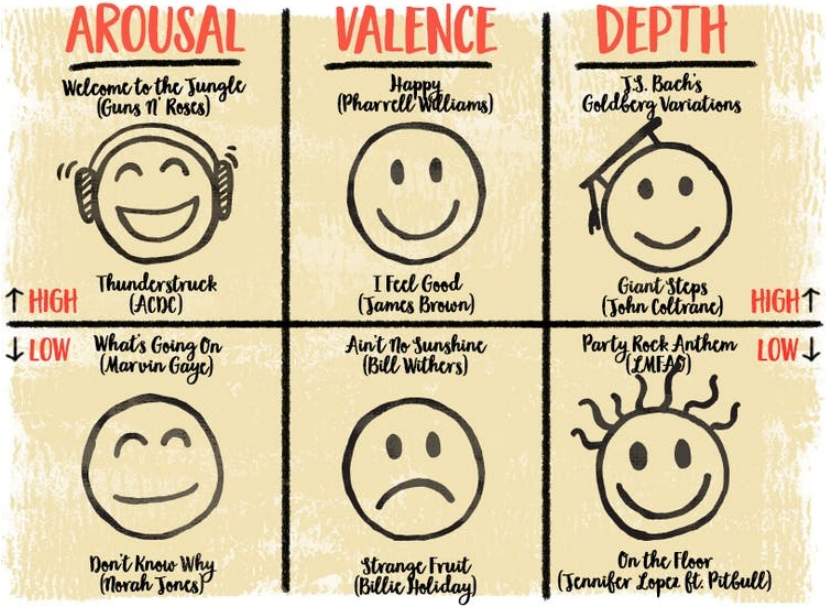
BEYOND GENRE

The fundamental problem is that genre labels often do not accurately describe artists and their music – they simply do not do them justice. A more accurate way to label music would be based solely on their actual musical characteristics (or attributes). Such a labeling system would also likely better account for diversity in a person's music taste.

Recently, my team of music psychologists addressed this problem by developing a scientific way to create a basic classification system of music that is based on its attributes and not social connotations. The team included expert in musical preferences, Jason Rentfrow (Cambridge), best-selling author and neuroscientist Daniel Levitin (McGill), big data scientists David Stillwell (Cambridge) and Michal Kosinski (Stanford), and music researcher Brian Monteiro. Our research was published this month.

We had more than 100 musical excerpts spanning over 20 genres and subgenres rated on 38 different musical attributes. We then applied a statistical procedure to categorize these musical attributes and discovered that they clustered into three basic categories: "Arousal" (the energy level of the music); "Valence" (the spectrum from sad to happy emotions in the music); and "Depth" (the amount of sophistication and emotional depth in the music). The statistical procedure mapped each song on each these three basic categories. For example, Joni Mitchell's "Blue" is low on arousal (because of the slow tempo and soft vocals), low on valence (because of the expressed nostalgia and sadness), and high on

depth (because of the emotional and sonic complexity expressed through the lyrics and sonic texture).



The songs listed represent each of the three musical attribute clusters.
[Tricia Seibold | Stanford Business | http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/can-your-personality-explain-your-itunes-playlist](http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/can-your-personality-explain-your-itunes-playlist)

AROUSAL, VALENCE, DEPTH

Will people start walking around wearing T-shirts that say "I love Depth in music", or list themselves as fans of positive valence on their Twitter profiles? I doubt it. But it might be useful if people began to use attributes to describe the music that they like (aggressive or soft; happy or nostalgic). People's music libraries today are incredibly diverse, typically containing music from a variety of genres. My hypothesis is that if people like arousal in one musical genre, they are likely to like it in another.

Even though these basic three dimensions probably won't become a part of culture, recommendation platforms, like Spotify, Pandora, Apple Music, and YouTube should find these dimensions useful when coding and trying to accurately recommend music for their users to listen to. Further, it is also useful for scientists, psychologists, and neuroscientists who are studying the effect of music and want an accurate method to measure it.

Our team next sought to see how preferences for these three dimensions were linked to the Big Five. Personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism). Nearly 10,000 people indicated their preferences for 50 musical excerpts and completed a personality measure. People who scored high on "openness to experience" preferred depth in music, while extroverted excitement-seekers preferred high arousal in music. Those who were relatively neurotic preferred negative emotions in music, while those who were self-assured preferred positive emotions in music.

Click on Mapping Personality Onto Music for an interactive chart of the data.

https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/5zLwT/1/

So, just as the old Kern and Hammerstein song suggests, "The Song is You". That is, the musical attributes that you like most reflect your personality. It also provides scientific support for what Joni Mitchell said in a 2013 interview with CBC:

> The trick is if you listen to that music and you see me, you're not getting anything out of it. If you listen to that music and you see yourself, it will probably make you cry and you'll learn something about yourself and now you're getting something out of it.

Find out how you score on the music and personality quizzes at www.musicaluniverse.org.

David M. Greenberg, Music psychologist, *University of Cambridge*

Music Industry Trends - TikTok

LOVE IT OR HATE IT, TIKTOK IS CHANGING THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Kai Riemer, *University of Sydney* and Sandra Peter, *University of Sydney*

"Tik-a-Tok-a-Who?", was Adele's response to her management's suggestion to promote her music to younger audiences on Tiktok, the video-sharing platform owned by Chinese company ByteDance.

"If everyone's making music for the TikTok, who's making music for my generation?", she asked.

Adele might resist, but the platform has nonetheless been popularising and promoting her song Easy on me, with creators using it in almost one million videos in the first month after its release, making it viral on the app alone.

That's because creator culture on TikTok is changing the way hits are made, how music is promoted, and how the world discovers music, even for those artists who choose not to engage with it.

TIKTOK MAKES HITS

In early 2019, an unknown 19-year-old college drop-out from Atlanta, Georgia, made headlines around the world.

Living at his sister's house and feeling bit lonely, in December

2018 he had bought a simple beat for US $30, recorded a song, half country and half rap, and posted it on Soundcloud and social media. The artist made news because Billboard magazine had removed the song from its country charts, after it took off in popularity, entering both the country and general Hot 100 charts.

The artist's name was Lil Nas X and the song Old Town Road, which has since become the most successful song of all time, the first ever song to reach 15 times platinum. Much of this success can be credited to the song becoming an early TikTok "meme", picked up by millions of users.

Old Town Road has become the origin story for a remarkable series of viral musical successes on TikTok. In each case artists have shot to popularity, because their songs were used by millions of TikTok users in their videos.

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Virality on TikTok is powerful yet unpredictable. Some of 2021's biggest global hits gained little traction when they were initially released to small audiences. Africa's most successful pop song ever, CKay's Love, Nwantiti, was released in 2019, but shot to fame only in 2021 and has now been used in more than 7 million TikTok videos.

Similarly, Australia's Masked Wolf found himself in the spotlight in 2021, making Barrack Obama's summer playlist and having been nominated for five ARIA awards. While his song Astronaut in the

Ocean became a global hit more than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, it was released two years prior by a small Australian label. It has since been used in more than 18 million TikTok videos.

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And while many artists, like Lil Nas X, create for virality on TikTok, others go viral even when unaware of the platform. We spoke to Masked Wolf who admitted:

> I never made Astro to be on TikTok. I didn't even know what TikTok was when I released Astronaut.

But it is not just new songs. Old songs are making remarkable comebacks with entirely new audiences. When a man named Nathan Apodaca went viral after he posted a video of himself gliding down a highway on his long board, casually drinking cranberry juice from a bottle, he was lip-syncing to Dreams, the 1977 Fleetwood Mac hit. Dreams was subsequently used by millions of TikTok creators and re-entered the Billboard Hot 100 more than 40 years after its original release.

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HOW IT WORKS

Videos created on the TikTok app are short. Most videos are less than 15 seconds long (though videos of up to 60 seconds are possible). Music plays a big part in these videos, many show dance moves or lip syncing, though there are others where users talk, even giving financial advice. When users create their videos, they will usually choose a song and select a short clip, often the catchiest bits of a song, like the chorus or beat drop.

Users can upload their own sound clips, but the app will detect copyrighted material that its owners do not allow on the platform and mute the sound. Instead, the app has in recent years put together an extensive catalogue of music authorised by big music labels, who have come on board due to TikTok's role in producing global hits.

Behind this virality are so-called challenges, in which often millions of users create their own versions of a visual story or dance move set to the same music clip, and promoted by the platform using hashtags. For example, in the #yeehaw challenge that brought Old Town Road to fame, people dressed in normal clothes and danced until the beat changed in the clip, when they would instantly transform into cowgirls or cowboys.

But videos on TikTok do not directly contribute to chart success. However, there is a direct correlation between a song going viral on TikTok and it gaining in popularity on music streaming platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music or YouTube, all of which in turn contribute to the Billboard charts.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR ARTISTS, LISTENERS AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

In our research, we spoke to Ole Obermann, Global Head of Music for TikTok and ByteDance, about the impact for artists, the music industry and music lovers. Ole points to the diversity of music on

TikTok and new opportunities for finding music far beyond one's usual taste.

He also stresses TikTok's role in discovering artists from all corners of the globe: "I do see a pretty profound impact on the global nature of music as a result of TikTok but also music streaming overall. It's so much more possible for a song that comes out of Australia or India or Korea or Japan or Saudi Arabia. To end up becoming a global hit and to be listened to by audiences all over the world."

The recent successes of Love Nwantiti and Astronaut in the Ocean are just two examples to make this point.

TikTok is an excellent platform for listeners to gain exposure to new and different music. TikTok's self-learning algorithm serves up new videos as a seemingly endless stream, allowing users to be exposed to a large amount of new music quickly, given videos are very short. When a user likes a particular song, with a simple tap they can instantly watch more videos set to the same clip.

The music industry is also coming on board, convinced by the viral success the platform produces. Ole Obermann again:

> I think the acceptance has come now because that's what the fans want. And it's a way to create more engagement with the music, but there was a lot of resistance for many years, because it was just not the way that the music industry has traditionally worked.

The initial resistance is not surprising, given TikTok presents a significant shift from the industry's understanding of recorded music as something to be listened to, to be passively consumed. Engagement with music on TikTok is very different, because music becomes a material for creation, for creative expression.

https://omny.fm/shows/the-unlearn-project/why-music-is-no-longer-just-for-listening-unlearn/embed

Importantly, what we see today is likely only the beginning, both in terms of new forms of creative expression, and promoting and marketing music in new ways.

But success also attracts investment, and creating on TikTok will likely become more commercialised over time. So far much of the virality has happened organically. But music labels increasingly hire professional influencers to use their music, or work with consultants to make songs more "TikTokkable", in an attempt to engineer the next viral trend.

It remains to be seen if this will crowd out organic creativity, or if artists will feel pressure to create for TikTok virality, as foreshadowed by Adele.

Kai Riemer, Professor of Information Technology and Organisation, *University of Sydney* and Sandra Peter, Director, Sydney Business Insights, *University of Sydney*

Pop Music Promotion and Viral Videos

HALSEY'S RECORD LABEL WON'T RELEASE A NEW SONG UNTIL IT GOES VIRAL ON TIKTOK. IS THIS THE FUTURE OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye, *Queensland University of Technology*

On Sunday, popular American singer songwriter Halsey shared a video on TikTok with tinny music in the background, the on-screen text reading:

> Basically I have a song that I love that I wanna release ASAP but my record label won't let me. I've been in this industry for 8 years and I've sold over 165 million records. And my record company is saying that I can't release it unless they can fake a viral moment on TikTok. Everything is marketing. And they are doing this to basically every artist these days. I just wanna release music, man. And I deserve better tbh. I'm tired.

The 30-second video did what Halsey's label wanted – though probably not how they wanted. It gained over 8 million views in 24 hours and sparked massive interest among fans, TikTok users and industry observers.

https://cdn.theconversation.com/infographics/708/bbc316f6c81f033b2a847c804d4d302385f7f034/site/index.html

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Comments on the video were divided between those expressing support for Halsey's predicament and indignation at the record label, and those who saw the post as the actual marketing scheme the label wanted all along.

In a second video shared two hours later, Halsey pushed back against accusations of fake outrage with a recording of someone speaking off screen, ostensibly a label representative, explaining how the viral TikTok campaign would need to play out for the song to get scheduled for release.

Throughout the explanation, Halsey stares despondently into the middle distance before finally saying "I hate this. It just sucks."

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https://cdn.theconversation.com/infographics/709/079529c36a84fa727b24b72f7e6ad4c2cf6ff6fa/site/index.html

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Whether staged or not, the fact that these two videos went viral so quickly shows people are willing to believe a major artist would be so frustrated with their label forcing them to "do TikTok" that they decided to expose their label on TikTok.

Like MTV or top 40 hits radio stations before it, TikTok is where popular music lives right now. Labels understand that.

To them, the allure of TikTok is that musical content can go viral quickly, offering the potential to save millions on other types of marketing campaigns.

AN UNEASY RELATIONSHIP

Halsey is not the first high profile artist to vent about this on TikTok.

In his first video posted last month, American singer songwriter, Gavin DeGraw shared a parody version of his 2003 hit, singing "I Don't Want to Be on TikTok but my label told me that I have to."

https://cdn.theconversation.com/infographics/710/f5c05a585015f18bcdaef427fd454676e65e7cf3/site/index.html

Just last week, English singer-songwriter FKA Twigs claimed her label was not only making her create and post TikTok videos but they wanted her to post videos multiple times a day.

In some cases artists do seem to enjoy being on TikTok.

Lizzo regularly shares memes, vlogs and recipe videos on TikTok, and heavily promoted her most recent release It's About Damn Time. She even participated in a dance challenge for the song choreographed by another TikTok creator.

https://cdn.theconversation.com/infographics/711/a58343128279e3e6c57956a5689abf989558a66e/site/index.html

Going viral on TikTok can be a double-edged sword for musical artists. It can catapult them to unprecedented visibility in markets around the world, but the content making them famous could be the video, not the music.

In 2019, Australian singer Inoxia went "accidentally viral" when a passer-by recorded her performing on the street and uploaded it to TikTok. The street-performer-turned-TikTok sensation was offered deals that seemed too good to be true and told by her manager she'd need to become more of a content creator to maintain her success.

Her passion was singing, not making videos to post on social media. Ultimately, she returned to busking on the street.

IS ALL PUBLICITY GOOD PUBLICITY?

Halsey's self-described "TikTok tantrum" tests the shock advertising theory that any and all publicity is good publicity for brands.

Star power is an effective bargaining tool to create change for artists who command it.

For independent artists without the same leverage, a viral venting video could be the very thing they need to ditch their label and share their music on their own – provided they aren't locked into the kind of exclusive record deal that has become standard in the music industry over the past decade.

Fake or genuine, Halsey's video shows fans and artists are willing to have a conversation about how labels exert influence over artists when it comes to marketing, the nature of obligations artists

contractually owe to their labels and the power artists wield to push back against labels if they feel they are being treated unfairly.

Viral rants on TikTok are not going to become the new normal for selling songs, just like video never actually killed the radio star. Label executives watching this unfold are likely more nervous about their own artists publicly airing grievances online than they are excited about a new trend in viral music marketing.

Regardless, as long as audiences continue discovering new music on TikTok, labels will continue searching for new ways to promote their music to the top of the feed.

The core job of the artist – making music – remains the same. Only now the video needs to go viral.

D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye, Lecturer, *Queensland University of Technology*

PART VI

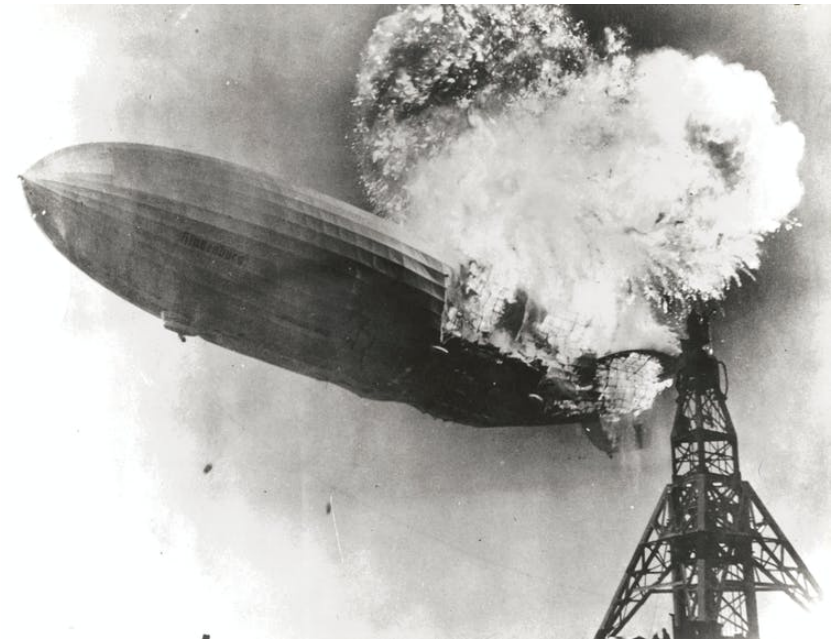
RADIO

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify significant milestones in the development of radio
- Explain the nature, functions and affordances of radio
- Describe the different radio formats
- Explain current business models, economic factors and other forces affecting the radio industry
- Identify the differences between traditional and digital radio and discuss the impact of media convergence and digital media on the radio industry
- Describe the cultural and personal impact of radio
- Discuss key ethical and legal issues related to contemporary radio

Radio History Snapshots

BROADCAST TURNS 100: FROM THE HINDENBURG DISASTER TO THE HOTTEST 100, HERE'S HOW RADIO SHAPED THE WORLD



The famous Hindenburg tragedy was heard around the world via recorded radio journalism.

Peter Hoar, *Auckland University of Technology*

Eighty-one years ago, a broadcast of Orson Welles's War of the Worlds supposedly caused mass hysteria in America, as listeners thought martians had invaded New Jersey.

There are varying accounts of the controversial incident, and it remains a topic of fascination, even today.

Back when Welles's fictional martians attacked, broadcast radio was considered a state-of-the-art technology.

And since the first transatlantic radio signal was transmitted in 1901 by Guglielmo Marconi, radio has greatly innovated the way we communicate.

DOTS AND DASHES

Before Marconi, German physicist Heinrich Hertz discovered and transmitted the first radio waves in 1886. Other individuals later developed technologies that could send radio waves across the seas.

At the start of the 20th century, Marconi's system dominated radio wave-based media. Radio was called "wireless telegraphy" as it was considered a telegraph without the wires, and did what telegraphs had done globally since 1844.

Messages were sent in Morse code as dots and dashes from one point to another via radio waves. At the time, receiving radio required specialists to translate the dots and dashes into words.

The more refined technology underpinning broadcast radio was developed during the first world war, with "broadcast" referring to the use of radio waves to transmit audio from one point to many listeners.

In 2020, organized broadcast radio turned 100. These days it's considered a basic technology, but that may be why it remains such a vital medium.

SOS: THE TITANIC SINKS

By 1912, radio was used to run economies, empires and armed forces.

Its importance for shipping was obvious – battleships, merchant ships and passenger ships were all equipped with it. People had faith in technological progress and radio provided proof of how modern machines benefited humans.

However, the sinking of the Titanic that year caused a crisis in the world's relationship with technology, by revealing its fallibility. Not even the newest technologies such as radio could avoid disaster.

A replica of the radio room on the Titanic. One of the first SOS messages in history came from the ship.
Wiki Commons

Some argue radio use may have increased the ship's death toll, as the Titanic's radio was outdated and wasn't intended to be used in an emergency. There were also accusations that amateur "ham radio" operators had hogged the bandwidth, adding to an already confusing and dire situation.

Nonetheless, the Titanic's SOS signal managed to reach another ship, which led to the rescue of hundreds of passengers. Radio remains the go-to medium when disasters strike.

MAKING MASTS AND NETWORKS

Broadcast radio got traction in the early 1920s and spread like a virus. Governments, companies and consumers started investing in the amazing new technology that brought the sounds of the world into the home.

Huge networks of transmitting towers and radio stations popped-up across continents, and factories churned out millions of radio receivers to meet demand.

Some countries started major public broadcasting networks, including the BBC.

Radio stations sought ways around regulations and, by the mid 1930s, some broadcasters were operating stations that generated up to 500,000 watts.

One Mexican station, XERA, could be heard in New Zealand.

HEARING THE HINDENBURG

On May 6, 1937, journalist Herbert Morrison was experimenting with recording news bulletins for radio when the Hindenburg airship burst into flames.

His famous commentary, “Oh the humanity”, is often mistaken for a live broadcast, but it was actually a recording.

Recording technologies such as transcription discs, and later magnetic tape and digital storage, revolutionized radio.

Broadcasts could now be stored and heard repeatedly at different places instead of disappearing into the ether.

TRANSISTORS AND FM

In 1953 radios got smaller, as the first all transistor radio was built.

A 1960 ad for a pocket sized Motorola transistor radio.
Wiki Commons

Transistor circuits replaced valves and made radios very cheap and portable.

Along with being portable, radio sound quality improved after the rise of FM broadcasting in the 1960s. While both FM and AM are effective ways to modulate carrier waves, FM (frequency modulation) offers better audio quality and less noise compared to AM (amplitude modulation).

Music on FM radio sounded as good as on a home stereo. Rock

and roll and the revolutionary changes of the 1960s started to spread via the medium.

AM radio was reserved for talkback, news and sport.

BEEPS IN SPACE

In 1957, radio experienced lift-off when the USSR launched the world's first satellite.

Sputnik 1 didn't do much other than broadcast a regular "beep" sound by radio.

But this still shocked the world, especially the USA, which didn't think the USSR was so technologically advanced.

Sputnik's beeps were propaganda heard all round the world, and they heralded the age of space exploration.

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The launch of Sputnik 1 started the global space race.

Today, radio is still used to communicate with astronauts and robots in space.

Radio astronomy, which uses radio waves, has also revealed a lot about the universe to astronomers.

DIGITAL, AND BEYOND

Meanwhile on Earth, radio stations continue to use the internet to extend their reach beyond that of analogue technologies.

Social media helps broadcasters generate and spread content, and digital editing tools have boosted the possibilities of what can be done with podcasts and radio documentaries.

The radio industry has learnt to use digital plenitude to the max, with broadcasters building archives and producing an endless flood of material beyond what they broadcast.

2020 marks a century of organized broadcast radio around the world.

Media such as movies, television, the internet and podcasts were expected to sound its death knell. But radio embraces new technology. It survives, and advances.

Peter Hoar, Senior Lecturer, School of Communications Studies, *Auckland University of Technology*

Non-Interactive Music Streaming

According to Nielsen's 2017 Comparable Metrics Report, if you add up the total minutes of AM/FM radio and streaming audio in the US this equates to more than 202 billion minutes per week, and of those 202 billion minutes AM/FM radio represents 93% of total weekly audio listening minutes as compared to only 7% for streaming audio.

According to Neilsen's 2020 Total Audience Report, Working from Home Special Edition, people indicated that the number one type of TV and streaming content viewed while working from home was news. Thirty-three percent of people listen to their news updates on a music radio station and 28% of people listen to a public radio station for their news. This highlights the diversity of radio's program offerings and radio's resiliency even during COVID-19.

Results from our 2020 Music Industry Report show that 33.3% of respondents discover new music from AM/FM Radio and 25.1% indicated that they discover new music from Satellite radio. Additionally, in response to "how do you usually listen to music?" 36% of respondents listen to AM/FM radio—the second-highest response behind only Spotify. Nearly 25%listen to SiriusXM (satellite radio) and 11.2% listen to Pandora. Additionally, satellite radios have become much more prominent as 75% of all new vehicles in the U.S. sold after 2016 have satellite radio installed. Also, with the continued rise and prevalence of computers, tablets and smartphones, Internet radio has also seen steady growth.

Though it may seem like interactive streaming is the sole form of music consumption today, research and data show that non-interactive streaming is still very relevant. Given the popularity of this form of music consumption, its rapid growth since the beginning of the 21st century, and its huge potential to provide new and existing sources of royalties, any interested party should seek to understand the ins and outs of non-interactive music streaming and their implications for the future of the music industry.

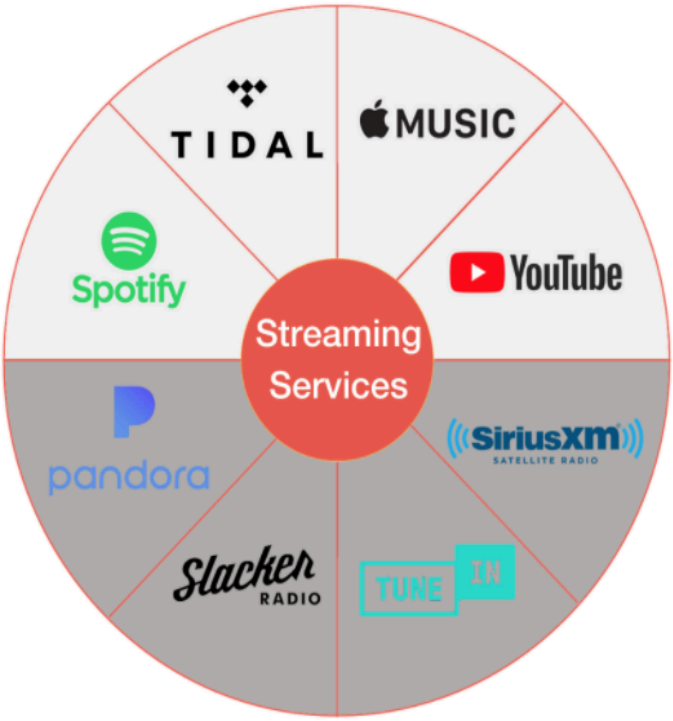
WHAT IS "NON-INTERACTIVE" MUSIC STREAMING?

Non-interactive music streaming differs from on-demand, or *interactive*, streaming because it allows users to play music but does not allow them to select the song that plays next. Non-interactive streams generate a performance royalty for both the sound recording and composition of the song. The performance royalty associated with the sound recording of the song is paid to SoundExchange, while the performance royalty associated with the song's composition is paid to the PROs.

Both "webcasting" and "Internet radio" are terms used in reference to non-interactive music streaming; however, the term "webcasting" can be defined as a broadcast over the Internet from a single content source to many simultaneous listeners. Therefore, webcasting also technically applies to on-demand streaming. In this guide, however, "webcaster" will primarily be used to refer to non-interactive streaming services. Internet Radio can be defined as a digital audio service transmitted over the Internet. Internet Radio presents listeners with a continuous audio stream of songs which, in the case of non-interactive music streaming, cannot be skipped or replayed, similar to traditional broadcast media like AM/FM radio.

The most important thing to remember about non-interactive music streaming is its namesake: the Digital Service Provider (DSP)

does not allow you to skip, rewind, skip forward, or know the playlist of songs ahead of time. You may only “tune in.”



(Example Graphic)

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Source/License

Starting a Podcast

Mapping out your podcast project and telling your story

OVERVIEW

According to **NPR**, if you are thinking about starting a podcast you first need to spend time thinking about what you want to make and who you're making it for. Indeed, you need to be *intentional* and *specific* about what you are about to set out to do and who will be listening to what you have to say.

This chapter will help you to start your podcast off on the right foot by showing you how to complete a podcast blueprint. This blueprint, based on the **NPR Storytelling Project Blueprint** from **NPR Training**, is a distillation of what we think are four essential steps in the planning and storytelling phase that will help increase your chances of setting realistic, authentic goals for your podcast.

STARTING YOUR PROJECT

No matter what format your podcast takes, you will *always* be telling a story. Your story will manifest in the sound of your voice, the environments in your recording, the words in your script, and the editing of your project. What you say and what you do matters. But we realize that starting a podcast is no small feat and often

comes with big ideas with no authentic and feasible way to scope those ideas and make them come to life.

Step 1: What is your Big Idea?

Describe your podcast in one memorable sentence. Consider this a statement of purpose. What is your podcast really about? You could also think of this as an "elevator pitch" but know that this idea can, and likely will, change during the workshop.

Step 2: Who is your audience?

Who do you intend to reach with your podcast? How do you think your audience perceives themselves?

Step 3: What general takeaways do you want the audience to have?

How do you want your audience to connect? What do you want them to feel? What do you want your audience to say after listening to your podcast?

Step 4: Write your aspirational podcast review.

Envision your ideal listener. What do they look like? Describe them. Now, envision your ideal podcast review – the 5.0 star review in your comments that gushes about your podcast. What does it say?

Step 5: What do you think you're making?

Now we're getting into the nitty gritty of your podcast idea. Identify your particular podcast format (interview, solo commentary, narrative stories, or hybrid) and try to provide a summary of what

you think you will be making in this workshop. Think of this as a conceptual outline – not a proposal – of where you want to go in this workshop. Know that this is a draft and is meant to provide a broad representation of your podcast's characteristics.

At this point, you are ready to choose a podcast genre. It's likely that you will pick and choose different aspects of each genre to incorporate into your own production, but we encourage you to start with the genre that most resonates with your idea or proposal. The genres are as follows [Click on links below]:

Interviews: Learn about the art of the interview.

Investigative Reporting: Get into the nitty gritty of investigative reporting and non-fiction podcasts.

Panel Discussion & Team Comedy: Podcasting as a team sport. Learn

about panels and team-based podcasts.

Solo Commentary, Comedy & Fiction: Taking on a podcast solo? Learn some strategies about how to do commentary-style, comedy, or fiction podcasts.

PART VII

MOTION PICTURES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify significant milestones in the evolution of motion pictures as a mass medium
- Explain the nature, functions and affordances of movies
- Analyze movies as an art form and cultural phenomenon
- Differentiate film genres and use the language of cinema for film analysis
- Evaluate the impact of technology, business models and structures, and the role of diverse audiences on the film industry

An Introduction to Cinema

What is Cinema?

Is it the same as a *movie* or *film*? Does it include digital video, broadcast content, streaming media? Is it a highbrow term reserved only for European and art house feature films? Or is it a catch-all for any time a series of still images run together to produce the illusion of movement, whether in a multi-plex theater or the 5-inch screen of a smart phone?

Technically, the word itself derives from the ancient Greek, *kinema*, meaning movement. Historically, it's a shortened version of the French *cinematographe*, an invention of two brothers, Auguste and Louis Lumiere, that combined *kinema* with another Greek root, *graphien*, meaning to write or record.

The "recording of movement" seems as good a place as any to begin an exploration of the moving image. And *cinema* seems broad (or vague) enough to capture the essence of the form, whether we use it specifically in reference to that art house film, or to refer to the more commonplace production and consumption of *movies*, *TV, streaming series, videos, interactive gaming, VR, AR* or whatever new technology mediates our experience of the moving image. Because ultimately that's what all of the above have in common: the moving image. Cinema, in that sense, stands at the intersection of art and technology like nothing else. As an art form it would not exist without the technology required to capture the moving image. But the mere ability to record a moving image would

be meaningless without the art required to capture our imagination.

But cinema is much more than the intersection of art and technology. It is also, and maybe more importantly, a powerful medium of communication. Like language itself, cinema is a surrounding and enveloping substance that carries with it what it means to be human in a specific time and place. That is to say, it *mediates* our experience of the world, helps us make sense of things, and in doing so, often helps shape the world itself. It's why we often find ourselves confronted by some extraordinary event and find the only way to describe it is: "It was like a movie."

In fact, for more than a century, filmmakers and audiences have collaborated on a massive, ongoing, largely unconscious social experiment: the development of a **cinematic language**, the fundamental and increasingly complex rules for how cinema communicates meaning. There is a syntax, a grammar, to cinema that has developed over time. And these rules, as with any language, are iterative, that is, they form and evolve through repetition, both within and between each generation. As children we are socialized into ways of seeing through children's programming, cartoons and YouTube videos. As adults we become more sophisticated in our understanding of the rules, able to innovate, re-combine, become creative with the language. And every generation or so, we are confronted with great leaps forward in technology that re-orient and often advance our understanding of how the language works.

And therein lies the critical difference between cinematic language and every other means of communication. The innovations and complexity of modern written languages have taken more than 5,000 years to develop. Multiply that by at least 10 for spoken language.

Cinematic language has taken just a little more than 100 years to come into its own. In January 1896 those two brothers, Auguste and Louis Lumiere, set up their *cinematographe*, a combination

motion picture camera and projector, at a café in Lyon, France and presented their short film, *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station) to a paying audience. It was a simple film, aptly titled, of a train pulling into a station. The static camera positioned near the tracks capturing a few would-be passengers milling about as the train arrived, growing larger and larger in the frame until it steamed past and slowed to a stop. There was no editing, just one continuous shot. A mere 50 seconds long...

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=143#oembed-1

And it blew the minds of everyone who saw it.

Accounts vary as to the specifics of the audience reaction. Some claim the moving image of a train hurtling toward the screen struck fear among those in attendance, driving them from their seats in a panic. Others underplay the reaction, noting only that no one had seen anything like it. Which, of course, wasn't entirely true either. It wasn't the first motion picture. The Lumiere brothers had projected a series of 10 short films in Paris the year before. An American inventor, Woodville Latham, had developed his own projection system that same year. And Thomas Edison had invented a similar apparatus before that.

But one thing is certain: that early film, as simple as it was, changed the way we see the world and ourselves. From the early *actualite* documentary short films of the Lumieres, to the wild, theatrical flights of fancy of Georges Melies, to the epic narrative

films of Lois Weber and D. W. Griffith, the new medium slowly but surely developed its own unique cinematic language. Primitive at first, limited in its visual vocabulary, but with unlimited potential. And as filmmakers learned how to use that language to re-create the world around them through moving pictures, we learned right along with them. Soon we were no longer awed (much less terrified) by a two-dimensional image of a train pulling into a station, but we were no less enchanted by the possibilities of the medium with the addition of narrative structure, editing, production design, and (eventually) sound and color cinematography.

Since that January day in Lyon, we have all been active participants in this ongoing development of a cinematic language. As the novelty short films of those early pioneers gave way to a global entertainment industry centered on Hollywood and its factory-like production of discrete, 90-minute narrative feature films. As the invention of broadcast technology in the first half of the 20th century gave way to the rise of television programming and serialized story-telling. And as the internet revolution at the end of the 20th century gave way to the streaming content of the 21st, from binge-worthy series lasting years on end to one-minute videos on social media platforms like Snapchat and TikTok. Each evolution of the form borrowed from and built on what came before, both in terms of how filmmakers tell their stories and how we experience them. And in as much as we may be mystified and even amused by the audience reaction to that simple depiction of a train pulling into a station back in 1896, imagine how that same audience would respond to the last Avengers film projected in IMAX 3D.

We've certainly come a long, long way.

This book is an exploration of that evolution of cinema, the art and technology of moving pictures. But it is also an introduction to the fundamentals of the form that have remained relatively constant for more than 100 years. Just as the text you are reading

right now defies easy categorization – is it a book, an online resource, an open source text – modern cinema exists across multiple platforms – is it a movie, a video, theatrical, streaming – but the fundamentals of communication, the syntax, grammar and rules of language, written or cinematic, remain relatively constant.

We'll start with a brief history of cinema to provide some historical context, then move on to an overview of how moving pictures work, literally and figuratively, from the neurological phenomena behind the illusion of movement, to the invisible techniques and generally agreed-upon conventions that form the basis of cinematic language. Then we'll review each aspect of how cinema is created in turn: production design, narrative structure, cinematography, editing, sound and performance. Whether it's released in a theater as a 2-hour spectacle or streaming online in 5-minute increments, every iteration of cinema includes these elements and they are each critical in our understanding of film form, how movies do what they do to us, and why we let them.

There is an ancient story about a king who was so smitten by the song of a particular bird that he ordered his wisest and most accomplished scientists to identify its source. How could it sing so beautifully? What apparatus lay behind such a sweet sound? So they did the only thing they could think to do: they killed the bird and dissected it to find the source of its song. Of course, by killing the bird, they killed its song.

The analysis of an art form, even one as dominated by technology as cinema, always runs the risk of killing the source of its beauty. By taking it apart, piece by piece, there's a chance we'll lose sight of the whole, that ineffable quality that makes art so much more than the sum of its parts. Throughout this text, my hope is that by gaining a deeper understanding of how cinema works, in both form and content, you'll appreciate its beauty even more.

In other words, I don't want to kill the bird.

Because as much as cinema is an ongoing, collaborative social experiment, one in which we are all participants, it also carries with it a certain magic. And like any good magic show, we all know it's an illusion. We all know that even the world's greatest magician can't really make an object float or saw a person in half (without serious legal implications). It's all a trick. A sleight of hand that maintains the illusion. But we've all agreed to allow ourselves to be fooled. In fact, we've often paid good money for the privilege. Cinema is no different. A century of tricks used to fool an audience that's been in on it from the very beginning. We laugh or cry or scream at the screen, openly and unapologetically manipulated by the medium. And that's how we like it.

This section is dedicated to revealing the tricks without ruining the illusion. To look behind the curtain to see that the wizard is one of us. That in fact, we *are* the wizard (great movie by the way). Hopefully by doing so we will only deepen our appreciation of cinema in all its forms and enjoy the artistry of a well-crafted illusion that much more.

Video Attributions:

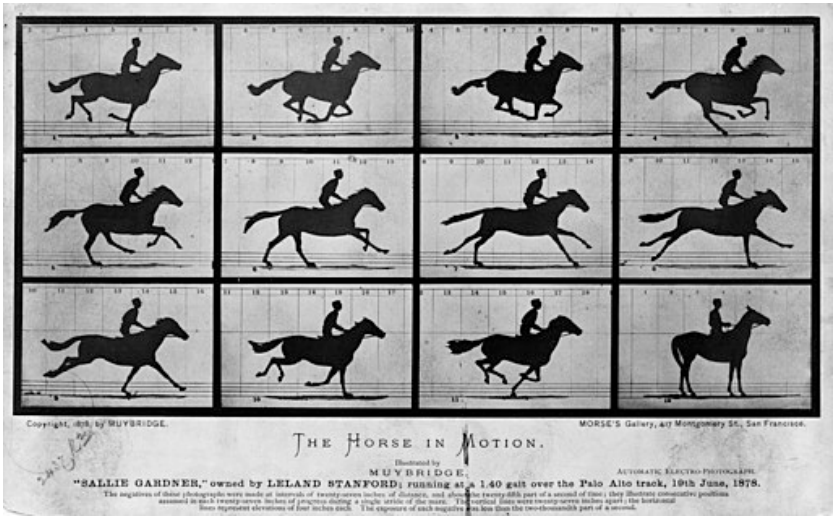
'L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat (Arrival of a Train)' by Lumière Brothers. by EcoworldReactor. Standard Vimeo License.

A Brief History of Cinema

Leland Stanford was bored.

In 1872, Stanford was a wealthy robber baron, former Governor of California, and horse racing enthusiast with way too much time on his hands. Spending much of that time at the track, he became convinced that a horse at full gallop lifted all four hooves off the ground. His friends scoffed at the idea. Unfortunately, a horse's legs moved so fast that it was impossible to tell with the human eye. So he did what really wealthy people do when they want to settle a bet, he turned to a nature photographer, Eadweard Muybridge, and offered him $25,000 to photograph a horse mid gallop.

Six years later, after narrowly avoiding a murder conviction (but that's another story), Muybridge perfected a technique of photographing a horse in motion with a series of 12 cameras triggered in sequence. One of the photos clearly showed that all four of the horse's hooves left the ground at full gallop. Stanford won the bet and went on to found Stanford University. Muybridge pocketed the $25,000 and became famous for the invention of **series photography**, a critical first step toward motion pictures.



The Horse in Motion. Eadweard Muybridge, 1878.

Of course, the mechanical reproduction of an image had already been around for some time. The **Camera Obscura**, a technique for reproducing images by projecting a scene through a tiny hole that is inverted and reversed on the opposite wall or surface (think pinhole camera), had been around since at least the 5th century BCE, if not thousands of years earlier. But it wasn't until a couple of French inventors, Nicephore Niepce and Louis Daguerre, managed to capture an image through a chemical process known as photoetching in the 1820s that photography was born. By 1837, Niepce was dead (best not to ask too many questions about that) and Daguerre had perfected the technique of fixing an image on a photographic plate through a chemical reaction of silver, iodine and mercury. He called it a **daguerreotype**. After himself. Naturally.

But to create the illusion of movement from these still images would require further innovation. The basic concept of animation was already in the air through earlier inventions like the **magic lantern** and eventually the **zoetrope**. But a photo-realistic

recreation of movement was unheard of. That's where Muybridge comes in. His technique of capturing a series of still images in quick succession laid the groundwork for other inventors like Thomas Edison, Woodville Latham and Auguste and Louis Lumiere to develop new ways of photographing and projecting movement. Crucial to this process was the development of strips of light-sensitive celluloid film to replace the bulky glass plates used by Muybridge. This enabled a single camera to record a series of high-speed exposures (rather than multiple cameras taking a single photo in sequence). It also enabled that same strip of film to be projected at an equally high speed, creating the illusion of movement through a combination of optical and neurological phenomena. But more on that in the next chapter.

By 1893, 15 years after Muybridge won Stanford's bet, Edison had built the first "movie studio," a small, cramped, wood-frame hut covered in black tar paper with a hole in the roof to let in sunlight. His employees nicknamed it the **Black Maria** because it reminded them of the police prisoner transport wagons in use at the time (also known as "paddy wagons" with apologies to the Irish). One of the first films they produced was a 5 second "scene" of a man sneezing.

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Riveting stuff. But still, movies were born.

Sort of.

There was just one problem: the only way to view Edison's films was through a **kinetoscope**, a machine that allowed a single viewer to peer into a viewfinder and crank through the images. The ability to project the images to a paying audience would take another couple of years.

In 1895, Woodville Latham, a chemist and Confederate veteran of the Civil War, lured away a couple of Edison's employees and perfected the technique of motion picture projection. In that same year, over in France, Auguste and Louis Lumiere invented the **cinematographe** which could perform the same modern miracle. The Lumiere brothers would receive the lion's share of the credit, but Latham and the Lumieres essentially tied for first place in the invention of cinema as we know it.

Sort of.

It turns out there was *another* French inventor, Louis Le Prince (apparently we owe a lot to the French), who was experimenting with motion pictures and had apparently perfected the technique by 1890. But when he arrived in the US for a planned public demonstration that same year – potentially eclipsing Edison's claim on the technology – he mysteriously vanished from a train. His body and luggage, including his invention, were never found. Conspiracy theories about his untimely disappearance have circulated ever since (we're looking at you, Thomas Edison).

Those early years of cinema were marked by great leaps forward in technology, but not so much forward movement in terms of art. Whether it was Edison's 5-second film of a sneeze, or the Lumieres' 46-second film *Workers Leaving a Factory* (which is exactly what it sounds like), the films were wildly popular because no one had seen anything like them, not because they were breaking new ground narratively.

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There were, of course, notable exceptions. Alice Guy-Blaché was working as a secretary at a photography company when she saw the Lumieres' invention in 1895. The following year she wrote, directed and edited what many consider the first fully fictional film in cinema history, *The Cabbage Fairy* (1896):

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But it was George Melies who became the most well-known filmmaker-as-entertainer in those first few years. Melies was a showman in Paris with a flare for the dramatic. He was one of the first to see the Lumieres' *cinematographe* in action in 1895 and immediately saw its potential as a form of mass entertainment. Over the next couple of decades he produced hundreds of films that combined fanciful stage craft, optical illusions, and wild storylines that anticipated much of what was to come in the next

century of cinema. His most famous film, *A Trip to the Moon*, produced in 1902, transported audiences to the surface of the moon on a rocket ship and sometimes even included hand-tinted images to approximate color cinematography.

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He was very much ahead of his time and would eventually be immortalized in Martin Scorsese's 2011 film *Hugo*.

By the start of the 20th century, cinema had become a global phenomenon. Fortunately, many of those early filmmakers had caught up with Melies in terms of the art of cinema and its potential as an entertainment medium. In Germany, filmmakers like Fritz Lange and Robert Weine helped form one of the earliest examples of a unique and unified cinematic style, consisting of highly stylized, surreal production designs and modernist, even futuristic narrative conventions that came to be known as *German Expressionism*. Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) was a macabre nightmare of a film about a murderous hypnotist and is considered the world's first horror movie.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLmccWlgqd0

And Lange's *Metropolis* (1927) was an epic science-fiction dystopian fantasy with an original running time of more than 2 hours.

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Meanwhile in Soviet Russia, Lev Kuleshov and Sergei Eisenstein were experimenting with how the creative juxtaposition of images could influence how an audience thinks and feels about what they see on screen (also known as *editing*, a relatively new concept at the time). Through a series of experiments, Kuleshov demonstrated that it was this juxtaposition of images, not the discrete images themselves, that generated meaning, a phenomenon that came to be known as **The Kuleshov Effect**. Eisenstein, his friend and colleague, applied Kuleshov's theories to his own cinematic creations, including the concept of *montage*: a collage of moving images designed to create an emotional effect rather than a logical narrative sequence. Eisenstein's most famous use of this technique is in the Odessa steps sequence of his historical epic, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).

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But it was the United States that was destined to become the center of the cinematic universe, especially as it grew into a global mass entertainment medium. Lois Weber was an early innovator and the first American director, male or female, to make a narrative feature film, *The Merchant of Venuce* (1914). Throughout her career, Weber would pursue subjects considered controversial at the time, such as abortion, birth control and capital punishment (it helped that she owned her own studio). But it wasn't just her subject matter that pushed the envelope. For example, in her short film, *Suspense* (1913) she pioneered the use of intercutting and basically invented split screen editing.

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Others, like D. W. Griffith, followed suit (though it's doubtful Griffith would have given Weber any credit). Like Weber, Griffith helped pioneer the full-length feature film and invented many of the

narrative conventions, camera moves and editing techniques still in use today. Unfortunately, many of those innovations were first introduced in his ignoble, wildly racist (and wildly popular at the time) *Birth of a Nation* (1915). Griffith followed that up the next year with the somewhat ironically-titled *Intolerance* (1916), a box office disappointment but notable for its larger than life sets, extravagant costumes, and complex story-line that made George Melies's creations seem quaint by comparison.

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Weber, Griffith and many other filmmakers and entrepreneurs would go on to establish film studios able to churn out hundreds of short and long-form content for the movie theaters popping up on almost every street corner.

CINEMA GOES HOLLYWOOD

This burgeoning new entertainment industry was not, however, located in southern California. Not yet, anyway. Almost all of the production facilities in business at the time were in New York, New Jersey or somewhere on the Eastern seaboard. Partly because the one man who still controlled the technology that made cinema

possible was based there: Thomas Edison. Edison owned the patent for capturing and projecting motion pictures, essentially cornering the market on the new technology (R.I.P. Louis Le Prince). If you wanted to make a movie in the 1900s or 1910s, you had to pay Edison for the privilege.

Not surprisingly, a lot of would-be filmmakers bristled at Edison's control over the industry. And since patent law was difficult to enforce across state lines at the time, many of them saw California as an ideal place to start a career in filmmaking. Sure, the weather was nice. But it was also as far away from the northeast as you could possibly get within the continental United States, and a lot harder for Edison to sue for patent violations.

By 1912, Los Angeles had replaced New York as the center of the film business, attracting filmmakers and entertainment entrepreneurs from around the world. World-renowned filmmakers like Ernst Lubitsch from Germany, Erich von Stroheim from Austria, and an impish comedian from England named Charlie Chaplin, all flocked to the massive new production facilities that sprang up around the city. Universal Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Warner Bros., all of them motion picture factories able to mass-produce dozens, sometimes hundreds of films per year. And they were surrounded by hundreds of other, smaller companies, all of them competing for screen space in thousands of new movie houses around the country.

One small neighborhood in the heart of Los Angeles became most closely associated with the burgeoning new industry: Hollywood.

By 1915, after a few years of failed lawsuits (and one imagines a fair number of temper-tantrums), Thomas Edison admitted defeat and dissolved his Motion Picture Patents Company.

In the heyday of those early years, some of those larger studios decided the best way to ensure an audience for their films was to own the theaters as well. They built extravagant movie palaces in large market cities, and hundreds more humble theaters in small

towns, effectively controlling all aspects of the business: production, distribution and exhibition. In business terms that's called *vertical integration*. It's a practice that would get them in a lot of trouble with the U.S. government a couple of decades later, but in the meantime, it meant big profits with no end in sight.

Then, in 1927, everything changed.

Warner Bros. was a family-owned studio run by five brothers and smaller than some of the other larger companies like Universal and MGM. But one of those brothers, Sam, had a vision. Or rather, an ear. Up to that point, cinema was still a silent medium. But Sam was convinced that sound, and more specifically, sound that was synchronized to the image, was the future.

And almost everyone thought he was crazy.

It seems absurd now, but no one saw any reason to add sound to an already perfect, and very profitable, visual medium. What next? Color? Don't be ridiculous...

Fortunately, Sam Warner persisted, investing the company's profits into the technology required to not only record synchronized sound, but to reproduce it in their movie theaters around the country. Finally, on October 6th, 1927, Warner Bros. released *The Jazz Singer*, the first film to include synchronized dialog.

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Spoiler alert: It was a HUGE success. Unfortunately, Sam Warner

didn't live to see it. He died of a brain infection on October 5th, the day before the premiere.

Suddenly, every studio was scrambling to catch up to Warner Bros. That meant a massive capital investment in sound technology, retrofitting production facilities *and* thousands of movie theaters. Not every production company could afford the upgrade, and many struggled to compete in the new market for films with synchronized sound. And just when it seemed like it couldn't get worse for those smaller companies, it did. In October of 1929, the stock market crashed, plunging the nation into the Great Depression. Hundreds of production companies closed their doors for good.

At the start of the 1930s, after this tremendous consolidation in the industry, eight major studios were left standing: RKO Pictures, Paramount, MGM, Fox, Warner Bros., Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures and United Artists. Five of those – RKO, Paramount, MGM, Fox and Warner Bros. – also still owned extensive theater chains (aka **vertical integration**), an important source of their enormous profits, even during the Depression (apparently movies have always been a way to escape our troubles, at least for a couple of hours). But that didn't mean they could carry on with business as usual. They were forced to be as efficient as possible to maximize profits. Perhaps ironically, this led to a 20-year stretch, from 1927 to 1948, that would become known as The Golden Age, one of the most prolific and critically acclaimed periods in the history of Hollywood.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The so-called Golden Age of Hollywood was dominated by those eight powerful studios and defined by four crucial business

decisions.[1] First and foremost, at least for five of the eight, was the emphasis on vertical integration. By owning and controlling every aspect of the business, production, distribution and exhibition, those companies could minimize risk and maximize profit by monopolizing the screens in local theaters. Theatergoers would hand over their hard-earned nickels regardless of what was playing, and that meant the studios could cut costs and not lose paying customers. And even for those few independent theater chains, the studios minimized risk through practices such as **block booking** and **blind bidding**. Essentially, the studios would force theaters to buy a block of several films to screen (block booking), sometimes without even knowing what they were paying for (blind bidding). One or two might be prestige films with well-known actors and higher production values, but the rest would be low-budget westerns or thrillers that theaters would be forced to exhibit. The studios made money regardless.

The second crucial business decision was to centralize the production process. Rather than allow actual filmmakers – writers, directors, actors – to control the creative process, deciding what scripts to develop and which films to put into production, the major studios relied on one or two **central producers**. At Warner Bros. it was Jack Warner and Darryl Zanuck. At RKO it was David. O. Selznick. And at MGM it was Louis B. Mayer and 28 year-old Irving Thalberg.

1. For a much more detailed analysis of this period (and a thoroughly entertaining read for film buffs), check out Thomas Schatz's The Genius of the System.

Thalberg would become the greatest example of the central producer role, running the most profitable studio throughout the Golden Age. Thalberg personally oversaw every production on the MGM lot, hiring and firing every writer, director and actor, and often taking over as editor before the films were shipped off to theaters. And yet, he shunned fame and never put his name on any of MGM's productions. Always in ill-health, perhaps in part because of his inhuman workload, he died young, in 1936, at age 37.

Irving Thalberg. Central Producer at MGM.

The third business decision that ensured studios could control costs and maximize profits was to keep the "talent" – writers, directors and actors – on low-cost, iron-clad, multi-year contracts. As Hollywood moved into the Golden Age, filmmakers – especially actors – became internationally famous. Stardom was a new and exciting concept, and studios depended on it to sell tickets. But if any one of these new global celebrities had the power to demand a fee commensurate with their name recognition, it could bankrupt even the most successful studio. To protect against stars leveraging their fame for higher pay, and thus cutting in on their profits, the studios maintained a stable of actors on contracts that limited their salaries to low weekly rates for years on end no matter how successful their films might become. There were no per-film negotiations and certainly no profit sharing. And if an actor decided to sit out a film or two in protest, their contracts would be extended

by however long they held out. Bette Davis, one of the biggest stars of the era, once fled to England to escape her draconian contract with Warner Bros. Warner Bros. sued the British production companies that might employ her and England sent her back. These same contracts applied to writers and directors, employed by the studio as staff, not the freelance creatives they are today. It was an ingenious (and diabolical) system that meant studios could keep their production costs incredibly low.

The fourth and final crucial business decision that made the Golden Age possible was the creative specialization, or **house style**, of each major studio. Rather than try to make every kind of movie for every kind of taste, the studios knew they needed to specialize, to lean into what they did best. This decision, perhaps more than any of the others, is what made this period so creatively fertile. Despite all of the restrictions imposed by vertical integration, central producers, and talent contracts, the house style of a given studio meant that all of their resources went into making the very best version of certain kind of film. For MGM, it was the "prestige" picture. An MGM movie almost always centered on the elite class, lavish set designs, rags to riches stories, the perfect escapist, aspirational content for the 1930s. For Warner Bros. it was the gritty urban crime thriller: *Little Caesar* (1931), *The Public Enemy* (1931), *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). They were cheap to make and audiences ate them up. Gangsters, hardboiled detectives, femme fatales, these were all consistent elements of Warner Bros. films of the period. And for Universal, it was the horror movie:

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Frankenstein (1931), *Dracula* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), all of them Universal pictures (and many of them inspired by the surreal production design of German Expressionist films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*).

But the fun and profits couldn't last forever.

Three important events conspired to bring an end the reign of the major studios and the Golden Age of Hollywood.

First, in 1943, Olivia de Havilland, a young actress known for her role as Melanie in *Gone with the Wind* (1939), sued Warner Bros. for adding six months to her contract, the amount of time she had been suspended by the studio for refusing to take roles she didn't want. She wasn't the first Hollywood actor to sue a studio over their stifling contracts. But she was the first to win her case. The court's decision in her favor set a precedent that quickly eroded the studios' power over talent. Soon actors became freelance performers, demanding fees that matched their box office draw and even profit participation in the success of their films. All of which took a sizeable chunk out the studios' revenue.

Then, in 1948, the U.S. government filed an anti-trust case against the major studios, finally recognizing that vertical integration constituted an unfair monopoly over the entertainment industry. The case went to the Supreme Court and in a landmark ruling known as **The Paramount Decision** (only because Paramount was listed first in the suit), the court ordered that all of the major studios sell off their theater chains and outlawed the

practices of block booking and blind bidding. It was a financial disaster for the big studios. No longer able to shovel content to their own theater chains, studios had to actually consider what independent theaters wanted to screen and what paying audiences wanted to see. The result was a dramatic contraction in output as studios made fewer and fewer movies with increasingly expensive, freelance talent hoping to hit the moving target of audience interest.

And then it got worse.

In the wake of World War II, just as the Supreme Court was handing down The Paramount Decision, the television set was quickly becoming a common household item. By the end of the 1940s and into the 1950s, the rise of television entertainment meant fewer reasons to leave house and more reasons for the movie studios to panic. Some of them, like MGM, realized there was money to be made in licensing their film libraries to broadcasters. And some of them, like Universal, realized there was money to be made in leasing their vast production facilities to television producers. But all of them knew it was an end of an era.

THE NEW HOLLYWOOD

The end of the Golden Age thrust Hollywood into two decades of uncertainty as the major studios struggled to compete with the new Golden Age of *Television* and their own inability to find the pulse of the American theater-going public. There were plenty of successes. MGM's focus on musicals like *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) and historical extravaganzas like *Ben Hur* (1959), for example, helped keep them afloat. (Though those came too late for Louis B. Mayer, one of the founders of the studio. He was fired in 1951.) But throughout the 50s and 60s, studios found themselves spending more and

more money on fewer and fewer films and making smaller and smaller profits. To make matters worse, many of these once family-owned companies were being bought up by larger, multi-national corporations. Universal was bought out by MCA (a talent agency) in 1958. Paramount by Gulf Western in 1966. And Warner Bros. by Seven Arts that same year. These new parent companies were often publicly traded with a board of directors beholden to shareholders. They expected results.

And that's when Warren Beatty, an ambitious young actor, walked into Jack Warner's office with a scandalous script about two mass murderers named Bonnie and Clyde in his hand. Inspired by the upstart, avant-garde filmmakers making waves in France with their edgy, experimental films like Agnes Varda's *La Pointe Courte* (1955), Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960) and Francois Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959) (we can't seem to get away from the French!), Beatty wanted to break the mold of the Warner Bros. gritty crime thriller. He wanted to make something bold, unpredictable, and transgressive. He begged the aging Warner brother to finance the film.

Maybe Jack Warner was at the end of his creative rope. Maybe he knew the movie business needed to start taking risks again. Maybe he was inspired by Beatty's artistic vision. Or maybe he had just sold the studio to Seven Arts and figured Beatty's crazy idea for a movie would be their problem, a parting shot before the last Warner left the building.

Whatever the reason, Warner Bros. bankrolled *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), tried to bury it on release, but ultimately had to admit they had a huge hit on their hands. It was as bold, unpredictable, and transgressive (for its time) as Beatty had hoped. And audiences, especially younger audiences, loved it.

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Six months later, an off-beat comedy no studio would touch called *The Graduate* (1967) opened to equally enthusiastic audiences and extraordinary profits. And two years after that, BBS, a fledgling production company bankrolled by its success in television, produced *Easy Rider* (1969), a drug-fueled, fever dream of a movie that captured a changing America, a seismic shift in the culture at the end of the 1960s. It cost less the $500,000 to make and earned nearly $60 million at the box office. Something had indeed changed. The major studios weren't sure exactly what It was, but they knew they wanted a piece of it.

The next decade would become another creative renaissance for the film industry known as The New Hollywood.[2] Like the Golden Age which rose from the ashes of the Great Depression and the rise of synchronized sound, The New Hollywood rose from the ashes of The Paramount Decision and the rise of television. Unlike the Golden Age, however, The New Hollywood emphasized the authority of the director and star over the material, not the central producer. And rather than control costs to maximize profits, studios allowed the freelance artists they employed to experiment with the form and take creative risks. In fact, more and more filmmakers were smart enough to shoot on location rather than

2. If you want to know more about this fertile, drug-fueled portion of Hollywood history, check out Peter Biskind's Easy Riders, Raging Bulls.

on the studio backlot where executives might micromanage their productions.

Those risks didn't always pay off, but when they did, they more than made up for the disappointments. Films like *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Exorcist* (1973) broke every accepted norm of cinematography, sound design, narrative structure, editing, performance and even distribution models. And in the process broke every box office record.

But such creative fertility *and* unpredictability couldn't last forever. Not when there are billions of dollars at stake. The New Hollywood was done in by a one-two punch of films that were so successful, so astronomically profitable, they would have to coin a new term for them: **Blockbusters**.

The first was meant to be a run-of-the-mill Universal monster movie, a direct descendant of the studio's Golden Age classics like *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. This time around, it would be a shark. A really big shark. And in a (futile) effort to save some money, they assigned a young, 28 year-old television director named Steven Spielberg to helm the project. *JAWS* (1975) cost $9 million to make (three times more than Universal budgeted) and took 159 days to shoot (three times longer the Universal had hoped), but it grossed more than $120 million in its first theatrical run. It hit Hollywood like a tidal wave. A simple genre movie with clear heroes and just enough eye-popping special effects to wow the audience. Best of all, there was no need for an expensive, star-studded cast or a well-known, temperamental director. The concept was the star. It was a formula the studios understood and knew they could replicate.

Two years later, 20th Century Fox released *Star Wars* (1977). Its success dwarfed that of *JAWS*.

Hollywood would never be the same.

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BIG MEDIA AND GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT

The rise of the blockbuster breathed new life into the Hollywood studio system, and by the 1980s, they had successfully wrested control of the filmmaking process from the young upstart artists of The New Hollywood era. But with increasing profits came increasing interest from investors and larger multi-national corporations looking to diversify their portfolios. The acquisition of major studios in the late 50s and 60s by mega-companies such as Gulf Western continued into the 80s and 90s.

For example, between 1969 and 2004, entrepreneur Kirk Kerkorian bought and sold MGM three times (mostly so he could put its name on a casino in Las Vegas) until finally selling it to Sony, the Japanese electronics company. In 1990, Warner Bros. merged with Time, Inc. to form Time Warner which was in turn purchased by AOL, an internet service provider, in 2000, then spun off into its own company again in 2009 before being purchased by AT&T in 2019. Throughout the 1980s, 20th Century Fox changed hands among private investors multiple times until finally falling into the hands of Australian media tycoon Rupert Murdoch. It was in turn

acquired by Disney in 2019. But it's Universal that has the most colorful acquisition history. In 1990, MCA which owned Universal was acquired by Panasonic, another Japanese electronics company. In 1995, Panasonic sold it to Seagram, a Canadian beverage company, which in turn sold it to Vivendi, a French water utility in 2000 (the French again!). Vivendi sold the studio to General Electric, this time an *American* electronics company that already owned NBC. Finally, in 2011, GE sold NBC Universal to Comcast, the cable provider (which incidentally joined forces with Sony to purchase MGM back in 2004).

If all of that makes your head spin, you're not alone. In short, back in 1983, 90% of all American media was controlled by more than 50 distinct companies. By 2012, that same percentage was controlled by just 5. By 2019, it was down to 4: Comcast, Disney, AT&T and National Amusements.

This massive consolidation of American media companies has equally massive implications for cinema. Beholden to shareholders and the corporate bottom-line, Hollywood studios must be more efficient than ever, producing fewer and fewer movies at higher and higher budgets to attract more and more eyeballs. And if that sounds familiar, you've been paying attention. A similar consolidation occurred after the advent of sound and the financial havoc of the stock market crash of 1929. Only this time, major studios don't have the luxury of monopoly control through vertical integration (though they are dancing close to the edge with Comcast and AT&T, both internet and cable providers, controlling nearly half of all media in the United States). Instead, they've looked abroad to a new and growing global audience to ensure profitability.

Before 2008, international sales made up less than 20% of box office dollars. By 2008 it was 50%. By 2013 it had grown to more than 70% of Hollywood's bottom line. That's due in part to a massive investment in theaters around the world. In 2021, there were more than 215,000 cinema screens globally. Just over 43,000

were in the United States and Canada. About 110,000 were in Asia alone.[3] And the theaters themselves are not immune to consolidation. In 2013, Dalian Wanda, a Chinese company, bought the American theater chain AMC for $2.6 billion.

What does all of this mean for contemporary cinema? At the corporate Hollywood level, it means tailoring content for a global audience. That means building film franchises around globally recognizable characters and brands. If you're thinking Marvel and DC comics, you're on the right track. That means fewer original movies and more entertainment spectacles that in turn cost more money to make. The lessons Hollywood learned from the blockbusters *JAWS* and *Star Wars* in the 1970s seem to have been carried to their logical conclusion.

But corporate Hollywood isn't the only hope for cinema.

A NEW HOPE

While much of this (very) brief history of cinema has focused on the media machine that is the Hollywood studio system, cinema – that is, the art of motion pictures – lives and breathes outside of that capital-intensive entertainment ecosystem. And it always has.

Alice Guy-Blachè, Georges Melies, Lois Weber, D.W. Griffith, and most of the very first cinema artists operated independently of any corporate studio. And during that great Golden Age of cinema, which was so dominated by Hollywood studios, independent producers like David O. Selznick were putting out massively popular films like Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and the perennially remade *A Star is Born* (1937). One of the most successful films of the era, *Gone with the Wind* (1939) was arguably an "indie"

3. You can see a comprehensive report on the global entertainment marketplace here: https://www.motionpictures.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/MPA-2021-THEME-Report-FINAL.pdf

picture (Selznick produced it with MGM as distributor). In fact, the New Hollywood of the 60s and 70s could not have taken hold at the corporate level without visionary filmmakers like Mike Nichols, Dennis Hopper and Hal Ashby working outside of the studio system:

As the technology required to make motion pictures became easier and cheaper to acquire, more and more cinema artists chose to work outside of the studio system. Towering figures like Shirley Clarke in the 1960s, John Cassavetes in the 1970s and Jim Jarmusch in the 1980s put out provocative and engaging cinema with limited distribution to match their limited budgets but often with enormous cultural impact. That trend continued into the 1990s and 2000s, supported by new production and distribution companies like Miramax (founded by the now disgraced Harvey Weinstein) that insisted on working outside of the studio system and often outside of Los Angeles itself.

That independent spirit in American cinema also created space for women and people of color to have a voice in the art form. A quick scan of the history above and you'll notice there are not a lot of women's names. And almost all of the men are white. But filmmakers like Shirley Clarke, Julie Dash and Allison Anders didn't wait around for Hollywood to give them permission to make great cinema. Nor did the filmmakers of the early so-called Blaxploitation movement (though their success was eventually and sadly co-opted by white filmmakers).

And as the massive corporate consolidation of the American media landscape has created a narrowing of cinematic content from the big studios, that indie spirit – along with a healthy dose of investor interest – has lead to new innovations in production and distribution models. Whether it's pre-selling foreign rights to a script to fund its production, or turning to streaming services for funding in return for exclusive rights to content, filmmakers continue to find new ways to push the boundaries of what is possible in cinema. Just take a look at the nominees for best picture

at any of the recent Academy Awards ceremonies. Once dominated by studio-financed pictures, almost all of them are now independent productions.

But perhaps the most exciting new direction in cinema is not found in theaters at all. For more than a century, cinema has been most closely associated with that roughly 90 minute, closed-ended feature film playing at a theater near you. And while that continues to be an important cinematic space, the rise of cable and streaming services in desperate need of content has created exciting new frontiers to explore for the medium. No longer restricted to those 90 or so minutes, cinema can sprawl over 100s of hours or even just a few cut into 30 minutes chunks. And while it's tempting to call this a new Golden Age of Television, even the term "television" no longer seems appropriate. We consume this content on all manner of devices, on our phones, laptops, even our wristwatches. Even theatrical content has picked up on the trend. What is the *Fast and Furious*, the *Transformers* or *The Avengers* franchises but multi-billion dollar episodic series distributed to theaters (and after a few months to our phones, laptops and wristwatches)?

Ultimately, regardless of how it's made or how we engage with it, all of the above still fits into one artistic medium: cinema, the art of the motion picture. The tools and techniques, the principals of form and content, are all exactly the same. And that will be true whatever comes next, whether it's VR, AR or a cinema-chip implanted in our visual cortex (heaven forbid...). Mise-en-scene, narrative, cinematography, editing, sound and acting will all still matter. And our understanding of how those tools and techniques not only shape the medium, but also shape our culture will also still matter. Maybe more than ever.

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How to Watch a Movie

Step One: Evolve an optic nerve that "refreshes" at a rate of about 13 to 30 hertz in a normal active state.[1] That's 13 to 30 cycles per second. Fortunately, that bit has already been taken care of over the past several million years. You have one of them in your head right now.

Step Two: Project a series of still images captured in sequence at a rate at least twice that of your optic nerve's ability to respond. Let's say 24 images, or frames, per second.

Step Three: Don't talk during the movie. That's super annoying.

Okay, that last part is optional (though it is super annoying), but here's the point: Cinema is built on a lie. It is not, in fact, a "motion" picture. It is, at a minimum, 24 still images flying past your retinas every second. Your brain interprets those dozens of photographs per second as movement, but it's actually just the **illusion of movement**, a trick of the mind known as **beta movement**: the neurological phenomenon that interprets two

1. Okay, it's actually a lot more complicated than that. Optic nerves don't "refresh" in the way we normally think of that term. In fact, the optic nerve is part of a complex system that includes your eyeballs, retinas and brain, each of which performs at varying degrees of efficiency and changes as we age. But the numbers here are a good rule of thumb for thinking about how quickly we can process images. For more on how the optic nerve works, check this out: https://wolfcrow.com/notes-by-dr-optoglass-motion-and-the-frame-rate-of-the-human-eye/

stimuli shown in quick succession as the movement of a single object.

An example of beta movement.

Because all of this happens so fast, faster than our optic nerves and synaptic responses can perceive, the mechanics are invisible. There may be 24 individual photographs flashing before our eyes every second, but all we *see* is one continuous moving picture. It's a trick. An illusion.

The same applies to cinematic language. The way cinema communicates is the product of many different tools and techniques, from production design to narrative structure to lighting, camera movement, sound design, performance and editing. But all of these are employed to manipulate the viewer without us ever noticing. In fact, that's kind of the point. The tools and techniques – the mechanics of the form – are invisible. There may be a thousand different elements flashing before our eyes – a subtle dolly-in here, a rack focus there, a bit of color in the set design that echoes in the wardrobe of the protagonist, a music cue that signals the emotional state of a character, a cut on an action

that matches an identical action in the next scene, and on and on and on – but all we *see* is one continuous moving picture. A trick. An illusion.

In this chapter, we'll explore how cinematic language works, a bit like breaking down the grammar and rules of spoken language, then we'll take a look at how to watch cinema with these "rules" in mind. We may not be able to speed up the refresh rate of our optic nerve to catch each of those still images, but we can train our interpretive skills to see how filmmakers use the various tools and techniques at their disposal.

CINEMATIC LANGUAGE

Like any language, we can break cinematic language down to its most fundamental elements. Before grammar and syntax can shape meaning by arranging words or phrases in a particular order, the words themselves must be built up from letters, characters or symbols. The basic building blocks. In cinema, those basic building blocks are **shots**. A shot is one continuous capture of a span of action by a motion picture camera. It could last minutes (or even hours), or could last less than a second. Basically, a shot is everything that happens within the **frame** of the camera – that is, the visible border of the captured image – from the moment the director calls "Action!" to the moment she calls "Cut!"

These discrete shots rarely mean much in isolation. They are full of potential and may be quite interesting to look at on their own, but cinema is built up from the *juxtaposition* of these shots, dozens or hundreds of them, arranged in a particular order – a cinematic syntax – that renders a story with a collectively discernible meaning. We have a word for that too: **Editing**. Editing arranges shots into patterns that make up scenes, sequences and acts to

tell a story, just like other forms of language communicate through words, sentences and paragraphs.

From these basic building blocks, we have developed a **cinematic language**, a set of rules and conventions by which cinema communicates meaning to the viewer. And by "we" I mean all of us, filmmakers and audiences alike, from the earliest motion picture to the latest VR experience. Cinematic language – just like any other language – is an organic, constantly evolving shared form of communication. It is an iterative process, one that is refined each time a filmmaker builds a story through a discrete number of shots, and each time an audience responds to that iteration, accepting or rejecting, but always engaging in the process. Together, we have developed a **visual lexicon**. A lexicon describes the shared set of meaningful units in any language. Think of it as the list of all available words and parts of words in a language we carry around in our heads. A visual lexicon is likewise the shared set of meaningful units in our collective cinematic language: images, angles, transitions and camera moves that we all understand *mean* something when employed in a motion picture.

But here's the trick: We're not supposed to notice any of it. The visual lexicon that underpins our cinematic language is invisible, or at least, it is meant to recede into the background of our comprehension. Cinema can't communicate without it, but if we pay too much attention to it, we'll miss what it all means. A nifty little paradox. But not so strange or unfamiliar when you think about it. It's precisely the same with any other language. As you read these characters, words, sentences and paragraphs, you are not stopping to parse each unit of meaning, analyze the syntax or double check the sentence structure. All those rules fade to the background of your own fluency and the meaning communicated becomes clear (or at least, I sure hope it does). And that goes double for spoken language. We speak and comprehend in a fluent flow of grammar and syntax, never pausing over the rules that have become second nature, invisible and unnoticed.

So, what are some of those meaningful units of our cinematic language? Perhaps not surprisingly, a lot of them are based on how we experience the world in our everyday lives. Camera placement, for example, can subtly orient our perspective on a character or situation. Place the camera mere inches from a character's face – known as a **close-up** – and we'll feel more intimately connected to their experience than if the camera were further away, as in a **medium shot** or **long shot**. Place the camera below the eyeline of a character, pointing up – known as a **low-angle shot** – and that character will feel dominant, powerful, worthy of respect. We are literally looking up to them. Place the camera at eye level, we feel like equals. Let the camera hover above a character or situation – known as a **high-angle shot** – and we feel like gods, looking down on everyone and everything. Each choice effects how we see and interpret the shot, scene and story.

We can say the same about **transitions** from shot to shot. Think of them as conjunctions in grammar, words meant to connect ideas seamlessly. The more obvious examples, like **fade-ins** and **fade-outs** or long **dissolves**, are still drawn from our experience. Think of a slow fade-out, where the screen drifts into blackness, as an echo of our experience of falling asleep, drifting out of consciousness. In fact, fade-outs are most often used in cinema to indicate the close of an act or segment of story, much like the end of a long day. And dissolves are not unlike the way we remember events from our own experience, one moment bleeding into and overlapping with another in our memory.

But perhaps the most common and least noticed transition, by design, is a hard cut that bridges some physical action on screen. It's called **cutting on action** and it's a critical part of our visual lexicon, enabling filmmakers to join shots, often from radically different angles and positions, while remaining largely invisible to the viewer. The concept is simple: whenever a filmmaker wants to cut from one shot to the next for a new angle on a scene, she ends the first shot in the middle of some on-screen action, opening

a door or setting down a glass, then begins the next shot in the middle of that same action. The viewer's eye is drawn to the action on screen and not the cut itself, rendering the transition relatively seamless, if not invisible to the viewer.

Camera placement and transitions, along with camera movement, lighting style, color palette and a host of other elements make up the visual lexicon of cinematic language, all of which we will explore in the chapters to follow. In the hands of a gifted filmmaker, these subtle adjustments work together to create a coherent whole that communicates effectively (and invisibly). In the hands of not so gifted filmmakers, these choices can feel haphazard, unmotivated, or perhaps worse, "showy" – all style and no substance – creating a dissonant, ineffective cinematic experience. But even then, the techniques themselves remain largely invisible. We are simply left with the feeling that it was a "bad" movie, even if we can't quite explain why.

EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT MEANING

Once we have a grasp on these small, meaningful units of our collective cinematic language we can begin to analyze how they work together to communicate bigger, more complex ideas.

Take the work of Lynne Ramsay, for example. As a director, Ramsay builds a cinematic experience by paying attention to the details, the little things we might otherwise never notice:

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Cinema, like literature, builds up meaning through the creative combination of these smaller units, but, also like literature, the whole is – or should be – much more than the sum of its parts. For example, *Moby Dick* is a novel that explores the nature of obsession, the futility of revenge and humanity's essential conflict with nature. But in the more than 200,000 words that make up that book, few if any of them communicate those ideas directly. In fact, we can distinguish between **explicit meaning**, that is the obvious, directly expressed meaning of a work of art, be it a novel, painting or film, and **implicit meaning**, the deeper, essential meaning, suggested but not necessarily directly expressed by any one element. *Moby Dick* is explicitly about a man trying to catch a whale, but as any literature professor will tell you, it was never *really* about the whale.

That comparison between cinema and literature is not accidental. Both start with the same fundamental element, that is, a story. As we will explore in a later chapter, before a single frame is photographed, cinema begins with the written word in the form of a screenplay. And like any literary form, screenplays are built around a narrative structure. Yes, that's a fancy way of saying story, but it's more than simply a plot or an explicit sequence of events. A well-conceived narrative structure provides a foundation for that deeper, implicit meaning a filmmaker, or really any storyteller, will explore through their work.

Another way to think about that deeper, implicit meaning is as a **theme**, an idea that unifies every element of the work, gives it coherence and communicates what the work is *really* about. And really great cinema manages to suggest and express that theme through every shot, scene and sequence. Every camera angle and camera move, every line of dialogue and sound effect, every music cue and editing transition will underscore, emphasize and point to that theme without ever needing to spell it out or make it explicit. An essential part of analyzing cinema is the ability to identify that thematic intent and then trace its presence throughout.

Unless there is no thematic intent, or the filmmaker did not take the time to make it a unifying idea. Then you may have a "bad" movie on your hands. But at least you're well on your way to understanding why!

So far, this discussion of explicit and implicit meaning, theme, and narrative structure points to a deep kinship between cinema and literature. But cinema has far more tools and techniques at its disposal to communicate meaning, implicit or otherwise. Sound, performance and visual composition all point to deep ties with music, theater, and painting or photography as well. And while each of those art forms employ their own strategies for communicating explicit and implicit meaning, cinema draws on all of them at once in a complex, multi-layered system.

Let's take sound, for example. As you know from the brief history of cinema in the last chapter, cinema existed long before the introduction of synchronized sound in 1927, but since then, sound has become an equal partner with the moving image in the communication of meaning. Sound can shape the way we perceive an image, just as an image can change the way we perceive a sound. It's a relationship we call **co-expressive**.

This is perhaps most obvious in the use of music. A **non-diegetic** musical score, that is music that only the audience can hear as it exists outside the world of the characters, can drive us toward an action-packed climax, or sweep us up in a romantic moment.

Or it can contradict what we see on the screen, creating a sense of unease at an otherwise happy family gathering or making us a laugh during a moment of excruciating violence. In fact, this powerful combination of moving image and music pre-dates synchronized sound. Even some of the earliest silent films were shipped to theaters with a musical score meant to be played during projection.

But as powerful as music can be, sound in cinema is much more than just music. **Sound design** includes music, but also dialog, sound effects and ambient sound to create a rich sonic context for what we see on the screen. From the crunch of leaves underfoot, to the steady hum of city traffic, to the subtle crackle of a cigarette burning, what we hear – and what we *don't* hear – can put us in the scene with the characters in a way that images alone could never do, and as a result, add immeasurably to the effective communication of both explicit and implicit meaning.

We can say the same about the relationship between cinema and theater. Both use a carefully planned **mise-en-scene** – the overall look of the production including set design, costume, make-up – to evoke a sense of place and visual continuity. And both employ the talents of well-trained actors to embody characters and enact the narrative structure laid out in the script.

Let's focus on acting for a moment. Theater, like cinema, relies on actors' performances to communicate not only the subtleties of human behavior, but also the interplay of explicit and implicit meaning. How an actor interprets a line of dialog can make all the difference in how a performance shifts our perspective, draws us in or pushes us away. And nothing ruins a cinematic or theatrical experience like "bad" acting. But what do we really mean by that? Often it means the performance wasn't connected to the thematic intent of the story, the unifying idea that holds it all together. We'll even use words like, "The actor seemed like they were in a different movie from everyone else." That could be because the director didn't clarify a theme in the first place, or perhaps they didn't shape,

or direct, an actor's performance toward one. It could also simply be poor casting.

All of the above applies to both cinema and theater, but cinema has one distinct advantage: the intimacy and flexibility of the camera. Unlike theater, where your experience of a performance is dictated by how far you are from the stage, the filmmaker has complete control over your point of view. She can pull you in close, allowing you to observe every tiny detail of a character's expression, or she can push you out further than the cheapest seats in a theater, showing you a vast and potentially limitless context. And perhaps most importantly, cinema can move between these points of view in the blink of an eye, manipulating space and time in a way live theater never can. And all of those choices effect how we engage the thematic intent of the story, how we connect to what that particular cinematic experience *really* means. And because of that, in cinema, whether we realize it or not, we identify most closely with the *camera*. No matter how much we feel for our hero up on the screen, we view it all through the lens of the camera.

And that central importance of the camera is why the most obvious tool cinema has at its disposal in communicating meaning is visual composition. Despite the above emphasis on the importance of sound, cinema is still described as a visual medium. Even the title of this chapter is How to *Watch* a Movie. Not so surprising when you think about the lineage of cinema and its origin in the fixed images of the camera obscura, daguerreotypes and series photography. All of which owe a debt to painting, both as an art form and a form of communication. In fact, the cinematic concept of **framing** has a clear connection to the literal frame, or physical border, of paintings. And one of the most powerful tools filmmakers – and photographers and painters – have at their disposal for communicating both explicit and implicit meaning is simply what they place inside the frame and what they leave out.

Another word for this is **composition**, the arrangement of

people, objects and setting within the frame of an image. And if you've ever pulled out your phone to snap a selfie, or maybe a photo of your meal to post on social media (I know, I'm old, but really? Why is that a thing?), you are intimately aware of the power of composition. Adjusting your phone this way and that to get just the right angle, to include just the right bits of your outfit, maybe edge Greg out of the frame just in case things don't work out (sorry, Greg). Point is, composing a shot is a powerful way we tell stories about ourselves every day. Filmmakers, the really good ones, are masters of this technique. And once you understand this principle, you can start to analyze *how* a filmmaker uses composition to serve their underlying thematic intent, to help tell their story.

One of the most important ways a filmmaker uses composition to tell their story is through repetition, a pattern of recurring images that echoes a similar framing and connects to a central idea. And like the relationship between shots and editing – where individual shots only really make sense once they are juxtaposed with others – a well-composed image may be interesting or even beautiful on its own, but it only starts to make sense in relation to the implicit meaning or theme of the overall work when we see it as part of a pattern.

Take, for example, Stanley Kubrick and his use of one-point perspective:

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Or how Barry Jenkins uses color in *Moonlight* (2016):

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Or how Sofia Coppola tends to trap her protagonists in gilded cages:

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These recurring images are part of that largely invisible cinematic language. We aren't necessarily supposed to notice them, but we are meant to feel their effects. And it's not just visual patterns that can serve the filmmaker's purposes. Recurring patterns, or **motifs**, can emerge in the sound design, narrative structure, mise-en-scene, dialog and music.

But there is one distinction that should be made between how we think about composition and patterns in cinema and how we think about those concepts in photography or painting. While all

of the above employ framing to achieve their effects, photography and painting are limited to what is fixed in that frame by the artist at the moment of creation. Only cinema adds an entirely new and distinct dimension to the composition: **movement**. That includes movement *within* the frame – as actors and objects move freely, recomposing themselves within the fixed frame of a shot – as well as movement *of* the frame itself, as the filmmaker moves the camera in the setting and around those same actors and objects. This increases the compositional possibilities exponentially for cinema, allowing filmmakers to layer in even more patterns that serve the story and help us connect to their thematic intent.

FORM, CONTENT AND THE POWER OF CINEMA

As we become more attuned to the various tools and techniques that filmmakers use to communicate their ideas, we will be able to better analyze their effectiveness. We'll be able to *see* what was once invisible. A kind of magic trick in itself. But as I tried to make clear from the beginning, my goal is not to focus solely on form, to dissect cinema into its constituent parts and lose sight of its overall power. Cinema, like any art form, is more than the sum of its parts. And it should be clear already that form and content go hand in hand. Pure form, all technique and no substance, is meaningless. And pure content, all story and no style, is didactic and, frankly, boring. How the story is told is as important as what the story is about.

However, just as we *can* analyze technique, the formal properties of cinema, to better understand *how* a story is communicated, we can also analyze content, that is, *what* stories are communicating to better understand how they fit into the wider cultural context. Cinema, again like literature, can represent valuable cultural

documents, reflecting our own ideas, values and morals back to us as filmmakers and audiences.

We'll spend more time on content analysis – the idea of cinema as a cultural document – in the last couple of chapters of this book, but I want to take a moment to highlight one aspect of that analysis in advance. I've discussed at length the idea of a cinematic language, and the fact that as a form of communication it is largely invisible or subconscious. Interestingly, the same can be said for cinematic content. Or, more specifically, the cultural norms that *shape* cinematic content. Cinema is an art form like any other, shaped by humans bound up in a given historical and cultural context. And no matter how enlightened and advanced those humans may be, that historical and cultural context is so vast and complex they cannot possibly grasp every aspect of how it shapes their view of the world. Inevitably, those cultural blind spots, the unexamined norms and values that makes us who we are, filter into the cinematic stories we tell and how we tell them.

The result is a kind of cultural feedback loop where cinema both influences and is influenced by the context in which it is created.

Because of this, on the whole, cinema is inherently conservative. That is to say, as a form of communication it is more effective at conserving or re-affirming a particular view of the world than challenging or changing it. This is due in part to the economic reality that cinema, historically a very expensive medium, must appeal to the masses to survive. As such, it tends to avoid offending our collective sensibilities, to make us feel better about who we already think we are. And it is also due in part to the social reality that the people who have historically had access to the capital required to produce that very expensive medium tend to all look alike. That is, mostly white, and mostly men. And when the same kind of people with the same kind of experiences tend to have the most consistent access to the medium, we tend to get the same kinds of stories, reproducing the same, often unexamined, norms, values and ideas.

But that doesn't mean cinema *can't* challenge the status quo, or

at least reflect real, systemic change in the wider culture already underway. That's what makes the study of cinema, particularly in regard to content, so endlessly fascinating. Whether it's tracking the way cinema reflects the dominant cultural norms of a given period, or the way it sometimes rides the leading edge of change in those same norms, cinema is a window – or frame (see what I did there) – through which we can observe the mechanics of cultural production, the inner-workings of how meaning is produced, shared, and sometimes broken down over time.

EVERYONE'S A CRITIC

One final word on how to watch a movie before we move on to the specific tools and techniques employed by filmmakers. In as much as cinema is a cultural phenomenon, a mass medium with a crucial role in the production of meaning, it's also an art form meant to entertain. And while I think one can assess the difference between a "good" movie and a "bad" movie in terms of its effectiveness, that has little to do with whether one likes it or not.

In other words, you don't have to necessarily *like* a movie to analyze its use of a unifying theme or the way the filmmaker employs mise-en-scene, narrative structure, cinematography, sound and editing to effectively communicate that theme. *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941), arguably one of the greatest films ever made, is an incredibly *effective* motion picture. But it's not my favorite. Between you and me, I don't even really like it all that much. But I still show it to my students every semester. Which means I've seen it dozens and dozens of times and it never ceases to astonish in its formal technique and innovative use of cinematic language.

Fortunately, the opposite is also true: You can really, really like a movie that isn't necessarily all that good. Maybe there's no unifying theme, maybe the cinematography is all style and no substance (or no style *and* no substance), maybe the narrative structure is made out of toothpicks and the acting is equally thin and wooden. (That's right, *Twilight*, I'm looking at you.) Who cares? You like it. You've watched it more often than I've seen *Citizen Kane* and you *still* like it.

That's great. Embrace it. Because *taste* in cinema is subjective. But *analysis* of cinema doesn't have to be. You can analyze anything. Even things you don't like.

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An example of beta movement. Public Domain Image.

Lynne Ramsay – The Poetry of Details by Tony Zhou. Standard Vimeo License.

Kubrick // One-Point Perspective by kogonada. Standard Vimeo License.

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Narrative

Over the past century, cinema has evolved into an incredibly complex medium involving the art and science of capturing the moving image, the equally important and co-expressive craft of sound design, not to mention new innovations in virtual reality and immersive technologies that will push the boundaries of what is possible in the years to come.

But one thing hasn't changed: the importance of a good story.

No matter how innovative the visual delights, how creative the soundscape, or how many millions are spent on the production design and celebrity talent, if it isn't all in service of a compelling **narrative** we'll walk away unmoved and unsatisfied. And good storytelling, of course, has been around at least as long as humans have been able to put together complete sentences. Let's face it, probably longer.

In this chapter we'll examine what makes *cinematic* storytelling unique, how narrative structure shapes our experience of the moving image, how compelling characters move that narrative forward, how the theme and narrative intent inform everything from the mise-en-scène to the cinematography, music, sound design and editing, and how all of this can morph into different narrative forms, or **genres**, in cinema.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Here's the recipe for a good story:

1 protagonist.

1 goal.

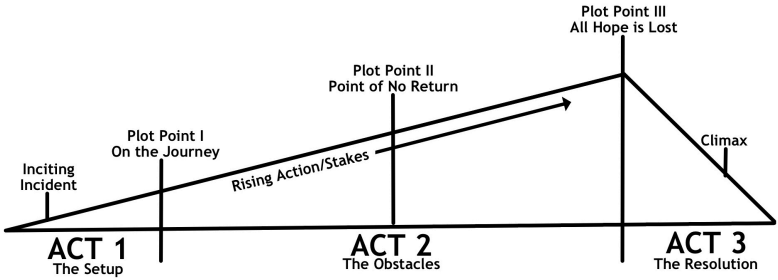
A whole bunch of obstacles.

That's it. Pretty much every story ever told can be boiled down to those three elements: A protagonist pursuing a goal confronted by obstacles. Cinematic storytelling draws from this same narrative source, and in that sense, is not so different from a good novel or even just a good yarn spun around the campfire. In fact, a lot of what we'll discuss here can apply to those other literary genres. Compelling characters are important no matter the form the story takes. Likewise, a clear theme or narrative intent from the storyteller. And sure, cinema, just like novels or short stories or even poetry, come in all shapes and sizes, otherwise known as **genres**, from thrillers to westerns, comedies to romance.

But I'd like to make the (somewhat controversial) case that cinema has developed its own unique structure, a rhythm to how a story is told cinematically. Not so much a "rule" to which all screenwriters must conform, more a pattern or set of patterns that writers have found most effective in communicating cinematically. This pattern has developed over time, evolved along with all of the other elements of cinematic language, and is, in fact, continuing to evolve as cinema moves into new, more open-ended forms like limited and streaming series. For now, let's examine just one cinematic form, the narrative feature film.

The closed-ended, narrative feature film, what we typically call a "movie" with a beginning, middle and an end and a running time anywhere from 90 minutes to over 2 hours, has been around for more than a century and served as a kind of foundational form in cinematic storytelling (though its cultural dominance has arguably lessened over the past decade or so, but we'll get to that). Over

that time, and in Hollywood in particular, it has been refined and perfected into what we can describe as a **three-act structure:**



Act one, which generally runs to 25 or 30 pages (or the first 25 to 30 minutes of screen time), introduces the **protagonist**, sets up their world, and clarifies the goal they'll be pursuing for the rest of the story. It might also introduce a central **antagonist**, or it might wait until later. But typically, by page 25 or 30, we know who we're rooting for, what they want, and what's in their way. Maybe they've resisted going on the journey to that point, but by the end of act one, they are launched into act two, sometimes against their will.

Act two, which is usually about twice as long as act one, is all about the obstacles. Our protagonist must confront and overcome each one, and typically, the **stakes** get higher every time. That is, with every obstacle, the protagonist must risk more and more, making their journey more and more difficult. Often, those obstacles are put there by someone or something specific, the **antagonist**. But the obstacles could also be internal, some part of the protagonist's own psychology. Either way, there's usually a **midpoint**, right around page/minute 55 or 60, where the protagonist has a choice: they can turn back, give up on the pursuit of the goal, or double-down and never look back. Of course, they double-down. But by the end of act two, around page/minute 85 or 90, our protagonist meets their biggest obstacle yet. In fact, it

seems to seal their fate. All hope is lost. They, and we, feel they will never reach their goal after all.

But that's not what we paid good money to see.

Act three, which is usually about the same length as act one, is all about our protagonist rallying to overcome that last obstacle leading to a climactic showdown and a resolution to their story. Usually that means they reach the goal defined in act one. But sometimes the journey clarifies a new goal, or they realize they always had what they were searching for and just needed to see it in themselves (insert eye roll here). But you get the idea, act three brings some kind of resolution.

This narrative structure as outlined above may seem all too familiar, and for some, its predictability is everything that's wrong with mainstream, Hollywood cinema. But I would argue that the cinematic three-act structure is one of the most important contributions to the global story-telling form in the past century. The Greeks had their tragedies, Shakespeare his five-act epics, Japanese poets the haiku. Hollywood has given us the three-act movie. And like the haiku, it is the structure of the three acts that, perhaps ironically, provides movies their creative freedom. We know the stories will resolve, the protagonist will reach their goal, that's why we show up at the theater, but it's the *how* – how this particular filmmaker is going to solve this particular problem – that keeps us in the seats. For all the rigidity of the haiku form (and come to think of it, that form of three lines of varying length echoes cinematic three act structure pretty nicely), no two poems are the same. Hopefully we can say the same of great cinema.

To be clear, the three-act structure is not an explicit industry standard or a rule to which screenwriters must conform. In fact, it is less a writing technique than it is an analytic tool, a way of breaking down cinematic stories for analysis. Unlike stage plays, there are no explicit act breaks in the script itself. And some writers actively work against that structure in an effort to push beyond expectations in cinema. The films of Quentin Tarantino, for

example, often "break the rules" for how cinema is supposed to work (and as a result his scripts often read more like novels than screenplays). But even Tarantino accepts the importance of setting up audience expectations and, eventually, paying them off. Even he understands that the journey of a protagonist toward their goal is littered with obstacles and follows an arc toward resolution. And more often than not, the exceptions ultimately prove the "rule" of how effective the three-act structure has become. Not just because screenwriters find it useful, but because we, as the audience, have internalized it as part of our shared cinematic language:

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But as cinema has evolved into other forms, including television and streaming series, so too has narrative structure evolved. Beginning nearly half a century ago with the rise of broadcast television, cinematic storytelling for the small screen required an adjustment to the pace and rhythm of how a protagonist pursued their goal. Commercial interruptions, for example, came at regular intervals, forcing writers into a four- or even five-act structure with cliffhangers at each break to make sure the audience didn't change the channel. Even today, broadcast television scripts still have explicit act breaks in the text to indicate where a commercial break might appear.

As binge-worthy streaming series have become the dominant form of cinematic entertainment, we see yet another evolution.

With no commercial breaks, writers need not write a cliffhanger every 10 or 15 minutes. But they are keenly aware of how important it is that viewers hit play on the next episode. So, the narrative structure of a streaming series tends to apply the classic three-act structure to an entire eight- or ten-episode season, converting that eight- to ten-hour experience into one that echoes the ups and downs of a two-hour feature film. And, interestingly, that evolution of the form has in turn informed the narrative structure of the most popular feature film franchises. What are The Fast and the Furious or Transformers film franchises but multi-billion dollar series with each episode doled out every two or three years?

Which is why these innovations in the form represent an *evolution* of cinematic language, not a radical break. Just as cinematic storytelling itself is simply an *evolution* of the classic, age-old formula: A protagonist pursuing a goal confronted by obstacles.

COMPELLING CHARACTERS AND THE PRIMARY NARRATOR

Now, let's talk about that protagonist for a moment. Narrative structure may be a critical component of cinematic language, but ultimately, structure is another word for plot, and we don't go to the movies to root for plots, we root for people. If there isn't a compelling character or characters at the center story, all of the plot points (and special effects) in the world won't hold our attention or capture our imagination.

But what does it mean to be a compelling character? Some distinguish between **round** and **flat** characters. A round character is a complex, often conflicted character with a deep internal life who usually undergoes some kind of change over the course of the

story. A flat character lacks that complexity, does not change at all over the course of the story, and is usually there only to help the more round characters on their journeys.

Obviously, most protagonists are, or should be, round characters. Though sometimes protagonists can be rather flat (check out any Steven Seagal flick from the 90s… or better yet, don't), and sometimes side characters who are only peripheral to the main story can be incredibly complex and undergo dramatic transformation. Still, a protagonist should at the very least be *interesting*, and that does not necessarily mean they are inherently *good*. In fact, often the most interesting protagonists are flawed in some fundamental way, and part of the fun is watching them struggle with that flaw. That's one reason Superman is such a difficult character to pull off on screen. He's just so… good. And he doesn't change all that much. But Batman? That guy is *dark*. And that's what makes him so much fun to watch (and perhaps why he's so much more successful at the box office).

Sometimes those flaws can be so deep and so disturbing that the character is no longer a protagonist and is more an **anti-hero**. An anti-hero is an unsympathetic hero pursuing an immoral goal, and somehow we end up rooting for them anyway. Think of basically every heist movie. Or every vigilante action movie. Or any Tarantino movie for that matter. The main characters are all essentially criminals intent on breaking the law. And we can't wait to see how they pull it off:

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To be clear, an anti-hero is *not* the same as an **antagonist**. The antagonist's role is to stop the hero from reaching their goal. In *The Dark Knight* (2008), Batman is the protagonist, the hero, and the Joker is the antagonist. But in *Joker* (2019), the Joker is the protagonist, in this case an anti-hero, and the police, ostensibly the "good guys", are the antagonists.

Whether protagonist or anti-hero, the central character of a cinematic narrative should always drive the story forward. We are on their journey, and it's their actions that move us through the plot.

But… they are *not* in control. That is to say, they are not, in fact, the primary narrator in cinema.

Let me explain.

When you read a novel, unless it is written in the first person, it's not any one character in the book telling you the story. One could argue it's the author herself, but the singular "voice" of the narrator is more an abstraction than a person.

The next time you are watching a film or series, take a step back and ask yourself: Who or what is telling this story? Not what character are we following or with whom do we most closely identify *in* the story, but who or what is actually relaying the events. Yes, there's the screenwriter and the director and ultimately the editor who are all responsible for narrative as we receive it. Just like the author of a novel. But moment to moment, the primary narrator in cinema is always the ***camera***.

Let's face it, we're all voyeurs. We like sitting in the dark and peering into other people's lives unnoticed and undetected. That's what cinema is. And our window into those lives is the camera frame. The camera dictates where we look and when. The camera provides all the information we need to construct the narrative unspooling at 24 frames per second.

But more generally, we can distinguish between two kinds of narration, two ways the camera tells the story. Does the camera restrict our view to the experiences of just one character? Or does it allow us to follow all sorts of characters, round and flat, major and minor, protagonist and antagonist, wherever they might go? **Restricted narration** refers to stories that never leave the protagonist, restricting our access to any other character unless they are in the same space as our hero. **Omniscient narration** can follow any character, even minor ones, if it helps tell the story. But in both cases, it's the camera than controls the story. It's the camera that serves as the primary narrator.

THEME AND NARRATIVE INTENT

A clear narrative structure and compelling, round characters are crucial elements in our shared cinematic language. And once we understand these principles of how a screenplay works, how it goes about telling a story, we can look more deeply into what, exactly, it is trying to say. We'll spend more time on that towards the end of this book, but for now, it's important to distinguish between a plot – what *happens* in a film – and a **theme** – what the film is *really* about. *Star Wars* (1977) is about a farm boy saving a princess and defeating a planet-destroying weapon wielded by the evil Empire. That's the plot. But it's *really* about believing in oneself and the difference one brave person can make in the face of overwhelming evil. That is its

narrative intent. It's that underlying idea that activates the plot, defines the characters, and leads us to a satisfying resolution.

That does not mean every film or series has a "message" like those saccharine after-school specials. But it does mean that great cinema is organized around an idea, an arguable point, that can focus the action and clarify character. A clear and well-planned narrative theme can serve as a unifying principle, informing every other element of the cinematic experience. Not just plot and character, but mise-en-scène, cinematography, sound design and editing as well. In *Star Wars*, the climactic Death Star sequence is a spectacular action set piece, but it also serves the central narrative theme. Luke Skywalker becomes the last pilot, one tiny fighter against a planet-sized weapon. And to defeat it, he must draw upon skills he learned back on the farm.

Compare that to the action set piece at the center of *G.I. Joe: Rise of Cobra* (2009). A missile filled with nanomites strikes the Eiffel Tower and destroys it in a blaze of CGI glory. What's a nanomite? Doesn't matter. The sequence is not connected to a clear theme because there is no clear theme, just a plot, a sequence of events where things happen. One is left with the impression that the only reason the Eiffel Tower scene exists is because someone thought it would look cool on screen. And it does. I guess. But it doesn't *move* us. It's meaningless, a mere plot point. And that's often why cinematic spectacles can leave us flat. They look cool, but have no unifying theme, no narrative intent aside from the spectacle itself.

But when that spectacle is tied to a clear theme, one that we can identify with and even argue over, then cinema can become transformative.

Take Pixar's *Toy Story* (1995) for example. The plot is fairly simple. A child's favorite toy is threatened by the arrival of a shiny new toy. His jealousy leads to them both becoming lost and working together to return home. A simple sequence of events. And with the innovation of 3D animation at the time, that might have been all it needed to hold our attention if not capture our imagination. But

the movie is much more than that. It's *really* about friendship and the importance of self-sacrifice. And every scene serves that theme, serving either as counterpoint or confirmation. The plot, then, is not *simply* a random sequence of events, it is a carefully planned dramatization of the theme where every obstacle encountered reveals something important about the hero's journey. That's what makes *Toy Story* a classic, and not just another cartoon.

GENRE IN CINEMA

Genre is likely a term you've encountered before. We use it when analyzing literature to distinguish between different types of stories. The word itself is French (I know, the French again), and it literally means "a kind" or type. And yes, it's related to the word gender, as in a "type" of person. And even the word generic, as in, non-specific, plain or even uninteresting.

And that's the blessing and the curse of genre. It's a useful way to categorize types of cinematic narrative – westerns, romantic comedies, horror, superhero – but it also implies a non-specificity, a certain sameness to films of a type.

But sometimes... that's *exactly* what we want.

When we go to see a romantic comedy, we know we're going to see two people meet early on in the story and then spend about 90 minutes overcoming all sorts of obstacles to be together. There will likely be some terrible misunderstanding or other calamity late in the film that dooms their relationship (end of act two!), and then someone will run through an airport or stand outside in the rain to profess their true feelings and they'll finally be together. We know all of this before the opening credits. That's the point. We want to see *how* this particular filmmaker gets them there. But they better get there. That's why we paid for our ticket.

These similarities, and they extend to types of characters, settings, themes, even musical scores, are called **narrative conventions**. Cinematic genres, just like literary genres, are grouped according to these conventions. We know a Western when we see one because they share similar settings (the 19th century American west), characters (the lone gunslinger, the homesteading widow, the disillusioned sheriff) and themes (rugged individualism and frontier justice). The same with Science Fiction, Horror, Gangster movies, and the Musical.

Genre distinctions are handy for us as viewers when deciding what kinds of stories we want to engage, but they are even more handy for producers and studios when it comes to meeting the demand of audiences. Cinema is an incredibly capital intensive medium, and the more targeted the content, the more likely filmmakers will see a return on that investment. In that sense, genre is a convenient shorthand for both the people who consume cinema *and* the people who produce it:

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And as we discussed with the three-act structure, the apparent rigidity of narrative conventions when it comes to genre might seem like a recipe for boredom. A formula instead of an art form. But structure doesn't dictate predictability. It can just as easily inspire creativity. Just like that "predictable" romantic comedy,

genre can pose a creative challenge to surprise an audience that already thinks it knows what's coming.

Of course, sometimes a filmmaker can lean into one genre, setting up expectations, and then really pull the rug out from under us:

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But perhaps more importantly, genre – again, like three-act structure – is really more an analytic technique than a writing tool. While some screenwriters work firmly and unequivocally within a particular genre, the narrative conventions we associate with certain types of films help us analyze how a particular filmmaker approaches the fundamental questions in any story: Who is the hero? What do they want? How are they going to get it?

1 protagonist.

1 goal.

A whole bunch of obstacles.

Video Attributions:

How Three-Act Screenplays Work (and why it matters) by Lindsay Ellis. Standard YouTube License.

Top 10 Movie Anti-Heroes by WatchMojo.com. Standard YouTube License.

Introduction to Genre Movies – Film Genres and Hollywood by Ministry Of Cinema. Standard YouTube License.

10 Movies That Made Shocking Genre Shifts Halfway Through by WhatCulture. Standard YouTube License.

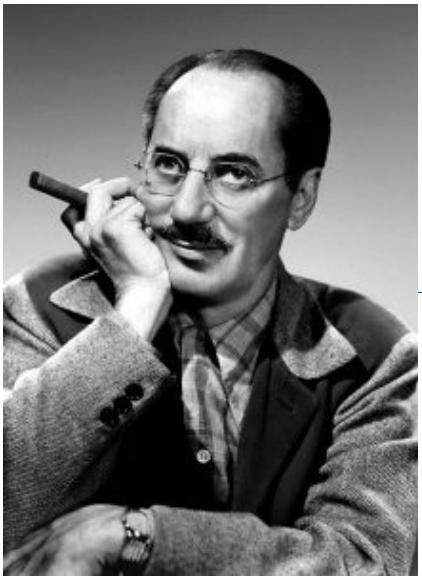
PART VIII

TELEVISION, CABLE AND STREAMING VIDEO

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify significant milestones in the evolution of TV as a mass medium
- Explain the nature, functions and affordances of TV
- Describe current business models and structures shaping the TV industry
- Evaluate the impact of new distribution platforms and viewing technologies on the TV industry
- Differentiate TV genres and analyze the cultural impact of TV programs made for domestic and global audiences

Television through Time



Groucho Marx portrait, from user Insomnia Cured Here, CCBY. Source: Flickr.

"I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book." — Groucho Marx

TELEVISION REVOLUTION

When you talk to a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent about life at home before television, they will probably tell you that they listened to the radio and read books, magazines and newspapers. They may also mention spending time together telling old stories and listening to music on a record player.

It is no wonder that when television was first becoming America's medium of choice in the 1940s and '50s, plenty of thoughtful people questioned the influence it could have on society.

Television's least-common-denominator sensibility concerned many, and some thought the entire entertainment industry was trying to turn the country Communist. Concerns about propaganda abounded. Of concern during the Cold War was that television would take that same power into people's homes on a platform that was constantly updated and sometimes broadcast live. Just as with film, the battle for control over the influence of television has existed as long as it has been a mass medium. It is difficult to underestimate television's cultural impact.

Besides those who saw television as a threat to spread Communism throughout the West, there were others who were not so radically against television but who preferred to talk about the importance of reading instead. They saw television not as a tool of the intellectual, global left but as anti-intellectual. You will still encounter people who voice with pride — and often an air of superiority — that they do not own a television. They imply that everyone else may be rotting their brains, but not their family. Condescension about the television and its content dates back to the dawn of the medium. Groucho Marx, depicted above, was an early film and TV star, and even he joked about the lack of quality programming. Of course, television isn't all bad. At every stage of the medium's development, there have been thoughtful, intelligent shows and there has been **dreck** — that is, waste or trash that serves to fill time but not to inform meaningfully.

This chapter discusses the nature of television content as the medium evolved throughout the second half of the 20th century. It then briefly discusses the role of the television industry in society by examining the ways we watch TV and its possible impacts on our health. Finally, this chapter covers the medium's influence on popular culture and explores how the 2000s and 2010s may have brought about the golden age of television while simultaneously opening up pathways for audience collaboration and shared cultural influence in what is perhaps the most culturally influential medium in human history.

Television Content in the 20th Century

This is a not dichotomy between the good old days of quality mass-market television and the modern garbage made to fill airtime on hundreds of digital channels. Rather, there has always been a dichotomy between informative programming and shows made purely for entertainment and distraction. As with all dichotomies, the boundary between the two is blurred.

Not every show on the low end of the intellectual spectrum is dreck. Even intellectually stimulating programs have moments of pandering. Television content generally strives to be popular and profitable first, entertaining second, and informational third, if at all. Consider some of the top-rated shows of each decade in the 20th century after television became popular. There were informative, educational programs and there was silly and mundane fare in each decade. The 1940s saw the debut of *Meet the Press*, a news discussion show that is still on the air, as well as *Howdy Doody*, a children's puppet show that set the tone for future children's programming but lacked some of the educational elements that came with *Sesame Street* and similar shows. In the '50s, the masterful journalist Edward R. Murrow led a journalistic team of titans with *See it Now*, a classic news documentary show. But he also hosted *Person to Person*, a celebrity profile show that bordered on tabloid TV. In the 1960s, Murrow made *Harvest of Shame*, a revolutionary television documentary about the oppression of farm workers. In the same decade, *Mister Ed* featured a talking horse that cracked jokes through a barn door. Producers persuaded the horse, a gelding named Bamboo Harvester, to "talk" by putting peanut butter on his teeth. At issue is not the existence of silly shows but their relative popularity. For every major in-depth documentary about poverty in America or some other heady topic, there were at least a dozen sitcom series that portrayed a peaceful, suburban, consumption-driven life even as American society underwent cultural and social upheaval.

An antique television displays an episode of The Munsters, a 1960s sitcom. Image by Michel Curi, CCBY. Source: Flikr

In the 1970s, the sitcom *M*A*S*H* gained great critical acclaim. It showed that a television show could entertain and inform. It satirized the Vietnam War through comedy, although it technically was a depiction of the Korean conflict. The show discussed war propaganda, PTSD, the honor of service and camaraderie in battle. It ran for 11 years, longer than the Korean and Vietnam Wars put together. *M*A*S*H* can be compared to another classic '70s sitcom, *Three's Company*, a farcical show about three single people living together as roommates in post-60s sexual revolution Santa Monica, California. Both shows depicted social and cultural change, and both aired successfully for decades in reruns, but *M*A*S*H* represents television in rare form, both entertaining and poignant.

In the 1980s, *Hill Street Blues* was a serious, police drama that demonstrated the difficulty of fighting crime in an unnamed modern American city by tackling deep subjects and showcasing a gritty production style. In contrast, *Married...with Children* was a purposefully shallow show designed to offend by depicting a grotesque caricature of an American family. *Hill Street Blues* ran for seven seasons. *Married...with Children* ran for 11. In the 1990s, *Homicide: Life on the Street* depicted grit, violence and crime fighting in Baltimore in the vein of *Hill Street Blues*. *Homicide* was based on a non-fiction book titled *Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets* by

David Simon. Simon went on to create *The Wire*, one of the top-rated television shows of all time that also depicted crime and crime fighting in Baltimore. While *Homicide* was popular, *Friends* dominated American pop culture and had a global influence. *Friends* showed an imaginary version of New York where six twenty-somethings, some of whom had no discernible employment, could afford spacious apartments and daily lattes. This is not to take issue with shows that paint a rosy picture of life. Instead, the point is that popular television content is made to entertain, not inform. The most entertaining and popular shows of the 20th century were not poorly made, nor were they necessarily detrimental to society as mainstays of the culture. They were, however, usually void of thoughtful social content. Television, the most popular mass medium in the world, often serves to distract.

Television and Society

The shallow nature of some of the most popular television content in the 20th century raises a broader question about mass-media content in capitalist society. Can we expect a media system based on profit-making to focus on serious issues? Perhaps we should not expect the majority of television content to be informative or to treat social issues with nuance. After all, it may not be much different from the appeal of movies in the 20th century where hard working people attended movies in part because they craved instant gratification and movies were affordable. In the early days of television, the television set was expensive, but the content was free and delivered over the airwaves from broadcast towers to antennas. To make money in this media environment, producers considered popularity first. Advertisers supported the medium and cared above all else how many "eyeballs" they could reach.

Scholars will often suggest that a "balanced" television diet is best. In other words, we should not expect for-profit television producers to forego revenues to deliver mostly informational

content. Rather it is on us as consumers to seek out quality programming and limit our "guilty pleasures" when viewing TV. Ratings suggest most people are just fine watching shallow television, and many will binge-watch TV for days. As consumers, we will probably have more success holding ourselves to better consumption standards than we will have trying to hold producers to more positive social standards. In a crowded marketplace of broadcast, cable, satellite and streaming television, quality content stands out.

Industry Shifts

Cable television started as a way to reach rural consumers and grew, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, into a nationwide service delivering paid content. It presented more options and a trustworthy wired connection — but at a cost. As cable networks consolidated into monopolies, costs went up and service quality often declined. Still, most Americans continue to consume broadcast and cable television. Market penetration of some form of television service, including over-the-air TV, stands at almost 96% according to Nielsen, the television ratings specialists.

According to industry estimates, pay television services (such as cable and satellite TV) are now in fewer than 80 percent of U.S. homes as people begin to "cut the cord." Broadband internet service now reaches more than 80 percent of homes, suggesting that it is displacing paid television service. American cable consumers may be comfortable transitioning to broadband because so much television content is now available online. Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, HBO GO and other broadband-based streaming services deliver television content with high production value. YouTube, Vimeo, Twitch and other streaming services deliver niche video content. Certain platforms for television delivery may be in decline, but consumption of video content remains strong.

Television's impact on society is debated by scholars. Long-term

studies have associated higher rates of television viewing with lower rates of high school completion. Watching television has been shown to make attention spans shorter. Media studies scholars do not agree on whether television "cultivates" a sense that the world is a violent, scary place, even when crime rates are low. Findings for that hypothesis seem to depend on how each study is carried out and how data analyses are structured. Alternatively, educational television can have a positive impact as an intervention for children in poverty. Too much television has the potential to affect us negatively. Doctors often recommend limiting screen time, particularly for children. The way we consume television has changed a great deal since the medium was introduced.

Appointment Viewing versus Binge-watching

Appointment viewing refers to the phenomenon of people watching television shows at the same time each week or each day. When most people watched television broadcast over the air or on cable, they generally had two options. They could watch the show live as it aired, or, once the VCR was invented, they could record programs to watch later. A major concern during the mid-20th century when appointment viewing was most popular was that people might not watch serial narratives on television because they would have to wait a week between episodes. If they missed an episode or two, they could feel lost and stop watching the show.

Thus, appointment viewing and episodic TV went hand in hand for a majority of shows during the 20th century. **Episodic** television shows usually featured a different story with each episode. Soap operas, however, were **serialized**. They told an ongoing story with several threads, and each episode picked up where the last one left off, but they aired almost every weekday, and the stories were not known for being complicated.

An image of a cartoon mouse crated by Keith Haring photographed by Alexandre Dulan, CCBY. Source: Flikr

The logic against making serial television dominated the 1980s and 1990s, but in the 2000s dramatic shows such as *The Sopranos, The Wire, Breaking Bad, MadMen, Deadwood, Dexter, Boardwalk Empire, Six Feet Under, Lost, 24*, *Homeland, Game of Thrones, Westworld, Stranger Things*, and *The Handmaid's Tale* became increasingly popular. DVRs (digital video recorders) and streaming services contributed to the popularity of these dramas and to the habit of **binge-watching** — consuming several hours of video content in a single viewing or in a very limited time frame.

The upside is that many shows now present intricate plots with long-building character arcs. Many former filmmakers, screenwriters and actors now prefer to do television rather than film because television allows for more intricate storytelling. Not everything in popular television needs to have the potential to reach a global audience interested in action, superheroes and sexy,

simplistic love stories. While it is true that many independent films pursue visual storytelling as an art form, such releases are limited. In many ways, television (including shows broadcast on streaming services) now leads the way in attempting to make cultural and social impacts. Of course, instant gratification television still exists. So-called "reality television" is still popular, as are game shows and myriad live sporting events, but it can still be argued that the highest form of the visual storytelling art may now be seen on the small screen.

Television and Health

Streamable television content may be as socially relevant as ever, but it encourages binge-watching, which can contribute to health problems. The content itself might not harm your health, but binge-watching and general overconsumption lead to unhealthy sedentary lifestyles. Researchers have found links between increased television viewing and obesity, smoking rates, and generally low fitness levels. Netflix, Amazon and Hulu are engaged in a fierce competition to create the most binge-worthy content, which means that binge-watching is not going away any time soon. Again, mitigation of the social impact of television will fall on the consumer's shoulders.

Socially, television is an incredibly powerful medium. Most media studies scholars agree that it has the potential to enable shared social understanding. Televised images of atrocities helped encourage the Civil Rights Movement and the end of the Vietnam War. Educational and informational programming is required of broadcasters, and many consumers find valuable shows amidst the information glut; however, the future of television might be darker than the present age of quality and variety.

As television content moves online and streaming services become more popular, there is a massive corporate push to give internet service providers (ISPs) the kind of control over content

that cable television providers have had in the past. The end of net neutrality could make streaming services more expensive, and though it is not likely to happen rapidly, internet access could be divided into tiers of websites and web services with ISPs charging more for the most popular sites. If the most binge-worthy, least intellectually valuable content becomes the affordable option for most people, the social impact of the new internet-television regime could be negative for generations to come.

Television and Culture

The cultural impact of television could be implied from the discussion of content through the decades. Regular television viewers make connections with storylines and characters. We can consume an eclectic mix of video content or focus only on the genre that interests us most. There are hundreds of digital channels and seemingly endless amounts of streaming content available at all time. The question is not whether there is something interesting to watch but what type of content interests us the most. There is more to the medium than the dramas and distractions of the 20th century. There is no single television culture emerging in the 21st century since mass audiences have an incredible variety of choices; however, for children of the 20th century, there are many shows that millions of people hold in common. Thus, we are transitioning from a time of a shared "TV culture" to a time of various digital content cultures.

A viewer uses an iPad while viewing the television version of "Hannibal."

For children of the 20th century, television is so ingrained in our culture there are shared references to shows that have not aired for 20 years, and there have even been shows *about watching* TV. Specifically, the HBO show *Dream On* depicted a grown man who recalled old television shows when his short attention span sent him off into daydreams. Popular television shows in 20th-century American culture were so familiar to mass audiences that there are still common tropes from as many as 50 years ago that most viewers would recognize. The image of the dull husband and his feisty wife echoes through the decades from *The Honeymooners* through *The Simpsons*, *King of Queens* and *Family Guy*. The crime procedural has been so popular for so long, it often seems as though an entire generation of TV stars have made at least one appearance on *Law & Order*. Other tropes are noted in "The Simpsons 138th Episode Spectacular," another example of television culture referencing itself.

We now use all manner of devices to connect to television content. Over-the-air television is gaining in popular support as people cut the cable cord. Streaming services, as stated, are beginning to dominate the landscape. Smartphones and tablets offer ways of consuming streaming television as well as amateur video programs as well as the opportunity for a **second screen experience**, which refers to watching something on television and interacting with the show or with fans of the show on social media and other Web platforms. The convergence of media platforms opens up new ways of engaging with video content and the people who produce it.

The cultural implications of participatory or **collaborative television** — the phenomenon in which content producers work with the audience to produce, alter or enhance content, including to decide the outcomes of televised competitions — are not yet known. It is expected, however, that the practice will continue to grow. Audiences often enjoy having a say in the direction or the outcome of a program. Digital platforms measure audience engagement as something they can market to advertisers, which encourages the practice. This also puts some responsibility on the part of consumers to positively influence the content they help shape.

As television and broadband internet services merge, it is worth noting that the prediction of the union of television and computers is as old as the personal computer. Internet-ready televisions might have become more popular than add-on streaming devices such as Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Roku, or Google Chromecast, but television manufacturers hesitated to add full internet functionality for fear of viruses. Also, consumer demand for connected TVs was not strong enough for manufacturers to offer built-in technology. For the consumer, it matters little whether the television connects directly to the internet or whether a relatively inexpensive add-on is needed. In whatever manner you connect to converged digital video content — that is, the media products formerly known as television — you have access to perhaps the most influential cultural tool in history.

The Battle of YouTube, TV and Netflix

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INTRODUCTION

The consumption of audiovisual content is rapidly changing. While traditional television (TV) still dominates the consumption of audiovisual contents of an older age audience, the younger ages already devote more time to consuming audiovisual contents via online streaming services and video portals, such as Netflix or YouTube (also referred to as video-on-demand; VoD). This development is also driven by an increased use of mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, allowing for considerably enhanced options of consuming audiovisual contents in not only the living room at home but also virtually everywhere and every time. User figures and viewing numbers from various countries show that particularly younger generations extensively use portals such as YouTube and watch online streaming services such as Netflix, whereas older age groups (50 + years) significantly less

switch on these services (see, inter alia, for Germany Lindstädt-Dreusicke & Budzinski 2020, for Scandinavia Audience Project 2019, for the UK Fisher 2019, and for the US Richter 2019). At the same time, traditional TV is not only relatively stronger with the older population (e.g., due to a lack of mobile consumption of non-TV contents, such as YouTube videos) but also in absolute terms. In 2019, the average daily viewing time of TV in the 50 + age groups amounted to 318 min per day, whereas the 30–49 years watched 176 min per day and the 14–29 years only 82 min per day. In addition, consumption time in the older age group slightly increased, whereas it decreased in the younger age clusters, particularly within the 30–49 years (− 18 min per day compared to previous year) (Statista 2020). Thus, the figures do not allow disentangling how much of the dynamics results from complementary services in the mobile online world and how much from viewers abandoning traditional TV and switching to various VoD formats.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=408#oembed-1

The currently relevant online services differ in terms of business models from both traditional TV and from each other. In terms of business models, advertised-financed streaming services (AVoD; e.g., YouTube) can be distinguished from paid-for (by users) streaming services (PVoD; e.g., Netflix) (Lindstädt-Dreusicke & Budzinski 2020). It is possible that streaming services mix these

models (i.e., hybrid models, such as Spotify is doing in respect to audio streaming services). Obviously, business models will develop and change along with the high dynamics of the markets in question. Despite the differences in content, business models and treatment by available empirical studies, at the end of the day, all of TV, AVoD and PVoD are offering audiovisual contents to the consumers. In the light of the increasing importance of online streaming services vis-à-vis traditional TV, therefore, the questions arise whether relevant competitive pressure between the services (in our study represented by YouTube, Netflix, TV) exists.

THEORY: COMPETITION AMONG DIFFERENT CHANNELS OF AUDIOVISUAL CONTENT

The ongoing process of digitization and the spread of broadband internet technology considerably increased the option for consumers to watch moving audiovisual contents. That traditional TV—irrespective of its transmission media (terrestrial, cable, satellite, online, etc.)—is now facing video-on-demand services changes the competitive landscape. This may be good news, since in many national television markets (including Germany), concentration and (a lack of) competition have been continuous concerns (Budzinski & Wacker 2007; Bundeskartellamt 2011a, 2011b, 2015; OFCOM 2018). However, the competitive interrelations between TV and VoD as well as among different types of VoD services are subject to controversial discussion[Footnote 3]. Thus, what are the theoretical reasons about factors influencing the competitive interrelation of different channels transmitting audiovisual contents (TV, different types of VoD)?

Fundamental differences in content

Fundamental differences in the type of content that is broadcasted may limit the intensity of competition between Netflix, YouTube,

and TV. An often-raised objection claims a service such as YouTube (AVoD) does not compete with the likes of traditional TV and PVoDs, such as Netflix, because its content is predominantly non-professional and/or non-commercial (inter alia, Bruns 2008; Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010; Bundeskartellamt 2011a, 2015; Dennhardt 2014; Fuchs 2014). According to this view, YouTube mainly represents a social media platform, where users upload content for other users (cat videos, fail videos, etc.), i.e., a sort of user-exchange of contents, and professional contents from business companies are in the clear minority. The nature of YouTube's early 'user generated content' (from users for users) has changed a lot and initial 'private' uploaders professionalized towards being active content providers, offering regular video uploads regarding specific topics according to the channel's media concept (Döring 2014; Budzinski and Gaenssle 2020). Notwithstanding the still existing type of non-professional content, this trend of professionalization points towards the significant turnovers and revenues that content providers such as so-called social media stars[Footnote 4] earn through participation on YouTube's advertisement revenues as well as through product placements—with the latter further emphasizing the commercial nature of the content supply (Budzinski and Gaenssle 2020; Gaenssle and Budzinski 2021). Nowadays, a significant share, if not most of the views on YouTube, fall on commercial content, most of which is professionally produced; the most popular 20% receive 97% of views (Ding et al. 2011) and 10–30% of videos have fewer than ten views (Chowdhury & Makaroff 2013).

A related aspect refers to content differences in terms of the extent of exclusive and/or original content. While this used to be a domain of traditional television, Netflix and Amazon Prime Video for instance, as well as new players, such as Disney + and Apple TV + , aim at attracting their audience especially with original (own produced) or exclusive content (e.g., Netflix with *House of Cards*

or *Orange is the New Black*) (inter alia, Aguiar and Waldfogel 2018; Benes 2019).

Content differences corresponding to different purposes of usage

Content differences between the different types of services that relate to different consumption purposes represent a second aspect. While YouTube is known to predominantly provide shorter videos (e.g., short clips, music videos & social media star entertainment), both Netflix and TV focus on longer pieces, such as movies, series, and shows. These content differences may go along with different ways of consumption. For quick information (specific tutorials/help, etc.) or social network elements (i.e., follow stars or friends, sharing content), YouTube meets the consumers' preferences, whereas for full-length video content the choice falls on the other types of services. Therefore, YouTube may be more relevant for purposes, such as bypassing waiting or traveling times, covering smaller breaks and shorter entertainment spaces, etc., whereas PVoDs, such as Netflix and TV, are preferred for filling an evening of entertainment or a free Sunday afternoon, for instance. As such, the two service types would rather complement each other than compete with each other. These differences in contents and consumption could reflect in service usages different times of day: Netflix and TV should be the prime-time competitors according to this view, whereas YouTube is more a media for "in-between" moments throughout the rest of the day. However, with the professionalization of AVoD content, average video length is developing towards traditional video formats. A study conducted by the search engine Pex (Turek 2019) shows that average YouTube videos are 11.7 min long (December 2018), with popular categories reaching up to 25 min on average (gaming 24.7 min; film & animation 19.2 min). Moreover, serial consumption of videos and so-called binge watching (Rubenking et al. 2018; Gaenssle & Kunz-

Kaltenhäuser 2020) allows consumers to watch hours of video content without interruption—a phenomenon that is further fueled by individualized recommendation systems and auto-play modes (for instance, for music videos).[Footnote 5] Independent of the single video length, this may result in hours of successive consumption; accumulating to a total consumption length, which is easily comparable to full-length movies. These developments show converging trends and increasing comparability of services.

Linearity, devices, and social network elements

VoD, in general, differs from TV in that there is no fixed program schedule as a take-it-or-leave offer for consumers. Instead, VoD consumers can watch all available contents whenever they want and compile their "program" by themselves. The media literature calls the schedule-bound service linear and the on-demand type non-linear (inter alia, Berman et al. 2009; Kazakova & Cauberghe 2013; Steemers 2014; van den Bulck & Enli 2014; Simons 2015; Enli & Syvertsen 2016). A further difference may relate to the device of usage. One expects consumers of traditional television programs or Netflix (PVoD) to prefer large television screens, while YouTube-style AVoD services are mostly watched on mobile devices (laptops, tablets and, particularly, smartphones). However, due to the possibility of downloading content to mobile devices and watching it 'on the road', consumers may start to watch their favorite shows—regardless of the original service (AVoD, PVoD or TV)—while, e.g., traveling to work. Eventually, social networking elements, such as commenting, sharing or liking content, may represent a differentiator. This social media function is usually not possible for linear TV, although broadcasters recently started to increase audience engagement, e.g., in live shows with audience questions or the possibility of writing (WhatsApp) messages. Nevertheless, due to the nature of the non-linear availability of content, audience ratings, comments, and shares are possible on

AVoD and PVoD. Especially AVoD services such as YouTube or Twitch entail networking elements and active 'below video commenting behavior'. However, former non-digital players in the market also adapt to new possibilities and try to increase audience engagement.

The economics of attention

Overall, the different services seem to converge and try to use all possible ways to increase the time recipients spent consuming their content. Attention may be a scarce resource and, in the face of information overflow due to omnipresent mobile access to the internet, a relevant one for online content consumption (Falkinger 2008; Anderson and da Palma 2012; Evans 2013; Boik et al. 2017; Gaenssle 2021). According to the economics of attention, all content providers compete for the scarce attention of the users who can spend every minute of their attention only once. Therefore, if a user opts for watching YouTube videos, she cannot spend this attention to a Netflix serial anymore and vice versa (opportunity costs). Given that many users spend a relevant time of any day for working, sleeping, and other activities (childcare, sports, etc.), competition for the remaining time for watching audiovisual online content may be intense. Furthermore, even though there are differences in detail, a large part of content and consumption regarding all three types of services is about entertainment and, thus, referring to the same underlying intention or want of the consumer.

From this theoretical perspective, the case for TV and Netflix-style services being in competition with each other appears to be straightforward. In a way, services such as Netflix may be viewed to take the place of TV, entailing the advantages of traditional TV and adding the luxury to be non-linear, so that users do not depend on a given program schedule anymore, but can cherry pick their times and contents (Tefertiller 2018; Budzinski and Lindstädt-

Dreusicke 2020; Fudurić et al. 2020). Therefore, it may mainly be a generation effect separating the two types of services with older generations just being slower to adapt to a superior new good (Lindstädt-Dreusicke and Budzinski 2020).

However, while enhanced choice options will mostly benefit consumers' preferences, there can be exceptions to that. Choosing does require investing cognitive capacity and in some situations in life—like the end of an exhausting day, where someone just looks for some relaxing entertainment before going to sleep or background entertainment without active engagement (like radio consumption is often done)—users may not want to spend cognitive resources on low-involvement routine consumption (Vanberg 2002; Budzinski 2003). Then, a linear service such as TV may be superior, since it demands less cognitive engagement and decision effort.[Footnote 6] Moreover, regular television consumers might enjoy the feeling of being connected to society, watching what other people nationwide are also watching, i.e., networking and commonality effects as well as cultural inclusion by, e.g., national popular TV shows. Finally, the bundling of information and entertainment, e.g., news and prime-time movie as a bundle, may be valued by consumers, and be very tiresome to self-compile (or even impossible due to lack of supply) on PVoD and AVoD.

Notwithstanding, the newer services entail a tool that may serve a similar purpose. The algorithm-based recommendation service of Netflix, YouTube and others, may substitute for the linear program schedule in cases of routine and low-involvement consumption. Based on individual data, recommender systems provide content suggestions for (indecisive) consumers. To simplify the demand-process and lower the cost of active consumption decisions, services use auto-play modes (immediately starting the next video), content suggestions, trailers, etc. (see for a detailed analysis Budzinski et al. 2021).

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Digitalization and the Filmed Entertainment Industry

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DIGITALIZATION AND THE FILM INDUSTRY

The film industry rarely involves film anymore. The cameras and microphones use sensors. They translate the images and sounds into bits and bytes. Directors and editors manipulate the raw footage on computers, rather than with light boxes and scissors. Finished "films" get distributed as large files rather than as giant spools. Analog has given way to digital.

Although the film industry has witnessed many technological changes—the introduction of sound, of color, the invention of television—digitalization, more than any of these others, has unleashed a radical transformation of the industry. It has changed not just the nature of production, but also the businesses of distribution and of exhibition. It has challenged decades-long industry rules and routines.

COVID-19, if anything, has accelerated this transformation. When the pandemic kept people home, streaming services came to the

rescue, providing audiences with filmed entertainment on their televisions, computers, tablets, and other digital devices. Since the advent of digitalization in the late 1990s, some of the more radical reconfigurations of the industry had been delayed by those with entrenched interests in the old system. But the pandemic has swept their objections aside.

Major players have repositioned themselves, re-envisioning their business models. After nearly a century of reaching audiences through middlemen, Disney became the first studio to offer their content direct to the consumer. As of December 2020, only one Hollywood studio (Sony) has yet to launch its own streaming service. Hollywood studios and their parent conglomerates have even begun to premiere their movies on streaming platforms. Universal/Comcast's "Trolls World Tour" first played in video-on-demand. It made almost $100 million in pay-per-view, with the lion's share going straight to the studio (Whitten 2020). Warner/AT&T announced that their entire slate of blockbuster productions in 2021 would open on the firm's streaming service, HBO Max, on the same dates that they began to play in theaters.

Studios and theaters are not the only players affected by digitalization. The traditional model for television—often referred to as "linear" television—where a single uniform signal goes out to all viewers, mixing content with advertisements, has also been in decline. Digital distribution has made it easier and cheaper to offer the content each viewer wants, when they want it. Streaming services, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, offer all-you-can-view buffets of video content, all with little or no advertising.

Digitalization has also been disruptive to academic research on the film industry. Decades of insight into the factors behind the success and failure of filmed entertainment had been garnered from studying the old model, one that had been dominant for more than half a century.[Footnote 1] But as that model evolves, many of the patterns that had been found no longer hold. Film has become a dichotomous business, of tentpoles and niche titles. Anything

in-between hardly exists anymore. People consume more video entertainment than ever, but they do so in different ways. The strategic landscape has shifted, forcing changes across all segments of the industry's value chain.

Historically, companies in the film industry in the USA have operated in only one of these segments. In part, that reflects the long-lasting implications of the Paramount decision, an antitrust settlement that required film studios to divest from theaters (Conant 1960). But in part, it also reflects some of the underlying economics of these segments (Caves 2000).

But the relatively clear separation of activities has been under threat from digitalization. In some cases, distributors have moved into the production of content. Witness Netflix, Amazon, and now also Apple developing their own "originals"—series, movies, and shows distributed, often exclusively, over their own streaming services. Content producers, meanwhile, have been diversifying downstream. These efforts began as collaborative efforts. Movielink, for example, offered video-on-demand from the libraries of all of the studies (Hennig-Thurau & Houston 2019). But increasingly the studios and their parents have chosen to go it alone. Disney actually cut its lucrative ties with streaming services to offer its content exclusively via its own streaming service.

In the film business, putting together a hit movie has always been considered more art than science. The story, the director's vision, the performances of and chemistry between many actors and actresses, the cinematography, and the music all matter. Having a hit, however, depends not just on these individual elements but also on whether they fit together (De Vany & Walls 1996).

Behrens et al. (2021), however, describe the many ways in which the digital revolution, particularly in terms of the availability of granular viewing data, has begun to interject more "science" into this production process. Information on what people watch, on where in the movie or serial they stop watching it, and on what

people watch next provides producers with a far better picture of the demand side. Combined with a variety of analytic techniques, consultants have been developing better ways of analyzing plot concepts and scripts before they get selected and finalized, talent before actors and actresses get cast, audience fit before engaging in marketing campaigns, and expected sales before exhibition. Interestingly, platforms, such as Amazon Prime and Netflix, potentially have an advantage in developing and using these tools as they collect and control access to much of the relevant data.

Hollywood "studios" also produce films, but their perspective differs from that of individual producers in terms of scale and scope. On the scale side, studios produce portfolios (or slates) of films. They often allocate billions of dollars to "franchise" films (e.g., Spider-Man or Harry Potter), expensive productions beyond the reach of most individual producers. Those "tentpole" productions have been found to have higher odds of success. But they are not fail-proof. On the scope side, in addition to producing content, studios also promote films and contract with theaters, television stations, and streaming services for the delivery of content to the consumer (Vogel 2020).

Hadida et al. (2021) argue that the digital age has challenged the core institutional logic for these studios. Institutional logic refers to a way of thinking about the problem. One firm, for example, might focus on minimizing production costs, whereas another might try to maximize customer satisfaction. For decades, the Hollywood studios have operated with an eye to maximizing box office performance, in other words ticket sales in theaters. That has governed their choice of release dates, the way in which they advertise and promote films, and even the terms in the contracts they sign with producers, television stations, and streaming services. Hadida et al. label this approach a "commitment" logic.

By contrast, streaming services have adopted a "convenience" logic. They have almost all converged on a subscription model. Most of what they do, therefore, has been in the name of increasing

subscriptions. This logic has led these services to accumulate large libraries of films and television shows, even though many of these offerings have limited appeal. It has led them to adopt evaluation and recommendation systems to help subscribers find additional content. And most recently, it has led them to develop their own proprietary content to attract more users to their platforms.

Which "logic" will win? Hadida et al. (2021) discuss a number of potential scenarios. Some sort of blending seems highly likely. Studios, for example, may embrace the analytics described by Behrens et al. (2021) but continue to focus on big-budget films designed for the big screen. Streaming services, meanwhile, will probably continue their forays into the production of content and begin to release some of these films in theaters, perhaps even contracting with the studios to handle the distribution.

Theaters, as exhibitors of movies, have traditionally been the main setting in which people have consumed films (Vogel 2020). But that has been changing. People increasingly watch filmed entertainment not just on their televisions but on a variety of mobile digital devices. COVID-19 has, at least temporarily, accelerated this trend. Movie theaters, in response, have been adapting, adopting their operations to differentiate further the experience of the big screen from that offered by streaming to digital devices.

Weinberg et al. (2021) discuss opportunities that digitalization offers to theater owners. Online sales can smooth the purchase process. Loyalty programs can help them to provide more targeted pricing and promotion, again revealing the importance of analytics (cf. Behrens et al. 2021). But digitalization also enables more subtle adaptations. Digital projectors, for example, allow multiplexes to allocate firms to individual theaters at a moment's notice. When they have multiple theater sizes available, multiplexes can better match supply to demand, improving their capacity utilization.

As another major distribution channel of the analog age of film, "linear" television, initially broadcast over the air, later piped

through cables, has enjoyed a long run of success. In the traditional model, this success has relied on selling the attention of viewers to advertisers. Consumers pay for programming with their time. But digitalization increasingly allows viewers to watch what they want, when they want, fast-forwarding through the commercials. Advertisers consequently have been allocating less and less of their budgets to the medium. Although linear television has not disappeared, it represents a shrinking share of filmed entertainment (Vogel, 2020).

Schauerte et al. (2021) consider the options linear television firms have to adapt to the digital age. Should they (1) remain linear-only television companies; (2) combine the linear offering with advertising-based video-on-demand services; (3) combine the linear offering with subscription-based video-on-demand services, or (4) combine the linear offering with both kinds of video-on-demand services. Building on the resource-based theory of the firm, the authors examine which sets of market-oriented and internal strategic resources each strategic option requires. Interestingly, as much as Hadida et al. (2021) argue that we should expect a blending, Schauerte et al. (2021) argue that linear television can remain relevant in the digital age, by leveraging synergies between linear and video-on-demand services.

Kübler et al. (2021) evaluate the strategies of digital subscription platforms. Hadida et al. (2021) called attention to the differing logics of these platforms, oriented toward subscriber growth and retention. This article explores the strategic implications of that logic. Treating the platforms as a form of product bundling, they provide a framework for assessing the value of each piece of content. Content can create value in a variety of ways, by bringing consumers to the platform, by retaining them, or by providing opportunities for advertising or cross-selling. Understanding that perspective can help traditional firms understand the streamers' logic, perhaps smoothing future cooperation, or allowing them to manage better their own streaming services.

Finance and economics

One of the fundamental questions from a finance and economics perspective has been the risk and return characteristics of the film industry. Films have historically been a business of hits and misses, with far more misses than hits. Because of the highly skewed nature of the returns, these hits account for the vast majority of the profits in the industry (De Vany & Walls 1996).

Much research has therefore focused on the nature of the risk-return trade-off in the industry (e.g., De Vany & Walls 1999, 2002; Palia et al. 2008; Ravid & Basuory 2004). One of the most consistent findings, dating back to Ravid (1999), has been that sequels and franchises (but not remakes) may be the holy grail of the industry, with projects featuring lower risk *and* higher return (see also Bohnenkamp et al 2015; Filson & Havlicek 2018; Palia et al. 2008). Filmmakers can use information from the sales of a successful early film to decide whether or not to produce the next one, thereby exercising a real option.

Streaming platforms appear to have learned this lesson. As they moved into production, they have focused more on creating serialized content than on stand-alone movies. But streaming platforms often commit to producing an entire series upfront. That has advantages in terms of reducing the costs of production. But it also carries a price-tag: producers cannot capitalize on the information gained from an earlier installment to determine whether or not to produce the next one, losing the real option value of serial content in the process.

Production companies and studios that sell movies outright to streaming platforms also transfer both the risk of failure and the benefit of success to a platform. This arrangement will change the risk and return from their point of view. It will probably affect the mix of movies studios would like to produce. High-risk blockbusters, for example, may seem less attractive. Platforms may dictate the types of movies that they will buy (this already happens

to some extent), but platforms have a very different risk profile. They may opt for sure-bet crowd pleasers, but, as discussed in Kübler et al. (2021), platforms can potentially profit also from films even if they appeal strongly only to a niche audience.

One effect of these decisions has been a blurring of the boundaries between made-for-television movies, television series, and theatrical movies. Theatrical movies have been differentiated from other forms of filmed entertainment. Theatrical movies have had larger budgets, and higher production values, than TV productions and were intended for the big screen. However, current serialized content often has the same production budgets and values once reserved for the theater.

Digitalization also promises to raise interesting questions about contract design and industry structure (Chisholm 1997; Filson et al. 2005; Palia et al. 2008). For instance, contracts with exhibitors will have to adjust as studios no longer have an interest in guaranteeing exhibition windows. These changes will affect the incentives and the entire business model of movie exhibition.

Another interesting aspect of contract design relates to pricing. Box office sales have traditionally been an important leading indicator of value. These sales have therefore helped set prices for subsequent channels, such as international markets and home video. Everyone had access to the same information; they agreed on its validity. But in streaming, performance data remain proprietary, introducing information asymmetry into any negotiations with other parties.

Finally, the largest question concerns the structure of the industry as a whole. The new streaming services have begun to compete on exclusive content. Will this trend continue, or will contracts allow multiple aggregators to compete over offering the same films to consumers, either on a pay-per-view basis or as part of a subscription service. The “new” film industry may therefore provide a rich environment for future research in industrial organization economics and finance.

Marketing

Marketing scholars study the creation of value through transactions by and relationships with market partners. Consumer preferences play a central role. Those companies that can best address consumers' preferences create the most value.

Digitalization, however, has been fundamentally changing these preferences. It has influenced the types of filmed entertainment that consumers want. It has changed the channels they favor for consuming these offerings. It has affected the prices they consider appropriate. And it has altered the ways in which and extent to which they attend to messages from marketers and from their fellow consumers. Here are some of the most pressing, yet underesearched, marketing issues that this transformation has raised.

Creation. Digitalization provides those who tell stories via film and those who produce them with powerful tools not only to analyze what kinds of narratives work (see Behrens et al. 2021), but also to visualize these stories. Digital technologies can bring beloved characters, heroes, and villains to the screen in unprecedented ways. Consider the creation of novel footage of the deceased Carrie Fisher's Princess Leia from bits and bytes stirred with some machine learning. The technical possibilities seem limitless. But who owns the rights? And how will consumers' react? So far, audiences appear torn between adoration and anger. Mori's (2012) "uncanny valley" theory might serve as a powerful starting point for a better understanding of their reception.

Digitalization also offers other technological opportunities to filmmakers, such as virtual reality (VR) and interactive storytelling. VR has been a disappointment so far. But its immersive powers appear so enormous that the entertainment industry, and its scholars, should find new ways to create value with the technology. Behrens et al. (2021) suggest that the "killer app" for VR might come from combining the technology with video-game-like interactive

storytelling. What business models might best fit such an application?

Distribution. Or will VR become a distribution channel? One could imagine VR being used to create digital venues in which we (or our avatars) meet and watch movies together—a high-tech variant of Amazon's "Watch Party" feature. Would such a service have mass appeal that might substitute for going to the theater? More generally, how will VR-based products and services interact with the existing business models in the industry? Should industry incumbents invest in their development, despite their potentially cannibalizing effects? Or should they leave them for outsiders, such as Facebook (who owns the current VR device leader, Oculus)?

Even leaving aside the possibility of VR venues, digitalization raises other distribution-related questions. How can studios optimize their release strategies given the new plethora-of-channels environment? With the implosion of the rigid windowing model—with a clear sequencing of releases in various channels—scholars might want to direct their attention toward a contingency approach for film distribution.

Pricing. Discredited by the "nobody knows anything" mantra of the analog era, pricing has played only a supporting role in film research. But the rise of subscription models, with bundling becoming dominant, may allow pricing to headline. Will single purchases persist in a world dominated by subscriptions? How should studios price "premium" video-on-demand offerings, which can generate incremental revenue but potentially at the expense of the value of the subscription bundle? After charging extra for Mulan, Disney released Soul as part of their basic fee. Under what conditions can video-on-demand still add value to consumers—and firms?

A HAPPY(?) ENDING

The film industry has weathered the introduction of many

innovations, from feature-length films and sound, to stars and color, to competition from television and wide-release strategies. But the shift from analog to digital has had more profound and wider-ranging implications for the industry than any of these earlier innovations. Despite the fact that this digital revolution began more than 20 years ago, producers, distributors, exhibitors, and others continue to adapt to it. They have discovered and experimented with a range of business models and practices enabled by digitalization. It remains far from certain what will prevail and what will disappear.

As much as digitalization challenges the accumulated wisdom of the film business, these are exciting times for scholars of the industry who continue to find ways to shed light on, and guide, the industry's future paths. Because one thing can be taken for granted: Humans' hunger for filmed entertainment will persist, digital times or not!

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The Netflix Nexus

"We are free only insofar as we exercise control over what people know about us, and in what circumstances they come to know it."
-Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*

THE GOLDEN GOOSE:

In October 2006, Netflix announced an open competition with a grand prize of $1,000,000 in exchange for rights to a content filtering algorithm that was 10% more accurate than Netflix' current Cinematch model. Three years later in September 2009, Team "Bellkor's Pragmatic Chaos" used a matrix factorization model to successfully win the contest. It is this model that Netflix bases its continuously improved upon algorithm and is the foundation for the platform's streaming recommendation services. Today, users can find thousands of personalized content recommendations within the Netflix app, a place where Netflix itself has deemed "binge-worthy". Not only did Netflix reshape the content distribution model by elevating streaming services directly to consumers, it also revolutionized how television is given and received. Previously, television distribution occurred on a serial model, where consumers would wait weekly for new releases.

Netflix, on the other hand, completely abandoned this model and instead drew inspiration from television box sets and dropped entire seasons of shows in one day— hence the idea of "binge-worthy content". With its algorithm technology, Netflix was also able to provide users the "best options" to pick and choose from. With its greatly expansive library and its content personalization, the Netflix name has become synonymous with the idea of "infinite choice". But this begs the question, to what extent do users of the application actually have a right to choose? When it comes to Netflix, the answer is very little. Its algorithmic technology utilizes not just individual user data in order to suggest content, but also relies on pattern recognition of the collective in order to make user aware suggestions. This allows Netflix to identify corresponding similarities between users and make better, more accurate suggestions. With the ability to make these identifications, Netflix can articulate a user selection that hides "unrelated" works. With over 5,000 titles available within the library, only a select 3,000 are shown on a user's home page. This suggests that users miss out on roughly 2,000 available titles that Netflix has deemed irrelevant to the individual—so when choosing from suggested titles, users are making "choices" from a pool of content that has already been decided for them.

1. MONEY MAKER

In 2020, Netflix earned roughly $24.5 billion in revenue. This is a drastic change from their 2007 revenue reports of $1.2 billion—the same year Netflix first launched streaming services. However, both these numbers reflect the company's high retention rates, as Netflix receives all profits from streaming subscriptions alone. Being a commercial-free distributor of both third party and in-house content, Netflix relies on the subscription model especially considering their aversion to paid product placement. Proxy for paid product placement, Netflix operates on co-promotional

marketing campaigns where advertisers will promote Netflix titles in exchange for embedded promotion within said title. For consumers, this means a commercial free viewing experience. For Netflix, it means total control over content production. Without the dependency of paid advertisements, Netflix is no longer bound to the constraints of an advertisers critique and can instead focus on their profit model; retention. With this in mind, it is principal to approach the Netflix sphere with a clear understanding of their intent to obtain and retain consumers for as long as possible. Netflix does not have commercial interest, they have retention interest and the algorithmic models they design and use are a direct reflection of this objective.

2. "ARE YOU STILL WATCHING?"

Netflix, like most tech companies, boasts a large portfolio of 962 patents to their name. These patents refer to various technologies used by the company, but this essay will explicitly focus on a select 18 that directly affect the user recommendation system. Found in the Appendix below, these 18 patents give Netflix rights to the inventions of a multitude of algorithms best described by Carlos A. Gomez-Uribe, former Vice President of Netflix Program Innovation: Personalization Algorithms, and Neil Hunt, Former Netflix Chief Product Officer. In the duo's 2015 paper, The Netflix Recommender System: Algorithms, Business Value, and Innovation, they write, "the time that our members spend viewing Netflix content—is strongly correlated with improving retention" and thus "Our recommender system is used on most screens of the Netflix product beyond the homepage, and in total influences choice for about 80% of hours streamed at Netflix". Their paper describes nine separate algorithms with six specifically acting as recommender programs for browsing. The Personalized Video Ranker (PVR) algorithm, for example, organizes the selection of

suggested content within genre rows, so that each individual user will have their own option of content to choose from within a range of genre titles. On a broader note, the Top-N Video Rank algorithm provides the "best" content selection out of the range of the entire catalog for a user, while the Trending Now algorithm selects the most "trendy" options that also fits the user's preferences. The Continue Watching algorithm recognizes when a user has "abandoned" certain content and will sort titles based on how likely it is the user will decidedly continue streaming it. On the other hand, Video-Video Similarity algorithms suggest content similar to that already viewed by users, within the "Because You Watched" rows of the browser. Finally, the Page Generation algorithm generates what rows will be presented to users during their browsing experience. Each of these algorithms, while somewhat similar in technique, draw upon different data sets in order to generate their suggestions allowing optimal output for consumers. An item of interest, however, are the discrepancies between Gomez-Uribe and Hunt's work and the patents held by Netflix, specifically that of the Markov Chain. As described in Row 17 of Exhibit A, Netflix holds a patent to collect explicit and implicit information in order to determine preferred metadata tags—in short, assigned tags used to identify user interests—in order to provide better recommendations. Further, as described in Row 9 of Exhibit A, Netflix holds a patent to utilize these metadata tags in conjunction with regression models to accurately increase the likelihood of consumer interactions with media. This is done through the use of Markov chain transition probabilities. Markov chains are used to recognize the decisions a consumer will make in the future, point j, as defined by the given option of the present, point i. In other terms, the probability of a user interacting with specific content in the future is defined by what content the user is shown first, with the first content shown acting as a dependent variable. The lack of mention by Gomez-Uribe and Hunt is most likely due to the patents filing coming two years after their

publication date and is likely a reflection of recent innovations of the Netflix algorithms. However, these patents are still key to note considering their explicit suggestion of Netflix' ability to sway consumer choice while utilizing the Markov Chain. The power to accurately predict what a user needs to be shown first in order to choose the next selection, gives Netflix the opportunity to make content viewing decisions for consumers. Referring back to Netflix' co-promotion marketing strategies for product placement, should Netflix choose to strike a deal with an advertiser to increase user viewings of certain product placement embedded content in exchange for greater promotion of title by said advertiser, what exactly is stopping them from doing so? Whether or not Netflix uses the Markov chain patent technology to do this is unclear, but it is a reality that could readily be used to their liking. It calls to question again, to what extent are users of Netflix given a right to choose? While it is arguably a consumer's choice when making content selection, are they really given a fair opportunity? Through the use of data collection, Netflix algorithms are able to identify patterns within a user that the user themself may not be able to identify. Further, as shown by the Markov Chains, Netflix has the power to strategize the presentation of these recognized patterns in a way that identifies user's susceptibility to decision making. Netflix is often described as the conqueror of "decision fatigue" due to their personalized recommendations, but even further, it might be because Netflix has already made the decision for you.

DISASTER CAPITALIST

The Netflix algorithm matters because Netflix is actively pursuing an experience of network based television, ad-free. There is a clear push to emphasize Netflix Original content, even so far as a 2021 promotion of one Netflix Original film released each week of the

year. Even further from this, consumers are already seeing the genesis of streaming bundles like the Disney+, Hulu and ESPN+ package. It would not be farfetched to assume that there is a possibility in the near future of consumers spending roughly $60 a month, an average estimate for the most basic cable package, for a streaming bundle that contains a multitude of platforms, "ad-free". Figures 3.1 to 3.4 are publicly tweeted statements made by individuals either calling for, or predicting the emergence of bundled streaming.

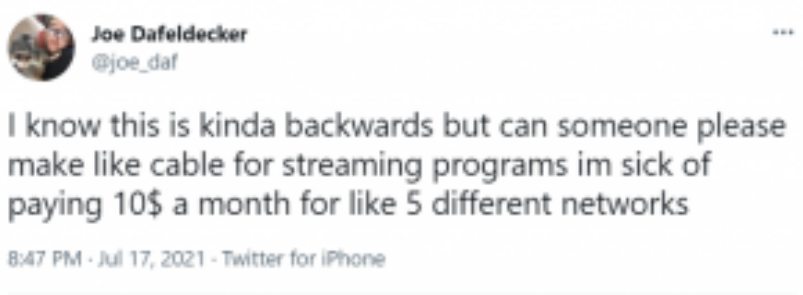

Figure 3.1

Figure 3.2

Figure 3.4.

Complications with this commentary arise because streaming is not cable. Cable television, as noted in Exhibit B, offers a wide range of channels within each bundle, with the highest offering 425 channels. This is 425 separate channels, many of which belong to separate networks, with network related content. In a cable environment, users are more limited in their choices of content, when to view it and its relevance. A lack in algorithmic technology means that cable television can not personalize content for individual consumers nor predict the likelihood of user interaction, and yet Figure 3.5 suggests that the difference between streaming and cable is "cool clunky hardware that shows me the time". This demonstrates a gap between the public's understanding of what streaming is, the technologies it uses and the power that it holds that cable does not operate with. The "death of cable" harbors risks due to the extensive personalization technologies upheld by streaming services. When media is individualized to excessive

levels, people are no longer exposed to a common world view. Users are instead provided with and associate with mindsets and ideologies that only confirm previous beliefs. Netflix and other similar streaming companies are not looking to expand worldviews, they are seeking out the algorithms that will maximize profits and expand user retention. Without regulation these companies have no motive to seek out any alternatives and the four horsemen of the streaming apocalypse—Netflix, Amazon, Disney and Warner Media—will ultimately control the narrative of all future television to come. If this means doing away with a users right to choice in exchange for higher profits, a public misperception seems like the perfect veil to hide behind.

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Appendix:

Exhibit B: Chart depicting cable bundle prices from top cable providers.

Which TV service provider is the best?

	Provider	Monthly price	Available channels	Learn more
dish	DISH	$64.99–$99.99*	290	View Plans
DIRECTV	DIRECTV	$64.99–$134.99†	330	View Plans
xfinity	Xfinity Tv	$49.99–$89.49‡	220	View Plans
Spectrum	Spectrum TV	$44.99–$94.99*	200	View Plans
SuddenLink	Suddenlink TV	$58–$124.99	340	View Plans
cox	Cox Tv	$50–$130^	250	View Plans
verizon	Verizon Fios TV	$56–$96*	425	View Plans
fubo TV	Fubo	$33–$79.99**	158	View Plans
YouTubeTV	YouTube Tv	$64.99**	85	View Plan
hulu	Hulu + Live TV	$64.99–$70.99**	65	View Plans
sling	Sling	$35–$50	50	View Plans
AT&T tv	AT&T TV	$64.99–$139.99**	140	View Plans

Data as of 10/28/20. Offers and availability vary by location and are subject to change.
Data effective 10/28/20. Offers and availability vary by location and are subject to change.
** For 24 months with a 2-year agreement and eAutoPay.*
† For 12 months with a 2-year contract, paperless bill & autopay. Price increases for months 13-24.
‡ For the first 12 months. Some packages require a 1-year contract.
^ For the first 12 months.
+ eAutoPay + taxes. Equipment charges may apply.
*** Data as of 10/28/20. Offers and availability vary by location and are subject to change.*

Acting Performance in Quality Television

No, I am not talking about the quality of your television screen. Quality television is not about watching TV in HD with the biggest screen size, it's about the kind of TV shows that you watch. With the Emmy Awards coming up, it's only natural to take a look at what quality television is and why it is the best.

WHAT IS QUALITY TELEVISION?

Have you ever wondered why some shows feel like they are at a higher level than other shows? You are probably watching a show that can be defined as quality television. Quality television is the idea that television shows are of a higher quality if they have more complex narratives, mise-en-scènes, bigger budgets, successful well-known actors, etc. Quality television shows are shot in ways that compare to how films are shot. They have a higher style and usually fewer cameras than most shows that are not "quality". Quality television shows are often associated with realism and/or darker themes, like sex, money, and violence, and are geared toward a more "highbrow" audience. By "highbrow" I mean the richer, whiter, and straighter male types of audiences who are more likely to enjoy male dominated stories about sex, money, and violence. Quality television shows earn more recognition and

the most respectable award nominations because they have bigger audiences, and more money in their budgets to produce the best stories, cast ensembles, etc. The most noticeable detail from quality television shows is the higher caliber of acting and actors who star in the shows. This part of the overall performance of quality television is the most talked about and arguably the most important part of any show. If a quality television show does not have high-quality acting or good actors in it, then it is not seen as a good show, and is not given the recognition that the producers and creators of the show desire. Quality television shows require good acting performances to maintain their "quality".

WHY IS QUALITY TV SO GOOD?

Quality television shows can be found anywhere these days, but it all started with HBO. HBO became huge in the 90s with its original programming that premiered throughout the 90s. HBO used to, and still does, pride themselves on the quality of their programming that their slogan used to be "It's not TV. It's HBO" (HBO). HBO believed in their quality productions so much that they advertised themselves as better than all TV. In the article "Boundary Collisions in HBO-BBC Transnational Coproduction: Rome and Parade's End," Robin Nelson writes that "HBO distinguished itself, and transformed the television industry, in establishing a market for distinctive and aspirational TV series based on good writing under the creative freedom of a premium subscription channel not beholden to advertisers' sensibilities" (149). This shows that HBO was the original subscription service that started the movement into quality television shows. With the move towards better writing and more aspirational TV series, HBO initiated the start of quality television.

Some of HBO's most successful and notable quality TV shows came out in the late 90s. This elevated HBO's status and convinced other networks to follow suit and create their own quality

television. With the move into the 21st century, more and more channels and networks debuted their own quality television shows. Nowadays, quality television can be found anywhere, and anyone can access it with almost every streaming service having their own original quality television shows to stream. The introduction of streaming services allowed for quality television to expand away from cable and into the hands of more consumers. Quality television used to rely on corporations advertising their products during the commercial breaks in-between scenes in quality TV shows. Now that streaming services have a lot of money, the creators of quality TV shows have bigger budgets and do not have to worry about which advertisers need to advertise their products in their show and they do not have to worry about organizing their episodes in ways that make room for commercial breaks. Putting the advertising concerns aside, creators of quality TV shows often have another main worry in mind. Casting their shows with the best actors is what makes or breaks any television show, not just those of "quality". In the article "Reframing Television Performance," Philip Drake writes that the "distinctiveness of such quality television as *The Sopranos, The Wire, Breaking Bad,* and *House of Cards,* it seems to me, is at least in part due to their screen performances" (6). This shows that any good quality TV show is successful because of the level of acting performances that are showcased in them. The most successful quality television shows of all time are recognized as such because of the memorable acting performances that were a part of them.

QUALITY ACTING PERFORMANCES ARE VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF QUALITY TV SHOWS

As I mentioned in the end of the previous section, the most successful quality TV shows of all time are seen as "quality television" partly, or even mainly, because of the superior acting performances that were a part of them. In the case of television in

the media, the most successful shows are the most talked about shows. The most talked about subject of the most talked about shows is usually the acting because the actors involved are the most famous figures of the shows, and the acting categories in every award show are always the most prestigious and popular categories every year. Therefore, if your show has good actors, you have a successful show. Success is most often measured in awards earned and numbers of audience members watching and interacting with the shows. Overall, high-quality performances are the most important element of any quality television show. One successful quality television show that depended its success on its high-quality acting performances was the FX show, *The Americans. The Americans* ran for six seasons from 2013-2018 and won 4 Primetime Emmy Awards. The overwhelming majority of their Emmy wins, and nominations, were for the acting performances throughout the series. The reason why *The Americans* had so much success with their acting performances was because they hired a successful actor from overseas, and because the writing of the show required for the lead performances within the show to be multilayered and more complex than other roles in the show.

THE REIGN OF *GAME OF THRONES*

When people think of quality TV shows, they usually think of shows like *The Americans*. However, one of the most successful quality TV shows, and TV shows in general, is HBO's *Game of Thrones.* Most people probably would not think of *Game of Thrones* being a quality television show because unlike most quality TV shows, it is not based in a realistic setting. *Game of Thrones* is based in fantasy, but the acting and feats of special effects, locations, cinematography, and huge battle sequences make it a high-quality TV show. *Game of Thrones* ran on HBO for 8 seasons from 2011-2019 and won a record breaking 59 Primetime Emmy Awards. As I mentioned previously above, Emmy Awards and awards in

general are how quality television shows measure their success, and *Game of Thrones* has the most of them out of every quality TV show in history. Like many quality TV shows, and unlike *The Americans, Game of Thrones'* Emmy Award wins reflect many aspects of the overall performance, not just the acting. Because the show has such a large and talented ensemble cast, so many actors were nominated every year, but many of the wins for the show come from writing and effects. These elements are also very big parts of the overall performance and mise-en-scène of quality television shows.

Despite *Game of Thrones* not having many wins in the notable award categories for acting, the actors were still highly recognized and celebrated for their work in the show. *Game of Thrones* was the cause for most of the actors' careers to expand and grow exponentially. According to the popular video media source WatchMojo, Peter Dinklage, who played the fan favorite Tyrion Lannister for all 8 seasons of *Game of Thrones,* has the third "best TV acting performance of the last century so far." Ironically, Peter Dinklage is the most decorated actor from the series, and he is one of the only American actors in the show. With everything that has been focused on so far, Brits coming over to American quality TV shows has been very successful, but in this case, it is almost the exact opposite with just as much, if not more, success. British actors in main roles in quality television shows is synonymous with success, and even though *Game of Thrones* did not have Emmy wins by the British actors in the show, they were still highly commended for their performances. In the chapter "Game of Thrones: Investigating British Acting" from *Transatlantic Television Drama: Industries, Programs, Fans,* Simone Knox and Gary Cassidy wrote that "*Game of Thrones,* as a telefantasy show, could be assumed to privilege a certain kind of heightened performance style, one commonly labeled 'theatrical' and with which British and Irish actors have traditionally been associated" (184). No matter how you look at heightened theatrical performances, in the case of *Game of*

Thrones, they work perfectly and should earn the credit that they deserve. This is just further proof of how perfectly the actors of *Game of Thrones* structured their high-quality performances for the show because when you watch the show, it feels like no other performances can compare.

QUALITY PERFORMANCE = BETTER PERFORMANCE

In conclusion, quality television shows have better performances which make them the more successful, and the best kind of television there is. There are many kinds of television that are just as enjoyable as quality television. Who doesn't like to just sit and watch some reality TV or a sitcom? Overall, quality television is the best kind of television, and quality television performances are the best kinds of performances, because they are the most captivating to watch. The acting performances are extremely compelling, and the writing and production value of quality television shows are what keep audiences coming back to it for every episode and every season. This ultimately makes quality television the best kind of television because every aspect of performance in quality television is made and destined for success.

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PART IX

ADVERTISING

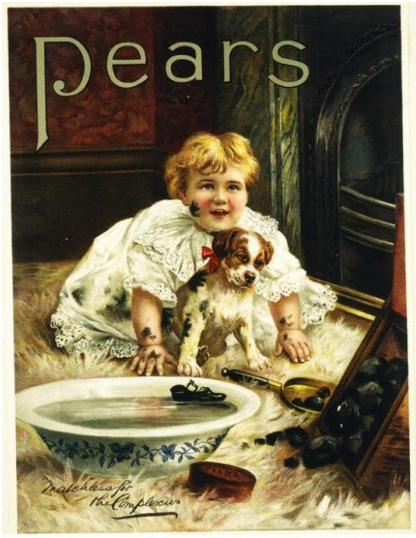
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define advertising and describe its various forms and functions
- Identify significant milestones in the development of advertising
- Evaluate the impact of economics and digital technology on advertising
- Describe current branding practices and explain brand-consumer engagement and relationship processes
- Describe the major ethical issues in advertising

Advertising Functions and Strategies

ADVERTISING: PAY TO PLAY

Advertising is any paid form of communication from an identified sponsor or source that draws attention to ideas, goods, services or the sponsor itself. Most advertising is directed toward groups rather than individuals, and advertising is usually delivered through media such as television, radio, newspapers and, increasingly, the Internet. Ads are often measured in **impressions** (the number of times a consumer is exposed to an advertisement).



A 1900 advertisement for Pears soap.

Advertising is a very old form of promotion with roots that go back even to ancient times. In recent decades, the practices of advertising have changed enormously as new technology and

media have allowed consumers to bypass traditional advertising venues. From the invention of the remote control, which allows people to ignore advertising on TV without leaving the couch, to recording devices that let people watch TV programs but skip the ads, conventional advertising is on the wane. Across the board, television viewership has fragmented, and ratings have fallen.

Print media are also in decline, with fewer people subscribing to newspapers and other print media and more people favoring digital sources for news and entertainment. Newspaper advertising revenue has declined steadily since 2000.[1] Advertising revenue in television is also soft, and it is split across a growing number of broadcast and cable networks. Clearly companies need to move beyond traditional advertising channels to reach consumers. Digital media outlets have happily stepped in to fill this gap. Despite this changing landscape, for many companies advertising remains at the forefront of how they deliver the proper message to customers and prospective customers.

THE PURPOSE OF ADVERTISING

Advertising has three primary objectives: to inform, to persuade, and to remind.

- **Informative Advertising** creates awareness of brands, products, services, and ideas. It announces new products and programs and can educate people about the attributes and benefits of new or established products.
- **Persuasive Advertising** tries to convince customers that a company's services or products are the best, and it

1. Weissman, J. (2014, April 28). *The decline of newspapers hits a stunning milestone.* Slate. http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2014/04/28/decline_of_newspapers_hits_a_milestone_print_revenue_is_lowest_since_1950.html

works to alter perceptions and enhance the image of a company or product. Its goal is to influence consumers to take action and switch brands, try a new product, or remain loyal to a current brand.

- **Reminder Advertising** reminds people about the need for a product or service, or the features and benefits it will provide when they purchase promptly.

Left: Informative Advertising ***Right:*** *Persuasive Advertising*

Reminder Advertising

When people think of advertising, often **product-focused advertisements** are top of mind—i.e., ads that promote an organization's goods or services. **Institutional advertising** goes beyond products to promote organizations, issues, places, events, and political figures. **Public service announcements (PSAs)** are a category of institutional advertising focused on social-welfare issues such as drunk driving, drug use, and practicing a healthy lifestyle. Usually PSAs are sponsored by nonprofit organizations and government agencies with a vested interest in the causes they promote.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ADVERTISING

As a method of marketing communication, advertising has both advantages and disadvantages. In terms of advantages, advertising creates a sense of credibility or legitimacy when an organization invests in presenting itself and its products in a public forum. Ads can convey a sense of quality and permanence, the idea that a company isn't some fly-by-night venture. Advertising allows marketers to repeat a message at intervals selected strategically.

Repetition makes it more likely that the target audience will see and recall a message, which improves awareness-building results. Advertising can generate drama and human interest by featuring people and situations that are exciting or engaging. It can introduce emotions, images, and symbols that stimulate desire, and it can show how a product or brand compares favorably to competitors. Finally, advertising is an excellent vehicle for brand building, as it can create rational and emotional connections with a company or offering that translate into goodwill. As advertising becomes more sophisticated with digital media, it is a powerful tool for tracking consumer behaviors, interests, and preferences, allowing advertisers to better tailor content and offers to individual consumers. Through the power of digital media, memorable or entertaining advertising can be shared between friends and go viral—and viewer impressions skyrocket.

The primary disadvantage of advertising is cost. Marketers question whether this communication method is really cost-effective at reaching large groups. Of course, costs vary depending on the medium, with television ads being very expensive to produce and place. In contrast, print and digital ads tend to be much less expensive. Along with cost is the question of how many people an advertisement actually reaches. Ads are easily tuned out in today's crowded media marketplace. Even ads that initially grab attention can grow stale over time. While digital ads are clickable and interactive, traditional advertising media are not. In the bricks-and-mortar world, it is difficult for marketers to measure the success of advertising and link it directly to changes in consumer perceptions or behavior. Because advertising is a one-way medium, there is usually little direct opportunity for consumer feedback and interaction, particularly from consumers who often feel overwhelmed by competing market messages.

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE ADS: THE CREATIVE STRATEGY

Effective advertising starts with the same foundational components as any other IMC campaign: identifying the target audience and the objectives for the campaign. When advertising is part of a broader IMC effort, it is important to consider the strategic role advertising will play relative to other marketing communication tools. With clarity around the target audience, campaign strategy, and budget, the next step is to develop the **creative strategy** for developing compelling advertising. The creative strategy has two primary components: the *message* and the *appeal*.

The **message** comes from the messaging framework discussed earlier in this module: what message elements should the advertising convey to consumers? What should the key message be? What is the call to action? How should the brand promise be manifested in the ad? How will it position and differentiate the offering? With advertising, it's important to remember that the ad can communicate the message not only with words but also potentially with images, sound, tone, and style.

Effective wordless advertisement

Marketers also need to consider existing public perceptions and other advertising and messages the company has placed in the market. Has the prior marketing activity resonated well with target audiences? Should the next round of advertising reinforce what went before, or is it time for a fresh new message, look, or tone?

Along with message, the creative strategy also identifies the **appeal**, or how the advertising will attract attention and influence a person's perceptions or behavior. Advertising appeals can take many forms, but they tend to fall into one of two categories: *informational* appeal and *emotional* appeal.

The **informational appeal** offers facts and information to help the target audience make a purchasing decision. It tries to generate attention using rational arguments and evidence to convince consumers to select a product, service, or brand. For example:

- More or better product or service features: Ajax "Stronger Than Dirt"
- Cost savings: Walmart "Always Low Prices"
- Quality: John Deere "Nothing runs like a Deere"
- Customer service: Holiday Inn "Pleasing people the world over"
- New, improved: Verizon "Can you hear me now? Good."

The following Black+Decker commercial relies on an informational appeal to promote its product. (Note: There is no speech in this video; only instrumental music.)

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=596#oembed-1

Text alternative for "Black and Decker 20V MAX" (opens in new window).

The **emotional appeal** targets consumers' emotional wants and needs rather than rational logic and facts. It plays on conscious or subconscious desires, beliefs, fears, and insecurities to persuade consumers and influence their behavior. The emotional appeal is linked to the features and benefits provided by the product, but it creates a connection with consumers at an emotional level rather than a rational level. Most marketers agree that emotional appeals are more powerful and differentiating than informational appeals. However, they must be executed well to seem authentic and credible to the the target audience. A poorly executed emotional appeal can come across as trite or manipulative. Examples of emotional appeals include:

- Self-esteem: L'Oreal "Because I'm worth it"
- Happiness: Coca-Cola "Open happiness"
- Anxiety and fear: World Health Organization "Smoking Kills"
- Achievement: Nike "Just Do It"
- Attitude: Apple "Think Different"
- Freedom: Southwest "You are now free to move about the

country"

- Peace of Mind: Allstate "Are you in good hands?"
- Popularity: NBC "Must-see TV"
- Germophobia: Chlorox "For life's bleachable moments, there's Chlorox"

The following Heinz Ketchup commercial offers a humorous example of an ad based entirely on an emotional appeal:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=596#oembed-2

DEVELOPING THE MEDIA PLAN

The media plan is a document that outlines the strategy and approach for an advertising campaign, or for the advertising component in an IMC campaign. The media plan is developed simultaneously with the creative strategy. A standard media plan consists of four stages: (a) stating media objectives; (b) evaluating media; (c) selecting and implementing media choices; and (d) determining the media budget.

Media objectives are normally stated in terms of three dimensions:

- *Reach:* number of different persons or households exposed to a particular media vehicle or media schedule

at least once during a specified time period.

- *Frequency:* the number of times within a given time period that a consumer is exposed to a message.
- *Continuity:* the timing of media assertions (e.g. 10 per cent in September, 20 per cent in October, 20 per cent in November, 40 per cent in December and 10 per cent the rest of the year).

The process of **evaluating media** involves considering each type of advertising available to a marketer, and the inherent strengths and weaknesses associated with each medium. The table below outlines key strengths and weaknesses of major types of advertising media. Television advertising is a powerful and highly visible medium, but it is expensive to produce and buy air time. Radio is quite flexible and inexpensive, but listenership is lower and it typically delivers fewer impressions and a less-targeted audience. Most newspapers and magazines have passed their advertising heydays and today struggle against declining subscriptions and readership. Yet they can be an excellent and cost-effective investment for reaching some audiences. Display ads offer a lot of flexibility and creative options, from wrapping buses in advertising to creating massive and elaborate 3-D billboards. Yet their reach is limited to their immediate geography. Online advertising such as banner ads, search engine ads, paid listings, pay-per-click links and similar techniques offers a wide selection of opportunities for marketers to attract and engage with target audiences online. Yet the internet is a very crowded place, and it is difficult for any individual company to stand out in the crowd.

The evaluation process requires research to assess options for reaching their target audience with each medium, and how well a particular message fits the audience in that medium. Many advertisers rely heavily on the research findings provided by the medium, by their own experience, and by subjective appraisal to determine the best media for a given campaign.

To illustrate, if a company is targeting young-to-middle-aged professional women to sell beauty products, the person or team responsible for the media plan should evaluate what options each type of media offers for reaching this audience. How reliably can television, radio, newspapers or magazines deliver this audience? Media organizations maintain carefully-researched information about the size, demographics and other characteristics of their viewership or readership.

Cable and broadcast TV networks know which shows are hits with this target demographic and therefore which advertising spots to sell to a company targeting professional women. Likewise newspapers know which sections attract the eyeballs of female audiences, and magazines publishers understand very well the market niches their publications fit. Online advertising becomes a particularly powerful tool for targeted advertising because of the information it captures and tracks about site visitors: who views and clicks on ads, where they visit and what they search for.

Not only does digital advertising provide the opportunity to advertise on sites that cater to a target audience of professional women, but it can identify which of these women are searching for beauty products, and it can help a company target these individuals more intensely and provide opportunities for follow-up interaction.The following video further explains how digital advertising targets and tracks individuals based on their expressed interests and behaviors.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text.

You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=596#oembed-3

You can view the transcript for "Behavioral Targeting" here (opens in new window).

SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The media planner must make decisions about the media mix and timing, both of which are restricted by the available budget. The media-mix decision involves choosing the best combination of advertising media to achieve the goals of the campaign. This is a difficult task, and it usually requires evaluating each medium quantitatively and qualitatively to select a mix that optimizes reach and budget. Unfortunately, there are few valid rules of thumb to guide this process, in part because it is difficult to compare audiences across different types of advertising media. For example, Nielsen ratings measure audiences based on TV viewer reports of the programs watched, while outdoor (billboard) audience-exposure estimates are based on counts of the number of automobiles that pass particular outdoor poster locations. The "timing of media" refers to the actual placement of advertisements during the time periods that are most appropriate, given the selected media objectives. It includes not only the scheduling of advertisements, but also the size and position of the advertisement.

There are three common patterns for advertising scheduling:

- **Continuous** advertising runs ads steadily at a given level indefinitely. This schedule works well products and services that are consumed on a steady basis throughout the year, and the purpose of advertising is to nudge consumers, remind them and keep a brand or product top-of-mind.
- **Flighting** involves heavy spurts of advertising, followed by periods with no advertising. This type of schedule makes sense for products or services that are seasonal in nature, like tax services, as well as one-time or occasional events.
- **Pulsing** mixes continuous scheduling with flighting, to create a constant drum-beat of ads, with periods of greater intensity. This approach matches products and services for which there is year-round appeal, but there may be some seasonality or periods of greater demand or intensity. Hotels and airlines, for example, might increase their advertising presence during the holiday season.

BUDGET

When considering advertising as a marketing communication method, companies need to balance the cost of advertising–both of producing the advertising pieces and buying placement—against the total budget for the IMC program. The selection and scheduling of media have a huge impact on budget: advertising that targets a mass audience is generally more expensive than advertising that targets a local or niche audience. It is important for marketers to consider the contribution advertising will make to the whole. Although advertising is generally one of the more expensive parts of the promotion mix, it may be a worthwhile investment if it contributes substantially to the reach and effectiveness of the whole program. Alternatively, some marketers spend very little on

advertising because they find other methods are more productive and cost-effective for reaching their target segments.

ANATOMY OF AN ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisements use several common elements to deliver the message. The **visual** is the picture, image, or situation portrayed in the advertisement. The visual also considers the emotions, style, or look-and-feel to be conveyed: should the ad appear tender, businesslike, fresh, or supercool? All of these considerations can be conveyed by the visual, without using any words.

The **headline** is generally what the viewer reads first—i.e., the words in the largest typeface. The headline serves as a hook for the appeal: it should grab attention, pique interest, and cause the viewer to keep reading or paying attention. In a radio or television ad, the headline equivalent might be the voice-over of a narrator delivering the primary message, or it might be a visual headline, similar to a print ad.

In print ads, a **subhead** is a smaller headline that continues the idea introduced in the headline or provides more information. It usually appears below the headline and in a smaller typeface.

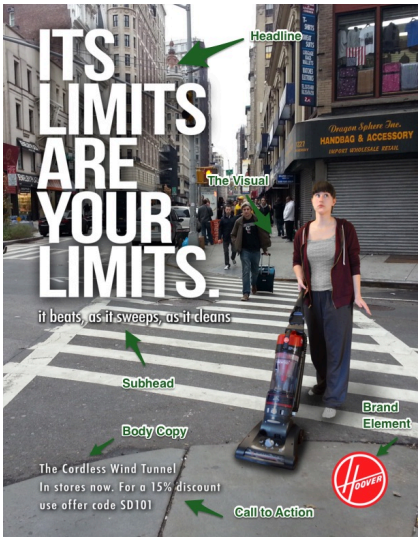
The **body copy** provides supporting information. Generally it appears in a standard, readable font. The **call to action** may be part of the body copy, or it may appear elsewhere in a larger typeface or color treatment to draw attention to itself.

A variety of **brand elements** may also appear in an advertisement. These include the name of the advertiser or brand being advertised, the logo, a tagline, hashtag, Web site link, or other standard "branded" elements that convey brand identity. These elements are an important way of establishing continuity with other marketing communications used in the IMC campaign or developed by the company. For example, print ads for an IMC campaign might contain a campaign-specific tagline that also

appears in television ads, Website content, and social media posts associated with the campaign.

AD TESTING AND MEASUREMENT

When organizations are poised to make a large investment in any type of advertising, it is wise to conduct marketing research to test the advertisements with target audiences before spending lots of money on ads and messages that may not hit the mark. Ad testing may preview messages and preliminary ad concepts with members of a target segment to see which ones resonate best and get insight about how to fine-tune messages or other aspects of the ad to make them more effective. Organizations may conduct additional testing with near-final advertising pieces to do more fine-tuning of the messages and visuals before going public.



Hoover advertisement with ad elements shown.

To gauge the impact of advertising, organizations may conduct pre-tests and post-tests of their target audience to measure whether advertising has its intended effect. A pre-test assesses consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behavior before the advertising campaign. A post-test measures the same things afterward to determine how the ads have influenced the target audience, if at all.

Companies may also measure sales before, during, and after advertising campaigns run in the geographies or targets where the advertising appeared. This provides information about the *return on investment* for the campaign, which is how much the advertising increased sales relative to how much money it cost to execute. Ideally advertising generates more revenue and, ultimately profits, than it costs to mount the advertising campaign.

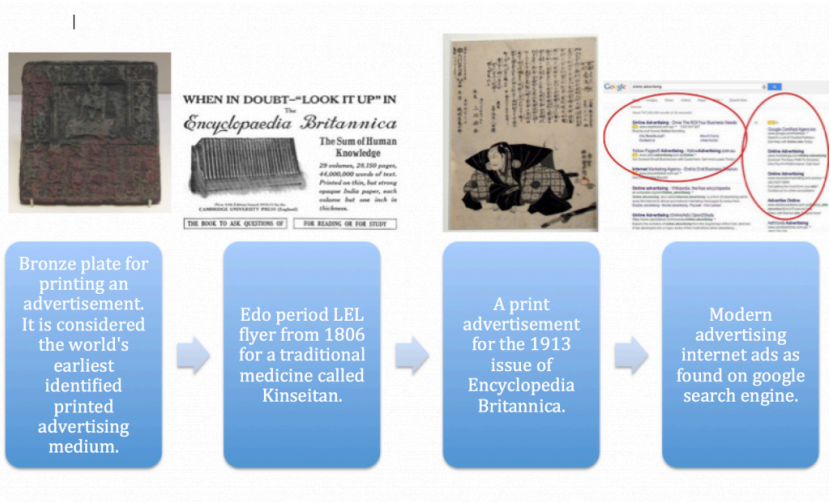
Advertising Media Strengths and Weaknesses

Advertising Media Type	Strengths	Weaknesses
Television	Strong emotional impact· Mass coverage/small cost per impression Repeat message Creative flexibility Entertaining/prestigious	High costs High clutter (too many ads) Short-lived impression Programming quality Schedule inflexibility
Radio	Immediacy Low cost per impression Highly flexible	Limited national coverage High clutter Less easily perceived during drive time Fleeting message
Newspapers	Flexibility (size, timing, etc.) Community prestige Market coverage Offer merchandising services Reader involvement	Declining readership Short life Technical quality Clutter
Magazines	Highly segmented audiences High-profile audiences Reproduction quality	Inflexible Narrow audiences Waste circulation
Display Ads: Billboards, Posters, Flyers, etc.	Mass coverage/small cost per impression Repeat message Creative flexibility	High clutter Short-lived impression

Online Ads (including mobile): Banner ads, search ads, paid listings, pay-per-click links, etc.	Highly segmented audiences Highly measurable Low cost per impression Immediacy; link to interests, behavior Click thru and code allow further interaction Timing flexibility	High clutter Short-lived impression Somewhat less flexibility in size, format

History of Advertising

Advertising is defined as promoting a product or service through the use of paid announcements (Dictionary). These announcements have had an enormous effect on modern culture, and thus deserve a great deal of attention in any treatment of the media's influence on culture.



History of Advertising

EARLY ADVERTISING

Advertising dates back to ancient Rome's public markets and forums and continues into the modern era in most homes around the world. Contemporary consumers relate to and identify with brands and products. Advertising has inspired an independent press and conspired to encourage carcinogenic addictions. An exceedingly human invention, advertising is an unavoidable aspect of the shared modern experience.

In 79 CE, the eruption of Italy's Mount Vesuvius destroyed and, ultimately, preserved the ancient city of Pompeii. Historians have used the city's archaeological evidence to piece together many aspects of ancient life. Pompeii's ruins reveal a world in which the fundamental tenets of commerce and advertising were already in place. Merchants offered different brands of fish sauces identified by various names such as "Scaurus' tunny jelly." Wines were branded as well, and their manufacturers sought to position them by making claims about their prestige and quality. Toys and other merchandise found in the city bear the names of famous athletes, providing, perhaps, the first example of endorsement techniques (Hood, 2005).

The invention of the printing press in 1440 made it possible to print advertisements that could be put up on walls and handed out to individuals. By the 1600s, newspapers had begun to include advertisements on their pages. Advertising revenue allowed newspapers to print independently of secular or clerical authority, eventually achieving daily circulation. By the end of the 16th century, most newspapers contained at least some advertisements (O'Barr, 2005).

European colonization of the Americas during the 1600s brought about one of the first large-scale advertising campaigns. When European trading companies realized that the Americas held economic potential as a source of natural resources such as timber, fur, and tobacco, they attempted to convince others to cross the

Atlantic Ocean and work to harvest this bounty. The advertisements for this venture described a paradise without beggars and with plenty of land for those who made the trip. The advertisements convinced many poor Europeans to become indentured servants to pay for the voyage (Mierau, 2000).

NINETEENTH-CENTURY ROOTS OF MODERN ADVERTISING

The rise of the penny press during the 1800s had a profound effect on advertising. The *New York Sun* embraced a novel advertising model in 1833 that allowed it to sell issues of the paper for a trifling amount of money, ensuring a higher circulation and a wider audience. This larger audience in turn justified greater prices for advertisements, allowing the paper to make a profit from its ads rather than from direct sales (Vance).

Early penny press papers such as the *New York Sun* took advantage of advertisements, which allowed them to sell their issues for a penny or two.

Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

In 1843, a salesman named Volney Palmer founded the first U.S. advertising agency in Philadelphia. The agency made money by linking potential advertisers with newspapers. By 1867, other agencies had formed, and advertisements were being marketed at the national level. During this time, George Rowell, who made a living buying bulk advertising space in newspapers to subdivide and sell to advertisers, began conducting market research in its modern recognizable form. He used surveys and circulation counts to estimate numbers of readers and anticipate effective advertising techniques. His agency gained an advantage over other agencies by offering advertising space most suited for a particular product. This trend quickly caught on with other agencies. In 1888, Rowell started the first advertising trade magazine, *Printers' Ink* (Gartrell).

McClure's had success in 1893 thanks to an advertising model: selling issues for nearly half the price of other magazines and depending on advertising revenues to make up the difference between cost and sales price. Magazines such as *Ladies' Home Journal* focused on specific audiences, so they allowed advertisers to market products designed for a specific demographic. By 1900, *Harper's Weekly*, once known for refusing advertising, featured ads on half of its pages (All Classic Ads).

P. T. Barnum and

Advertising

The career of P. T. Barnum, cofounder of the famed Barnum & Bailey circus, gives a sense of the uncontrolled nature of advertising during the 1800s. He began his career in the 1840s writing ads for a theater, and soon after, he began promoting his own shows. He advertised these shows any way he could, using not only interesting newspaper ads but also bands of musicians, paintings on the outside of his buildings, and street-spanning banners.

Barnum also learned the effectiveness of using the media to gain attention. In an early publicity stunt, Barnum hired a man to wordlessly stack bricks at various corners near his museum during the hours preceding a show. When this activity drew a crowd, the man went to the museum and bought a ticket for the show. This stunt drew such large crowds over the next 2 days, that the police made Barnum put a halt to it, gaining it even wider media attention. Barnum was sued for fraud over a bearded woman featured in one of his shows; the plaintiffs claimed that she was, in fact, a man. Rather than trying to keep the trial quiet, Barnum drew attention to it by parading a crowd of witnesses attesting to the bearded woman's gender, drawing more media attention—and more customers.


THE
BARNUM & BAILEY
GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
THE MARVELOUS FOOT-BALL DOGS

P. T. Barnum used the press to spark interest in his shows.

trialsanderrors – The marvelous foot-ball dogs, poster for Barnum & Bailey, 1900 – CC BY 2.0.

Barnum aimed to make his audience think about what they had seen for an extended time. His Feejee mermaid—actually a mummified monkey and fish sewn together—was not necessarily interesting because viewers thought the creation was really a mermaid, but because they weren't sure if it was or not. Such marketing tactics brought Barnum's shows out of his establishments and into social conversations and newspapers (Applegate, 1998). Although most companies today would eschew Barnum's outrageous style, many have used the media and a similar sense of mystery to promote their products. Apple, for example, famously keeps its products such as the iPhone and iPad under wraps, building media anticipation and coverage.

Another ubiquitous aspect of advertising developed around this time: brands. During most of the 19th century, consumers purchased goods in bulk, weighing out scoops of flour or sugar from large store barrels and paying for them by the pound. Innovations in industrial packaging allowed companies to mass produce bags, tins, and cartons with brand names on them. Although brands existed before this time, they were generally reserved for goods that were inherently recognizable, such as china or furniture. Advertising a particular kind of honey or flour made it possible for customers to ask for that product by name, giving it an edge over the unnamed competition.[1]

In the early 1900s, brand-name food items, such as this one, began making a household name for themselves.

Stuart Rankin – Payn's Sure-Raising Flour – CC BY-NC 2.0.

ADVERTISING GAINS STATURE DURING THE 20TH CENTURY

Although advertising was becoming increasingly accepted as an element of mass media, many still regarded it as an unseemly occupation. This attitude began to change during the early 20th century. As magazines—widely considered a highbrow medium—began using more advertising, the advertising

profession began attracting more artists and writers. Writers used verse and artists produced illustrations to embellish advertisements. Not surprisingly, this era gave rise to commercial jingles and iconic brand characters such as the Jolly Green Giant and the Pillsbury Doughboy.

The household cleaner Sapolio produced advertisements that made the most of the artistic advertising trend. Sapolio's ads featured various drawings of the residents of "Spotless Town" along with a rhymed verse celebrating the virtues of this fictional haven of cleanliness. The public anticipated each new ad in much the same way people today anticipate new TV episodes. In fact, the ads became so popular that citizens passed "Spotless Town" resolutions to clean up their own jurisdictions. Advertising trends later moved away from flowery writing and artistry, but the lessons of those memorable campaigns continued to influence the advertising profession for years to come (Fox, 1984).

World War I fueled an advertising and propaganda boom. Corporations that had switched to manufacturing wartime goods wanted to stay in the public eye by advertising their patriotism. Equally, the government needed to encourage public support for the war, employing such techniques as the famous Uncle Sam recruiting poster. President Woodrow Wilson established the advertiser-run Committee on Public Information to make movies and posters, write speeches, and generally sell the war to the public. Advertising helped popularize World War I on the home front, and the war in turn gave advertising a much-needed boost in stature. The postwar return to regular manufacturing initiated the 1920s as an era of unprecedented advertising.[3]

The rising film industry made celebrity testimonials, or product endorsements, an important aspect of advertising during the 1920s. Film stars including Clara Bow and Joan Crawford endorsed products such as Lux toilet soap. In these early days of mass-media consumer culture, film actors and actresses gave the public figures to emulate as they began participating in popular culture.[4]

Radio became an accepted commercial medium during the 1920s. Although many initially thought radio was too intrusive a medium to allow advertising, as it entered people's homes by the end of the decade, advertising had become an integral aspect of programming. Advertising agencies often created their own programs that networks then distributed. As advertisers conducted surveys and researched prime time slots, radio programming changed to appeal to their target demographics. The famous *Lux Radio Theater*, for example, was named for and sponsored by a brand of soap. Product placement was an important part of these early radio programs. Ads for Jell-O appeared during the course of the *Jack Benny Show* (JackBennyShow.com), and *Fibber McGee and Molly* scripts often involved their sponsor's floor wax (Burgan, 1996). The relationship between a sponsor and a show's producers was not always harmonious; the producers of radio programs were constrained from broadcasting any content that might reflect badly on their sponsor.

The Great Depression and Backlash

Unsurprisingly, the Great Depression, with its widespread

decreases in levels of income and buying power, had a negative effect on advertising. Spending on ads dropped to a mere 38 percent of its previous level. Social reformers added to revenue woes by again questioning the moral standing of the advertising profession. Books such as *Through Many Windows* and *Our Master's Voice* portrayed advertisers as dishonest and cynical, willing to say anything to make a profit and unconcerned about their influence on society. Humorists also questioned advertising's authority. The Depression-era magazine *Ballyhoo* regularly featured parodies of ads, similar to those seen later on *Saturday Night Live* or in *The Onion*. These ads mocked the claims that had been made throughout the 1920s, further reducing advertising's public standing.[5]

This advertising downturn lasted only as long as the Depression. As the United States entered World War II, advertising again returned to encourage public support and improve the image of businesses.[6] However, there was one lasting effect of the Depression. The rising consumer movement made false and misleading advertising a major public policy issue. At the time, companies such as Fleischmann's (which claimed its yeast could cure crooked teeth) were using advertisements to pitch misleading assertions. Only business owners' personal morals stood in the way of such claims until 1938, when the federal government created the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and gave it the authority to halt false advertising.

In 1955, TV outpaced all other media for advertising. TV provided advertisers with unique, geographically oriented mass markets that could be targeted with regionally appropriate ads (Samuel, 2006). The 1950s saw a 75 percent increase in advertising spending, faster than any other economic indicator at the time.[7]

Single sponsors created early TV programs. These sponsors had total control over programs such as *Goodyear TV Playhouse* and *Kraft Television Theatre*. Some sponsors went as far as to manipulate various aspects of the programs. In one instance, a program run by

the DeSoto car company asked a contestant to use a false name rather than his given name, Ford. The present-day network model of TV advertising took hold during the 1950s as the costs of TV production made sole sponsorship of a show prohibitive for most companies. Rather than having a single sponsor, the networks began producing their own shows, paying for them through ads sold to a number of different sponsors.[8] Under the new model of advertising, TV producers had much more creative control than they had under the sole-sponsorship model.

Advertising research during the 1950s had used scientifically driven techniques to attempt to influence consumer opinion. Although the effectiveness of this type of advertising is questionable, the idea of consumer manipulation through scientific methods became an issue for many Americans. Vance Packard's best-selling 1957 book *The Hidden Persuaders* targeted this style of advertising. *The Hidden Persuaders* and other books like it were part of a growing critique of 1950s consumer culture. The U.S. public was becoming increasingly wary of advertising claims—not to mention increasingly weary of ads themselves. A few adventurous ad agencies used this consumer fatigue to usher in a new era of advertising and American culture (Frank, 1998).

The Creative Revolution

Burdened by association with Nazi Germany, where the company had originated, Volkswagen took a daring risk during the 1950s. In 1959, the Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) agency initiated an ad campaign for the company that targeted skeptics of contemporary culture. Using a frank personal tone with the audience and making fun of the planned obsolescence that was the hallmark of Detroit automakers, the campaign stood apart from other advertisements of the time. It used many of the consumer icons of the 1950s, such as suburbia and game shows, in a satirical way, pitting Volkswagen against mainstream conformity and placing it strongly on the side of the consumer. By the end of the 1960s, the campaign had become an icon of American anticonformity. In fact, it was such a success that other automakers quickly emulated it. Ads for the Dodge Fever, for example, mocked corporate values and championed rebellion.[9]

This era of advertising became known as the **creative revolution** for its emphasis on creativity over straight salesmanship. The creative revolution reflected the values of the growing anticonformist movement that culminated in the countercultural revolution of the 1960s. The creativity and anticonformity of 1960s advertising quickly gave way to more product-oriented conventional ads during the 1970s. Agency conglomeration, a recession, and cultural fallout were all factors in the recycling of older ad techniques. Major TV networks dropped their long-standing ban on comparative advertising early in the

decade, leading to a new trend in positioning ads that compared products. Advertising wars such as Coke versus Pepsi and, later, Microsoft versus Apple were products of this trend.[10]

Innovations in the 1980s stemmed from a new TV channel: MTV. Producers of youth-oriented products created ads featuring music and focusing on stylistic effects, mirroring the look and feel of music videos. By the end of the decade, this style had extended to more mainstream products. Campaigns for the pain reliever Nuprin featured black-and-white footage with bright yellow pills, whereas ads for Michelob used grainy atmospheric effects (New York Times, 1989).

The Rise of Digital Media

Twenty-first-century advertising has adapted to new forms of digital media. Internet outlets such as blogs, social media forums, and other online spaces have created new possibilities for advertisers, and shifts in broadcasting toward Internet formats have threatened older forms of advertising. Video games, smartphones, and other technologies also present new possibilities. Specific new media advertising techniques will be covered in the next section.

Types of Advertising

Despite the rise of digital media, many types of traditional advertising have proven their enduring effectiveness. Local advertisers and large corporations continue to rely on billboards and direct-mail fliers. In 2009, Google initiated a billboard campaign for its Google Apps products that targeted business commuters. The billboards featured a different message every day for an entire month, using simple computer text messages portraying a fictitious executive learning about the product. Although this campaign was integrated with social media sites such as Twitter, its main thrust employed the basic billboard (Ionescu, 2009).

Google billboards targeted commuters, creating a story that spanned the course of a month.

Danny Sullivan – Ask Versus Google In Billboards – CC BY 2.0.

Newspapers and Magazines

Although print ads have been around for centuries, Internet growth

has hit newspaper advertising hard. Traditionally, newspapers have made money through commercial and classified advertising. Commercial advertisers, however, have moved to electronic media forms, and classified ad websites offer greater geographic coverage for free. The future of newspaper advertising—and of the newspaper industry as a whole—is up in the air.

Print magazines have suffered from many of the same difficulties as newspapers. Declining advertising revenue has contributed to the end of popular magazines such as *Gourmet* and to the introduction of new magazines that cross over into other media formats, such as *Food Network Magazine*. Until a new, effective model is developed, the future of magazine advertising will continue to be in doubt.

Radio

Compared to newspapers and magazines, radio's advertising revenue has done well. Radio's easy adaptation to new forms of communication has made it an easy sell to advertisers. Unlike newspapers, radio ads target specific consumers. Advertisers can also pay to have radio personalities read their ads live in the studio, adding a sense of personal endorsement to the business or product. Because newer forms of radio such as satellite and Internet stations have continued to use this model, the industry has not had as much trouble adapting as print media have.

Television

TV advertisement relies on verbal as well as visual cues to sell items. Promotional ad time is purchased by the advertiser, and a spot usually runs 15 to 30 seconds. Longer ads, known as infomercials, run like a TV show and usually aim for direct viewer response. New technologies such as DVR allow TV watchers to skip through commercials; however, studies have shown that these technologies do not have a negative effect on advertising (Gallagher, 2010). This is partly due to product placement. Product placement is an important aspect of TV advertising, because it incorporates products into the plots of shows. Although product placement has been around since the 1890s, when the Lumière brothers first placed Lever soap in their movies, the big boom in product placement began with the reality TV show *Survivor* in 2000 (Anderson, 2006). Since then, product placement has been a staple of prime-time entertainment. Reality TV shows such as *Project Runway* and *American Idol* are known for exhibiting products on screen, and talk-show host Oprah Winfrey made news in 2004 when she gave away new Pontiacs to her audience members (Stansky, 2008). Even children's shows are known to hock products; a cartoon series on Nickelodeon featured characters that represent different Sketchers sneakers (Freidman, 2010).

Digital Media

Emerging digital media platforms such as the Internet and mobile phones have created many new advertising possibilities. The Internet, like TV and radio, offers free services in exchange for advertising exposure. However, unlike radio or TV, the Internet is a highly personalized experience that shares private information.

Government Regulation of Advertising

Advertising regulation has played an important role in advertising's history and cultural influence. One of the earliest federal laws addressing advertising was the Pure Food and Drug Law of 1906. A reaction to public outcry over the false claims of patent medicines, this law required informational labels to be placed on these products. It did not, however, address the questionable aspects of

the advertisements, so it did not truly delve into the issue of false advertising.[12]

The Formation of the FTC

Founded in 1914, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) became responsible for regulating false advertising claims. Although federal laws concerning these practices made plaintiffs prove that actual harm was done by the advertisement, state laws passed during the early 1920s allowed prosecution of misleading advertisements regardless of harm done.[13] The National Association of Attorneys General has helped states remain an important part of advertising regulation. In 1995, 13 states passed laws that required sweepstakes companies to provide full disclosure of rules and details of contests (O'Guinn, et. al., 2009).

During the Great Depression, New Deal legislation threatened to outlaw any misleading advertising, a result of the burgeoning consumer movement and the public outcry against advertising during the period (Time, 1941). The reformers did not fully achieve their goals, but they did make a permanent mark on advertising history. The 1938 Wheeler-Lea Amendment expanded the FTC's role to protect consumers from deceptive advertising. Until this point, the FTC was responsible for addressing false advertising

complaints from competitors. With this legislation, the agency also became an important resource for the consumer movement.

Truth in Advertising

In 1971, the FTC began the Advertising Substantiation Program to force advertisers to provide evidence for the claims in their advertisements. Under this program, the FTC gained the power to issue cease-and-desist orders to advertisers regarding specific ads in question and to order corrective advertising. Under this provision, the FTC can force a company to issue an advertisement acknowledging and correcting an earlier misleading ad. Regulations under this program established that supposed experts used in advertisements must be qualified experts in their field, and celebrities must actually use the products they endorse.[14] In 2006, Sunny Health Nutrition was brought to court for advertising height-enhancing pills called HeightMax. The FTC found the company had hired an actor to appear as an expert in its ads, and that the pills did not live up to their claim. Sunny Health Nutrition was forced to pay $375,000 to consumers for misrepresenting its product (Consumer Affairs, 2006).

In 1992, the FTC introduced guidelines defining terms such as *biodegradable* and *recyclable*. The growth of the environmental movement in the early 1990s led to an upsurge in environmental

claims by manufacturers and advertisers. For example, Mobil Oil claimed their Hefty trash bags were biodegradable. While technically this statement is true, a 500- to 1,000-year decomposition cycle does not meet most people's definitions of the term (Lapidos, 2007). The FTC guidelines made such claims false by law (Schneider, 1992).

Advertising's Influence on Culture

Discussing advertising's influence on culture raises a long-standing debate. One opinion states that advertising simply reflects the trends inherent in a culture, the other claims advertising takes an active role in shaping culture. Both ideas have merit and are most likely true to varying degrees.

Advertising and the Rise of Consumer Culture

George Babbitt, the protagonist of Sinclair Lewis's 1922 novel *Babbitt*, was a true believer in the growing American consumer culture:

> Just as the priests of the Presbyterian Church determined his every religious belief...so did the national advertisers fix the surface of his life, fix what he believed to be his individuality. These standard advertised wares—toothpastes, socks, tires, cameras, instantaneous hot-water heaters—were his symbols and proofs of excellence; at first the signs, and then the substitutes, for joy and passion and wisdom (Lewis, 1922).

Although Lewis's fictional representation of a 1920s-era consumer may not be an actual person, it indicates the national consumer culture that was taking shape at the time. As it had always done, advertising sought to attach products to larger ideas and symbols of worth and cultural values. However, the rise of mass media and of the advertising models that these media embraced made advertising take on an increasingly influential cultural role.

Automobile ads of the 1920s portrayed cars as a new, free way of life rather than simply a means of transportation. Advertisers used new ideas about personal hygiene to sell products and ended up breaking taboos about public discussion of the body. The newly

acknowledged epidemics of halitosis and body odor brought about products such as mouthwash and deodorant. A Listerine campaign of the era transformed bad breath from a nuisance into the mark of a sociopath (Ashenburg, 2008). Women's underwear and menstruation went from being topics unsuitable for most family conversations to being fodder for the pages of national magazines.[15]

Creating the Modern World

World War I bond campaigns had made it clear that advertising could be used to influence public beliefs and values. Advertising focused on the new—making new products and ideas seem better than older ones and ushering in a sense of the modernity. In an address to the American Association of Advertising Agencies in 1926, President Coolidge went as far as to hold advertisers responsible for the "regeneration and redemption of mankind (Marchand, 1985)."

Up through the 1960s, most advertising agencies were owned and staffed by affluent white men, and advertising's portrayals of typical American families reflected this status quo. Mainstream culture as propagated by magazine, radio, and newspaper advertising was that of middle- or upper-class White suburban families (Marchand, 1985). This sanitized image of the suburban

family, popularized in such TV programs as *Leave It to Beaver*, has been mercilessly satirized since the cultural backlash of the 1960s.

A great deal of that era's cultural criticism targeted the image of the advertiser as a manipulator and promulgator of superficial consumerism. When advertisers for Volkswagen picked up on this criticism, turned it to their advantage, and created a new set of consumer symbols that would come to represent an age of rebellion, they neatly co-opted the arguments against advertising for their own purposes. In many instances, advertising has functioned as a codifier of its own ideals by taking new cultural values and turning them into symbols of a new phase of consumerism. This is the goal of effective advertising.

Apple's 1984 campaign is one of the most well-known examples of defining a product in terms of new cultural trends. A fledgling company compared to computer giants IBM and Xerox, Apple spent nearly $2 million on a commercial that would end up only being aired once (McAloney, 1984). During the third quarter of the 1984 Super Bowl, viewers across the United States watched in amazement as an ad unlike any other at the time appeared on their TV screens. The commercial showed a drab gray auditorium where identical individuals sat in front of a large screen. On the screen was a man, addressing the audience with an eerily captivating voice. "We are one people, with one will," he droned. "Our enemies shall talk themselves to death. And we will bury them with their own confusion. We shall prevail (McAloney, 1984)!" While the audience sat motionlessly, one woman ran forward with a sledgehammer and threw it at the screen, causing it to explode in a flash of light and smoke. As the scene faded out, a narrator announced the product. "On January 24, Apple Computer will introduce the Macintosh. And you'll see why 1984 won't be like *1984* (Freidman, 1984)." With this commercial, Apple defined itself as a pioneer of the new generation. Instead of marketing its products as utilitarian tools, it advertised them as devices for combating conformity (Freidman, 1984). Over the next few decades, other

companies imitated this approach, presenting their products as symbols of cultural values.

In his study of advertising's cultural impact, *The Conquest of Cool*, Thomas Frank compares the advertising of the 1960s with that of the early 1990s:

> How [advertisers] must have rejoiced when the leading minds of the culture industry announced the discovery of an all-new angry generation, the "Twenty-Somethings," complete with a panoply of musical styles, hairdos, and verbal signifiers ready-made to rejuvenate advertising's sagging credibility.... The strangest aspect of what followed wasn't the immediate onslaught of even hipper advertising, but that the entire "Generation X" discourse repeated...the discussions of youth culture that had appeared in *Advertising Age*, *Madison Avenue*, and on all those youth-market panel discussions back in the sixties.[16]

To be clear, advertisers have not set out to consciously manipulate the public in the name of consumer culture. Rather, advertisers are simply doing their job—one that has had an enormous influence on culture.

Advertising Stereotypes

The White, middle-class composition of ad agencies contributed to advertisements' rare depictions of minority populations. DDB—the

agency responsible for the Volkswagen ads of the 1960s—was an anomaly in this regard. One of its more popular ads was for Levy's rye bread. Most conventional advertisers would have ignored the ethnic aspects of this product and simply marketed it to a mainstream White audience. Instead, the innovative agency created an ad campaign that made ethnic diversity a selling point, with spots featuring individuals from a variety of racial backgrounds eating the bread with the headline "You don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's."

During the 1950s, stereotypical images of African Americans promulgated by advertisers began to draw criticism from civil rights leaders. Icons such as Aunt Jemima, the Cream of Wheat chef, and the Hiram Walker butler were some of the most recognizable black figures in U.S. culture. Unlike the African Americans who had gained fame through their artistry, scholarship, and athleticism, however, these advertising characters were famous for being domestic servants.

During the 1960s, meetings of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) hosted civil rights leaders, and agencies began to respond to the criticisms of bias. A New York survey in the mid-1960s discovered that Blacks were underrepresented at advertising agencies. Many agencies responded by hiring new African American employees, and a number of Black-owned agencies started in the 1970s.[17]

Early advertising frequently reached out to women because they made approximately 80 percent of all consumer purchases. Thus, women were well represented in advertising. However, those depictions presented women in extremely narrow roles. Through the 1960s, ads targeting women generally showed them performing domestic duties such as cooking or cleaning, whereas ads targeting men often placed women in a submissive sexual role even if the product lacked any overt sexual connotation. A National Car Rental ad from the early 1970s featured a disheveled female employee in a chair with the headline "Go Ahead, Take Advantage

of Us." Another ad from the 1970s pictured a man with new Dacron slacks standing on top of a woman, proclaiming, "It's nice to have a girl around the house (Frauenfelder, 2008)."

An advertising profile printed in *Advertising Age* magazine gave a typical advertiser's understanding of the housewife at the time:

> She likes to watch TV and she does not enjoy reading a great deal. She is most easily reached through TV and the simple down-to-earth magazines.... Mental activity is arduous for her.... She is a person who wants to have things she can believe in rather than things she can think about (Rodnitzky, 1999).

The National Organization for Women (NOW) created a campaign during the early 1970s targeting the role of women in advertisements. Participants complained about the ads to networks and companies and even spray-painted slogans on offensive billboards in protest.

Representation of minorities and women in advertising has improved since the 1960s and '70s, but it still remains a problem. The 2010 Super Bowl drew one of the most diverse audiences ever recorded for the event, including a 45 percent female audience. Yet the commercials remained focused strictly on men. And of 67 ads shown during the game, only four showed minority actors in a lead role. Despite the obvious economic benefit of diversity in marketing, advertising practices have resisted change (Ali, 2010).

Advertising to

Children

The majority of advertisements that target children feature either toys or junk food. Children under the age of eight typically lack the ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality, and many advertisers use this to their advantage. Studies have shown that most children-focused food advertisements feature high-calorie, low-nutrition foods such as sugary cereals. Although the government regulates advertising to children to a degree, the Internet has introduced new means of marketing to youth that have not been addressed. Online video games called advergames feature famous child-oriented products. The games differ from traditional advertising, however, because the children playing them will experience a much longer period of product exposure than they do from the typical 30-second TV commercial. Child advocacy groups have been pushing for increased regulation of advertising to children, but it remains to be seen whether this will take place (Calvert, 2008).

Positive Effects of Advertising

Although many people focus on advertising's negative outcomes, the medium has provided unique benefits over time. Early newspaper advertising allowed newspapers to become independent of church and government control, encouraging the development of a free press with the ability to criticize powerful interests. When newspapers and magazines moved to an advertising model, these publications became accessible to large groups of people who previously could not afford them. Advertising also contributed to radio's and TV's most successful eras. Radio's golden age in the 1940s and TV's golden age in the 1950s both took place when advertisers were creating or heavily involved with the production of most of the programs.

Advertising also makes newer forms of media both useful and accessible. Many Internet services, such as e-mail and smartphone applications, are only free because they feature advertising. Advertising allows promoters and service providers to reduce and sometimes eliminate the upfront purchase price, making these services available to a greater number of people and allowing lower economic classes to take part in mass culture.

Advertising has also been a longtime promoter of the arts. During the Renaissance, painters and composers often relied on wealthy patrons or governments to promote their work. Corporate advertising has given artists new means to fund their creative efforts. In addition, many artists and writers have been able to support themselves by working for advertisers. The use of music in

commercials, particularly in recent years, has provided musicians with notoriety and income. Indeed, it is hard to imagine the cultural landscape of the United States without advertising.

[1]Mierau, 42.

[2]Hood, 28–51.

[3]Fox, 74–77.

[4]Fox, 89.

[5]Fox, 121–124.

[6]Fox, 168.

[7]Fox, 173.

[8]Fox, 210–215.

[9]Frank, 60–67, 159.

[10]Fox, 324–325.

[11]Klein, 12–22.

[12]Fox, 65–66.

[13]Hood, 74–75.

[14]O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik, 131–137.

[15]Fox, 95–96.

[16]Frank, 233–235.

[17]Fox, 278–284.

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Advertising as Persuasion

Don Draper seeing a ghost. Photo illustration by Bill Strain, CCBY. Source: Flickr.

"What you call love was invented by guys like me to sell nylons." — Don Draper, fictional advertising executive from the AMC series *Mad Men*

Advertising is a relatively straightforward process, right? Companies develop brands and specific products they want to sell. They need to make consumers aware of their brands, products and those products' features, so they develop creative campaigns to promote them and often pay ad agencies to do the creative work and place the ads in front of mass audiences. The basic definition of **advertising** is a message or group of messages designed with three intentions: to raise awareness in the population about brands, products and services; to encourage consumers to make purchases; and, ultimately, to inspire people to advocate for their favorite brands. A **brand advocate** is someone who is so supportive of a product or service that they publicly encourage others to buy it. There are paid brand advocates, of course, but in a networked communication environment, even unpaid individuals with modest followings can

become **influencers** — people who promote products on their social media streams. Consumers who have been so successfully persuaded to purchase and enjoy a product that they try to persuade others to buy it too extend the reach of advertising potentially exponentially.

A **company** is a business entity that produces several types of product, whereas a **brand** is a term used to label a specific product or a limited family of products. It is important to differentiate between the two. For example, PepsiCo owns the Pepsi brand but also Frito Lay, Gatorade and Quaker, among others. Under the Pepsi brand, there are several products such as Diet Pepsi, Pepsi Wild Cherry and many other variations around the world. Advertising most often focuses on brands and products rather than the companies and large corporations that own them.

Advertising Defined

On one level, advertising is a simple concept. Mass media professionals craft messages to help sell products by raising awareness and pushing people to make actual purchase decisions, but in the network society and the age of targeted marketing, the ability to reach individual consumers who fit precise sets of characteristics is incredible. More is expected of advertisers than to put interesting messages in front of the "right people" based on general demographics. Brands may advertise during certain TV shows or publications to reach a particular type of media consumer. This more traditional form of mass media advertising is still a multibillion-dollar industry, but with data-driven targeting capabilities, brands can reach people based not only on general demographic characteristics but on specific behaviors as well. The combination of detailed demographic information, search and digital media usage behaviors and physical world behaviors (such as whether someone has entered a Walmart or Macy's in the past week) makes advertising in the information age more powerful,

sometimes more meaningful and often more ethically questionable than in the past. The level of targeting that is possible is incredible and would have been unimaginable 20 years ago. Advertising has always been about tapping into consumers' existing needs or about creating a need and inserting a product to fill it. Now, there is a greater ability than ever to identify and create a need not only for interested members of a mass audience but also for specific individuals in real time based on their online and physical world behavior.

The History of Advertising

Before delving into a discussion about the future of advertising, it might help to survey the history of the field. Advertising in the modern sense emerged between the mid-19th and early-20th centuries. At the same time that the concept of brands was developing, mass-media platforms such as daily newspapers and radio broadcasts grew their audiences and spread their influence geographically. Corporations, conveniently, grew large enough to have massive budgets to spend on advertising. The promotion of products dates back thousands of years, but the modern advertising explosion tracks explosive growth in industrial manufacturing from roughly the mid-1800s through the entire 20th century.


STARK TREES BEAR

The Experience of Others is a good thing to go by, if it is **actual**, not manufactured, which is so often dealt out to confiding planters by "paper nurseries."

I am glad I set a Stark orchard a few years ago. Then I had only 25 acres of tillable land. My orchard has enabled me to buy 80 **acres more** and I want to put out **another Stark orchard.**—R. Sawyer, Fruit Co., Mo.

A Test of Good Trees.—Four years ago bought trees from different nurseries, yours among them; can go in the orchard now and pick out the Stark trees—they have **grown so much faster** and look so healthy. Want to fill vacancies with Stark trees.—J. L. Lamont, Lake Co., Ill.

Cheap (?) Trees.—I made a quest for cheap trees, and found them—if they bear fruit as large as the knots on the peach I will be well pleased. But until then count me a **regular customer** for **Stark Trees at any price**; I have some and **want more.**—A. S. Burks, Ref Smith Co., Ind.

Stark Trees stand the winter as well as any grower; will keep on planting them.—A. W. Bailey, Lake Co., N. H.

Stark Trees or None.—In this valley those who have been setting Stark Trees will set **no other.** Eight or ten agents for different nurseries came in here to run Stark Trees out, but all put together have not sold $100 worth, while I sold **$750 worth** of Stark Trees **this week.**—S. S. Dobbs, Sonoma Co., Cal.

Stark Trees Are Known the World Over.—7,000 Miles.—Trees received in '99 **doing nicely.** Herewith order for personal use, also one for Dr. Shormaker, who lives 180 miles north of here.—R. L. Sudler, Penn Yan, Cal.

7000 Miles.—Many of your new fruits are now established—they have come to **stay,** and have taken their place among our standard varieties.—R. Ker & Son, Auckland, N. Z.

A Journey of 15,000 Miles.—Have determined to give Stark Trees a trial. Ship enclosed order to London, England, thence to Bombay, India, where my agents will forward them to Bajaura, which is about 1000 miles inland and 150 miles from the nearest R. R. point. Pack in boxes not more than 6 ft. long, weighing not over 200 lbs. each, as they have to be **carried by bearers** over mountain passes **11,000 ft. high.** The scions you sent so **perfectly packed** arrived in excellent condition, so am going to try to get scions from them, tho I realize the trip will be a severe one.—Col. R. R. E. Kennedy, Bajaura, India, India.

Stark Trees in the North.—Visited orchard of one of your Wis. customers, Wm. Gaylord, of Pensburg. Your publications seem to be his Bible. His display of apples at La Crosse Fair last fall attracted my attention and I wanted to see the trees. Mistake! I was **surprised** to find the trees to be but brought of you during so well so far north. I want some of your 2-yr. budded trees.—A. J. Philips, Sec'y Wis. Horticultural Society.

Burbank's Five Greatest Creations.—Colored plate of my five plums is about **perfection.** Each variety has the right born and color and seems **astonishingly accurate.** Kindly send me two more of the plates for my scrap book.—Luther Burbank, Santa Rosa, Cal. (Pets coming from a man who **never exaggerates** should convince the most skeptical that our colored plates are as **nearly true to nature as possible.**—Stark Bro's.)

Early newspaper ad for Stark Trees from the Boston Public Library Collection, public domain. Source: Flikr.

HubSpot has a deck of 472 slides that presents a narrative about the history of advertising. Some highlights are referenced here. One key point made in this visual history is that non-branded newspaper ads would often outnumber branded ads in the early days of the newspaper industry. As uniformity in mass-produced goods became the norm and brand differentiation became possible, so did the need to communicate it.

Ayer & Son is credited with being the first ad agency to work on commission. In other words, it is known as the first modern ad agency. It was founded in Philadephia in 1869. Today there are about 500,000 ad agencies in the world of all shapes and sizes. They employ ever-evolving techniques to try to stay ahead of information weary consumers.

Categorizing Advertising Methods

From the mid-20th century on, advertisers conceptualized their work by breaking it down into one of two strategic categories: “above-the-line” and “below-the-line” methods. Put simply, “above the line” (ATL) refers to methods of advertising that target mass audiences on mass media platforms with messages usually designed from a one-to-many point of view. Often, “above the line” implies that the ad or **ad campaign** — a series of related ads meant to work in tandem — appears on legacy media platforms. “Legacy media” refers to platforms in existence before the transition to digital. ATL campaigns most often include television, radio and

print ads as well as sponsorships. A **sponsorship** is when a company pays to support an event or a mass media production in exchange for having its brand promoted alongside the activity or content. The organizing concept for ATL advertising, as the term is used today, is that the ads target a mass audience primarily on "legacy" media platforms.

"Below the line" (BTL) advertising refers to more one-on-one marketing approaches which can include targeted social media campaigns, direct mail marketing, point-of-sale ads, coupons and deals, and email and telemarketing appeals. This is not an exhaustive list of ATL or BTL methods, but these examples demonstrate that ATL has more in common with the concept of mass communication introduced in earlier chapters, and BTL has more in common with interpersonal communication, also as previously discussed. This is not to say that BTL messages are crafted one at a time for individual consumers. Rather, the tone, style and method of dissemination of BTL advertising are more personal.

Billboards clutter the roadway in Leakey, Texas. Photo by Marc St. Gil, public domain work of the EPA. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

In the 20th century, the term ATL advertising was associated with ad agency work (mostly mass media campaign ads), whereas BTL advertising referred to pamphlets, point-of-sale marketing and other relatively "small" tasks that ad agencies typically did not handle. Now, there are ad agencies of all sizes, and even very large agencies might do BTL marketing. Online advertising and social media marketing have made it possible to target people with personal messages but still purchase the ads on a massive scale. Thus, advertising can be **massively individuated** — that is,

produced for mass audiences but having the appearance of personalized messages — much like social media content. The profit in BTL marketing comes from reaching large audiences with tailored messages at specific times in relation to their previous purchasing and shopping behaviors. So much data exists on individual users and on the behavior of similar people who have made similar purchases that advertisers can try to target people at precisely the right moment to influence their purchase decisions.

ATL and BTL advertising can work hand in hand. Think of a summer soft drink promotion advertised on television and on the radio (ATL) that is also backed up with neighborhood-specific billboards and hyper-targeted Twitter messages with surprise prizes given out (BTL). BTL messages still reach large numbers of people, but they are by definition more tailored than ATL ads. An individual ad in a BTL context may not cost as much as a massive ad buy facilitated by an agency that primarily does ATL advertising; however, BTL advertising can still be costly for advertisers and profitable for ad agencies in the aggregate. For example, an ad agency that does not typically manage multimillion-dollar television ad buys might still put together hundreds of thousands of dollars in targeted social media ads. Rather than displaying one commercial for several months, the BTL social media campaign might be made up of dozens of targeted videos, tweets, influencer posts and online ads. Often software algorithms are used to decide who sees which targeted ad and when.

The Advertising Funnel and Other Key Concepts

At its heart, advertising is a matter of raising *awareness*, creating a deeper *interest* in a product, and encouraging consumers to *desire* to make a purchase and ultimately to take *action*. Professional communicators tailor messages in relation to the advertising funnel or **purchase funnel**, as shown in the image on the left. Brands, either on their own or with the help of advertising agencies,

target audiences in different ways at specific points along the funnel to reach their strategic goals. For example, if an unknown brand launches a new product, people need to be made aware of both the brand and product. The brand may need to establish itself with an awareness campaign. If Nike introduces a new Air Jordan, the branding is easily handled. The top of the funnel areas of awareness and interest will not need as much focus as the decision and action areas, the "down funnel" aspects of a campaign for a well-known and well-loved brand.

Simple graphic representation of the purchase funnel. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Another way to think of this is as a pathway a potential customer makes, also known as the **consumer journey**. First, the consumer needs to be made aware of the brand and its products. Then, they might take an interest in a particular product as they learn more about its features. They need to move from being interested to desiring a product if they are going to make the purchase. Ultimately, from the advertiser's point of view, the goal is not only to move the consumer to purchase the product but also to inspire

them to advocate for the brand. This is not conceptually complicated. The idea is to move people in straightforward steps toward desired behaviors; however, there are complex processes of cognition and persuasion that underlie consumer decisions.

Consumer behavior is about as unpredictable as other forms of human behavior. There are also ethical concerns. If a product or service proves to be harmful, advertisers and public relations professionals have to decide if and when they will stop marketing the brand. Advertising is challenging enough when products do not raise ethical dilemmas. Promoting harmful products can be damaging socially, professionally and personally. Thus, the world of consumer advertising in the mass media is more complex than the funnel makes it seem, although it is an essential strategic model in the industry.

Content Marketing

Content marketing refers to a common practice where brands produce their own content, or hire someone else to produce it, and then market that information as an alternative to advertising. It still moves people along the purchase funnel, but there is usually added value in this type of content. If an advertisement for a mattress describes its features and price, a blog funded by the mattress brand might compare the pros and cons of many different mattresses, perhaps with a bias for the brand. It isn't always pretty. Content produced for a brand should ethically be labeled as sponsored, but it is not always done. In cases when consumers have discovered that trusted sources were content marketers rather than independent reviewers, the revelations have created public relations problems for the brands. Content marketing done ethically offers financial transparency while providing valuable information and an emotional connection to the product for consumers. It can take the form of blog posts or entire blogs. Such marketing is usually optimized for search

engines, which is to say the posts are written to attract search engine attention as well as outside links, which also alerts search engines that this content is valuable. Done well, branded content can be seen as more authentic than advertising content, and it can be cheaper to produce and disseminate. It is difficult to do well, of course.

The most common types of content created in this context besides blog content are social media profiles and posts, sponsored content in social media spaces and even viral video and meme chasing. Brands might have their own social media profiles, or they might support social media influencers to promote their products in a sponsored way. Brands might also use their influencer teams or their own internal marketing teams to follow viral social media trends and to create memes. In a sense, content marketing allows a brand to create a more human profile in digital spaces. In this manner, brands can engage with potential and repeat customers. Brands can foster relationships and encourage brand advocacy among people not being paid to promote their products. Many brands use this form of marketing to engage consumers on a deep level and to offer information and emotion that might not be present in other forms of advertising.

Digital Advertising Giants

OVERVIEW

- Google and Meta (formerly known as Facebook) are the largest online platforms that are funded by digital advertising. Their business model relies on attracting consumers' attention and gathering data about them, which they use to sell targeted advertising.
- The services provided by both companies are highly valued by consumers. Search engines give us instant access to information, news and a wide range of goods and services. Social media services enable us to connect with friends and family around the world, keep up with news or current trends and share creative content with one another. Both platforms have opened up access to sophisticated and targeted advertising for millions of small businesses around the world. Both companies are also able to gather substantially more data about consumers than their rivals.
- Both Google and Meta are highly profitable. Our analysis demonstrates that both companies have for many years been earning profits that are substantially higher than any reasonable estimate of what we would expect in a competitive market.
- We are assessing whether problems such as market power, lack of

transparency and conflicts of interest mean that competition in search, social media and digital advertising is not working as well as it should.

- These issues matter to consumers: if competition in search and social media is not working well, this can lead to reduced innovation and choice, while poor competition in digital advertising can increase the prices of goods and services across the economy, and undermine the ability of newspapers and other providers who rely on digital advertising revenue to produce valuable content.

THE BUSINESS MODEL OF PLATFORMS FUNDED BY DIGITAL ADVERTISING

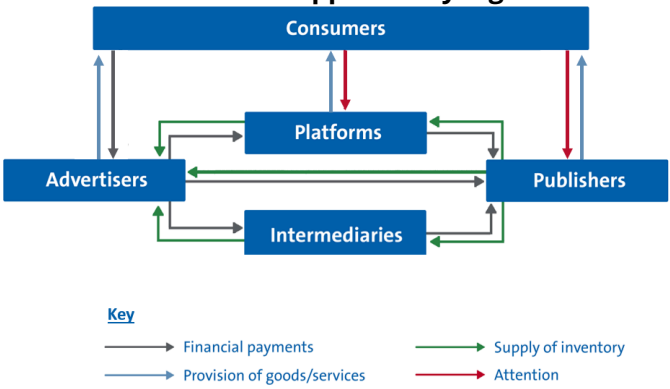
Online platforms typically seek to attract consumers by offering their core services for free. Once they have attracted a critical mass of consumers, they seek to make money from business users on another side of the platform. In transaction-based platforms, such as Amazon Marketplace or Apple's App Store, this is predominantly through the commission that is charged to retailers or app developers respectively.

For other platform services, such as search engines and social media services, monetization comes predominantly through serving ads. More specifically, they make money by selling inventory to advertisers. Advertising 'inventory' is a space, whether located on a billboard, in a newspaper, on a web page, or on a TV screen, where adverts can be displayed. In an online setting, inventory is essentially empty space on a web page or mobile app, which can be filled with text (including links to other websites), images, and videos. Google and Meta are by far the largest two companies operating with this business model.

Although consumers do not pay money for these services, there

is still an exchange that takes place between them and the platform. In exchange for searching the internet, watching videos, or communicating with friends, consumers provide their attention and data about themselves. Advertising- funded platforms are able to combine the attention of their users with contextual or personal information they have about them to serve highly- targeted ads, which are in high demand by advertisers. These exchanges are illustrated in the Figure below.

Figure: Consumer services supported by digital advertising



Source: CMA assessment.

The advertising-funded business model is not novel, nor is it inherently problematic from a competition perspective. Newspapers have been generating revenue through advertising for several hundred years. Similarly, radio and television have been generating revenue through advertising for years. These services have added substantial value to our society.

The same is true of many services provided by digital platforms. Search engines give us instant access to information, news, directions, and other websites with minimal effort. Social media services enable us to connect with friends and family around the world, make new friends, keep up with news or current trends, and share creative content with one another. These services, which are funded by digital advertising, are highly valued by consumers.

THE VALUE OF ONLINE PLATFORM SERVICES

Platform services that are funded by digital advertising bring substantial benefits to consumers, while being provided free of charge. Research published in 2018 demonstrated that consumers place great financial value on a range of online services, with values of multiple thousands of dollars being assigned to search engines and digital maps. Video streaming services such as YouTube, and social media more broadly received lower, but still significant valuations.

The fact that these services are so important to consumers and valued so highly is precisely why it is critical that competition is effective in these markets. The current COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the critical importance of digital services for consumers' well-being and prosperity. It is important to ensure that current consumers are reaping the maximum potential rewards from these services, and that future consumers will continue to benefit from new innovative services that can transform our lives.

The targeted nature of digital advertising can add value to both advertisers and consumers. For consumers, targeted adverts will be more relevant to them, which can make them less irritating and more likely to provide genuinely useful information about products and services they may be interested in. For advertisers, improved targeting should deliver a greater return on their investment as their adverts will be viewed more often by their intended audience. Overall, more relevant and better targeted adverts can be expected to result in more purchases, increasing consumer and producer welfare as a result.

Platforms such as Google and Meta have made it substantially easier for businesses to reach and serve adverts to consumers all around the world, in a way that was only previously possible for large companies. This has opened up greater advertising possibilities for a long tail of small businesses, and enabled large

numbers of predominantly online businesses to thrive that may otherwise not have been viable.

Despite these benefits that online platforms have undoubtedly delivered, the markets within which they operate contain a range of features that mean they frequently tend towards a 'winner-takes-most' dynamic, with limited competition 'in' or 'for' the market, and with demand often aggregated by one or sometimes two very large platforms. This may result in sub-optimal outcomes for consumers in these and other markets over the longer term.

GOOGLE'S AND META'S POSITIONS IN RESPECT OF CONSUMER ATTENTION AND DATA

There are two key factors that influence the revenue that online platforms and publishers can generate through digital advertising:

- **Capturing consumers' attention:** this is an essential requirement for selling any form of advertising inventory. The more of consumers' attention that platforms can capture, whether that is through increased reach or keeping consumers online for longer periods, the more attractive the platform's inventory is to advertisers, and the more inventory they will have to sell.
- **Understanding preferences, purchasing intent and behavior:** understanding the wants and needs of specific consumers at any point in time is valuable to advertisers as they can target their adverts towards those individuals that they suspect are most likely to make a purchase. This targeting – whether it is based on contextual information such as the subject of a web page, or on personal data such as the individual's age or recent purchases – can result in a higher return on investment for advertisers, and a willingness to pay higher prices. Similarly, advertisers are more likely to be willing to pay high prices

> in the future if they are given evidence that consumers exposed to adverts on a platform went on to make a purchase. Platforms are therefore rewarded by advertisers for having extensive and up-to-date knowledge of their consumers' characteristics, preferences and behavior. The key input to this knowledge is data.

Competition & Markets Authority. Online Platforms and Digital Advertising Market Study Final Report, July 1. 2020

Text edited to refer to Facebook by its new name Meta.

The Influence of Advertising

The advertising industry revolves around creating commercial messages urging the purchase of new or improved products or services in a variety of media: print, online, digital, television, radio, and outdoor. Because as consumers we need and want to be informed, this feature of advertising is to the good. Yet some advertising is intended to lead to the purchase of goods and services we do not need. Some ads may make claims containing only the thinnest slice of truth or exaggerate and distort what the goods and services can actually deliver. All these tactics raise serious ethical concerns that we will consider here.

THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Relevant to any discussion of the influence and ethics of advertising is the emergence and dominance of social media, which now serve as the format within which many people most often encounter ads. Kelly Jensen, a digital-marketing consultant, observed that we inhabit a "Digital Era" in which "the internet is arguably the single most influential factor of our culture—transforming the way we view communication, relationships, and even ourselves. Social media platforms have evolved to symbolize the status of both individuals and businesses alike. . . Today, using social media to create brand awareness, drive revenue, engage current customers,

and attract new ones isn't optional anymore. Now it is an absolute 'must.'"[1]

These are bold claims—as are the claims of some advertising—but Jensen argues convincingly that social media platforms reach many consumers, especially younger ones, who simply cannot be captured by conventional advertising schemes. For those who derive most of the significant information that shapes their lives solely through electronic sources, nothing other than social media–based appeals stands much chance of influencing their purchasing decisions.

This upending of conventional modes of advertising has begun to change the content of ads dramatically. It certainly presents a new stage on which people as young as their teens increasingly rely for help in choosing what to buy. Many marketers have come to appreciate that if they are not spreading the word about their products and services via an electronic source, many millennials will ignore it.[2]

Undeniably, a digital environment for advertising, selling, and delivering products and services functions as a two-edged sword for business. It provides lightning-quick access to potential customers, but it also opens pathways for sensitive corporate and consumer data to be hacked on an alarming scale. It offers astute companies nearly unlimited capacity to brand themselves positively in the minds of purchasers, but it simultaneously offers a

1. Kelly Jensen, "The Power a Social Media Policy Plugs into Your Brand," *QSRweb.com*, May 21, 2018. https://www.qsrweb.com/blogs/the-power-a-social-media-policy-plugs-into-your-brand/.
2. The Millennial Generation is defined by different metrics, depending on who the assessor is. For many, though, this generation consists of those who are currently (in 2018) 18 to 35 years of age. See "Global Marketing Analytics Market Analysis, Growth, Trends & Forecast 2018-2023, with an Expected CAGR of 13.17% - ResearchAndMarkets.com," *BusinessWire*. May 18, 2018. https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180518005174/en/Global-Marketing-Analytics-Market-Analysis-Growth-Trends.

platform for disgruntled stakeholders to assail companies for both legitimate and self-serving reasons.

Paul A. Argenti, who has taught business communication for many years at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth University, has studied this dilemma. As he put it, "mobile apps have created a new playground for cyber-thieves."[3]
And consumer advocates and purchasers alike "now use technology to rally together and fuel or escalate a crisis—posing additional challenges for the corporation" in the crosshairs of criticism. Finally, "the proliferation of online blogs and social networking sites has greatly increased the visibility and reach of all current events, not excluding large corporate"[4]
bungling.

Regardless of the delivery platform, however, any threat that the advertising of unnecessary or harmful products may pose to our autonomy as consumers is complicated by the fact that sometimes we willingly choose to buy goods or services we may not necessarily require. Sometimes we even buy things that have been proven to be harmful to us, such as cigarettes and sugary drinks. Yet we may *desire* these products even if we do not *need* them. If we have the disposable income to make these discretionary purchases, why should we not do so, and why should advertisers not advise us of their availability?

DOES ADVERTISING DRIVE US TO UNNECESSARY PURCHASES?

By definition, advertising aims to persuade consumers to buy goods and services, many of which are nonessential. Although consumers have long been encouraged to heed the warning caveat

3. Paul A. Argenti, *Corporate Communication*, 7th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2016), 261.
4. Paul A. Argenti, *Corporate Communication*, 7th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2016), 265.

emptor (let the buyer beware), it is a valid question whether advertisers have any ethical obligation to rein in the oft-exaggerated claims of their marketing pitches. Most consumers emphatically would agree that they do.

The award-winning Harvard University economist John Kenneth Galbraith directly addressed this issue in *The Affluent Society*, first published in 1958. In what he depicted as the "the dependence effect," Galbraith bemoaned the power of corporations to harness wide-ranging advertising strategies, marketing efforts, and sales pitches to influence consumer purchasing decisions.[5] He asked whether it is possible for a sophisticated advertising campaign to create a demand for a product whose benefits are frivolous at best. If so, is there anything inherently wrong with that? Or are informed consumers themselves responsible for resisting tempting—though misleading—advertising claims and exercising their own best judgment about whether to buy a product that might be successful, not because it deserves to be but simply because of the marketing hype behind it? These questions remain fundamental to the manager's task of creating ethical advertising campaigns in which truthful content is prioritized over inducing wasteful consumption.

Psychological appeals form the basis of the most successful ads. Going beyond the standard ad pitch about the product's advantages, psychological appeal**s** try to reach our self-esteem and persuade us that we will feel better about ourselves if we use certain products. If advertising frames the purchase of a popular toy as the act of a loving parent rather than an extravagance, for instance, consumers may buy it not because their child needs it but because it makes them feel good about what generous parents they are. This is how psychological appeals become successful, and when they do work, this often constitutes a victory for the power of psychological persuasion at the expense of ethical truthfulness.

5. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, 3rd ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Press, 1976), 103.

Purchases are also affected by our notion of what constitutes a necessity versus a luxury, and that perception often differs across generations. Older consumers today can probably remember when a cell phone was considered a luxury, for instance, rather than a necessity for every schoolchild. On the other hand, many younger consumers consider the purchase of a landline unnecessary, whereas some older people still use a conventional phone as their main or even preferred means of communication. The cars and suburban homes that were once considered essential purchases for every young family are slowly becoming luxuries, replaced, for many millennials, by travel. Generational differences like these are carefully studied by advertisers who are anxious to make use of psychological appeals in their campaigns.

A consumer craze based on little more than novelty—or, at least, not on necessity or luxury in the conventional sense—is the Pet Rock, a recurring phenomenon that began in 1977. Pet Rocks have been purchased by the millions over the years, despite being nothing more than rocks. During the 2017 holiday shopping season, they retailed at $19.95.[6]

Is this a harmless fad, or a rip-off of gullible consumers who are persuaded it can satisfy a real need? In the annals of marketing, the Pet Rock craze denotes one of the most successful campaigns—still unfolding today, though in subdued fashion—in support of so dubious a product.

As long as marketers refrain from breaking the law or engaging in outright lies, are they still acting ethically in undertaking influential advertising campaigns that may drive gullible consumers to purchase products with minimal usefulness? Is this simply the free market in operation? In other words, are manufacturers just supplying a product, promoting it, and then seeing whether customers respond positively to it? Or are savvy marketing campaigns exerting too much influence on consumers ill prepared to resist them? Many people have long asked exactly these

6. Pet Rock. http://www.petrock.com (accessed December 27, 2017).

questions, and we still have arrived at no clear consensus as to how to answer them. Yet it remains an obligation of each new generation of marketers to reflect on these points and, at the very least, establish their convictions about them.

A second ethical question is how we should expect reasonable people to respond to an avalanche of marketing schemes deliberately intended to separate them from their hard-earned cash. Are consumers obligated to sift through all the messages and ultimately make purchasing decisions in their own best interest? For example, does a perceived "deal" on an unhealthy food option justify the purchase? These questions have no consensus answers, but they underlie any discussion of the point at which sophisticated advertising runs headlong into people's obligation to take responsibility for the wisdom of their purchases.

When an unwise purchase is made appealing, where does the consumer's responsibility for decision-making lie? Furthermore, if the purchase is spurred by children who are responding to advertising specifically directed at them, is consumer responsibility diminished? (credit: "Big Burgers – Asia (5490379696)" by Kinoko

kokonotsu/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0)

No one would argue that children are particularly susceptible to the ads commercial television rains over them regularly. Generally, young children have not developed sufficient judgment to know what advertised products are good for them and which ones have little or no benefit or perhaps can even harm. Research has even shown that very young children have difficulty separating what is real on television from what is not. This is especially so as it pertains to advertising for junk food. Savvy marketers take advantage of the fact that young children (those younger than age seven or eight years) view advertising in the same manner they do information from trustworthy adults—that is, as very credible—and so marketers hone pitches for junk food directly to these children.[7] What restrictions could we reasonably impose on those who gear their ads toward children? We could argue that they should take special care that ads targeting children make absolutely no exaggerated claims, because children are less capable of seeing through the usual puffery that most of us ignore. Children are more literal, and once they gain the ability to understand messages directed toward them, especially when voiced by adult authority figures, they typically accept these as truthful statements.

When adults make poor consumer choices, who is responsible? Is it ourselves? Is it our society and culture, which permit the barrage of marketing to influence us in ways we often come to regret? Is it the persuasive power of marketers, which we should rein in through law? Do adults have the right to some assistance from

7. See "Impact of Food Advertising on Children" in *Slogan*, January 31, 2018. The article states, "children less than eight are viewed by many child development researchers as vulnerable to misleading advertising. The intense marketing of high fat, high sugar foods to this age group is termed as exploitative because children do not understand that commercials are designed to sell products and they do not possess the cognitive ability to comprehend or evaluate the advertising." This applies regardless of the medium. https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#./!?&_suid=1528231282086007969979052352172.

marketers as they attempt to carry out their responsibility to protect children from manipulative ads? We have no easy answers to these questions, though they have taken on special urgency as technology has expanded the range of advertising even to our smartphones.

IS SUBLIMINAL ADVERTISING REAL?

It may be possible for marketing to be unfairly persuasive in ways that overwhelm the better judgment of consumers. Whether it is the consumers' responsibility to resist or marketers' to tone down their appeals, or both, will continue to be debated. Yet the question of where responsibility lies when consumers are steered to make choices certainly has ethical ramifications.

Some psychologists and educational specialists claim that the very old and the very young are particularly ill prepared to exercise good judgment in the face of subliminal advertising, that is, embedded words or images that allegedly reach us only beneath the level of our consciousness. Other experts, however, disagree and insist that subliminal advertising is an urban myth that no current technology could create or sustain.

A U.S. journalist, Vance Packard, published *The Hidden Persuaders* in 1957, contending that subliminal messaging had already been introduced into some U.S. cinemas to sell more refreshments at the theaters' snack bars. Alarms sounded at the prospect, but it turned out that any data on which Packard was relying came from James Vicary, a U.S. market researcher who insisted he had engineered the feat in a cinema in New Jersey. No other substantiation was provided, and Vicary's claim was eventually dismissed as self-promotion, which he seemed to concede in an interview five years later. Although the immediate threat of subliminal advertising receded, some people remain concerned that such persuasion

might indeed be possible, especially with the advent of better technologies, like virtual reality, to implement it.[8]

A 2015 study at the University of South Carolina found that thirsty test subjects placed in the role of shoppers in a simulated grocery store could be subliminally influenced in their choice of beverages *if* they were primed by images of various beverage brands within fifteen minutes of acknowledging being thirsty. After that window of time passed, however, any impact of subliminal messaging receded.[9]

So the scientific evidence establishing any real phenomenon of subliminal advertising is inconclusive. Put another way, the evidence to this point does not definitively demonstrate the existence of a current technology making subliminal marketing pitches possible. Given this, it cannot be clearly determined whether such a technology, if it did exist, would be effective. Another question is whether virtual reality and augmented reality might eventually make subliminal advertising viable. Real subliminal persuasion might render children, the elderly, and those with developmental disabilities more vulnerable to falling prey. Could even the most skeptical viewer resist a message so powerfully enhanced that the product can be sampled without leaving home? Would you be in favor of federal government regulation to prevent such ads? What sort of ethical imperatives would you be willing to request of or impose on sophisticated marketers?

Advertising plays a useful role in informing consumers of new or modified products and services in the marketplace, and wise

8. David Aaronovitch, "Subliminal Advertising: Unmasking the Myth or Menace in Hidden Messages," *The Times*, January 19, 2015. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/subliminal-advertising-unmasking-the-myth-or-menace-in-hidden-messages-xm3wnn0fnvx.
9. "Marketing Research; Researchers from University of South Carolina Report Recent Findings in Marketing Research (Drink Coca-Cola, Eat Popcorn, and Choose Powerade: Testing the Limits of Subliminal Persuasion)," *Marketing Weekly News,* December 18, 2015.

purchasers will pay attention to it but with a discerning eye. Even the exaggerated claims that often accompany ads can serve a purpose as long as we do not unquestioningly accept every pitch as true.

Why It Matters: Branding

WHY ANALYZE ELEMENTS OF A BRAND AND EXPLAIN HOW THE BRAND-BUILDING PROCESS CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF PRODUCTS OR SERVICES?

Pop Quiz!

Instructions: *Grab a piece of paper and jot down answers to the following questions:*

- What is your favorite brand of clothing?
    - Why is it your favorite?
    - List a word or phrase that describes how this brand makes you feel:
- What is your favorite brand of car?
    - Why is it your favorite?
    - List a word or phrase that describes how this brand makes you feel:
- What is your favorite place to stop for coffee, donuts, a bagel, or some other snack?

Coffee art in 3D

- Why is it your favorite?
- List a word or phrase that describes how this place (which is also a brand) makes you feel:

Set the paper aside for a moment and keep reading. We'll come back to it.

THE POWER OF BRAND

Brands are images that exist in your mind–and in the minds of other consumers–about the things around you: products, services, places, companies, people, entertainment, and so on. In a modern world that offers many choices, brands help simplify the decisions you make about what to buy, where to go, and how to spend your time.

Brands are powerful. When you explain why a brand is your favorite, you probably identify some of the traits or features of its products or services that explain rationally what makes it better than others. But rational explanations are just part of the story. Strong brands are powerful because they also tap into emotions. They make you feel a certain way, and that feeling is hard for any other brand to replicate—let alone replace.

Brands can cause people to spend more money on a product than they would otherwise. Brands can create a sense of loyalty and even lock-in—that haloed point where a tribe of dedicated fans always chooses one company's product or services over another.

So how do they do it? What's happening in marketing

departments to create these powerful, emotional assets called brands?

WHAT CREATES A BRAND EXPERIENCE?

Go back to your pop quiz responses. Pick one of your favorite brands and list 2–3 things the company behind the brand provides to help make that favorite brand so memorable or special for you. It could be any of the following things–or something else entirely:

- Brand name
- Product design
- The shopping experience
- The post-purchase experience
- People or communities associated with the brand
- Product packaging
- Advertising
- Social media activity
- Customer service
- Comfort, convenience, or ease-of-use
- Attitude or personality of the brand
- Special information, deals, or promotions targeted to you
- Membership or loyalty programs
- Pricing or value for the money
- Events or activities tied to the brand
- Something else?

Marketers use these tools and many others to create the total experience with a product, service, or company that turns it into an

actual "brand." In this module, you'll learn how a brand starts and discover what it takes to coordinate all the different parts of the unique brand.

THE PARADOX OF BRAND

Although organizations take all kinds of measures to create and build brands, in fact, the brand *isn't* just what the company says it is. In the end, the brand is what customers *believe* it is, as the following quote explains:

> *So what exactly is a brand?*
> *A brand is a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or organization.*
> *It's a gut feeling because people are emotional, intuitive beings. It's a person's gut feeling because brands are defined by individuals, not companies, markets, or the public.*
> *It's not what YOU say it is.*
> *It's what THEY say it is.*
> —Marty Neumeier, author and branding consultant, Neutron LLC

Companies can do a lot to create and build brands, but the net impact and value is what happens inside the mind of the consumer. The supreme challenge of brand is to make your vision of your brand the same thing other people experience and believe about your brand.

Don Draper of Mad Men captures (in the antiquated context of the 1950's) the difference of a good brand experience and how it can create a feeling.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=586#oembed-1

WHAT IS A BRAND?

As we start our exploration of brand and its role in marketing, take a few minutes to watch the following video about Coca-Cola, which is perhaps one of the most iconic brands of all time.
Here's Don Drapers' 'idea' for the refreshed Coke Brand in the 1971. Does it resonate today?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=586#oembed-2

Brands are interesting, powerful concoctions of the marketplace that create tremendous value for organizations and for individuals. Because brands serve several functions, we can define the term "brand" in the following ways:

- **A brand is an identifier:** a name, sign, symbol, design,

term, or some combination of these things that identifies an offering and helps simplify choice for the consumer.

- **A brand is a promise:** the promise of what a company or offering will provide to the people who interact with it.
- **A brand is an asset:** a reputation in the marketplace that can drive price premiums and customer preference for goods from a particular provider.
- **A brand is a set of perceptions:** the sum total of everything individuals believe, think, see, know, feel, hear, and experience about a product, service, or organization.
- **A brand is "mind share":** the unique position a company or offering holds in the customer's mind, based on their past experiences and what they expect in the future.

A brand consists of all the features that distinguish the goods and services of one seller from another: name, term, design, style, symbols, customer touchpoints, etc. Together, all elements of the brand work as a psychological trigger or stimulus that causes an association to all other thoughts one has had about this brand. Brands are a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as the following:

- Visual design elements (i.e., logo, color, typography, images, tagline, packaging, etc.)
- Distinctive product features (i.e. quality, design sensibility, personality, etc.)
- Intangible aspects of customers' experience with a product or company (i.e. reputation, customer experience, etc.)

Branding–the act of creating or building a brand–may take place at multiple levels: company brands, individual product brands, or branded product lines. Any entity that works to build consumer

loyalty can also be considered a brand, such as celebrities (Lady Gaga), events (CIBC Run for the Cure), and places (Las Vegas).

ORIGINS OF BRANDING

The word "brand" is derived from the Old Norse *brand* meaning "to burn," which refers to the practice of producers burning their mark (or brand) onto their products. Italians are considered among the first to use brands in the form of watermarks on paper in the 1200s. However, in mass-marketing, this concept originated in the nineteenth century with the introduction of packaged goods.

During the Industrial Revolution, the production of many household items, such as soap, was moved from local communities to centralized factories to be mass-produced and sold to the wider markets. When shipping their items, factories branded their logo or insignia on the barrels they used. Eventually these "brands" became trademarks—recognized symbols of a company or product that have been established by use. These new brand marks enabled packaged goods manufacturers to communicate that their products were distinctive and should be trusted as much as (or more than) local competitors. Campbell Soup, Coca-Cola, and Juicy Fruit gum were among the first products to be "branded."

The Coca-Cola logo is an example of a widely recognized trademark and global brand.

BRANDS CREATE MARKET PERCEPTIONS

A successful brand is much more than just a name or logo. As

suggested in one of the definitions above, brand is the sum of perceptions about a company or product in the minds of consumers. Effective brand building can create and sustain a strong, positive, and lasting impression that is difficult to displace. Brands provide external cues to taste, design, performance, quality, value, or other desired attributes if they are developed and managed properly. Brands convey positive or negative messages about a company, product, or service. Brand perceptions are a direct result of past advertising, promotion, product reputation, and customer experience.

A brand can convey multiple levels of meaning, including the following:

As an automobile brand, the Mercedes-Benz logo suggests high prestige.

1. **Attributes:** specific product features. The Mercedes-Benz brand, for example, suggests expensive, well-built, well-engineered, durable vehicles.
2. **Benefits:** attributes translate into functional and emotional benefits. Mercedes automobiles suggest prestige, luxury, wealth, reliability, self-esteem.
3. **Values:** company values and operational principles. The Mercedes brand evokes company values around excellence, high performance, power.
4. **Culture:** cultural elements of the company and brand. Mercedes represents German precision, discipline, efficiency, quality.
5. **Personality:** strong brands often project a distinctive personality. The Mercedes brand personality combines

luxury and efficiency, precision and prestige.

6. **User:** brands may suggest the types of consumers who buy and use the product. Mercedes drivers might be perceived and classified differently than, for example, the drivers of Cadillacs, Corvettes, or BMWs.

BRANDS CREATE AN EXPERIENCE

Effective branding encompasses everything that shapes the perception of a company or product in the minds of customers. Names, logos, brand marks, trade characters, and trademarks are commonly associated with brand, but these are just part of the picture. Branding also addresses virtually every aspect of a customer's experience with a company or product: visual design, quality, distinctiveness, purchasing experience, customer service, and so forth. Branding requires a deep knowledge of customers and how they experience the company or product. Brand-building requires long-term investment in communicating about and delivering the unique value embodied in a company's "brand," but this effort can bring long-term rewards.

In consumer and business-to-business markets, branding can influence whether consumers will buy the product and how much they are willing to pay. Branding can also help in new product introduction by creating meaning, market perceptions, and differentiation where nothing existed previously. When companies introduce a new product using an existing brand name (a brand extension or a branded product line), they can build on consumers' positive perceptions of the established brand to create greater receptivity for the new offering.

BRANDS CREATE VALUE

Brands create value for consumers and organizations in a variety of ways.

Benefits of Branding for the Consumer

Tim Hortons in Cochrane Ontario

Brands help simplify consumer choices. Brands help create trust, so that a person knows what to expect from a branded company, product, or service. Effective branding enables the consumer to easily identify a desirable company or product because the features and benefits have been communicated effectively. Positive, well-established brand associations increase the likelihood that consumers will select, purchase, and consume the product. Tim Hortons, for example, has an established logo and imagery familiar to many Canadian consumers. The vivid colors and the always fresh slogan are easily recognized and distinguished from competitors, and many associate this brand with tasty donuts, good coffee, and great prices. It combines small-town living with Hockey and a compelling brand story. The trusted Canadian brand has its own nickname of "Timmies." In recent years, as ownership changed have caused a slip in their brand ranking. In May 2018, the Reputation Institute reported that Tim Hortons had fallen from 13th to 67th in its study of Canada's most reputable companies. Digging in deeper, an Ipsos study showed that 35% of consumers said their opinion of Tim's has gone down over the past five years.[1]

1. Robertson, G. (2020, February 9). *Tim Horton's fixing everything except what*

Brands are living and dynamic. Companies can not control their brands. Sometimes the customer can create the brand or its nickname.

Listen to the Under the Influence podcast of Brands and their nicknames. Start at 4:31 minutes.

Benefits of Branding for Product and Service Providers

The Starbucks brand is associated with premium, high-priced coffee.

For companies and other organizations that produce goods, branding helps create loyalty. It decreases the risk of losing market share to the competition by establishing a competitive advantage customers can count on. Strong brands often command premium pricing from consumers who are willing to pay more for a product they know, trust, and perceive as offering good value. Branding can be a great vehicle for effectively reaching target audiences and positioning a company relative to the competition. Working in conjunction with positioning, brand is the ultimate touchstone to

is hurting the brand. Beloved Brands. Beloved Brands. https://beloved-brands.com/2020/02/09/tim-hortons/

guide choices around messaging, visual design, packaging, marketing, communications, and product strategy.

For example, Starbucks' loyal fan base values and pays premium prices for its coffee. Starbucks' choices about beverage products, neighborhood shops, the buying experience, and corporate social responsibility all help build the Starbucks brand and communicate its value to a global customer base.

Benefits of Branding for the Retailer

Retailers such as Target, Safeway, and Wal-Mart create brands of their own to create a loyal base of customers. Branding enables these retailers to differentiate themselves from one another and build customer loyalty around the unique experiences they provide. Retailer brand building may focus around the in-store or online shopping environment, product selection, prices, convenience, personal service, customer promotions, product display, etc.

Retailers also benefit from carrying the branded products customers want. Brand-marketing support from retailers or manufacturers can help attract more customers (ideally ones who normally don't frequent an establishment).

Image Credits

Awe, J.C. (2013, February 7). Coffee art in 3D [Photograph]. CC BY 2.0 Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/qqjawe/8452733327/

Couleur. (2016, February 24). Coca Cola crown corks [Photograph]. CCO Pixabay. https://pixabay.com/photos/coca-cola-crown-corks-red-1218688/

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Pixabay. https://pixabay.com/photos/car-mercedes-transport-auto-motor-1506922/

PART X

JOURNALISM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define journalism and describe its role in society
- Identify significant milestones in the development of journalism
- Discuss current journalism types and practices and the effects of convergence
- Evaluate how technology and economics impact/affect the practice of journalism
- Identify ethical and legal issues in the practice of journalism today
- Apply the principles of news literacy

News Literacy Q&As

This chapter provides answers to a number of pertinent news literacy questions.

Q: HOW CAN A REPORTER ANSWER ALL THE KEY QUESTIONS IN A SHORT ARTICLE?

Journalistic writing is direct, concise and precise. As "The Elements of Style" says: "A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts."

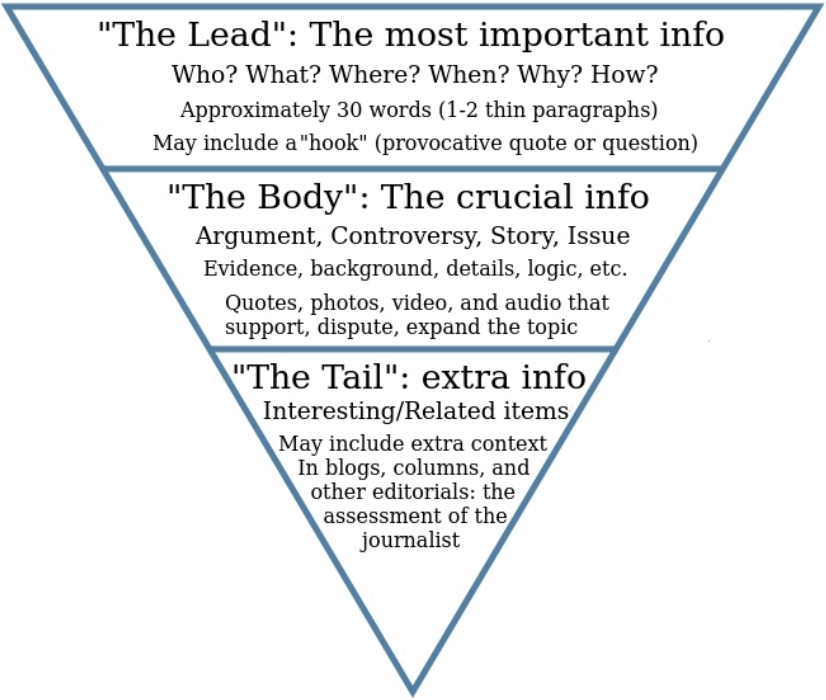
This book is to writing as "The Elements of Journalism" is to the reporting—a treatise, a bible, an instruction guide.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=478#oembed-1

This semi-humorous video might help you remember the rules of writing short and concisely. The Elements of Style from Jake Heller on Vimeo.

The goal isn't sentences that fall flat on the ear, but efficient and exacting word choices. I tell journalism students to pretend that there is a word drought; use as few words as possible to say what you need to say. You don't water your lawn needlessly during a rain drought, and you don't waste words in journalism. "This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline," William Strunk, Jr. writes in the book, "but that every word tell."

In addition to word choice, the article's structure helps readers learn everything they need to know in a short amount of space.



There are three main story outlines journalists use in their articles: the kabob, the martini glass (or hourglass) and the inverted

pyramid. The inverted pyramid is the most popular for short news stories because the focus is putting the most important information at the top (the widest part of the pyramid) and the least important at the bottom.

News wasn't always written this way. If you compare articles written in the early 1800s to those written at the end of the century, you'll notice the earlier ones are wordy, flowery and take forever to get to the point. What changed? The invention of the telegraph in 1845. "The thing to know about the telegraph is that in its day it was as revolutionary as the Internet," writes Chip Scanlon in a 2003 article. This groundbreaking invention allowed newspapers to publish stories days after an event happened, not weeks or months. It also cost about 1 penny a character, which is the equivalent of $.34 today.

If you were a publisher and the above paragraph (606 characters) was going to cost you $207.04 to publish, wouldn't you demand that your writers were as efficient as possible with their word choice?

Q: WHY DON'T JOURNALISTS JUST STICK TO THE FACTS?

Journalists get this question—or lament—all the time from people who think the news offers too much opinion and not enough fact. More than two-thirds of Americans say they see too much opinion and bias in news that is supposed to be "objective," according to a Knight Foundation poll. Hence the plea, "just stick to the facts."

Here's the problem: Serving up just the facts can misrepresent the news or even create a false narrative. Facts need context—that background information that adds depth to a story and helps news

consumers understand the issue or the wider implications of those facts. Context provides historical information and a frame of reference for comparisons. It's necessary to make sense of the news.

When context is missing, the truth can be distorted. Case in point: Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson's record on sentencing sex offenders. Missouri Senator Josh Hawley has portrayed Jackson as "soft on crime" based on her sentences in seven child pornography cases that he listed in a thread on his Twitter account.

Several news outlets picked up on these tweets and published stories with headlines like "Ketanji Brown Jackson's worrying, outdated thinking on child pornography" at the Washington Examiner, "An Alarming Pattern" on Daily Caller and "Hawley Warns

of Biden's SCOTUS pick's 'long record' of letting child porn offenders off the hook" at Fox News.

Even network news outlets like NBC and CBS included Hawley's claims in stories without "pushback, providing unchecked airtime to his lie about Jackson's judicial record," according to Mediamatters.org.

While Hawley accurately lays out the specifics of each case, the facts belie Jackson's true record.

Why? Because they are presented without any context.

Jackson made more than 100 sentencing decisions and 500 rulings as a federal trial court judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia since 2013. She presided over 14 child sex crime cases during that period. Those seven cases presented by Hawley are a small subset of her sentencing decisions and a judgment on whether she is "soft" or "tough" on crime should look at her record in its entirety, not a few cherry-picked cases.

That said, in the seven cases listed below, Fact-check.org found that Jackson's average sentence in these sex offender cases was more than two years below the minimum federal guidelines. That is a fact, but one that requires context to fully understand its relevance and meaning.

DEFENDANT	CASE NUMBER	SENTENCING GUIDELINE	GOVERNMENT	PROBATION	JACKSON'S SENTENCE
Wesley Hawkins	13-cr-244	97–121 months	24 months	18 months	3 months
Jeremy Sears	19-cr-21	97–121 months	108 months	120 months	71 months
Neil Stewart	16-cr-67	97–121 months	97 months	42 months	57 months
Christopher Michael Downs	18-cr-391	70-87 months	70 months	60 months	60 months
Ryan Cooper	19-cr-382	151-188 months	72 months	60 months	60 months
Adam Chazin	21-cr-076	78-97 months	78-97 months	28 months	28 months
Daniel Savage	15-cr-95	37-46 months	49 months	36 months	37 months

Source: Factcheck.org

According to a 2021 report by the U.S. Sentencing Commission, 59 percent of all sentences for defendants in child pornography cases were below these minimum sentencing guidelines, largely because the legal community views the recommendations as excessively severe and in need of reform. In two of the seven cases, even the federal prosecutor recommended sentences below the minimum guideline. If this is considered, Jackson's decisions on sentencing in these cases appear to be well within the mainstream.

The chart also includes the sentence recommended by the probation office, which provides all judges with a presentence report. Hawley neglected to mention that Jackson's sentences in five of the seven cases aligned with, or exceeded, the probation office's recommendation. Jackson's sentences were below the government and probation office's recommendations in just two cases.

In light of this context, both conservative and liberal legal scholars and numerous fact-checking sites have determined that Hawley's charges that Jackson is "soft on crime" and "soft on sex offenders who prey on children" are misleading. Despite Hawley's presentation of the facts in these cases, Fox News legal analyst Andrew McCarthy called the charges "a smear" and "meritless to the point of demagoguery," and NYU law professor Rachel Barkow said Hawley's claims misrepresent Jackson's record and lack critical context.

In *The Elements of Journalism*, Kovach and Rosenstiel state that it is the journalist's responsibility to verify information and then help make sense of it. They write that providing context "implies doing more reporting, adding facts, widening the lens and perspective. It is not argument or persuasion. Nor is it telling people what to think." On the contrary, once news consumers are armed with the facts and the context surrounding those facts, they are in a position to reach their own informed opinion.

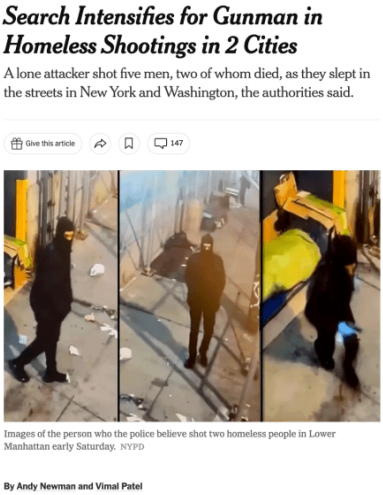
Kovach and Rosenstiel go on to say the truth is a complicated and sometimes contradictory phenomenon and that, fortunately, journalists have moved beyond stenography. Brent Cunningham's 2003 essay *Re-Thinking Objectivity* notes that American reporters began to question "official" narratives during the 1960s and '70s,

and quotes former New York Times reporter Anthony Lewis: "Vietnam and Watergate destroyed what I think was a genuine sense that our officials knew more than we did and acted in good faith." To this, Cunningham adds that journalists began to appreciate the "limits of objectivity," noting that "reporters [are allowed] leeway to analyze, explain, and put news in context, thereby helping guide readers and viewers through the flood of information."

Facts alone cannot guide us through that flood. As Cunningham observes, context is the ingredient that transforms facts into knowledge and ultimately, truth.

Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEWS AND TRUTH?

Men were dying. Homeless, indigent, alone, often asleep on city streets or in subway cars. No one knew when the next death might occur. The locations were adding up, too: Washington, then New York. Was Boston next? Baltimore? Fear gripped the eastern seaboard, especially among those with nowhere to go but the subways and streets. A serial killer was on the loose. Why homeless men were the target, no one knew.



Search Intensifies for Gunman in Homeless Shootings in 2 Cities

A lone attacker shot five men, two of whom died, as they slept in the streets in New York and Washington, the authorities said.

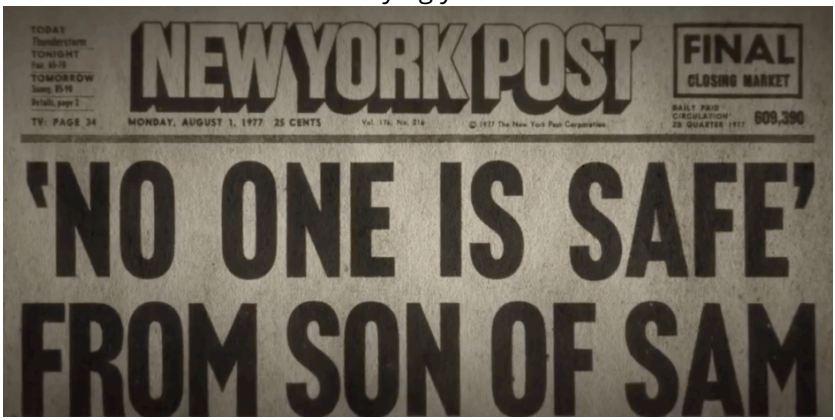
Give this article 147

Images of the person who the police believe shot two homeless people in Lower Manhattan early Saturday. NYPD

By Andy Newman and Vimal Patel

New York Times March 22, 2022

It was up to the daily crime reporters in New York and Washington to report these deaths, to follow the story as it developed. We all relied on those reports. They gave us the news practically in real time. They let us know when the killing in one city seemed to abate, only to resume in another a few hours away by train. To those old enough to have lived through past killing sprees, like that of the DC sniper in 2002 or those of the Son of Sam in 1976-77, the first two weeks of March 2022 felt terrifyingly familiar.



NEW YORK POST

FINAL CLOSING MARKET

TODAY Thunderstorm TONIGHT Fair 65-72 TOMORROW Sunny 85-91 Details, page 2

TV: PAGE 34

MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 1977 25 CENTS

Vol. 176, No. 214

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DAILY PAID CIRCULATION 2D QUARTER 1977 609,390

'NO ONE IS SAFE' FROM SON OF SAM

That's the news. It gives us essential information. Often that

information gets richer as the story develops. By March 15th, a suspect had been arrested: Gerald Brevard III. We learned details about his life, his past arrests, his history of mental illness. More news, more context. The story grew.

By March 21st, we knew more about two of the men Brevard allegedly killed. The story evolved from being about a serial killer on the loose to one about a suspect in custody to one about the scourge of mental illness. The two victims suffered from delusions. Brevard was not homeless or indigent, but he too suffered from mental anguish. The reporting became less alarming and more humane. A search of Brevard's apartment uncovered writings by the suspect that suggest a loosening grip on reality: "I write a poem, now I'm a poet. Can't kill her I love her, she'll never know it. Even when guilty I'm innocent."

The story isn't over; Brevard has yet to stand trial. Nevertheless, we can begin to look at the big picture: How and why does our society continue to fail the mentally ill? Answering that will take time, and it will demand a lot more than beat reporters telling us know about the latest death in a major American city. It will require a long, hard look at an inconvenient truth about this country: For all its prosperity, America does not take sufficient care of its most vulnerable. Sometimes, as the March killings suggest, this has tragic consequences.

In 2003, Brent Cunningham wrote an essay for the Columbia Journalism Review titled *Re-thinking Objectivity*. In it, he argues that journalistic "objectivity" is not only a myth, but a dangerous one that leads us into situations like the war in Iraq. In the lead-up to that war, Cunningham notes that very few publications spent any time addressing the ramifications of invading Iraq. Instead, they focused on the tick-tock of what the Bush administration was doing and saying about its plans to invade. There was scant analysis, zero speculation. Only the official word from the White House. This makes sense: Unless they're commentators, journalists are not

supposed to speculate, but to report the news. If the president says something, they report it.

CJR July/August 2003

But in fixating so much on the facts of the present, Cunningham writes, they failed to address the inevitable truth of the future: Invading Iraq would create a quagmire from which we might never emerge. "Our pursuit of objectivity can trip us up on the way to 'truth,'" Cunningham writes. "Objectivity excuses lazy reporting. If you're on deadline and all you have is 'both sides of the story,' that's often good enough."

He continues: "It's not that such stories laying out the parameters of a debate have no value for readers, but too often, in our obsession with, as *The Washington Post*'s Bob Woodward puts it, 'the latest,' we fail to push the story, incrementally, toward a deeper understanding of what is true and what is false."

What does this have to do with Gerald Brevard and the men he is accused of having killed? Surely we would not want to dispense with the daily reporting that began on March 3rd and ended on March 12th, the dates that bookend his killing spree in New York and Washington. We needed that coverage. It was the news. But if we stop there, we ignore the systemic problems that led to those deaths. We pretend that events happen in a vacuum. We ignore the truth.

To be sure, grappling with the Truth (capital T) is not the job of daily journalists. After all, truth is complex, debatable, and often subjective. But, as Cunningham argues, the most seasoned

journalists can bring their expertise and analysis to the table, let it inform their reporting, and inch us toward a deeper understanding of important social and political issues like mental illness, poverty, drug addiction, and war. Otherwise, all we've got is the news.

Q: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH NATIVE ADVERTISING? SHOULD NEWS OUTLETS LIMIT THIS CONTENT?

One of the biggest challenges news consumers face today is distinguishing news from other media that does not embody journalism's three defining attributes: Verification, independence and accountability. Thanks to native advertising, the line between news and advertising has never been more blurred. By design, native ads look just like news stories, blending in seamlessly with editorial content. And therein lies the problem.

Nearly all consumers are easily and consistently duped by native ads, according to research by Boston University Professor Michelle Amazeen. In her study, she showed 738 participants a Bank of America native ad seen below called "America's Smartphone Obsession Extends to Mobile Banking," which included a disclosure at the end identifying it as an ad. Despite this label, more than 9 in 10 people thought they were reading a news article with unbiased and vetted information.

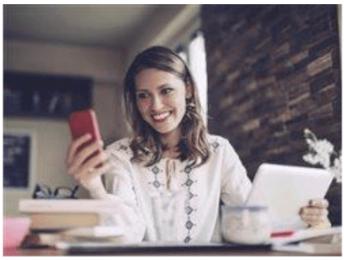
Home › Tech › America's smartphone obsession extends to mobile banking

Tech

America's smartphone obsession extends to mobile banking

By - August 3, 2015

Share on Facebook Tweet on Twitter



(BPT) – There's no denying it — smartphones have become essential to daily life. From the smallest to the most complex of tasks, we've adopted a mobile-first mindset. For an increasing number of adults, this means their smartphone is never too far out of reach.

In fact, if you're like most Americans, your smartphone is your first and last interaction of the day. Nearly 71 percent of consumers sleep with their smartphones nearby and 35 percent say it's the first thing they reach for in the morning, according to the second annual Bank of America Trends in Consumer Mobility Report. What's more, 36 percent report checking their mobile devices "constantly," and 38 percent never disconnect from their smartphones.

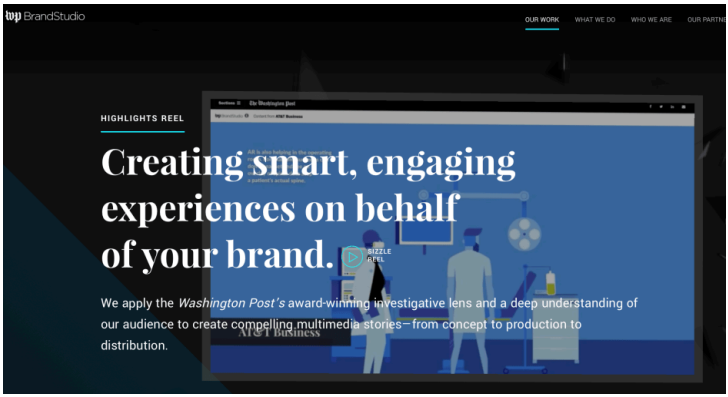
Credit: GoUpstate.com

Old school journalists (like me) are wary of native ads because they undermine the public's already wavering trust in the news media. When Amazeen disclosed that the Bank of America article was actually an ad, participants reacted negatively and blamed the news media for spreading fake news. "Trust in media is at an all-time low," said Amazeen in a Phys.org article. "I'm not suggesting it's only from native advertising, but I think it's a contributing factor."

Also not a fan of this paid content, John Oliver, who devoted an entire segment of his show *Last Week Tonight* to bashing these ads. "Native ads are baked into content like chocolate chips into a cookie. Except it's more like raisins in a cookie because no one f**cking wants them there," said Oliver.

Advertising firms and the business side of many news sites would

disagree with that last part. Native advertising is a lucrative business, topping more than $85 billion in 2020, [according to ADYOULIKE, a global native advertising platform.](#) BuzzFeed News was one of the first to profit from ads that look like news, but its success led others to embrace a much-needed new revenue source.

- 

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT SPONSORED

Creating Space for Youth | Meet CUNY SPS Student Allison Cooke

BY GOTHAMIST SPONSOR
FEB. 21, 2020 12:00 A.M.

Allison Cooke is a multi-hyphenate. She is a student (earning a Master's degree in Youth Studies at the CUNY School of Professional Studies, an advocate for

- 

In 2013, the Washington Post set up its WP BrandConnect business to produce sponsored content. Then, in 2016, the New York Times followed with T Brand Studio. As word spread that native ads were more effective and engaging than traditional ads, demand grew, and The Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, The Atlantic, and Politico, to name just a few, set up teams to create paid content. Now nearly all news sites profit from native advertising despite the risks to their credibility and integrity.

And no one is talking about limiting this content. To the contrary, native ad spending is expected to grow to more than $400 billion by 2025. That means it's going to be even more pervasive and that we had all better learn how to tell the difference between paid and unpaid content.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), a bipartisan agency

responsible for protecting consumers from deceptive advertising practices, has issued guidelines calling for clear and prominent labels such as "Advertisement," "Paid Advertisement," "Ad" or "Sponsored Advertising Content" rather than "Promoted" or "Presented By," which can be misleading.

And most reputable news sites have produced their own guidelines as well. After the backlash following The Atlantic's native ad clearly endorsing the Church of Scientology, it came up with a comprehensive set of guidelines that reads in part:

- *The overriding consideration is that The Atlantic must maintain its editorial integrity and the trust of its readers.*
- *All advertising content must be clearly distinguishable from editorial content. To that end, The Atlantic will label an advertisement with the word "Advertisement" when, in its opinion, this is necessary to make clear the distinction between editorial material and advertising.*
- *As with all advertising, and consistent with the foregoing General Advertising Guidelines, The Atlantic may reject or remove any Sponsor Content at any time that contains false, deceptive, potentially misleading, or illegal content.*

That may sound all well and good, but in reality, many of these "clearly distinguishable" labels are easy to overlook or ignore. That leaves the onus, once again, on news consumers to be vigilant because no one can afford to take any content at face value in this digital age.

Q: WHAT'S THE APPEAL OF CONSPIRACY THEORIES?

Humans are storytellers. We like narratives that take the random chaos of life and put it into a coherent structure. The alternative is too difficult to live with: a world where nothing adds up to anything, nothing results from anything else, and people are just free-floating organisms in a sea of other organisms with nothing to connect them. Even history is just a way to make sense of life and is far more creative and subjective than most elementary and high school textbooks acknowledge.

But when we tell stories to make sense of real events, we have two options: fabricate and make connections based on speculation or research what happened and form narratives based on facts.

In a nutshell, this is the difference between a conspiracy theory and an actual conspiracy. In recent years, the extraordinary growth of social media has enabled the former to spread more rapidly than ever before, to take root in communities, and to undermine efforts by scientists, journalists and others to inform the public with credible information. The most prevalent example today is QAnon, the conspiracy theory that a high-level intelligence officer has been leaking highly classified information about "deep-state Democrats" controlling society from the shadows and even trafficking children for sex.

In 2016, just before a user with the name QAnon appeared for the first time on message boards, a man named Edgar Welch drove from North Carolina to Washington, D.C., with a carload of artillery, intending to liberate children from the basement of a pizza parlor called Comet Ping Pong. Welch had read about an alleged sex-trafficking operation on social media and decided to take matters into his own hands. The idea that Democrats, with all their power and ties to big industry, were abusing children on top of everything else was too much for Welch to bear.

But when he arrived and even fired a round inside the restaurant, he found no children. Police arrested Welch at the scene, and he is now in prison for numerous offenses. None of them, however, is believing in the conspiracy theory. That's because simply believing conspiracy theories is not illegal; in fact, QAnon believers have even been elected to Congress. No one is saying that believing in conspiracy theories should be illegal, but we need to do more to understand their popularity and their spread.

So what's the difference between a conspiracy theory and a real conspiracy? Basically, a real conspiracy would hold up under scrutiny. One example is Bridgegate, a scandal from 2013 in which New Jersey government officials conspired to shut down part of the George Washington Bridge as a way to punish the mayor of Fort Lee, a Democrat, for not supporting the Republican governor, Chris Christie. A local reporter broke the story by starting with some very simple questions, like "Why is there so much congestion on the bridge if no work is being done?" He ultimately uncovered a plot involving numerous people close to Christie to put pressure on the Fort Lee mayor, and eventually, the facts came to light. By reporting the story, he showed that the connections were not mere coincidence or speculation.

Researchers at UCLA recently did a study on conspiracy theories and found that this is the key difference between a theory and an actual conspiracy. If you sever any major connection in a conspiracy theory, the whole thing falls apart. But if you sever a connection in a real conspiracy — that is, if you prove that two people who were alleged to have had a secret meeting, for example, have never met — then further investigation will show that other connections nevertheless exist. A conspiracy theory would fall apart the moment such a connection was severed. In other words, everything has to line up exactly as the conspiracy theorists say, even without direct evidence to back up their claims.

And yet, many people believe in conspiracy theories. The reason is very simple, and it goes back to the beginning of this post: They explain the unexplainable. We may never know, conclusively, where the coronavirus originated, who the first infected person was, or how it mutated early on to become even more deadly than it might have been otherwise. And that's tough to sit with, the not knowing. Conspiracy theories like the notion that the virus was developed in a lab and intentionally leaked into the population, and then spread around the world with the help of Bill Gates so that he could plant tracking technologies in our bodies through vaccine injections, may sound ludicrous to some. But to others, such a theory is much more palatable than living with not knowing.

The problem is not our natural tendency to seek out structure but our inability to discern facts from fiction. That's where critical thinking comes in. We need to be able to separate credible information from fabrication; we need facts to navigate life. If we believe in fictions, we risk nothing less than life itself–of ourselves, our loved ones, and the well-being of the planet.

PART XI

PUBLIC RELATIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define public relations and describe its functions
- Identify significant milestones in the development of public relations
- Evaluate the impact of digital technologies on current public relations practice
- Describe the major ethical issues in public relations

Public Relations Basics

WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Whereas advertising is the paid use of media space to sell something, public relations (PR) is the attempt to establish and maintain good relations between an organization and its constituents (Theaker, 2004). Practically, PR campaigns strive to use the free press to encourage favorable coverage. In their book The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR, Al and Laura Ries make the point that the public trusts the press far more than they trust advertisements. Because of this, PR efforts that get products and brands into the press are far more valuable than a simple advertisement. Their book details the ways in which modern companies use public relations to far greater benefit than they use advertising (Ries & Ries, 2004). Regardless of the fate of advertising, PR has clearly come to have an increasing role in marketing and ad campaigns.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) defines public relations as "a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and

their publics" (2016, para. 4). Simply put, public relations helps to influence an audience's perceptions by building relationships and shaping public conversations about a client or company. These public conversations often take place through mass media and social media, which is why public relations professionals need to understand how to work with and write effective messages for the media. Click here for more information on what you can expect in a public relations career.

Public relations professionals are in charge of a wide range of communication activities that may include increasing brand visibility and awareness, planning events, and creating content. Some of them also deal with crisis communication and help to salvage a brand's integrity and reputation during a negative event. This video from Kate Finley, chief executive officer of Belle Communications, explains what it is like to work at a public relations agency.

What to Expect from a PR Agency with Kate Finley

Video Clip

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/mediacommunication/?p=502#oembed-1

THE HISTORY OF PR AND PROPAGANDA

At the core of PR is a simple model developed by Harold Lasswell in the 1940s. Developing an effective PR model was an important war effort during World War II when it was essential to develop theories for how propaganda worked to determine what the Nazis were doing and, if possible, how their propaganda could be stopped. Lasswell's model asked five simple questions: *who* (Sender) sent *what* (Message) through which *channel* (Channel) to which *audience* (Receiver) and with what *effect.* This was a way of breaking down mass influence beyond advertising. In a sense, governmental propaganda is PR, but the client is a country. The **S-M-C-R model** (often attributed in that particular configuration to Berlo) is the most efficient model for understanding how to break down and analyze messages in the mass media.

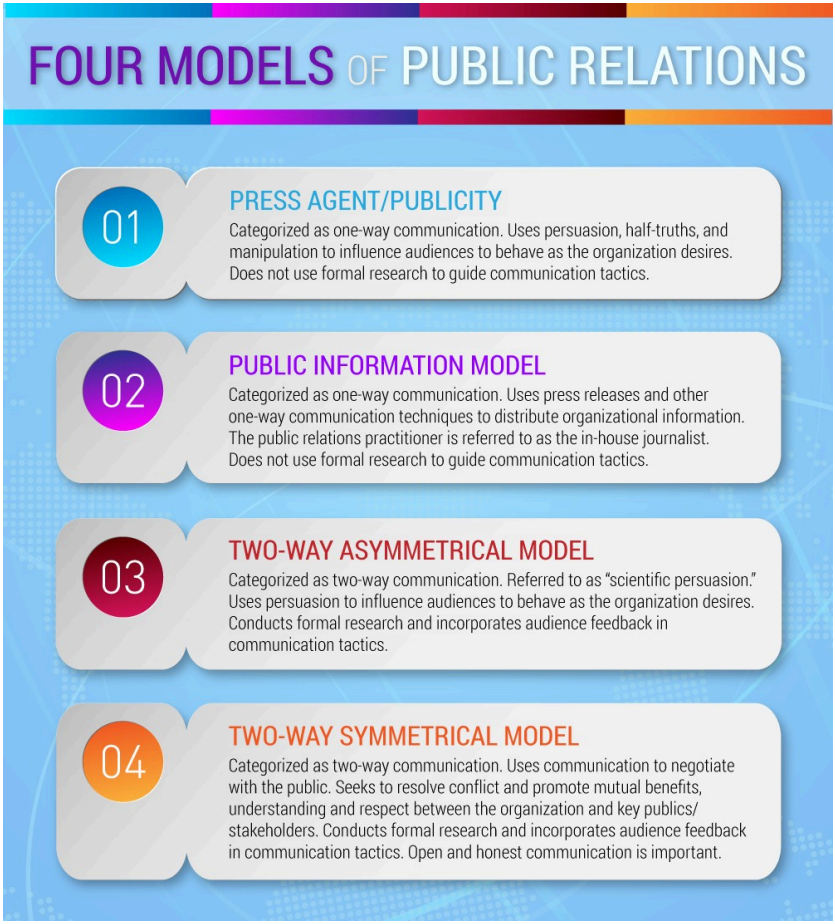
"Communication" by Jonny Hughes. Source: flickr. CC BY 2.0

Professionals and academics examine and manipulate all four components to isolate which changes correlate with which behavioral effects. S-M-C-R assumes that the sender comes first and the receiver comes last. There is a time element that must be established in researching the effects of mass-mediated messages, but the point is that this simple model of propaganda became the basis for all sorts of media effects studies. Propaganda and PR messaging does not work immediately to bring about drastic changes in behavior. Behavioral phenomena, particularly *changes in behavior,* are driven by many variables, however, if you want to begin to look at an advertising campaign, film or news documentary to examine its effects, this is the model to start with.

Noise must be accounted for, and in an age dominated by the digital information glut, the opportunity for immediate feedback and engagement must also be considered. Receivers almost immediately become senders in a network. Thus, the S-M-C-R model will often include measures looking at how much noise gets into the system and looking at what happens when receivers immediately start their own S-M-C-R processes. Wherever a message originates, even if it is as simple as clicking "Share" on Facebook, the S-M-C-R model starts again.

FOUR MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Grunig and Hunt (1984) developed four models of public relations that describe the field's various management and organizational practices. These models serve as guidelines to create programs, strategies, and tactics.



Four Models of PR" by Michael Shiflet and Jasmine Roberts is licensed under CC BY 2.0

In the **press agent/publicity model**, communications professionals use persuasion to shape the thoughts and opinions of key audiences. Under the traditional publicity model, PR professionals seek to create media coverage for a client, product, or event. These efforts can range from wild publicity stunts to simple news conferences to celebrity interviews in

fashion magazines. P. T. Barnum was an early American practitioner of this kind of PR. His outrageous attempts at publicity worked because he was not worried about receiving negative press; instead, he believed that any coverage was a valuable asset. In this model, accuracy is not important and organizations do not seek audience feedback or conduct audience analysis research. It is a one-way form of communication. One example is propagandist techniques created by news media outlets in North Korea.

The **public information model** moves away from the manipulative tactics used in the press agent model and presents more accurate information. The goal of the public information model is to release information to a constituency. This model is less concerned with obtaining dramatic, extensive media coverage than with disseminating information in a way that ensures adequate reception. For example, utility companies often include fliers about energy efficiency with customers' bills, and government agencies such as the IRS issue press releases to explain changes to existing codes. In addition, public interest groups release the results of research studies for use by policy makers and the public. However, the communication pattern is still one-way. Practitioners do not conduct audience analysis research to guide their strategies and tactics.

The **two-way asymmetrical model** presents a more "scientifically persuasive" way of communicating with key audiences. Here, content creators conduct research to better understand the audience's attitudes and behaviors, which in turn informs the message strategy and creation. To be considered effective, this model requires a measured response from its intended audience. Government propaganda is a good example of this model. Propaganda is the organized spreading of information to assist or weaken a cause (Dictionary). Edward Bernays has been called the founder of modern PR for his work during World War I promoting the sale of war bonds. One of

the first professional PR experts, Bernays made the two-way asymmetric model his early hallmark. In a famous campaign for Lucky Strike cigarettes, he convinced a group of well-known celebrities to walk in the New York Easter parade smoking Lucky Strikes. Persuasive communication is used in this model to benefit the organization more so than audiences; therefore, it is considered asymmetrical or imbalanced. Most modern corporations employ the persuasive communication model. The model is particularly popular in advertising and consumer marketing, fields that are specifically interested in increasing an organization's profits.

Finally, the **two-way symmetrical model** argues that the public relations practitioner should serve as a liaison between the organization and key publics, rather than as a persuader. The two-way symmetric model requires true communication between the parties involved. By facilitating a back-and-forth discussion that results in mutual understanding and an agreement that respects the wishes of both parties. Here, practitioners are negotiators and use communication to ensure that all involved parties benefit, not just the organization that employs them. The term "symmetrical" is used because the model attempts to create a mutually beneficial situation. This PR model is often practiced in town hall meetings and other public forums in which the public has a real effect on the results. In an ideal republic, Congressional representatives strictly employ this model.

Many nonprofit groups that are run by boards and have public service mandates use this model to ensure continued public support. Commercial ventures also rely on this model. PR can generate media attention or attract customers, and it can also ease communication between a company and its investors, partners, and employees. The two-way symmetric model is useful in communicating within an organization because it helps employees feel they are an important part of the company.

Investor relations are also often carried out under this model. The two-way symmetrical model is deemed the most ethical model, one that professionals should aspire to use in their everyday tactics and strategies (Simpson, 2014).

Some experts think of public relations more broadly. For instance, they may argue that political lobbying is a form of public relations because lobbyists engage in communication activities and client advocacy in order to shape the attitudes of Congress (Berg, 2009).

WHY DO COMPANIES NEED PUBLIC RELATIONS?

The history of the public relations field is often misunderstood. Many think of public relations as organized manipulation made up of corporate, political and even non-profit propaganda. It is often thought of as deception, but this is not always the case. In a society fueled by networked communications, it is becoming less important to ask what messages people receive and more important to ask what messages they seek out, according to Greg Jarboe, author of a brief history of PR. Jarboe worked for a PR firm with offices in San Francisco and Boston, two of the most well-established technology markets in the country. He argues that PR is more about creating a sense of understanding between consumers and brands and that this might be done just as well by the brand in digital spaces just as it is via other mass media channels controlled by other corporate entities. Historically, PR depended on other media platforms such as TV, newspapers and magazines to promote its content. Content marketing means this is no longer the case. Mass media platforms may still be needed to reach mass audiences outside of a brand's collection of fans and followers, but much goodwill can be generated by maintaining a proactive, positive and professional digital presence.

While it is true that PR often tries to put a good face on

companies with all manner of reputations and harmful business practices, it also serves charities, governmental services and small local businesses. Not every institutional organization can have a huge PR budget, but the practices can be taught to just about any small business owner.

There was a time when many companies did not see the value of public relations, unless a crisis happened. Even now, some public relations professionals face challenges in convincing key executives of their value to the function of the company.

With the abundance of information readily available to audiences worldwide, companies are more vulnerable than ever to misinformation about their brand. An audience's attitudes and beliefs about a company can greatly influence its success. Therefore, the public relations professional helps to monitor and control conversations about a company or client and manage its reputation in the marketplace. Viewing public relations as a key management function of a business or an essential strategy to manage one's individual reputation will help accomplish important goals such as establishing trust among key publics, increasing news media and social media presence, and maintaining a consistent voice across communication platforms.

For more on the impact of reputation on business success, take a look at this article from *The Entrepreneur.*

PUBLIC RELATIONS VERSUS MARKETING VERSUS ADVERTISING

Many people confuse public relations with marketing and advertising. Although there are similarities, there also are key differences.

Probably the most important difference between marketing, public relations, and advertising is the primary focus. Public relations emphasizes cultivating relationships between an organization or individual and key publics for the purpose of

managing the client's image. Marketing emphasizes the promotion of products and services for revenue purposes. Advertising is a communication tool used by marketers in order to get customers to act. The image below outlines other differences.

The difference between marketing, public relations, and advertising" by Jasmine Roberts and Michael Shiflet is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

MARKETING

- Systematic process and planning of an organization's

promotional efforts

- Larger umbrella term that includes public relations and advertising
- Focused on the promotion of products and/or services in order to drive sales
- Audience is primarily customers or potential buyers
- Paid media: companies have to pay for marketing efforts

P.R.

- Focused on creating a favorable public image through relationship building and reputation management
- Draws attention to public conversations and media coverage. Also diverts attention away from public discussions if damaging.
- Audiences varies; not just customers (examples: media, internal employees)
- Component of marketing
- Earned media: Publicity achieved through pitching or convincing journalists to cover your client or organization

ADVERTISING

- Focused on drawing attention to the product through strategic placement and imagery
- Component of marketing (falls under the umbrella of marketing efforts)
- Execution of some marketing plans
- Paid media: companies have to pay for advertisement creation

- Audience is primarily customers or potential buyers

For more information on the differences between marketing, public relations, and advertising, read the following article:

- The real difference between public relations and advertising

Content Marketing

Content marketing refers to a common practice where brands produce their own content, or hire someone else to produce it, and then market that information as an alternative to advertising. It still moves people along the purchase funnel, but there is usually added value in this type of content. If an advertisement for a mattress describes its features and price, a blog funded by the mattress brand might compare the pros and cons of many different mattresses, perhaps with a bias for the brand. It isn't always pretty. Content produced for a brand should ethically be labeled as sponsored, but it is not always done. In cases when consumers have discovered that trusted sources were content marketers rather than independent reviewers, the revelations have created public relations problems for the brands. Content marketing done ethically offers financial transparency while providing valuable information and an emotional connection to the product for consumers. It can take the form of blog posts or entire blogs. Such marketing is usually optimized for search engines, which is to say the posts are written to attract search engine attention as well as outside links, which also alerts search engines that this content is valuable. Done well, branded content can be seen as more authentic than advertising content, and it can be cheaper to produce and disseminate. It is difficult to do well, of course.

The most common types of content created in this context besides blog content are social media profiles and posts,

sponsored content in social media spaces and even viral video and meme chasing. Brands might have their own social media profiles, or they might support social media influencers to promote their products in a sponsored way. Brands might also use their influencer teams or their own internal marketing teams to follow viral social media trends and to create memes. In a sense, content marketing allows a brand to create a more human profile in digital spaces. In this manner, brands can engage with potential and repeat customers. Brands can foster relationships and encourage brand advocacy among people not being paid to promote their products. Many brands use this form of marketing to engage consumers on a deep level and to offer information and emotion that might not be present in other forms of advertising.

MORE CONCEPTS IN PR

For most of the 20th century, the shorthand definition of PR was that it was like advertising only instead of paying a media outlet to run a message, you sent the message out to journalists and other **gatekeepers** in the hopes that they would share the information as news. Now, PR has to work in a digital media system where news reporters and editors are not the major gatekeepers deciding what information will be made public. PR professionals now need to think about search algorithms, search engine optimization, social media trends, social media platform algorithms, social media influencers and social link sharing sites such as Reddit. Publicity on these channels can be worth tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. PR often measures its worth in **earned media —** the amount of free air time on TV or space in major newspapers and magazines that is earned by getting other mass media channels to tell your product's stories without having to pay for ad space.

An example of earned media is when Apple released a new iPhone, and news organizations provided coverage of the lines that wrapped around city blocks as people waited for the latest gadget.

For years, Apple earned millions of dollars in earned media by keeping new features a secret and then releasing new iPhones with considerable hype. Free marketing time and space in digital and print publications can help push a brand from being a leader to being legendary.

PR can take the form of an event, a product placement, or a skillfully crafted message delivered during a crisis. It is much less about promoting specific brands and more about promoting and maintaining the image of a brand, company or large corporation. Recall that advertising tends to focus on brands and products. PR can focus on the company and the **corporate narrative**, the story of how the company came to exist and how it represents certain values and ideals — at least in theory.

Sometimes it helps us to understand an element of mass media if we discuss when it all goes wrong. When British Petroleum (BP) had an oil gusher erupt in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010, after the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded, 11 people died, and more than three million barrels of oil leaked into the gulf. It took almost three months to cap the oil gusher. The CEO of BP, Anthony Bryan "Tony" Hayward, lost his job because he made a major PR blunder when he said he just wanted his "life back." Eleven people were dead. The fishing and tourism industries of Louisiana, Mississippi and parts of Texas, ravaged by hurricanes just years before, were being threatened again. This time, though, Mother Nature was not to blame. It was BP, a multinational corporation that up to that point had been working to create a more environmentally friendly image. It took BP years to come back from that disaster, and it was made worse because of poor crisis communications. PR is about promoting good relationships with your consumers, your employees and the communities where your products are made. It is about earning "free" news and social media coverage, but perhaps most importantly it is about managing crises so that people are not given a reason *not* to buy your products.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The best way to build good PR is to carefully maintain a good reputation over time and to avoid behaviors as an individual, company or corporation that might harm others. The best prevention against bad PR is to follow your industry's and your own ethical codes at all times, whatever they are. Even if you do this, you might face a PR crisis. For example, a politician might decide to target your brand regardless of whether your business practices are ethical. All the more reason to maintain good longstanding relationships with your consumers.

"War on the bullshit!" graffiti in London. Photo by Duncan Hull. Source: Flickr. CC BY 2.0

The first rule of crisis communications is to plan ahead by anticipating the kinds of problems your company might have. Chemical companies should prepare for chemical spills. Sports teams will probably not prepare for environmental disasters, but they may have to prepare for the social media scandals that players sometimes land themselves in. If there is a disaster, the advice is to "be truthful and transparent," to not say too much and to correct any exaggerations that emerge in the news media and on social media, within reason. Engaging in social media arguments is almost never productive for a brand, unless you have Wendy's level of Twitter clapback. A major goal of PR efforts during a crisis is to try to make people forget there ever was a crisis.

Journalists often have the opposite interest because reporting on conflict is interesting. Helping people to survive is one of the primary functions of journalism. This explains why negative news

gets so much more attention than positive news. No one dies when people do their jobs salting the roads and drivers maneuver safely in snowstorms. When people crash, that, sadly, is news. Journalists know that people care about safety perhaps more than any other issue, so they focus on safety concerns during times of crisis. At these times, PR and journalism can be at odds, but truth and transparency are still advisable to the PR professional. You do not legally have to tell journalists everything that has happened (depending on the circumstances and whether your institution is funded by taxpayers), but if journalists discover a negative impact that you failed to disclose, they will wonder what else you are hiding, and they may give your critics and detractors extra consideration and attention.

PR professionals work to manage story framing. PR pros often work with journalists to cover negative stories with clarity and honesty rather than trying to hide the facts about a crisis. Finally, in PR there is the need to learn from mistakes and to analyze a company or corporation's crisis responses. As difficult as it might be to go back and discuss where communication failed, it is essential. Reflection is a critical step in learning and corporations are like any other social institution. They need to learn to survive and to thrive.

PR WARS | PR AND ADVERTISING | PR AND MARKETING

Besides the conflict during crisis situations between journalists and PR professionals, there are PR battles that go on between competing brands and between non-profits, corporations and government officials all the time. Lobbyists make demands on politicians but also push agendas on mass media and social media platforms. In an age of digital communication, it is cheap and easy to develop detailed, professional messages employing a variety of media types that PR pros can try to spread around the world

instantaneously. You should be aware as an information consumer that there are ongoing battles for your allegiance. Corporations engage in PR combat all the time, though they often try to work undetected. This is not to claim conspiracy or to frighten readers. It is simply a matter of fact that PR efforts are ongoing and that attacks within these battles do not always take the form of headlines. They may come in the form of messages from Twitter bots, **botnets,** collections of fake social media profiles run by software or blogs, or email spam.

You can influence other people by what you read and share, and you are encouraged once again to be aware of where your news sources get *their* information. Read and think before you share. It has become easy for individuals and fake accounts to publish information into the world's information glut. Twitter and Instagram followers and Facebook friends can easily be bought. Major political influence is now wielded by fake accounts working to drum up anger and to promote misinformation to sway public opinion. Individual information consumers must take responsibility for their own consumption and for what they spread. Your media health is as important as your sexual health. Protect yourself and those you share information with.

What you need to be able to do is to consider a source, consider how it is presenting its message, and consider the source's sources. Media literacy is about what enters your mind: what stays in (that is, what is **salient**) and what goes out. We are all publishers now. Media, society, and culture will always influence you to some degree, but they are also yours to try to control. Mass audiences may be in decline but entities who know how to build mass networks of users and how to successfully, if not always ethically, use their information are only starting to show their power.

PR FUNCTIONS

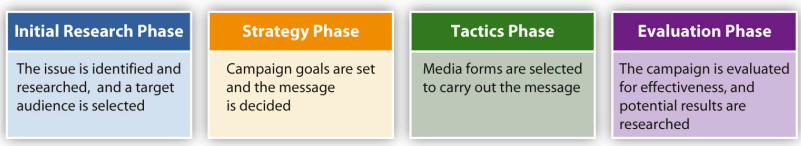
Either private PR companies or in-house communications staffers

carry out PR functions. A PR group generally handles all aspects of an organization's or individual's media presence, including company publications and press releases. Such a group can range from just one person to dozens of employees depending on the size and scope of the organization.

PR functions include the following:

- **Media relations:** takes place with media outlets
- **Internal communications:** occurs within a company between management and employees, and among subsidiaries of the same company
- **Business-to-business:** happens between businesses that are in partnership
- **Public affairs:** takes place with community leaders, opinion formers, and those involved in public issues
- **Investor relations:** occurs with investors and shareholders
- **Strategic communication:** intended to accomplish a specific goal
- **Issues management:** keeping tabs on public issues important to the organization
- **Crisis management:** handling events that could damage an organization's image1

ANATOMY OF A PR CAMPAIGN



Anatomy of a PR Campaign

PR campaigns occur for any number of reasons. They can be a quick response to a crisis or emerging issue, or they can stem from a long-term strategy tied in with other marketing efforts. Regardless of its purpose, a typical campaign often involves four phases.

Initial Research Phase

The first step of many PR campaigns is the initial research phase. First, practitioners identify and qualify the issue to be addressed. Then, they research the organization itself to clarify issues of public perception, positioning, and internal dynamics. Strategists can also research the potential audience of the campaign. This audience may include media outlets, constituents, consumers, and competitors. Finally, the context of the campaign is often researched, including the possible consequences of the campaign and the potential effects on the organization. After considering all of these factors, practitioners are better educated to select the best type of campaign.

Strategy Phase

During the strategy phase, PR professionals usually determine objectives focused on the desired goal of the campaign and formulate strategies to meet those objectives. Broad strategies

such as deciding on the overall message of a campaign and the best way to communicate the message can be finalized at this time.

Tactics Phase

During the tactics phase, the PR group decides on the means to implement the strategies they formulated during the strategy phase. This process can involve devising specific communication techniques and selecting the forms of media that suit the message best. This phase may also address budgetary restrictions and possibilities.

Evaluation Phase

After the overall campaign has been determined, PR practitioners enter the evaluation phase. The group can review their campaign plan and evaluate its potential effectiveness. They may also conduct research on the potential results to better understand the cost and benefits of the campaign. Specific criteria for evaluating the campaign when it is completed are also established at this time (Smith, 2002).

PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS

Public relations (PR) is the practice of managing the flow of information between an individual or an organization and the public. The aim is to persuade the public, investors, partners, employees, and other stakeholders to maintain a certain point of view about the company and its leadership, products, or political decisions. Common PR activities include speaking at conferences, seeking industry awards, working with the press, communicating with employees, and sending out press releases.

Public relations may include an organization or individual gaining exposure to an audience through topics of public interest and news

items. Building and managing relationships with those who influence an organization's or individual's audiences is critical in public relations. When a public relations practitioner is working in the field, they build a list of relationships that become assets, especially in media relations. The ultimate objective of PR is to retain goodwill as well as create it; the procedure to follow to achieve this is to first do good and then take credit for it. The PR program must describe its target audience—in most instances, PR programs are aimed at multiple audiences that have varying points of view and needs.

There are several PR tools firms can utilize to ensure the efficacy of PR programs: messaging, audience targeting, and media marketing.

Messaging

Messaging is the process of creating a consistent story around a product, person, company, or service. Messaging aims to avoid having readers receive contradictory or confusing information that will instill doubt in their purchasing choice or spur them to make other decisions that will have a negative impact on the company. A brand should aim to have the same problem statement, industry viewpoint, or brand perception shared across multiple sources and media.

Audience Targeting

A fundamental technique of public relations is identifying the target audience and tailoring messages to appeal to them. Sometimes the interests of different audiences and stakeholders vary, meaning several distinct but complementary messages must be created.

Stakeholder theory identifies people who have a stake in a given institution or issue. All audiences are stakeholders (or presumptive stakeholders), but not all stakeholders are audiences. For example,

if a charity commissions a public relations agency to create an advertising campaign that raises money toward finding the cure for a disease, the charity and the people with the disease are stakeholders, but the audience is anyone who might be willing to donate money.

Media Marketing

Digital marketing is the use of Internet tools and technologies, such as search engines, Web 2.0 social bookmarking, new media relations, blogs, and social media marketing. Interactive PR allows companies and organizations to disseminate information without relying solely on mainstream publications and to communicate directly with the public, customers, and prospects. Online social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter ensure that firms can get their messages heard directly and quickly. Other forms of media include newspapers, television programs, radio stations, and magazines. Public relations people can use these various platforms and channels to publish press releases. It is important to ensure that the information across all channels is accurate and as complementary as possible.

The amount of money spent on traditional media channels has declined as more and more readers have turned to favor online and social media news sources. As the readership of traditional media shift to online media, so has the focus of many in public relations. The advent and increase of social media releases, search engine optimization, and online content publishing and the introduction of podcasts and video are related trends.

Sponsorship is often used as part of a public relations campaign. A company will pay money to compensate a public figure, spokesperson, or “influencer” to use its logo or products. An example of sponsorship is a concert tour presented by a bank or drink company.

Product placement is basically passive advertising in which a

company pays to have its products used prominently in a photograph, film, or video message or during a live appearance. The most common use of product placement is in films where characters use branded products.

Both product placement and sponsorship decisions are based on a shared target market. No matter the public relations vehicle, there must be a common buyer that all parties want to reach.

EXAMPLES OF PR CAMPAIGNS

Since its modern inception in the early 20th century, PR has turned out countless campaigns—some highly successful, others dismal failures. Some of these campaigns have become particularly significant for their lasting influence or creative execution. This section describes a few notable PR campaigns over the years.

Diamonds For The Common Man

During the 1930s, the De Beers company had an enormous amount of diamonds and a relatively small market of luxury buyers. They launched a PR campaign to change the image of diamonds from a luxury good into an accessible and essential aspect of American life. The campaign began by giving diamonds to famous movie stars, using their built-in publicity networks to promote De Beers. The company created stories about celebrity proposals and gifts between lovers that stressed the size of the diamonds given. These stories were then given out to selected fashion magazines. The result of this campaign was the popularization of diamonds as one of the necessary aspects of a marriage proposal (Reid, 2006).

Big Tobacco Aids Researchers


Grimaults
Indian Cigarettes
for asthma
Recommended by Medical Authorities for the immediate relief of Asthma and Bronchial trouble, Hay Fever, Laryngitis and Irritation of the air passages.
GRIMAULT'S CIGARETTES
ease the feeling of tightness across the chest and give à relief from gasping for breath.
GRIMAULT & Cie, 8, r. Vivienne, Paris.

In response to the increasing number of health concerns surrounding smoking, tobacco companies began running ads that argued the benefits of smoking their brand. Big Tobacco. By Ceylon Standard 190706.08 Source: Wikimedia. CC0 Public Domain

In 1953, studies showing the detrimental health effects of smoking caused a drop in cigarette sales. An alliance of tobacco manufacturers hired the PR group Hill & Knowlton to develop a campaign to deal with this problem. The first step of the campaign Hill & Knowlton devised was the creation of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee (TIRC) to promote studies that questioned the health effects of tobacco use. The TIRC ran advertisements featuring the results of these studies, giving journalists who were addressing the subject an easy source to quote. The groups working against smoking were not familiar with media relations, making it harder for journalists to quote them and use their arguments.

The campaign was effective, however, not because it denied the harmful effects of smoking but because it stressed the disagreements between researchers. By providing the press with information favorable to the tobacco manufacturers and publicly promoting new filtered cigarettes, the campaign aimed to replace the idea that smoking was undeniably bad with the idea that there was disagreement over the effects of smoking. This strategy served tobacco companies well up through the 1980s.

PR AS A REPLACEMENT FOR ADVERTISING

In some cases, PR has begun overtaking advertising as the preferred way of promoting a particular company or product. For example, the tobacco industry offers a good case study of the migration from advertising to PR. Regulations prohibiting radio and TV cigarette advertisements had an enormous effect on sales. In

response, the tobacco industry began using PR techniques to increase brand presence.

Tobacco company Philip Morris started underwriting cultural institutions and causes as diverse as the Joffrey Ballet, the Smithsonian, environmental awareness, and health concerns. Marlboro sponsored events that brought a great deal of media attention to the brand. For example, during the 1980s, the Marlboro Country Music Tour took famous country stars to major coliseums throughout the country and featured talent contests that brought local bands up on stage, increasing the audience even further. Favorable reviews of the shows generated positive press for Marlboro. Later interviews with country artists and books on country music history have also mentioned this tour.

FROM ADVERTISING TO PR BRANDING

While advertising is an essential aspect of initial brand creation, PR campaigns are vital to developing the more abstract aspects of a brand. These campaigns work to position a brand in the public arena in order to give it a sense of cultural importance. Pioneered by such companies as Procter & Gamble during the 1930s, the older, advertising-centric model of branding focused on the product, using advertisements to associate a particular branded good with quality or some other positive cultural value. Yet, as consumers became exposed to ever-increasing numbers of advertisements, traditional advertising's effectiveness dwindled. The ubiquity of modern advertising means the public is skeptical of—or even ignores—claims advertisers make about their products. This credibility gap can be overcome, however, when PR professionals using good promotional strategies step in.

The new PR-oriented model of branding focuses on the overall image of the company rather than on the specific merits of the product. This branding model seeks to associate a company with specific personal and cultural values that hold meaning for

consumers. Apple has employed this type of branding with great effectiveness. By focusing on a consistent design style in which every product reinforces the Apple experience, the computer company has managed to position itself as a mark of individuality. Despite the cynical outlook of many Americans regarding commercial claims, the notion that Apple is a symbol of individualism has been adopted with very little irony. Douglas Atkin, who has written about brands as a form of cult, readily admits and embraces his own brand loyalty to Apple:

> I'm a self-confessed Apple loyalist. I go to a cafe around the corner to do some thinking and writing, away from the hurly-burly of the office, and everyone in that cafe has a Mac. We never mention the fact that we all have Macs. The other people in the cafe are writers and professors and in the media, and the feeling of cohesion and community in that cafe becomes very apparent if someone comes in with a PC. There's almost an observable shiver of consternation in the cafe, and it must be discernable to the person with the PC, because they never come back.
>
> Brand managers that once focused on the product now find themselves in the role of community leaders, responsible for the well-being of a cultural image (Atkin, 2004).

Kevin Roberts, the current CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide, a branding-focused creative organization, has used the term "lovemark" as an alternative to trademark. This term encompasses brands that have created "loyalty beyond reason," meaning that consumers feel loyal to a brand in much the same way they would toward friends or family members. Creating a sense of mystery around a brand generates an aura that bypasses the usual cynical take on commercial icons. A great deal of Apple's success comes from the company's mystique. Apple has successfully developed PR campaigns surrounding product releases that leak selected rumors to various press outlets but maintain secrecy over essential details, encouraging speculation by bloggers and mainstream journalists on the next product. All this combines to create a sense of mystery and an emotional anticipation for the product's release.

Emotional connections are crucial to building a brand or lovemark. An early example of this kind of branding was Nike's product endorsement deal with Michael Jordan during the 1990s. Jordan's amazing, seemingly magical performances on the basketball court created his immense popularity, which was then further built up by a host of press outlets and fans who developed an emotional attachment to Jordan. As this connection spread throughout the country, Nike associated itself with Jordan and also with the emotional reaction he inspired in people. Essentially, the company inherited a PR machine that had been built around Jordan and that continued to function until his retirement (Roberts, 2003).

Branding Backlashes

An important part of maintaining a consistent brand is preserving the emotional attachment consumers have to that brand. Just as PR campaigns build brands, PR crises can damage them. For example, the massive Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010 became a PR nightmare for BP, an oil company that had been using PR to rebrand itself as an environmentally friendly energy company.

In 2000, BP began a campaign presenting itself as "Beyond Petroleum," rather than British Petroleum, the company's original name. By acquiring a major solar company, BP became the world leader in solar production and in 2005 announced it would invest $8 billion in alternative energy over the following 10 years. BP's marketing firm developed a PR campaign that, at least on the surface, emulated the forward-looking two-way symmetric PR model. The campaign conducted interviews with consumers, giving them an opportunity to air their grievances and publicize energy policy issues. BP's website featured a carbon footprint calculator consumers could use to calculate the size of their environmental impact (Solman, 2008). The single explosion on BP's deep-water oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico essentially nullified the PR work of the

previous 10 years, immediately putting BP at the bottom of the list of environmentally concerned companies.

A company's control over what its brand symbolizes can also lead to branding issues. The Body Shop, a cosmetics company that gained popularity during the 1980s and early 1990s, used PR to build its image as a company that created natural products and took a stand on issues of corporate ethics. The company teamed up with Greenpeace and other environmental groups to promote green issues and increase its natural image.

By the mid-1990s, however, revelations about the unethical treatment of franchise owners called this image into serious question. The Body Shop had spent a great deal of time and money creating its progressive, spontaneous image. Stories of travels to exotic locations to research and develop cosmetics were completely fabricated, as was the company's reputation for charitable contributions. Even the origins of the company had been made up as a PR tool: The idea, name, and even product list had been ripped off from a small California chain called the Body Shop that was later given a settlement to keep quiet. The PR campaign of the Body Shop made it one of the great success stories of the early 1990s, but the unfounded nature of its PR claims undermined its image dramatically. Competitor L'Oréal eventually bought the Body Shop for a fraction of its previous value (Entine, 2007).

Other branding backlashes have plagued companies such as Nike and Starbucks. By building their brands into global symbols, both companies also came to represent unfettered capitalist greed to those who opposed them. During the 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, activists targeted Starbucks and Nike stores for physical attacks such as window smashing. Labor activists have also condemned Nike over the company's use of sweatshops to manufacture shoes. Eventually, Nike created a vice president for corporate responsibility to deal with sweatshop issues.2

RELATIONSHIP WITH POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Politics and PR have gone hand in hand since the dawn of political activity. Politicians communicate with their constituents and make their message known using PR strategies. Benjamin Franklin's trip as ambassador to France during the American Revolution stands as an early example of political PR that followed the publicity model. At the time of his trip, Franklin was an international celebrity, and the fashionable society of Paris celebrated his arrival; his choice of a symbolic American-style fur cap immediately inspired a new style of women's wigs. Franklin also took a printing press with him to produce leaflets and publicity notices that circulated through Paris's intellectual and fashionable circles. Such PR efforts eventually led to a treaty with France that helped the colonists win their freedom from Great Britain (Isaacson, 2003).

Famous 20th-century PR campaigns include President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Fireside Chats, a series of radio addresses that explained aspects of the New Deal. Roosevelt's personal tone and his familiarity with the medium of radio helped the Fireside Chats become an important promotional tool for his administration and its programs. These chats aimed to justify many New Deal policies, and they helped the president bypass the press and speak directly to the people.

The proliferation of media outlets and the 24-hour news cycle have led to changes in the way politicians handle PR. The gap between old PR methods and new ones became evident in 2006, when then–Vice President Dick Cheney accidentally shot a friend during a hunting trip. Cheney, who had been criticized in the past for being secretive, did not make a statement about the accident for three days. Republican consultant Rich Galen explained Cheney's silence as an older PR tactic that tries to keep the discussion out of the media. However, the old trick is less effective in the modern digital world.

That entire doctrine has come and gone. Now the doctrine is

you respond instantaneously, and where possible with a strong counterattack. A lot of that is because of the Internet, a lot of that is because of cable TV news (Associated Press, 2006).

Lobbyists also attempt to influence public policy using PR campaigns. The Water Environment Federation, a lobbying group representing the sewage industry, initiated a campaign to promote the application of sewage on farms during the early 1990s. The campaign came up with the word biosolids to replace the term sludge. Then it worked to encourage the use of this term as a way to popularize sewage as a fertilizer, providing information to public officials and representatives. In 1992, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency adopted the new term and changed the classification of biosolids to a fertilizer from a hazardous waste. This renaming helped New York City eliminate tons of sewage by shipping it to states that allowed biosolids (Stauber & Rampton, 1995).