

2016 UPDATE

# MEDIA & CULTURE

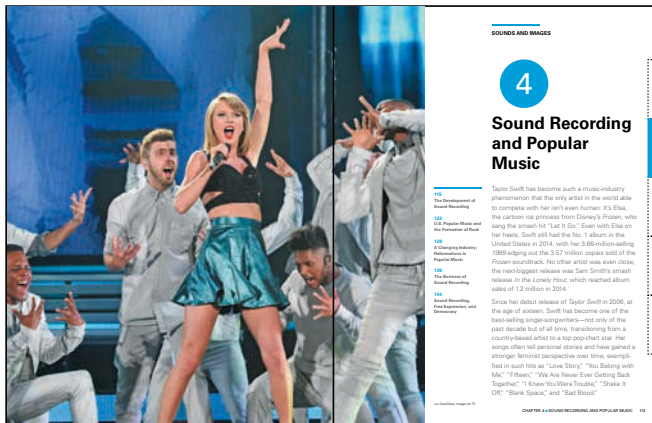
MASS COMMUNICATION  
IN A DIGITAL AGE

10

**Richard Campbell**  
**Christopher R. Martin**  
**Bettina Fabos**

## See what's new in the 2016 update.

*Media & Culture* will enhance your understanding of where the digital turn has taken us—and where media is headed in the future.



### ◀ New coverage of important developments in mass media

including social TV viewing, online hacktivism and harassment, Taylor Swift taking on Apple Music, the 2016 presidential race, net neutrality laws, and more, along with fully updated charts, graphs, and statistics.

### An all-new Extended Case Study

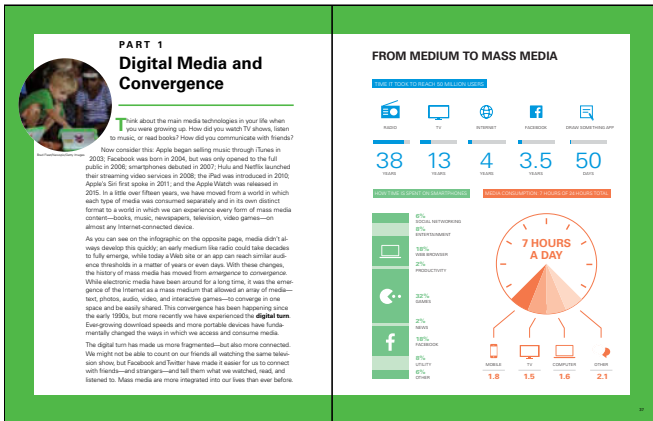
examines the media's role in covering police violence through the book's trademark five-step critical process—asking students to examine their own relationship with the media while posing critical-thinking questions that can be used throughout their lives. ▶



**LaunchPad**  
macmillanhighereducation.com/mediaculture10eupdate

**Breaking Barriers with 12 Years a Slave**  
Visit LaunchPad to view a short clip from the Oscar-winning movie from director Steve McQueen.  
**Discussion:** How do you think *12 Years a Slave* differs from previous depictions of black history in America?

◀ **LaunchPad for Media & Culture** is Bedford/St. Martin's learning platform that merges and converges print and the Web with video clips, interviews, discussion questions, activities, and LearningCurve adaptive quizzing for each chapter.



## Part-opening infographics

showcase enlightening statistics about how we use digital media as well as the connections between the media industries. Statistics throughout the book have been updated to reflect the most recent data, trends, and developments in the world of the media.

**Digital Job Outlook** boxes in each media industry chapter feature advice and wisdom from media professionals about what employers are looking for in the fields of gaming, television, advertising, PR, and more. ▶

### DIGITAL JOB OUTLOOK

#### Media Professionals Speak about Internet Jobs

**Erik Bonzer, Web Designer, Spinitech**

You'll want to learn HTML and know how to write it from scratch, not using Dreamweaver. And then the CSS—also learn how to write that from scratch. Certainly the Adobe Creative Suite is great, but for the most part it's really knowing how to write that stuff from scratch.

**Gina Bianchini, CEO, Mighthell**

If Zuckerberg, the Google guys, and Bill Gates are the pattern creators, Steve Jobs may be the best counter-evidence to the creation myth. He didn't study computer science during his brief time at Reed College. He didn't need to be an ace at coding. Instead, he relentlessly and passionately focused on products. He marketed. He sold. He inspired. He challenged. He succeeded. He failed. He kept going. Then, he succeeded again. These are the true characteristics of a successful entrepreneur in the consumer Internet space. And there is nothing stopping women from performing just as well as men.

**Visual Designer Ad for Uber, New York Office**

You are . . .

- A utility player. You're willing to find resolutions to customer issues early, late, and often.
- Cool and calm under pressure. You have superior organizational skills, integrity, and great follow-through on tasks. You don't get overwhelmed easily . . . tons of design requests from the Community and Operations teams? No prob!
- Graceful. You are self-aware, well-spoken on the phone, and eloquent in e-mails.
- Fun. You're a charismatic people person who can talk to anyone; you're flexible, fearless, and excited to help build something awesome and share it with the world.
- Motivated. You're ready to hit the ground running; you are slightly obsessive-compulsive about grinding away at projects for the team.

**Alexa Andrzzejewski, Ux Designer and Founding CEO of Foodspotting**

Share your idea with anyone who will listen. There is a temptation to keep it to yourself so no one will steal it. The truth is, finding someone with the time and money to do it better and faster than you is so rare, and the value of sharing your idea is so much more. I shared the idea when I first had it, and I felt validated and motivated to pursue it.

**The critical and cultural perspective** illustrates how the mass media and our shared culture fit together, addressing digital-age convergence and media literacy.

For more information about *Media & Culture*, Tenth Edition, 2016 Update, please visit [macmillanhighered.com/mediaculture10eupdate](http://macmillanhighered.com/mediaculture10eupdate).



# Praise for *Media & Culture*

The updated material in each edition makes the thought-provoking text relevant and offers plenty of resources for students considering a communications-related career.

ARNOLD MACKOWIAK,  
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

The text consistently reminds us of the strands that weave their way through the material—regularly pointing out how all of the information is intimately connected.

MARCIA LADENDORFF,  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

Excellent and well-researched materials, excellent writing, and strong ideas for stimulating critical thinking for students.


DAVID BRADFORD,  
EASTERN FLORIDA STATE  
COLLEGE

It is simply the best intro to mass communication book available.

MATTHEW CECIL,  
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

I think the Campbell text is outstanding. It is a long-overdue media text that is grounded in pressing questions about American culture and its connection to the techniques and institutions of commercial communication. It is, indeed, an important book. At the undergraduate level, that's saying something.

STEVE M. BARKIN,  
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND



***Media & Culture* respects students' opinions, while challenging them to take more responsibility and to be accountable for their media choices. This text is essential for professors who are truly committed to teaching students how to understand the media.**

DREW JACOBS,  
CAMDEN COUNTY COLLEGE

**I will switch to Campbell because it is a tour de force of coverage and interpretation, it is the best survey text in the field hands down, and it challenges students. Campbell's text is the most thorough and complete in the field. . . . No other text is even close.**

RUSSELL BARCLAY,  
QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

**The critical perspective has enlightened the perspective of all of us who study media, and Campbell has the power to infect students with his love of the subject.**

ROGER DESMOND,  
UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

**The feature boxes are excellent and are indispensable to any classroom.**

MARVIN WILLIAMS,  
KINGSBOROUGH  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**I love *Media & Culture*! I have used it since the first edition. *Media & Culture* integrates the history of a particular medium or media concept with the culture, economics, and the technological advances of the time. But more than that, the authors are explicit in their philosophy that media and culture cannot be separated.**

DEBORAH LARSON,  
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

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# Media & Culture

## Mass Communication in a Digital Age

Tenth Edition

2016 Update

Richard Campbell

Miami University

Christopher R. Martin

University of Northern Iowa

Bettina Fabos

University of Northern Iowa



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Macmillan Learning

Boston | New York

**“WE ARE NOT ALONE.”**

For my family—Chris, Caitlin, and Dianna

**“YOU MAY SAY I’M A DREAMER, BUT I’M NOT THE ONLY ONE.”**

For our daughters—Olivia and Sabine

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# About the Authors

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**Richard Campbell**, Chair of the Department of Media, Journalism and Film at Miami University, is the author of “60 Minutes” and *the News: A Mythology for Middle America* (1991) and coauthor of *Cracked Coverage: Television News, the Anti-Cocaine Crusade, and the Reagan Legacy* (1994). Campbell has written for numerous publications, including *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Journal of Communication*, and *Media Studies Journal*, and he is on the editorial boards of *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* and *Television Quarterly*. He also serves on the board of directors for Cincinnati Public Radio. He holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University and has also taught at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, Mount Mary College, the University of Michigan, and Middle Tennessee State University.



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**Bettina Fabos**, an award-winning video maker and former print reporter, is an associate professor of visual communication and interactive digital studies at the University of Northern Iowa. She is the author of *Wrong Turn on the Information Superhighway: Education and the Commercialized Internet* (2004). Her areas of expertise include critical media literacy, Internet commercialization, the role of the Internet in education, and media representations of popular culture. Her work has been published in *Library Trends*, *Review of Educational Research*, and *Harvard Educational Review*. She is also a recipient of Fulbright and Spencer Fellowships. Fabos has taught at Miami University and has a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.



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# Preface

The digital future of mass media is here—we’re living it right now. E-books are outselling print books on Amazon, digital album sales and streaming songs dominate the music industry, and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter reach hundreds of millions of users worldwide. As mass media converge, the newest devices multitask as e-readers, music players, Web browsers, TV and movie screens, gaming systems, and phones.

But while many of today’s students have integrated digital media into their daily lives, they may not understand how the media evolved to this point; how technology converges text, audio, and visual media; and what all these developments mean. This is why we believe the critical and cultural perspectives at the core of *Media & Culture*’s approach are more important than ever. *Media & Culture* pulls back the curtain to show students how the media really work—from the roots and economics of each media industry to the implications of today’s consolidated media ownership to how these industries have changed in our digital world. By looking at the full history of media through a critical lens, students will leave this course with a better understanding of the complex relationship between the mass media and our shared culture.

The tenth edition of *Media & Culture* confronts the digital realities of how we consume media—and how students learn in today’s classroom. Throughout the book, new “Elsewhere” pages cross-reference media stories and statistics, showing the Web-like connections between media industries and key issues. New part-opening infographics convey complex media relationships with eye-catching statistics and factoids about shifts in media consumption, ownership, and the most important and vital digital companies. New “Digital Job Outlook” boxes offer perspectives from industry insiders on how media jobs actually work. And a heavily revised Chapter 13, “Media Economics and the Global Marketplace,” addresses the new economic realities of the media world with more visuals and greater digital savvy.

*Media & Culture* shares stories about the history of media, the digital revolution, and ongoing convergence—and the book itself practices convergence, too. The tenth edition is available packaged with LaunchPad, combining print and digital media together in an interactive e-book featuring video clips of media texts, links to streaming media, and an insider’s look at the media industries—along with quizzes, activities, and instructor resources—free to the student with purchase of the book.

Of course, *Media & Culture* retains its well-loved and teachable organization that supports instructors in their quest to provide students with a clear understanding of the historical and cultural contexts for each media industry. Our signature five-step approach to studying the media has struck a chord with hundreds of instructors and thousands of students across the United States and North America. We continue to be enthusiastic about—and humbled by—the chance to work with the amazing community of teachers that has developed around *Media & Culture*. We hope the text enables students to become more knowledgeable media consumers and engaged, media-literate citizens who are ready to take a critical stake in shaping our dynamic world.

## The 2016 Update Keeps *Media & Culture* Current

*Media & Culture* has taken the digital turn, and the new 2016 updated edition continues to keep pace with the technological, economic, and social effects of today’s rapidly changing media landscape. Since the publication of the tenth edition, we’ve seen more changes than ever: revisions in net neutrality laws, shifts in viewing habits, new forms of online activism,

and the kickoff of a new, media-saturated presidential race. The new 2016 update of *Media & Culture* covers all of this and more. It features:

- **New coverage of important developments in mass media.** All of the chapters have been updated, with new information and analysis of social TV viewing, online “hacktivism” and harassment, Taylor Swift taking on Apple Music, the 2016 presidential race, net neutrality laws, and more, along with fully updated charts, graphs, and statistics.
- **An all-new Extended Case Study that examines media roles in police violence.** This case study takes students through recent stories of police violence and accompanying protests, and how these stories are told through both social and mainstream media outlets. Through the book’s trademark five-step critical process, this section has students examine their own relationships with both digital and traditional media while asking critical-thinking questions about the media world in which we live.
- **New “Elsewhere” pages cross-reference and converge related topics.** As the mass media continue to converge, overlap, and influence one another, *Media & Culture* highlights those connections with new “Elsewhere” pages. Each of the book’s five parts includes a page telling students where to find related information in other sections of the book, connecting the inner workings of media industries like video games, music, and movies with concepts like media effects studies, monopolies, and government regulation.
- **New Digital Job Outlook boxes give students the inside scoop.** *Media & Culture* takes students behind the scenes of the media with the brand-new Digital Job Outlook feature. Each of the chapters on media industries includes a box highlighting real advice and observations from media professionals, explaining what they look for, how they find those qualities in employees, or how they got where they are today.
- **Print and media converge with LaunchPad.** LaunchPad for *Media & Culture* merges and converges the book with the Web. A variety of video clips for each chapter gets students to think critically about media texts. Clips of movies and TV shows, streaming links, and videos provide an insider’s look at the media industries through the eyes of leading professionals, including Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, and Junot Díaz. These clips are showcased throughout the book and are easily accessible through LaunchPad, where accompanying questions make them perfect for media response papers and class discussions. For more ideas on how using LaunchPad can enhance your course, see the Instructor’s Resource Manual. For a complete list of available clips and access information, see the inside back cover of the book or visit [macmillanhigherred.com/mediaculture10e](http://macmillanhigherred.com/mediaculture10e).

## The Best and Broadest Introduction to the Mass Media

- **A critical approach to media literacy.** *Media & Culture* introduces students to five stages of the critical thinking and writing process—description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and engagement. The text uses these stages as a lens for examining the historical context and current processes that shape mass media as part of our culture. This framework informs the writing throughout, including the “Media Literacy and the Critical Process” boxed features in each chapter.
- **A cultural perspective.** The text focuses on the vital relationship between mass media and our shared culture—how cultural trends influence the mass media and how specific historical developments, technical innovations, and key decision makers in the history of the media have affected the ways our democracy and society have evolved.
- **Comprehensive coverage.** The text supports the instructor in providing students with the nuts-and-bolts content they need to understand each media industry’s history, organizational structure, economic models, and market statistics.

- **An exploration of media economics and democracy.** *Media & Culture* spotlights the significance and impact of multinational media systems throughout the text. It also invites students to explore the implications of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and other deregulation resolutions. Additionally, each chapter ends with a discussion of the effects of various mass media on the nature of democratic life.
- **Compelling storytelling.** Most mass media make use of storytelling to tap into our shared beliefs and values, and so does *Media & Culture*. Each chapter presents the events and issues surrounding media culture as intriguing and informative narratives, rather than as a series of unconnected facts and feats, and maps the uneasy and parallel changes in consumer culture and democratic society.
- **The most accessible book available.** Learning tools in every chapter help students find and remember the information they need to know. Bulleted lists at the beginning of every chapter give students a road map to key concepts, annotated time lines offer powerful visual guides that highlight key events and refer to more coverage in the chapter, Media Literacy and the Critical Process boxes model the five-step process, and the Chapter Reviews help students study and review for quizzes and exams and set them up for success.

## Student Resources

For more information on student resources or to learn about package options, please visit the online catalog at [macmillanhighered.com/mediaculture/catalog](http://macmillanhighered.com/mediaculture/catalog).

### Your E-Book. Your Way.

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### ***Media Career Guide: Preparing for Jobs in the 21st Century, Tenth Edition***

Sherri Hope Culver, *Temple University*; ISBN: 978-1-319-01953-2

Practical, student-friendly, and revised with recent trends in the job market (like the role of social media in a job search), this guide includes a comprehensive directory of media jobs, practical tips, and career guidance for students who are considering a major in the media industries. *Media Career Guide* can also be packaged for free with the print book.

## Instructor Resources

For more information or to order or download the instructor resources, please visit the online catalog at [macmillanhighered.com/mediaculture/catalog](http://macmillanhighered.com/mediaculture/catalog).

### **Instructor's Resource Manual**

Bettina Fabos, *University of Northern Iowa*; Christopher R. Martin, *University of Northern Iowa*; and Marilda Oviedo, *University of Iowa*

This downloadable manual improves on what has always been the best and most comprehensive instructor teaching tool available for introduction to mass communication courses. This extensive resource provides a range of teaching approaches, tips for facilitating in-class discussions, writing assignments, outlines, lecture topics, lecture spin-offs, critical-process exercises, classroom media resources, and an annotated list of more than two hundred video resources.

### **Test Bank**

Christopher R. Martin, *University of Northern Iowa*; Bettina Fabos, *University of Northern Iowa*; and Marilda Oviedo, *University of Iowa*

Available as software formatted for Windows and Macintosh, the Test Bank includes multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and short and long essay questions for every chapter in *Media & Culture*.

### **PowerPoint Slides**

PowerPoint presentations to help guide your lecture are available for downloading for each chapter in *Media & Culture*.

### **Questions for Classroom Response Systems**

Questions for every chapter in *Media & Culture* help integrate the latest classroom response systems (such as i>clicker) into your lecture to get instant feedback on students' understanding of course concepts as well as their opinions and perspectives.

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Please feel free to e-mail us at [mediaandculture@bedfordstmartins.com](mailto:mediaandculture@bedfordstmartins.com) with any comments, concerns, or suggestions!

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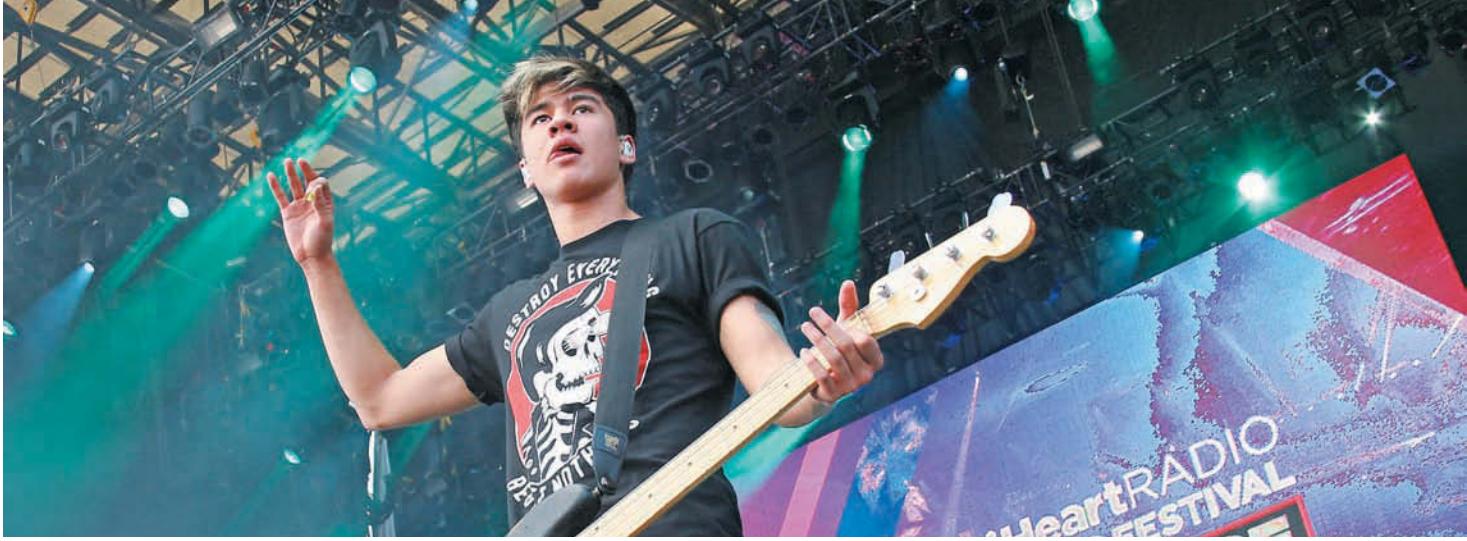
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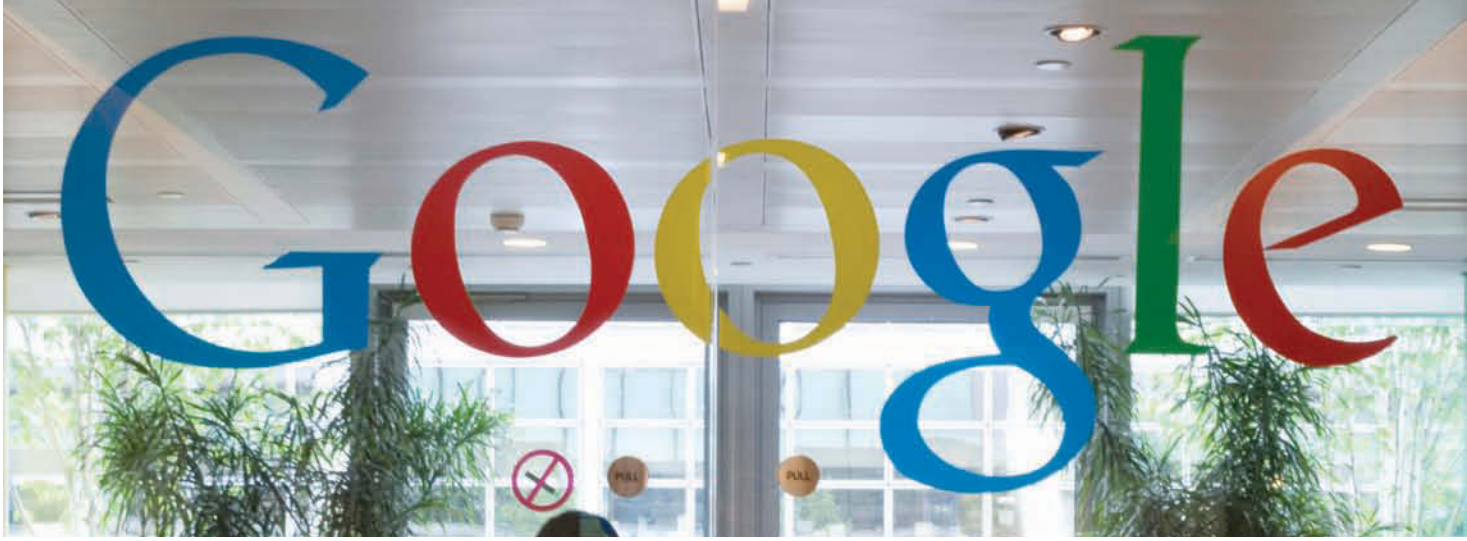
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## How to Use This Timeline

This timeline pairs world events with developments in *all* the media and explains how media advances interact with the surrounding culture. Use it to learn more about the intersections among history, media, and culture from the birth of print to the digital age.

The timeline is set up as follows:

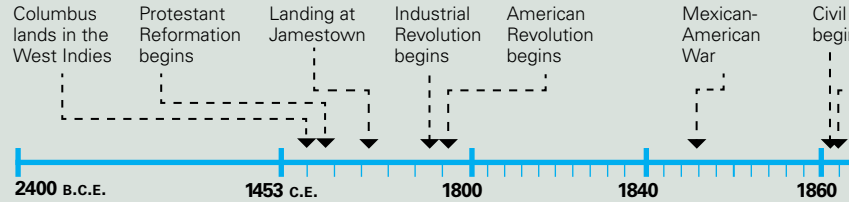
- The “Historical Context” row lists major events in U.S. and world history.
- The “Media and Culture” row shows the connections between media advances and broad social trends.
- Below “Media and Culture,” media industry rows show major advances. An arrow indicates each industry’s starting point.

Read the timeline vertically to contextualize a given time period in terms of history, culture, and the media spectrum. Read it horizontally to understand the developments within individual industries. Because media forms have exploded over time, the timeline becomes denser as it moves toward the present.

Photos (left to right): © Bettmann/Corbis; SSP/Getty Images; © Bettmann/Corbis; © Bettmann/Corbis; © Corbis; Kevin Winter/Getty Images; Marc Riboud/Magnum Photos; CBS Photo Archive/Getty Images; Richard Freeda/Aurora Photos; KRT/Newscom; © Danny Moloshok/Reuters/Corbis; Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg via Getty Images

# Timeline: Media and Culture through History

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT



## MEDIA AND CULTURE

### 2400 B.C.E.–C.E. 1453:

Oral communication reigns supreme. The introduction of papyrus brings portability to written symbols. In the Middle Ages, scribes formalize rules of punctuation and style, create illuminated manuscripts, and become the chief recorders of history and culture.

### 1453–1840: Gutenberg’s print-

ing press with movable type allows books to become the first mass medium. Information spreads, and the notion of a free press becomes a foundation for democracy. The printed word inspires new mass media: newspapers and magazines.

### 1840s: The telegraph us-

new For t mes faste trans allow com acro tances. Literacy rates b newspapers, and maga a vital part of American



## BOOKS

- 2400 B.C.E. Papyrus
- 1000 B.C.E. Earliest books
- 400 C.E. Codex
- 600 C.E. Illuminated manuscripts
- 1453 Printing press by Gutenberg
- 1640 First colonial book
- 1836 McGuffey publishes *Eclectic Reader*
- 1852 *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* published

## NEWSPAPERS

- 1690 First colonial newspaper
- 1734 Press freedom precedent is set
- 1827 First African American newspaper
- 1848 First wire service
- 1860s First newspaper

## MAGAZINES

- 1821 National magazines. *The Saturday Evening Post* is launched
- 1850s Engravings and illustrations are added to magazines

## RADIO

- 1844 First telegraph line set by Samuel Morse

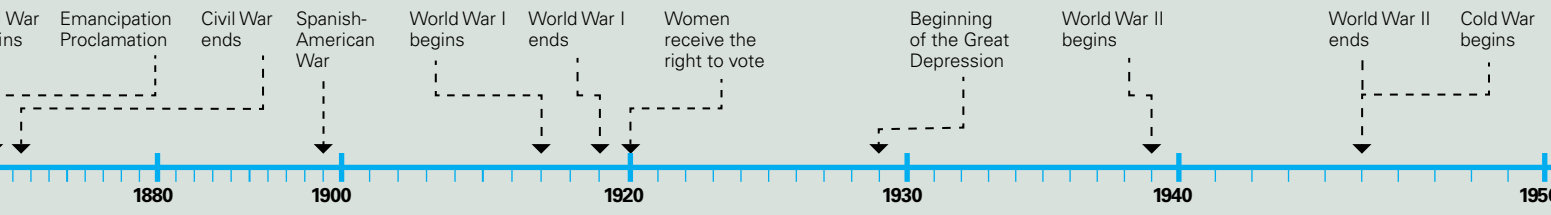
## MUSIC

- 1850s First experiments with sound by de Martinville

## MOVIES

## TELEVISION AND CABLE

## INTERNET AND DIGITAL GAMING



publishers in a new era in 1844. For the first time, messages travel faster than human transportation, allowing instant communication across great distances—books, magazines become a part of society.

**1880–1920:** The Industrial Revolution gains full steam, and the majority of the U.S. population shifts from rural to urban areas. As urban centers grow, muckraking journalists focus on social issues and big business. Media formats explode: Nickelodeons bring film to cities, recorded music is popularized, and radio becomes a full-fledged mass medium. The U.S. becomes an international power, advertising fuels the booming consumer economy, and public relations spurs the U.S. into World War I.



**1920–1936:** Networks take hold of radio broadcasting, uniting the U.S. with nationwide programming and advocating an ad-based system. But as the Roaring Twenties turn into the Great Depression of the 1930s, many Americans grow distrustful of big business. Citizens' groups push to reserve part of the airwaves as nonprofit, but commercial broadcasters convince Congress that their interests best represent the public interest.



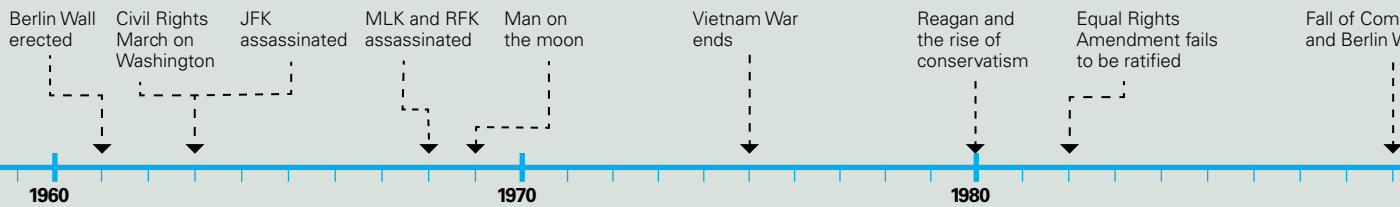
**1937–1945:** Public relations shapes world events through print, radio, and movies. In Europe, fascism rises with overwhelming propaganda campaigns, while in the U.S., Edward Bernays and others use the “engineering of consent” to sell consumer products and a positive image of big business. Movies offer both newsreels and escape from harsh realities.



**1945–1960:** Mass media takes content to draw mass media take for the first time rock and roll and 40 radio.



- **1870** Mass market paperbacks
- **1880** Linotype and offset lithography
- **1884** *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* published
- **1880s–1890s** The age of yellow journalism
- **1879** Postal Act increases magazine circulation
- **1894** Marconi experiments on wireless telegraph
- **1889** First flat disk and gramophone by Berliner
- **1877** Edison's wax cylinder phonograph
- **1889** Celluloid, a transparent film, developed by Hannibal Goodwin
- **1895** Film screenings in Paris by Lumière brothers
- **1890s** Cathode ray tube invented
- **1880s** Penny arcades
- **1906** *The Jungle* published
- **1912** *Titanic* lives saved by onboard wireless operators
- **1910** Phonographs enter homes
- **1907** Nickelodeons—storefront theaters
- **1910s** Movie studio system develops
- **1925** *The Great Gatsby* published
- **1922** *Reader's Digest* launched
- **1922** First commercial radio advertisements
- **1920s** Electricity and microphones introduced
- **1927** Sound comes to movies
- **1926** Book clubs
- **1923** *Time* magazine launched
- **1927** First TV transmission by Farnsworth
- **1930** Syndicated columns flourish
- **1927** Congress issues radio licenses
- **1935** First public demonstration of television
- **1930s** Golden age of radio
- **1940** *Native Son* published
- **1933–1944** FDR's Fireside Chats
- **1940s** Audiotape developed in Germany
- **1941** FCC sets TV standards
- **1940s** Digital technology developed
- **1945** Modern pinball machines
- **1951** *Catch Me If You Can*, *Rye* published
- **1950s** Rock and roll emerges
- **1947** HUAC convicts 10 men from film industry of alleged communist sympathies
- **1950** Audience developed; Nielsen MR Research
- **1948** Supreme Court forces studios to divest their theaters in the Paramount Decision
- **1950** Cathode ray tube



any American families make an exodus to the suburbs, and television becomes the electronic hearth of homes. As TV becomes the dominant medium, movies diversify their new audiences. The target teenagers as a group; teens lead the rise of and the sounds of Top

**1960s:** As the Cold War fuels the space race, defense research leads to communications satellite technology and the beginnings of the Internet. Domestically, television's three main networks promote a shared culture and, with news images of racism in the South and war in Vietnam, social movements. An active FCC prevents media mergers and manages competition in radio and TV broadcasting.



**1970s:** Social issues take the forefront in broadcast television, with TV shows broaching topics such as race, class, politics, and prejudice. The popularization of the VCR, the expansion of cable, the invention of the microprocessor, and the new musical forms of hip-hop and punk rock set the stage for major media trends in the 1980s and 1990s.



**1980s:** Cable television explodes. MTV changes the look and sound of television, music, advertising, and our overall attention spans. CNN offers 24/7 news to viewers, while *USA Today* brings color and bite-sized reports to readers. The Reagan administration deregulates the mass media, and media fragmentation emerges—people seek their own niche media through cable channels, talk radio, and magazines.



- **1953** *TV Guide* launched
- **1955** *Village Voice*—first underground paper
- **1957** *On the Road* published
- **1960** *To Kill a Mockingbird* published
- **1965** *In Cold Blood* published
- **1971** Borders established as first superstore
- **1972** First Watergate article in the *Washington Post*
- **1971–1972** *Look and Life* shut down
- **1974** *People* magazine launched
- **1980** First online paper—the *Columbus Dispatch*
- **1982** *USA Today* launched
- **1987** *Beloved* published
- **1989** First new solo horror
- **1952** RCA debuts transistor radio
- **1960s** FM radio format gains popularity
- **1970** NPR first airs
- **1955** Carl Perkins writes “Blue Suede Shoes”
- **1960s** Cassettes introduced as new format
- **1967** Beatles release *Sgt. Pepper*
- **1970s** Hip-hop emerges
- **1983** CDs introduced as new format
- **1950s** Visual gimmicks such as 3-D begin to attract viewers
- **1966** Studio mergers begin with Gulf & Western buying Paramount
- **1977** Video transforms the industry with VHS-format videocassettes
- **1954** Color TV system approved by the FCC
- **1960** Telstar satellite relays telephone and TV signals
- **1967** Congress creates the Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- **1975** HBO uplinks to satellite, becoming the first premium channel
- **1975–1976** Consumer VCRs begin to sell to public
- **1980** CNN premieres
- **1981** MTV launches
- **1983** *M\*A\*S\*H\** finale becomes highest-rated program in modern TV
- **1987** Fox network launches *The Simpsons*
- **1960s** ARPAnet research begun for the Internet
- **1970s** E-mail developed
- **1971** Microprocessor developed
- **1975** *Pong* released
- **1980s** Fiber-optic cable used to transmit information
- **1980s** Hypertext enables users to link Web pages together
- **1985** *Super Mario Bros.* released
- Web browser introduced



**1990s:** The digital era is in full swing. The Internet becomes a mass medium, computers become home appliances, and e-mail—born in the 1970s—revolutionizes the way people and businesses communicate around the world. CDs and DVDs deliver music, movies, and video games. Corporate media dominate through consolidation and the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which discards most ownership limits.



**2000s:** Media fragmentation deepens and political polarization divides the U.S. Cable and the Internet become important news sources but no longer require that we share common cultural ground, as did older forms of radio, TV, and the movies. E-commerce booms. Movies, TV shows, music, books, magazines, and newspapers converge on the Internet. The rise of smartphones and touchscreen devices makes it easier than ever to consume a variety of media at any time and in any place.



**2010s:** Devices like smartphones and touchscreen tablets become more prevalent, making it simpler to consume a wide variety of media at any time and in any place. In this emerging era of media convergence, it will be fascinating to see what the future of media holds.



- 1995** Amazon.com launched
- 1997** First Harry Potter book published
- 2003** *The Da Vinci Code* published
- 2007** Amazon introduces the Kindle e-book reader
- 2011** Borders declares bankruptcy and closes stores
- 2011** Amazon.com sells more e-books than print books
- 1995** Demise of many big-city dailies
- 2001** Dominance of newspaper chains
- 2006** Knight Ridder sold
- 2007** Tribune Co. sold
- 2011** *New York Times* puts up paywall
- 2013** Jeff Bezos buys *Washington Post*
- 1995** Salon.com founded
- 2003** *AARP Bulletin* and *Magazine* top circulation
- 2008** *U.S. News* becomes a monthly magazine
- 2009** Magazine ad pages drop 26%
- 2010** *Wired* sells 24,000 downloads of its iPad app on the first day
- 1990s** Talk radio becomes most popular format
- 1996** Telecommunications Act of 1996 consolidates ownership
- 2002** Satellite radio begins
- 2004** Podcasting debuts
- 2007** HD radio introduced
- 2008** Sirius and XM satellite radio companies merge
- 2010** Pandora brings back portable radio listening with an iPad app
- 1997** DVDs introduced
- 2000** MP3 format compresses digital files
- 2001** File sharing
- 2003** iTunes online music store
- 2014** iTunes celebrates its 35 billionth download
- 2011** Spotify debuts in the U.S.
- 1990s** The rise of independent films as a source of new talent
- 1995** Megaplex cinemas emerge
- 1997** DVDs largely replace VHS cassettes
- 2000** Digital production and distribution gain strength
- 2006** Movie theaters continue to add IMAX screens to their megaplexes
- 2009** James Cameron uses specially created 3-D cameras (developed with Sony) to present a whole new world in *Avatar*
- 2015** International box office plays an increasing role in movie profits
- 1994** DBS, direct broadcast satellite, offers service
- 1996** Telecommunications Act of 1996 consolidates ownership
- 2002** TV standard changed to digital
- TV shows widely available online and on demand
- 2006** TV programs are available on iTunes
- 2008** Switch to DTV
- 2009** Hulu Plus debuts
- 2013** Netflix receives Emmy nomination for its original programming
- 1992** Users make the Internet navigable
- 1995** Amazon.com launches online shopping
- 1999** Blogger software released
- 2001** Instant messenger services flourish
- 2002** Xbox LIVE debuts
- 2004** *World of Warcraft* debuts
- Broadband in 60% of American homes
- 2006** Google buys YouTube.com
- 2008** Apple launches the iPad
- 2010** Wireless devices popularize cloud computing
- 2011** *Grand Theft Auto V* generates more than \$1 billion in three days
- 2013** Facebook buys Oculus Rift for \$2 billion
- 2014** Facebook buys Oculus Rift for \$2 billion

# Media Ownership: Who Owns What in t

**Media ownership** affects the media you consume and how you receive that media.

While the media used to be owned by numerous different companies, today six large conglomerates—**Sony, Disney, Comcast/NBC Universal, News Corp., Time Warner, and CBS**—dominate. However, in the wake of the digital turn, several more companies have emerged as leaders in digital media. These five digital companies—**Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Google, and Facebook**—began in software or as Web sites, but their reach has expanded to compete with traditional media companies in many areas as they have begun producing, distributing, and consuming content. This visualization breaks down the media holdings of these digital companies to help you understand their growing influence.

As you examine this information, think about how much of your daily media consumption is owned by these top digital companies (as well as more traditional conglomerates like Sony or Disney). Which companies have the most influence on your entertainment and news consumption? What about on the technology you use every day? What does it mean that so few companies own so much of the media? Are there areas where the newer digital companies have a weaker hold?

## Top Digital Companies and Their 2014 Revenue

### Apple

\$182.8 billion

The company Steve Jobs built sells computers, iPods, iPads, iPhones—and the music, movies, and e-books you consume on them.



### Amazon

\$89 billion

What began as an online bookstore now commands a high share of printed and recorded media in traditional and digital forms—and dominates the e-reader market.



### Microsoft

\$86.8 billion

Thanks to their widely used Windows operating system and their Xbox gaming console, Microsoft is still a major force in the digital world.

### Google

\$66 billion

Still the most-used search engine, Google has branched out into other media with its Google Play service and the Android phone.

### Facebook

\$12.5 billion

Facebook doesn't yet have as broad a multimedia reach as Amazon or Apple, but it is easily the biggest and most powerful social networking site, which provides a platform for games, music, news feeds, and plenty of crowd-sourced content.



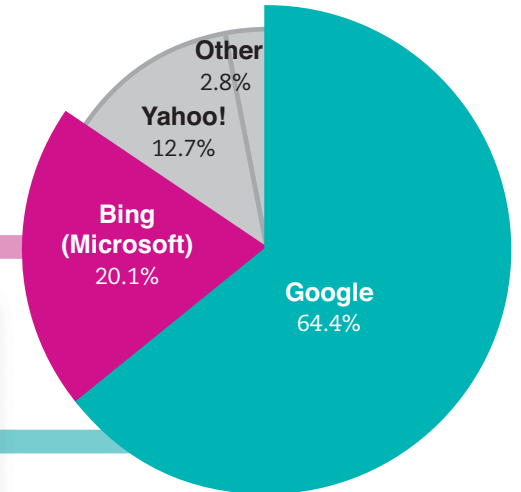
# The Mass Media?

## Top Music Retailers by Market Share

1. **iTunes (Apple):** 29%
2. **Amazon/Amazon MP3:** 19%
3. **Walmart:** 11%

Data from: "iTunes Continues to Dominate Music Retailing," NPD Group, September 19, 2012, <https://www.npd.com/wps/portal/npd/us/news/press-releases/itunes-continues-to-dominate-music-retailing-but-nearly-60-percent-of-itunes-music-buyers-also-use-pandora/>.

## Search Engine Market Share

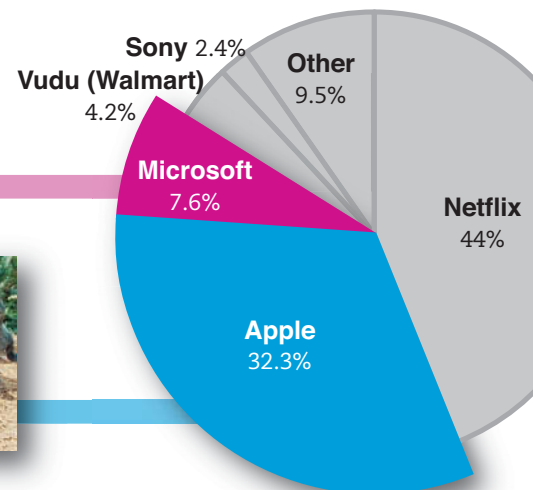


## Top Book Retailers by Market Share

1. **Amazon:** 29%
2. **Barnes & Noble:** 20%
3. **Other online stores:** 10%
4. **Independent brick-and-mortar store:** 6%

Data from: "Amazon Picks Up Market Share," Publishers Weekly, July 27, 2012, <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/financial-reporting/article/53336-amazon-picks-up-market-share.html>.

## Top Online Movie Distributor Market Share



Data from: "Report: Netflix Beats Apple as No. 1 Online Movie Distributor," PaidContent, June 1, 2012, <http://paidcontent.org/2012/06/netflix-beats-apple-as-no-1-online-movie-supplier/>.



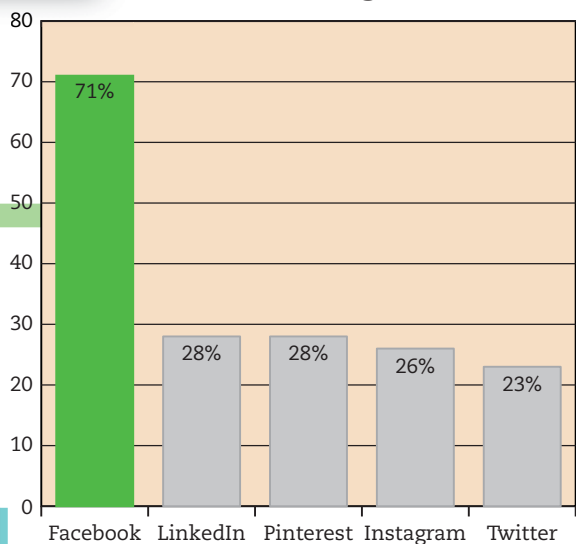
## Estimated Revenue Share of Digital Ad Revenue in the U.S.

1. Google:	38.0%
2. Facebook:	10.0%
3. Microsoft:	6.0%
4. Yahoo!:	5.4%

Data from: Pew Research Center State of the News Media 2015.



## Percentage of Online Adults Using ...



Data from: "Social Media Update 2014," <http://pewinternet.org/2013/12/30/social-media-update-2014>



## Most Popular News Sites

1. Yahoo! News
2. Google News
3. Huffington Post
4. CNN
5. *New York Times*
6. Fox News
7. NBC News
8. *Mail Online*
9. *Washington Post*
10. *The Guardian*

Data from: eBizMBA, "Top 15 Most Popular News Websites," [www.ebizmba.com/articles/news-websites](http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/news-websites)

## Top-Selling Video Game Consoles in 2014

1. PlayStation 4 (Sony):	4.7 million
2. XboxOne (Microsoft):	4.2 million
3. 3DS (Nintendo):	2.7 million
4. Wii U (Nintendo):	1.6 million

Data from: "USA Yearly Chart," VGChartz, <http://vgchartz.com/yearly/2014/USA>

Movie Supplier,"  
5/01/report

erg via Getty Images.

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# How much do media companies make, really?



# **Media & Culture**

# 2016 Pregame

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The Washington Post

JONES DAY





# 1

## Mass Communication

### A Critical Approach

**5**  
Culture and the Evolution of Mass Communication

**10**  
The Development of Media and Their Role in Our Society

**16**  
Surveying the Cultural Landscape

**29**  
Critiquing Media and Culture

Unlike any national election in recent memory, the 2016 presidential race started with a bang: a political campaign packaged as a reality show. With billionaire businessman Donald Trump taking the early lead in the crowded Republican field, the former host of NBC’s *The Apprentice* seemed inoculated from the scrutiny most politicians face when they say things that cause voters to question their sanity, like “The beauty of me is that I’m very rich.”<sup>1</sup> In Trump’s case, his standing as a reality-show celebrity seemed to elevate, rather than sink, him in the early polls.

One of the appeals of reality TV, of course, is that viewers expect blunt opinions, outrageous actions, and crazy plot twists—and that’s exactly what Donald Trump delivered to the 2016 campaign. He criticized other candidates for taking “special interest” money (including from him); he denigrated legal and illegal immigrants, promising to build a wall between the United States and Mexico—and make Mexico pay for it; and he retweeted comments labeling Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly a “bimbo.” She had asked him tough questions during the first debate of the season—which, thanks to Trump’s celebrity, drew a record twenty-four million viewers.

Scott Shaw/For the Washington Post via Getty Images

Particularly disheartening to many of the other Republican presidential candidates was the need to spend money on campaign ads to counter the Trump juggernaut. In response to Trump's critical remarks about him, fellow GOP candidate Jeb Bush had to pay for ads reminding voters that Trump used to be a Democrat. Trump's retort that President Ronald Reagan also started out as a Democrat, though, cost him nothing; his social media and TV interviews received so much attention that he didn't need to repeat his assertions in paid ads. Instead, his shocking comments about other candidates were picked up and recirculated—for free—by CNN, CBS, Fox News, NBC, the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, among others. At one point early in the campaign, the conservative Media Research Center reported in a study that “Donald Trump [had] received almost three times the network TV news coverage than all the other [sixteen] GOP candidates combined. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

Trump's candidacy demonstrated the power of social media to gain free publicity and cheap access. Recently, office seekers have depended on their parties and outside partisan groups to afford the expensive TV ads campaigning usually requires. Following the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* ruling by the Supreme Court in 2010 (see Chapter 16), election campaigns now benefit from unlimited funds raised by wealthy individuals, corporations, and other groups, causing partisan pundits and concerned citizens alike to fret about rich donors dictating election outcomes.

For the 2016 election cycle, Donald Trump used social media to share his own criticisms of political ads and the “big money”

that pays for them, thereby making candidates beholden to special interest groups. Though most media today communicate primarily to niche markets, Trump seemed to offer broad appeal at the time—even Democrats who said they would not vote for him enjoyed watching him make other GOP candidates squirm. So will Trump's TV strategies reshape political campaigning by forging a link with the sensibilities of reality television?

The fate of elections in the end increasingly rests with young voters and a candidate's ability to draw them into the election, which could make the rawness of reality TV enticing to some strategists. In election year cycles, news media often reduce the story of an election to two-dimensional narratives, obscuring or downplaying complex policy issues like climate change, economic recovery, campaign financing, immigration reform, and worldwide terrorism. To his credit, Trump's candid and controversial ideas during the 2016 presidential campaign forced the news media to pay closer attention. In a democracy, we depend on media to provide information to help us make decisions about our leaders. Despite their limitations, the media continue to serve as watchdogs for us over government and business. We must hope they are not too easily distracted by the power of celebrity to generate ratings and readers. As media watchdogs ourselves, we can point a critical lens back at the media and describe, analyze, and interpret news stories, reality TV shows, and political ads, arriving at informed judgments about the media's performance. This textbook offers a map to help us become more *media literate*, critiquing the media not as detached cynics or rabid partisans, but as informed citizens with a stake in the outcome.


### ▲ **SO WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF NEWSPAPERS AND MEDIA IN GENERAL?**

In an age of highly partisan politics, economic and unemployment crises, and upheaval in several Arab nations, how do we demand the highest standards from our media to describe and analyze such complex events and issues—especially at a time when the business models for newspapers and most other media are in such flux? At their best, in all their various forms—from mainstream newspapers and radio talk shows to blogs—the media try to help us understand the events that affect us. But at their worst, the media’s appetite for telling and selling stories leads them not only to document tragedy but also to misrepresent or exploit it. Many viewers and critics disapprove of how media, particularly TV and cable, hurtle from one event to another, often dwelling on trivial, celebrity-driven content.

In this book, we examine the history and business of mass media and discuss the media as a central force in shaping our culture and our democracy. We start by examining key concepts and introducing the critical process for investigating media industries and issues. In later chapters, we probe the history and structure of media’s major institutions. In the process, we will develop an informed and critical view of the influence these institutions have had on national and global life. The goal is to become media literate—to become critical consumers of mass media institutions and engaged participants who accept part of the responsibility for the shape and direction of media culture. In this chapter, we will:

- Address key ideas, including communication, culture, mass media, and mass communication
- Investigate important periods in communication history: the oral, written, print, electronic, and digital eras
- Examine the development of a mass medium from emergence to convergence
- Learn about how convergence has changed our relationship to media
- Look at the central role of storytelling in media and culture
- Discuss two models for organizing and categorizing culture: a skyscraper and a map
- Trace important cultural values in both modern and postmodern societies
- Study media literacy and the five stages of the critical process: description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and engagement

As you read through this chapter, think about your early experiences with the media. Identify a favorite media product from your childhood—a song, book, TV show, or movie. Why was it so important to you? How much of an impact did your early taste in media have on your identity? How has your taste shifted over time? What do your current preferences indicate about your identity now? Do your current media preferences reveal anything about you? For more questions to help you think about the role of media in your life, see “Questioning the Media” in the Chapter Review.

 Visit **LaunchPad** for **Media & Culture** and use **LearningCurve** to review concepts from this chapter.

## ***Culture and the Evolution of Mass Communication***

One way to understand the impact of the media on our lives is to explore the cultural context in which the media operate. Often, culture is narrowly associated with art, the unique forms of creative expression that give pleasure and set standards about what is true, good, and beautiful. Culture, however, can be viewed more broadly as the ways in which people live and represent themselves at particular historical times. This idea of culture encompasses fashion, sports, literature, architecture, education, religion, and science, as well as mass media.



Krzysztof Dydyński/Getty Images

### CULTURAL VALUES AND IDEALS

are transmitted through the media. Many fashion advertisements show beautiful people using a company's products; such images imply that anyone who buys the products can obtain such ideal beauty. What other societal ideas are portrayed through the media?

Although we can study discrete cultural products, such as novels or songs from various historical periods, culture itself is always changing. It includes a society's art, beliefs, customs, games, technologies, traditions, and institutions. It also encompasses a society's modes of **communication**: the creation and use of symbol systems that convey information and meaning (e.g., languages, Morse code, motion pictures, and one-zero binary computer codes).

Culture is made up of both the products that a society fashions and, perhaps more important, the processes that forge those products and reflect a culture's diverse values. Thus **culture** may be defined as the symbols of expression that individuals, groups, and societies use to make sense of daily life and to articulate their values. According to this definition, when we listen to music, read a book, watch television, or scan the Internet, we are usually not asking "Is this art?" but are instead trying to identify or connect with something or someone. In other words, we are assigning meaning to the song, book, TV program, or Web site. Culture, therefore, is a process that delivers the values of a society through products or other meaning-making forms. The American ideal of "rugged individualism"—depicting heroic characters overcoming villains or corruption, for instance—has been portrayed on television for decades through a tradition of detective stories like HBO's *True Detective* and crime procedurals like CBS's *NCIS*. This ideal has also been a staple in movies and books, and even in political ads.

Culture links individuals to their society by providing both shared and contested values, and the mass media help circulate those values. The **mass media** are the cultural industries—the

channels of communication—that produce and distribute songs, novels, TV shows, newspapers, movies, video games, Internet services, and other cultural products to large numbers of people. The historical development of media and communication can be traced through several overlapping phases or eras in which newer forms of technology disrupted and modified older forms—a process that many academics, critics, and media professionals began calling *convergence* with the arrival of the Internet.

These eras, which all still operate to some degree, are oral, written, print, electronic, and digital. The first two eras refer to the communication of tribal or feudal communities and agricultural economies. The last three phases feature the development of **mass communication**: the process of designing cultural messages and stories and delivering them to large and diverse audiences through media channels as old and distinctive as the printed book and as new and converged as the Internet. Hastened by the growth of industry and modern technology, mass communication accompanied the shift of rural populations to urban settings and the rise of a consumer culture.

## Oral and Written Eras in Communication

In most early societies, information and knowledge first circulated slowly through oral traditions passed on by poets, teachers, and tribal storytellers. As alphabets and the written word emerged, however, a manuscript—or written—culture began to develop and eventually overshadowed oral communication. Documented and transcribed by philosophers, monks, and stenographers, the manuscript culture served the ruling classes. Working people were generally illiterate, and the economic and educational gap between rulers and the ruled was vast. These eras of oral and written communication developed slowly over many centuries. Although



exact time frames are disputed, historians generally consider these eras as part of Western civilization’s premodern period, spanning the epoch from roughly 1000 B.C.E. to the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution.

Early tensions between oral and written communication played out among ancient Greek philosophers and writers. Socrates (470–399 B.C.E.), for instance, made his arguments through public conversations and debates. Known as the Socratic method, this dialogue style of communication and inquiry is still used in college classrooms and university law schools. Many philosophers who believed in the superiority of the oral tradition feared that the written word would threaten public discussion. In fact, Socrates’ most famous student, Plato (427–347 B.C.E.), sought to banish poets, whom he saw as purveyors of ideas less rigorous than those generated in oral, face-to-face, question-and-answer discussions. These debates foreshadowed similar discussions in our time in which we ask whether TV news, Twitter, or online comment sections cheapen public discussion and discourage face-to-face communication.

## The Print Revolution

While paper and block printing developed in China around 100 C.E. and 1045, respectively, what we recognize as modern printing did not emerge until the middle of the fifteenth century. At that time in Germany, Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of movable metallic type and the printing press ushered in the modern print era. Printing presses and publications spread rapidly across Europe in the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century. Early on, the size and expense of books limited them to an audience of wealthy aristocrats, royal families, church leaders, prominent merchants, and powerful politicians. Gradually, printers reduced the size and cost of books, making them available and affordable to more people. Books eventually became the first mass-marketed products in history because of the way the printing press combined three necessary elements.

First, machine duplication replaced the tedious system in which scribes hand-copied texts. Second, duplication could occur rapidly, so large quantities of the same book could be reproduced easily. Third, the faster production of multiple copies brought down the cost of each unit, which made books more affordable to less-affluent people.

Since mass-produced printed materials could spread information and ideas faster and farther than ever before, writers could use print to disseminate views counter to traditional civic doctrine and religious authority—views that paved the way for major social and cultural changes, such as the Protestant Reformation and the rise of modern nationalism. People started to resist traditional clerical authority and also began to think of themselves not merely as members of families, isolated communities, or tribes but as part of a country whose interests were broader than local or regional concerns. While oral and written societies had favored decentralized local governments, the print era supported the ascent of more centralized nation-states.

Eventually, the machine production of mass quantities that had resulted in a lower cost per unit for books became an essential factor in the mass production of other goods, which led to the Industrial Revolution, modern capitalism, and the consumer culture of the twentieth century. With the revolution in industry came the rise of the middle class and an elite business class of owners and managers who acquired the kind of influence formerly held only by the nobility or the clergy. Print media became key tools that commercial and political leaders used to distribute information and maintain social order.

As with the Internet today, however, it was difficult for a single business or political leader, certainly in a democratic society, to gain exclusive control over printing technology (although



Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris/Scala—Art Resource, NY

### EARLY BOOKS

Before the invention of the printing press, books were copied by hand in a labor-intensive process. This beautifully illuminated page is from an Italian Bible made in the early fourteenth century.

the king or queen did control printing press licenses in England until the early nineteenth century, and even today, governments in many countries control presses, access to paper, advertising, and distribution channels). Instead, the mass publication of pamphlets, magazines, and books in the United States helped democratize knowledge, and literacy rates rose among the working and middle classes. Industrialization required a more educated workforce, but printed literature and textbooks also encouraged compulsory education, thus promoting literacy and extending learning beyond the world of wealthy upper-class citizens.

Just as the printing press fostered nationalism, it also nourished the ideal of individualism. People came to rely less on their local community and their commercial, religious, and political leaders for guidance. By challenging tribal life, the printing press “fostered the modern idea of individuality,” disrupting “the medieval sense of community and integration.”<sup>3</sup> In urban and industrial environments, many individuals became cut off from the traditions of rural and small-town life, which had encouraged community cooperation in premodern times. By the mid-nineteenth century, the ideal of individualism affirmed the rise of commerce and increased resistance to government interference in the affairs of self-reliant entrepreneurs. The democratic impulse of individualism became a fundamental value in American society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## The Electronic Era

In Europe and the United States, the impact of industry’s rise was enormous: Factories replaced farms as the main centers of work and production. During the 1880s, roughly 80 percent of Americans lived on farms and in small towns; by the 1920s and 1930s, most had moved to urban areas, where new industries and economic opportunities beckoned. The city had overtaken the country as the focal point of national life.

The gradual transformation from an industrial, print-based society to one grounded in the Information Age began with the development of the telegraph in the 1840s. Featuring dot-dash electronic signals, the telegraph made four key contributions to communication. First, it separated communication from transportation, making media messages instantaneous—unencumbered by stagecoaches, ships, or the pony express.<sup>4</sup> Second, the telegraph, in combination with the rise of mass-marketed newspapers, transformed “information into a commodity, a ‘thing’ that could be bought or sold irrespective of its uses or meaning.”<sup>5</sup> By the time of the Civil War, news had become a valuable product. Third, the telegraph made it easier for military, business, and political leaders to coordinate commercial and military operations, especially after the installation of the transatlantic cable in the late 1860s. Fourth, the telegraph led to future technological developments, such as wireless telegraphy (later named radio), the fax machine, and the cell phone, which ironically resulted in the telegraph’s demise: In 2006, Western Union telegraph offices sent their final messages.

The rise of film at the turn of the twentieth century and the development of radio in the 1920s were early signals, but the electronic phase of the Information Age really boomed in the 1950s and 1960s with the arrival of television and its dramatic impact on daily life. Then, with the coming of ever more communication gadgetry—personal computers, cable TV, DVDs, DVRs, direct broadcast satellites, cell phones, smartphones, PDAs, and e-mail—the Information Age passed into its digital phase, where old and new media began to converge, thus dramatically changing our relationship to media and culture.

## The Digital Era

In **digital communication**, images, texts, and sounds are converted (encoded) into electronic signals (represented as varied combinations of binary numbers—ones and zeros) that are then reassembled (decoded) as a precise reproduction of, say, a TV picture, a magazine article, a

song, or a telephone voice. On the Internet, various images, texts, and sounds are all digitally reproduced and transmitted globally.

New technologies, particularly cable television and the Internet, developed so quickly that traditional leaders in communication lost some of their control over information. For example, starting with the 1992 presidential campaign, the network news shows (ABC, CBS, and NBC) began to lose their audiences, first to MTV and CNN, and later to MSNBC, Fox News, Comedy Central, and partisan radio talk shows. By the 2012 national elections, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites had become key players in news and politics, especially as information resources for younger generations who had grown up in an online and digital world.

Moreover, e-mail—a digital reinvention of oral culture—has assumed some of the functions of the postal service and is outpacing attempts to control communications beyond national borders. A professor sitting at her desk in Cedar Falls, Iowa, sends e-mail or Skype messages routinely to research scientists in Budapest. Moreover, many repressive and totalitarian regimes have had trouble controlling messages sent out over the borderless Internet, as opposed to hard copy “snail mail.”

Oral culture has been further reinvented by the emergence of *social media*—such as Twitter and, in particular, Facebook, which now has nearly one billion users worldwide. Social media allow people from all over the world to have ongoing online conversations, share stories and interests, and generate their own media content. This turn to digital media forms has fundamentally overturned traditional media business models, the ways we engage with and consume media products, and the ways we organize our daily lives around various media choices.

## The Linear Model of Mass Communication

The digital era also brought about a shift in the models that media researchers have used over the years to explain how media messages and meanings are constructed and communicated in everyday life. In one of the older and more enduring explanations of how media operate, mass communication has been conceptualized as a linear process of producing and delivering messages to large audiences. **Senders** (authors, producers, and organizations) transmit **messages** (programs, texts, images, sounds, and ads) through a **mass media channel** (newspapers, books, magazines, radio, television, or the Internet) to large groups of **receivers** (readers, viewers, and consumers). In the process, **gatekeepers** (news editors, executive producers, and other media managers) function as message filters. Media gatekeepers make decisions about what messages actually get produced for particular receivers. The process also allows for **feedback**, in which citizens and consumers, if they choose, return messages to senders or gatekeepers through phone calls, e-mail, Web postings, talk shows, or letters to the editor.

But the problem with the linear model is that in reality, media messages—especially in the digital era—do not usually move smoothly from a sender at point A to a receiver at point Z. Words and images are more likely to spill into one another, crisscrossing in the daily media deluge of ads, TV shows, news reports, social media, smartphone apps, and—of course—everyday conversation. Media messages and stories are encoded and sent in written and visual forms, but senders often have very little control over how their intended messages are decoded or whether the messages are ignored or misread by readers and viewers.

## A Cultural Model for Understanding Mass Communication

A more contemporary approach to understanding media is through a cultural model. This concept recognizes that individuals bring diverse meanings to messages, given factors and differences such as gender, age, educational level, ethnicity, and occupation. In this model of mass communication, audiences actively affirm, interpret, refashion, or reject the messages and stories that flow through various media channels. For example, when controversial singer Lady Gaga released her nine-minute music video for the song “Telephone” in 2010, fans and critics