

The best-selling **Mass Communication: Living in a Media World** presents a highly accessible introduction to mass communication that equips students with the critical thinking skills they need to become savvy media consumers. To help students better retain the material, author Ralph E. Hanson uses a storytelling approach that weaves in examples drawn from everyday life. Readers are encouraged to consider the media industry from the inside out and, in doing so, discover the many dimensions of mass communication that operate in our society. The thoroughly revised **Eighth Edition** highlights how social and digital media, video games, and the COVID-19 pandemic are changing the face of media.

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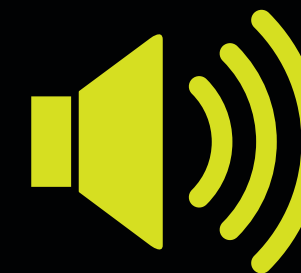
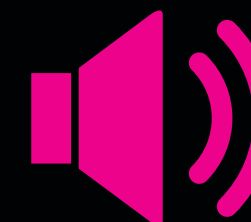
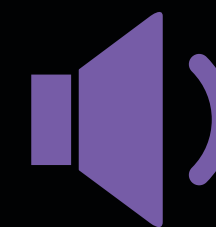


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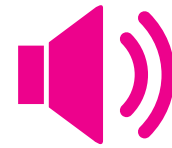


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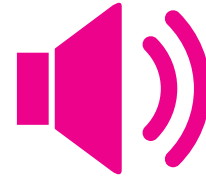
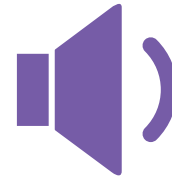
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To my father, Roger J. Hanson

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MASS COMMUNICATION

LIVING IN A MEDIA WORLD



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PREFACE

Many of the defining moments of our lives come from our shared experiences with the media. It could be witnessing the Black Lives Matter protests across the country on both TV and through social media, following the scary news about the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic through the various news media, experiencing the thrill of the World Cup competition viewed streaming on the internet, going to the latest Marvel Cinematic Universe movie as the backdrop to a first date, or hearing “that” song from the summer you turned sixteen. For my generation, it was the moon walk. Parents across the United States let their nine-year-olds stay up way past their bedtimes to watch the biggest show of their lives on television—*Apollo 11* astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin setting foot on the moon.

On September 11, 2001, my eldest son and his fellow fifth-grade classmates sat mesmerized by news coverage of the airplanes crashing into the World Trade Center Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and a field in southwestern Pennsylvania. Some parents questioned whether their children ought to have watched these events, but my son said, “We begged the teacher to keep the TV on. We had to know.” As I write this, my former fifth-grader has his master’s degree and has lived in Canada, Europe, and Asia with a global perspective brought in part by that fateful day in 2001. In the fall of 2021, I will have incoming freshman students for whom 9/11 is something that happened before they were born. It will simply be a thing that has always been. Now their top media memory might be watching the results come in as we elected our first black president, watching *Hannah Montana* (Miley Cyrus, was that really you?), Pixar’s *WALL-E*, or listening and singing along to country music in their parents’ cars.


Then there are the myriad trivial aspects of everyday life that come from our time with the media: finding the perfect little brunch café through restaurant review site Yelp, watching the band American Football play a music festival on the Minecraft game site during a COVID-19 online music festival, or arguing on social media as to who should be the top pick in your fantasy basketball league.

The media world we inhabit is constantly changing, as is our relationship with the media. In my first job as a college professor, I taught a course in media effects. On the first day of class, a student raised his hand and asked, “When do we get to the part where we talk about how television turns people into zombies?” His question has stayed with me through the years because it represents the view many people have about the media. The student’s attitude had been fostered by media critics with an agenda—getting elected to office, getting a regulation approved, promoting a product, or even pushing a moral choice. I have long taken the view that the successful study of mass communication is also a journey of self-awareness. We are students of media and players in a media world.

Approach of the Book

Dr. James Potter, in his book *Media Literacy*, reports that people spend an average of twelve hours and one minute a day interacting with mass media of one form or another. Timewise, the biggest medium is television, but in terms of growth, it’s online media—much of it mobile. Much of this time is also multitasking, interacting with your phone while watching TV, for example. That is how people squeeze in that much time with the media.

Mass Communication: Living in a Media World views the media in our world not as isolated institutions that somehow “do something” to us, but rather as forces that are central to how we live, work, and play. The media are not outside influences; they are part of who we are. From mobile media devices to streaming video, the pervasiveness of mass communication in our daily lives complicates our ability to understand the media’s rich history of technical, cultural, sociological, political, economic, and artistic achievements. *Mass Communication* reveals the forces



that drive the industry, while at the same time motivating readers to think critically about how they consume media. It uses compelling stories and examples drawn from everyday life. Readers are encouraged to consider the media industry from the inside out and, in so doing, to explore the many dimensions of mass communication that operate in our society.

My students over the years have told me that they remember information better if it is presented as a story, and so I strive to be a storyteller. Some of these stories are unpleasant and ugly. But that doesn't mean we don't need to tell them. The narrative style of this book will help motivate students to do the reading and facilitate their recall of the material. Many of the Test Your Media Literacy exercises are based on writing assignments I've used in classroom settings, as well as in more writing-intensive online sections. These exercises connect the material from the book to the media that students use every day, and students say that these assignments make them really think about how they experience the media.

Organization

Previous adopters will note that there have been substantial changes within the organization with this edition, including the retirement of the old magazine chapter and the addition of a stand-alone chapter on social media and video games. It was a difficult decision to remove the magazine chapter, but it is clear that much of the old magazine industry is dying. Former magazine giant Time Inc. has been sold by WarnerMedia, with some titles being eliminated and the flagship *Time* magazine sold off to an individual investor. It was becoming problematic trying to keep the chapter up-to-date with every month bringing news that another publication had gone digital-only or been discontinued completely. Much of the material about how magazines influence our culture has found its way into other chapters. This has made room for something users have been requesting for several years: a stand-alone chapter on video games and social media.

The book is organized into five parts, each examining critical dimensions that comprise the world of mass communication. *Part I: Introduction to the Media* presents the institutions, social effects, and business workings of the media in order to lay the foundation for understanding mass communication. *Part II: Legacy Media* explores the development of mass literacy and mass communication and what has traditionally been the paper-oriented print media, including newspapers and books, as well as legacy audiovisual media, such as audio, movies, and television. But these media are now increasingly delivered in digital form as well. *Part III: Digital and Global Media* covers the internet, social media, video games, and critiques of normative theories of the press in various countries; and it looks at how the media operate around the globe. *Part IV: Strategic Communication* delves into the advertising and public relations industries. *Part V: Regulation and Control of the Media* looks at the institutions, conventions, and rules that regulate and control the media in the United States and around the world.

Most of the chapters about the individual media (Parts II and III) are organized around the same basic structure. Following an opening vignette come four major sections:

1. How the medium developed along with major changes in society and culture. More than just a history of the medium, this section considers how societal, cultural, and technological elements came together to create the medium we have today.
2. How the medium operates within the business and social world. This section looks at why the medium behaves the way it does within our economy.
3. Current issues and controversies between the medium and society. These often include issues involving media effects, such as the concern about the importance of seeing people like yourself portrayed in the media.
4. The future of the medium, including the effects mobile technology and the long tail have had on it.

New to the Eighth Edition

The media world of 2021 is vastly different from that of 2015 or 2010, and it is unimaginably different from the year 2000 and the turn of the millennium. “Fake news” used to refer to late-night satirical comedy from *Saturday Night Live* or *The Daily Show*. Now that term is used as an attack on the news media or as a description of deceptive social media propaganda efforts. Powerful men showing up unexpectedly in the news used to mean they had completed some big business deal or died. Now, it often means they have been accused of sexual misconduct. Talk about hip-hop used to be talk about BET videos. Now it is a discussion of the Broadway hit show *Hamilton* or the Pulitzer Prize–winning album *DAMN.* from Kendrick Lamar.

In the seventh edition of *Mass Communication*, I focused on the importance of representation, inclusion, and diversity with an emphasis on whose voices get heard. Your author is a firm believer that everything can be explained by the hip-hop musical *Hamilton*. In this case, the line comes at the end from President George Washington, who asks the musical question, “Who lives, who dies, who tells your story?” In this eighth edition, we look at how media have covered the conflicts between police, journalists, and protesters marching for Black Lives Matter. It is almost exactly 216 years after the death of founding father and treasury secretary Alexander Hamilton as I write this preface. And the reason that no one questions why I would bring him up is that Ron Chernow wrote a brilliant biography of Hamilton that Lin-Manuel Miranda used as the basis for a musical. Hamilton, his nemesis Aaron Burr, his wife Eliza, and his sister-in-law Angelica live on for us because we tell their stories.

In 2020 we started hearing the story of the spread of a brutal emergent virus, COVID-19, that became a global pandemic, killing more than 200,000 Americans at the time of this writing. This virus forced many Americans out of their jobs with the more fortunate being able to work from home. College and university classes were almost universally moved online to slow the spread of the disease. The media industry also underwent massive effects, with virtually every movie theater in the United States closing for at least three months. Studios experimented with releasing first-run movies as premium video on demand, thus bypassing theaters entirely. Sports on all levels were cancelled, thus eliminating much of the most popular television programming. Local media lost devastating amounts of advertising leading to employee layoffs and furloughs, along with some having to just close their doors permanently.


We also continued to hear the stories of women who had suffered harassment and abuse by powerful men in Hollywood, politics, and business. The point here is that what we talk about in our media matters a lot. The stories we talk about are the stories that get told.

New Chapter-Opening Vignette. Seven of the chapters feature brand-new stories about key figures and issues in the media to provide a powerful narrative thread exemplifying the major themes of each chapter. These vignettes convey the excitement and relevance of media studies and critical inquiry by way of those whose lives have been profoundly affected by the media. New vignettes include how the story broke in early 2020 about the novel coronavirus as people slowly came to terms with a disease that would kill thousands of people and crash the American economy; how Amazon founder Jeff Bezos became the owner of the *Washington Post* and ended up transforming himself into a much more public figure; and how COVID-19 transformed the movie industry and forced televised sports to resort to covering reruns of old games, talking about sports returning, and broadcasting professional athletes playing video games of their sports.

Review Questions. The central concepts that were listed at the end of each chapter have been converted to review questions. These questions will encourage students to apply critical thinking skills to examples of mass communication from literature and popular culture.

Updated Chapters. Each chapter has been thoroughly updated to include new developments, new scholarship, and recent events in mass communication. Highlights of the revisions include the following:

- **Chapter 1**, *Living in a Media World*, starts the book with a look at how the news of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus spread and transformed the United States during the winter and spring of 2020. It would create new concepts of social distancing, create new norms about wearing masks in public, and lead to major changes in various media industries, along with killing more than 200,000 people in the United States as of this writing. There is also new material on how we develop our media literacy, drawing on the work of Dr. James Potter.
- **Chapter 2**, *Mass Communication Effects*, has been substantially reorganized, bringing in material on media effects that had previously been in other chapters. This includes critical theory examples on gender and race issues that had been previously covered in the magazine chapter. The materials on the Payne Fund Studies previously covered in the movie chapter have also been placed here. Finally, there is an expanded look at the history of the direct and indirect effects models.
- **Chapter 3**, *The Media Business*, has been updated to look at how Facebook handles the balance of targeting advertising and respecting user privacy. It looks at the big changes that have taken place at a number of media giants, including Disney acquiring much of Fox's properties, the launch of streaming service Disney+, the changes of what used to be Time Warner with its sale to AT&T to become WarnerMedia, the long anticipated re-merger of ViacomCBS, and investigations of both monopoly behavior and charges of bias at Google.
- **Chapter 4**, *Books*, continues its longstanding look at new words that have found their way into the dictionary. The chapter also looks at how independent booksellers are resurgent at a time when chain bookstores are having difficulties, the radical changes taking place in the textbook industry, and a look at how Japanese American actor George Takei has told his story of growing up in a World War II internment camp through a new graphic novel.
- **Chapter 5**, *The News Business*, looks at how buying the *Washington Post* was transformative for both the paper and its new owner, Amazon founder and world's richest man Jeff Bezos. There is a new section moved from elsewhere on the role magazines have played in the news industry. Finally, there is an in-depth look at the future of the local news industry.
- **Chapters 6 and 7**, *Audio and Movies*, both look at how the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed both the lives of musicians and the entire movie industry. With virtually every theater and concert venue in the country closed for months, both industries have been forced to reconsider how they reach their publics and make an income. The audio chapter also takes an updated look at the issue of smart speakers and privacy. The movie chapter has expanded its consideration of a wide range of diversity issues, including the role that black actor/director/producer Tyler Perry has had in making the state of Georgia a major location for movie production.
- **Chapter 8**, *Television and Video*, opens with a discussion of how live television, that depends on sports for viewers, has dealt with the complete shutdown of all sports globally during the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter has also been updated with a continued look at how television has dealt with its lack of diversity, especially in terms of Asian characters, along with looking at the move of television from broadcasting to cable to streaming, and how streaming changes the economic model of television.
- **Chapters 9 and 10**, *Online and Mobile Media and Social Media and Video Games*, contain information that in previous editions was included in a single chapter on a range of interactive media. In this edition, online and mobile media continue to be in one chapter, while the more interactive social media and video games now have their own, expanded chapter. *Online and Mobile Media* looks at concerns about electronic tracking of individuals, both real and imagined, along with charges of bias in Google's search algorithms. *Social Media and Video Games* has a new opening vignette considering the costs of making unwise



posts on social media and how these posts can change people's lives. The chapter continues with an examination of how conflict over recent political events have driven people on special interest and geographical community Facebook groups apart.

Finally, the new chapter includes a discussion of the controversy surrounding the Chinese video-sharing social media channel TikTok; an in-depth history of video games and how they have reshaped popular culture; an updated look at how the president has used social media to communicate directly with voters; and a consideration of how people have used online video game platforms for social interaction during times of social isolation.

- **Chapter 11**, *Global Media*, has been lightly restructured to match its movement from the end of the textbook to coming immediately following the individual media chapters, in part to highlight the importance of global media. There is an expanded analysis of press freedom around the world based on the World Press Freedom Index throughout the chapter, including an updated look at how press freedom has been rolled back in India, the world's largest democracy. Finally, material on international privacy laws has been moved from the law chapter to here and expanded to deal with recent changes in European Union privacy rules.
- **Chapter 12**, *Advertising*, opens with a new look at the role of YouTube influencers in the advertising market through the actions of kid-toy influencer Ryan Kaji and his parents. This is also an updated look at advertising to children. The chapter also has an expanded look at controversies companies can face for targeting ads at LGBTQ families and how they handle that criticism. The chapter closes with an expanded section on social marketing ranging from the role of online celebrities to the use of Twitter for marketing chicken sandwiches.
- **Chapter 13**, *Public Relations*, considers how aerospace giant Boeing mishandled its response to and communication surrounding its 737 MAX airplane safety crisis.
- **Chapter 14**, *Media Law*, has an updated look at media law, including a consideration of the writings of conservative United States Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas on *Times v. Sullivan*, along with a look at a high school student's libel suit against multiple national media.
- **Chapter 15**, *Media Ethics*, has an expanded section on how news outlets handle mistakes and misjudgments that includes how news media dealt with the rapidly breaking news of NBA star Kobe Bryant's death. Material on how the news media covered stories about the Flint, Michigan, water crisis was moved from the *News Business* chapter to here.

Returning Favorites

While some of the book's new features were described above, the eighth edition contains many returning features and coverage that have been updated to enhance and improve on the existing content.

In the sixth edition, it became clear that it was time to update the Seven Secrets to better match our changing media world. These updated secrets all deal with what the media are, who controls the media, how media content is selected, why the media behave the way they do, and how society and the media interact with each other. The Seven Secrets are as follows:

SECRET 1 The media are essential components of our lives.

SECRET 2 There are no mainstream media.

SECRET 3 Everything from the margin moves to the center.

SECRET 4 Nothing is new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

SECRET 5 All media are social.



SECRET 6 Online media are mobile media.

SECRET 7 There is no “they.”

The secrets are presented in depth in the last section of Chapter 1, and they recur, when relevant, in the subsequent chapters to remind students of these concepts and also to serve as a springboard for discussions or writing assignments. These important principles of media literacy are highlighted to call attention to where the Seven Secrets appear throughout the chapters, reminding readers to be attentive and thoughtful.

Chapter Objectives. Learning objectives appear at the start of each chapter and call out key topics for close, focused reading. Students can refer to them for study guidance as well.

Test Your Media Literacy Boxes. There is no better way to cultivate critical media consumers than by modeling critical thinking. These boxes present students with current research, interviews, and issues relating to the practice of mass communication, and ask questions that challenge students to evaluate and analyze the story being told. The readings are engaging and fun, but more important, the questions get students to do more than summarize what they have read—they encourage them to think.

Test Your Visual Media Literacy Boxes. These boxes showcase images—sometimes controversial, sometimes disturbing—from various media to seek instinctive reactions from students before providing context and questions that encourage critical assessment of how we see and interpret images, and what more may be behind them. Both media literacy boxes are supplemented with up-to-the-minute additions and further related information through my blog at <https://www.ralphehanson.com/>.

Chapter Summary. Each chapter concludes with a brief recap of important points to assist students in reviewing key themes, events, and concepts.

Key Terms. A list of key terms—with page references—appears at the end of each chapter to make the terms easy to locate.

Living in a Media World's Social Media

Located at <https://www.ralphehanson.com/>, my blog *Living in a Media World* covers the entire mass media. One of the blog's biggest benefits to you is that it provides a single destination for up-to-date material on the topics covered in this book. It also occasionally features guest posts by national experts on a wide range of media issues. Think of it as a clearinghouse for current media news and features. You may find examples of new assignments or early versions of new book features, along with links associated with book material on the blog as well.

The *Living in a Media World* blog has been joined by several other social media feeds. You can follow me on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ralphehanson>) for daily links to media news and whatever else I am reading. (Expect links to web comics, motorcycle news, and whatever I am reading to make an appearances as well.) I also have a Tumblr (<https://ralphehanson.tumblr.com>) that will feature a lot of great video clips that work well as a pre-class feature, along with photos and other images I have found online or created myself. Typical content includes music clips, viral videos, memes, and commentary on geek culture. The Tumblr tends to be a bit less focused than the blog and sometimes includes photos I have taken. Finally, this book has a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/livinginamediaworld>) where you can share materials and find links to what I have been posting about on the blog and on Tumblr.

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long-standing connections between the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and the NFL's Super Bowl. When Ralph is not out on his motorcycle riding to places a long way from Nebraska, he is blogging on mass communication issues at <https://www.ralphehanson.com>. He tweets as @ralphehanson.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDIA

Chapter 1

Living in a Media World

An Introduction to Mass
Communication

Chapter 2

Mass Communication Effects

How Society and Media Interact

Chapter 3

The Media Business

Consolidation, Globalization,
and the Long Tail

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