The Mass Media Landscape

THE MASS MEDIA LANDSCAPE

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University of Arkansas Libraries
Fayetteville, Arkansas

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ABOUT THIS OER

Compiled and written by Dave Bostwick and Alyssa Riley
  Edited by Dominique Andrea Montiel Valle

The Mass Media Landscape is a compilation of lessons to help readers understand the evolution of U.S. mass media and disruptive media technologies, including overviews of media law, media ethics and media literacy. Following are four points of emphasis:

- Media literacy extends beyond the ability to identify misinformation and disinformation or follow reliable news sources.
- A crucial part of media literacy is understanding mass media history.
- Media literacy skills help both consumers and professionals create and publish reliable content, including on social media, in an ethical manner and with an understanding of long-term effects and potential consequences.
- All students, not just those who seek careers in the industry, benefit from learning about media history, media law, media ethics, and media literacy.

Because this Open Educational Resource (OER) is presented in a book-like structure, the **interactive elements may be more convenient on a standard screen, such as a laptop or tablet computer.** However, the display will automatically reformat for reading on a smaller screens, such as a smartphone.

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  Dave Bostwick

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A Note About First-Person Content – Several chapters in this OER text begin with first-person narratives as a means of using authentic storytelling to engage, inform and educate audiences. While it may seem odd to read brief first-person accounts in a text focused on a specific curriculum, I hope this **gives audiences a chance to reflect on their own personal stories about the evolution of media** as it has affected their lives. In a classroom setting, this may facilitate students or faculty sharing their own stories. Within Blackboard, online faculty will have the option to tell their own brief first-person narratives related to chapter topics.

A Note About External Content – This online guidebook includes embedded multimedia content and links to external articles. These were verified as functioning upon initial publication of this text and may be periodically checked and updated during the lifespan of this OER text. Occasionally, website addresses may change or content may no longer be available. **Please email bostwick@uark.edu if you encounter any problems.**

MEET THE AUTHORS AND EDITOR

AUTHORS

Lead author **Dave Bostwick** is the vice chair and online course coordinator for the School of Journalism and Strategic Media at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. He has a doctoral degree in higher education leadership with an emphasis in instructional design from Baker University in Kansas. He earned a master's degree in English from Fort Hays State University in Kansas and a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Oklahoma. When he was a college undergraduate, he had a lot more hair and aspired to be an international rock star.

Collaborating author **Alyssa Riley** is a second-year graduate student, earning her master's degree in News/Narrative Journalism. In addition to her graduate work and studies, she's a staff writer for *Walton Insights*, an intern for Hogs+ and a freelancer for *Celebrate! Arkansas* magazine. During her undergraduate education, she worked as a writer and editor for *Hill Magazine* and *The Razorback Yearbook*, a marketing ambassador for George's Music Lounge, and was published in *The Diamond Line* magazine for prose. After graduating in 2025, Alyssa hopes to work in the magazine industry, focusing on culture, art, and entertainment.

EDITOR

Dominique M. Valle is a Ph.D. graduate from the School of Journalism and Media at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include emerging technologies, user cultures, and media representation, particularly within the Latin American region. She grew up in Nicaragua, lived in Malaysia, and has been in the United States for seven years, which has given her a varied perspective on global and local media ecosystems.

Special thanks to University of Arkansas OER Librarian Christine Rickabaugh.

Additional thanks to Hanna Williams for contributing the drawing used on the cover.

INTRODUCTION

By Dave Bostwick

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=4#h5p-116*

MORE THAN TEXT

An influential 2024 article in the Chronicle of Higher Education asked a crucial question about undergraduate college coursework: [Is this the end of reading?](#)

A source in the article suggested that "we're entering into a hybrid oral-written culture." Supporting statistics included one estimate that only 20% of college students actually read anything that's assigned to them outside of class.

One quote in the article provided this advice to college educators: "If you design a class based on the assumption that students will do the readings, you'll get nowhere."

In the audio below, an AI voice conversation agent, Sarah, will give you a brief summary of the approach used in this OER text.

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=4#h5p-117*

Or if you prefer to read, here's the audio transcript:

> *It's still important for students to develop and hone their reading skills, but it's also critical for them to develop fluency in decoding other media forms, such as audio and video along with emerging interactive and immersive platforms. With that in mind, this OER text incorporates paragraph text along with interactive presentations, audio and video embeds, self-check quizzes, and a variety of digital flip cards. You'll find that the OER chapters are designed to avoid long blocks of uninterrupted paragraph text.*

MEDIA LITERACY AND MEDIA HISTORY

Media content creators and educators share a similar purpose to inform their audiences, and a primary focus of this OER text is to help you make informed decisions that improve your media literacy. Here's a related flip-card question.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=4#h5p-118

That's an important distinction, but media literacy extends beyond gaining skills to identify misinformation and disinformation or follow reliable news sources. You also need to understand that many of our current ethical concerns and debates about mass media are not unique.

Or put another way, **a crucial component of gaining media literacy is understanding mass media history**.

Ultimately, media literacy skills help both consumers and professionals create and publish reliable content, including via social media, in an ethical manner and with an understanding of the long-term effects.

A PERSONAL APPROACH

Although we're in a brave new world of AI content and immediate media gratification, the present can still resemble the past.

When I was a child, I could manually dial a phone number hosted by a local business to hear an automated voice that gave me the current time and temperature along with a brief weather forecast. Many of us have a similar routine today, except we consult our smartphone screens and apps instead of dialing numbers on a rotary phone.

Throughout this text, you'll have opportunities to share your own reflections about media changes in your lifetime.

ENJOY!

As you learned in the opening comments, some education analysts wonder whether we've reached "the end of reading." Thanks to those of you who did read to the end of this page.

I hope you enjoy this OER project as much as our team enjoyed creating it. Send any feedback or suggestions to Dave Bostwick (bostwick@uark.edu).

1.

OPENING CONCEPTS

by Dave Bostwick

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=22#h5p-68*

CURTAIN-RAISER

You'll be reading some of my personal perspectives in this OER text, so I want to raise the curtain and introduce myself by taking you back to the 1980s when I first attended college. Below is a photo of me singing from way back then (when I had a lot more hair).

Like a few of my peers, I watched a lot of MTV, which made me want to become an international rock star more than a news journalist. In less than a decade, my generation went from 8-track tapes to cassette tapes to compact discs (CDs). Of course, there was no internet for consumers. Small-screen personal computers were a clunky novelty, high-quality stereo speakers were huge, and it would have been impossible for us to imagine a streaming service like Spotify.

I spent my childhood in a rural area of Oklahoma, and my family used a directional TV antennae to pick up one station at a time. For example, if you wanted to watch shows broadcast on a TV station in Wichita Falls, Texas, you had to point the antennae toward Wichita Falls. I remember moving to a larger city and getting a cable TV box connected to a controller with a physical cord. At the time, it seemed almost unbelievable that my roommates and I could sit on the couch and change the TV channel without getting up to turn a control knob.

Regardless of your age, you probably have memories of how media consumption habits have changed in your lifetime. This Open Educational Resource (OER) text will explore how mass media technologies have

evolved over several centuries. We'll also look at how mass media affects users (and vice versa), paying special attention to ethical concerns.

OPENING CONCEPTS

This chapter includes several interactive exercises to introduce some key concepts. Here's your first flip-card question.

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As a current example, it's an oversimplification to refer to a singular idea of *media* as liberal or conservative. No single entity controls American media, so it's best to think of the word *media* as plural. The U.S. media landscape is extremely diverse in content and ownership. It is not a singular concept, and it includes a variety of liberal and conservative outlets.

Whenever possible, try to be specific about the type of medium or media outlets that you discuss.

MEDIA LITERACY

Many of today's media critics complain that social media platforms devalue accuracy and make it difficult for consumers to gain reliable information. Several chapters will mention this and similar concerns about media literacy.

Here's a warm-up question to help you think about whether this is a new or old problem.

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Franklin wasn't alone among our founding fathers. John Adams wrote in his diary about "Cooking up Paragraphs" and "working the political Engine!"

The following 2018 audio from National Public Radio details the history of fake news in American journalism, including an example from Pea Ridge, Arkansas.

Fake News: An Origin Story (NPR)

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=22#h5p-3*

In particular, pay attention to the opening case example and analysis beginning at the 2-minute mark progressing through the brief overview of the Pea Ridge case and the Ida B. Wells example ending at the 10:30 mark.

Later, the NPR audio also mentions that some audience members seek information that confirms their beliefs or identity, so they (perhaps unconsciously) don't mind if journalists lie to them.

One could say that "making stuff up" is an American tradition. It certainly didn't start with the 2016 and 2020 elections. Here are some additional resources about the history of fake news in the United States.

- Fake News? That's a Very Old Story. – The Washington Post
- Fake News, Real News: History of Fake News – Middlesex College
- An Independence Day Salute to Our Founding Fathers of Fake News – Thom Fladung of Hennes Communications

THE EVOLUTION OF MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

This OER text will emphasize that, when it comes to disruptive technology, media history repeats itself. Here is a media history question that may give you some perspective on that concept.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=22#h5p-4

Creative Commons Image

The contraption in the picture above is a telegraph, used to send coded messages electronically beginning in the 1800s. If you are a history buff, you can read the History Channel's explanation of "Morse Code & the Telegraph."

Next comes a question about image manipulation.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=22#h5p-5

As an example, compare the two images below. In the 1940s manipulated photo on the left, it appears no one is holding the reins of a horse ridden by Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini. In the original photo on the right, we see there actually was someone handling the horse while Mussolini posed.
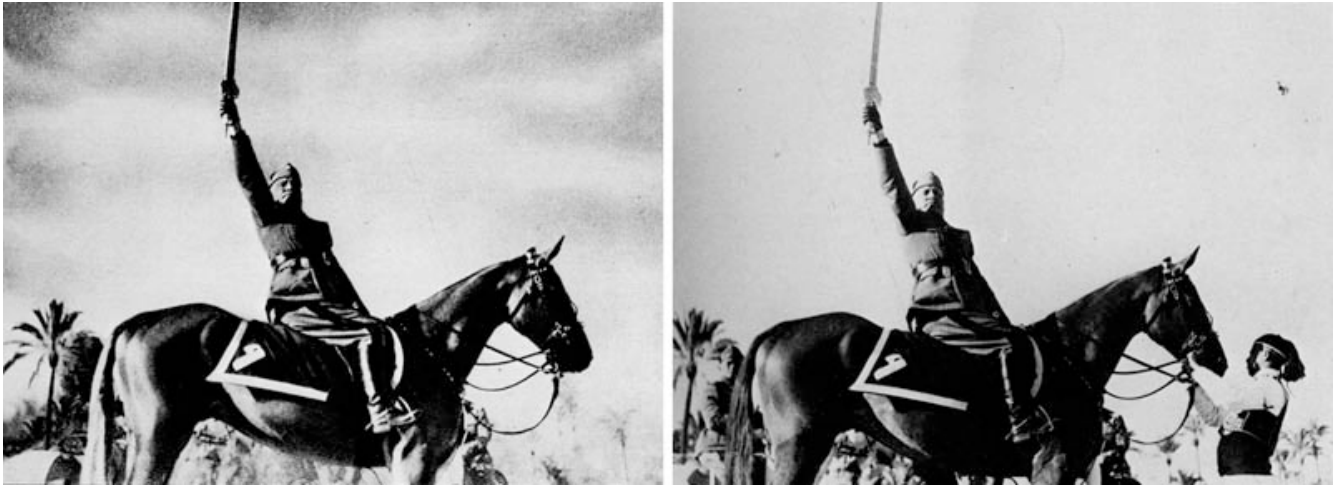
Photoshop was not developed until the 1980s, and this is one of many famous examples of image manipulation that came before digital photography.

You can peruse lots of interesting image-manipulation case studies, starting with an 1860s example involving Abe Lincoln, in the following document from Georgia Tech University.

- [Photo Tampering Through History](#)

MEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN THE 2020s

Here's a poem about a special dog, adopted from an animal shelter, who is one of my best friends.

> *Harvey the Mutt, a dog of mixed breed,*
> *With a wagging tail, and a heart full of need.*
> *Though not a pedigree pup, you see,*
> *His loyalty and love are pure and truly free.*
> *He'll be your companion, through thick and thin,*
> *Harvey the Mutt, a true friend within.*

You may be wondering why this poem appears in our OER text as part of this chapter. Here's a flip card that may explain that.

Actual photo of Harvey, an adopted dog.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=22#h5p-70

Content-creation tools using artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT, are disruptive media technologies in the 2020s. If media history is a guide, we can predict that most people will adjust and adapt to the new technology. It will lead to the elimination of some jobs and the creation of others.

However, our media landscape will forever be changed, much like it was with the advent of the printing press, the telegraph, radio, movies, television and the internet.

IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REALLY BULL*#*#?

You may be surprised to learn that there is an academic definition of the term *bullshit* based largely on the pioneering work of a Princeton professor, Harry Frankfurt, who wrote an influential book titled *On Bullshit*.

Three academicians at the University of Glasgow in Scotland applied Frankfurt's principles to publish a research work titled "ChatGPT Is Bullshit." They argued that, rather than hallucination, the more appropriate term to describe the output of large language models, such as ChatGPT, is *bullshit*. Here is part of their argument:

> *The problem here isn't that large language models hallucinate, lie, or misrepresent the world in some way. It's that they are not designed to represent the world at all; instead, they are designed to convey convincing lines of text.*

In the audio below, one of the co-authors, Joe Slater explained the challenges of truth and verification related to text generated by large language models such as ChatGPT.

Audio: Truth and Verification

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=22#h5p-120

(*transcript of the audio*)

Slater also provided a brief warning about unintended plagiarism resulting from text generated by AI-generated text.

Audio: Unintended Plagiarism

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it

online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=22#h5p-121

([transcript of the audio](#))

CONCERNS ABOUT AI

The argument from the Scottish researchers above is one of many evolving viewpoints about AI-generated content, which likely will be both reviled and embraced by future media professionals and educators.

If you are a student in academic courses, I strongly recommend that you consult your instructor before using any AI tools to complete assigned work. This will help you avoid a breach of academic integrity.

Accuracy is frequently a concern. In a 2023 research study conducted by the startup company Vectara, AI chatbots invented information [at least 3 percent of the time](#). In some situations, that number climbed as high as 27%.

Also, research suggests that consumers often [cannot tell the difference](#) between authentic online reviews and ones produced by AI. This can contribute to a media landscape in which we become skeptical of everything we see.

Consumers face similar challenges with judging the authenticity of online photos and videos. You can quiz yourself with the following interactive exercise from The New York Times:

- [A.I. Is Getting Better Fast. Can You Tell What's Real Now?](#)

WHY YOU SHOULD EMBRACE AI

On the other hand, many media professionals already use AI tools to complete tedious tasks and sift through data, so it's a good idea for you to experiment with AI tools now.

For example, there are a limited number of ways to phrase a brief promotional description of a typical apartment with two bedrooms and two bathrooms. As long as the advertising pitch for the apartment is accurate, readers may not care if it is generated by an AI tool.

Despite concerns about accuracy and ethics, future media professionals will benefit from understanding how artificial intelligence is used to generate text, audio and visual content. Plus, the amount of hallucination (or bullshit) may decrease as AI products evolve.

TWO CLOSING JOKES (an experiment with ChatGPT)

One drizzly Friday in 2023, my collaborator on this textbook project, Alyssa Riley, found some online jokes to share with a few students who needed a bit of comic relief. Here are two of the jokes:

> *JOKE 1 – What did the police officer say to his belly button?*

You're under-a-vest

> *JOKE 2 – How do you get a country girl's attention?*

a-tractor

As an informal experiment, Alyssa then asked ChatGPT (free version) to answer those two questions in the context of a joke.

ChatGPT provided a verbatim punch line on the first joke, meaning that the language used for Joke 1 was stored someplace that ChatGPT could locate and replicate.

ChatGPT's response on the second joke, however, demonstrated how a large language model (LLM) can generate odd or unexpected content in ways we do not fully understand.

> *JOKE 2 – How do you get a country girl's attention?*

(ChatGPT Answer) Play a tune on your banjo and ask her if she wants to two-step with you under the stars, but make sure to bring a sweet tea and a pickup truck – because nothing says romance like a tailgate serenade!

I'll admit this was just an amusing experiment with an AI tool. Consider, though, the broader implications when an AI tool generates a similarly random response in a query for specific medical or financial advice instead of the punchline to a joke.

TRUE or FALSE

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=22#h5p-45*

SHORT OPENING REFLECTION

Write approximately 250 words summarizing changes in mass media technology that you've observed in your lifetime. In what ways do the media changes you've experienced relate to information and concepts mentioned in the opening chapter?

Include at least one paragraph about the concept of fake news and the extent to which you previously knew that news content has been manipulated throughout U.S. history. Be sure you have listened to the assigned NPR audio about fake news, and incorporate support from that audio in your response. Over your lifetime, do you think changes in your media habits have led you to information that is more reliable or less reliable?

To follow journalistic style, you should write crisply with no more than three or four sentences per paragraph.

(If you are using this OER text as part of an academic course, your instructor may provide additional details or alter the parameters of this writing assignment.)

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2.

MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AND THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE

By Dave Bostwick

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When silent movies became popular early in the 20th century, my grandmother (pictured here) had a part-time job improvising mood music on the piano to accompany the action on the screen. As popular movies began to include sound in the 1930s, local musicians such as my grandmother lost their jobs as movie accompanists.

At the same time, the advent of recorded sound in movies led to new jobs for script writers, who could now craft language creatively in new formats. At my grandmother's expense, recorded words became an integral part of making movies.

This chapter shows how media history often repeats itself. The disruptive nature of media technology, which can affect jobs and language usage, did not start with my grandmother and silent films, though. For the next section, let's go back somewhere in the vicinity of 400 B.C.

LETTERS

In Plato's Phaedrus, Socrates recounts a legend about an Egyptian god whose "great discovery" was the use of letters for writing. He showed his discovery to a pharaoh, who feared the discovery would not lead people to wisdom. The pharaoh says ...

> "... this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing."

You should especially note the line saying that the introduction of letters for writing will give people "not truth, but only the semblance of truth." That sounds a bit like our debates about fake news today.

Over the centuries, widespread adoption of written words led to less emphasis on oral storytelling traditions passed from generation to generation. The best storytellers and philosophers eventually became writers.

And as writing became a way for information and ideas to spread, so too did some rulers seek to control what their people read. Way back in approximately 200 B.C., China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, directed his officials to destroy classic cultural books in history and education. Today's historians believe the emperor did not want the Chinese people to compare his rules to the teachings of Confucius.
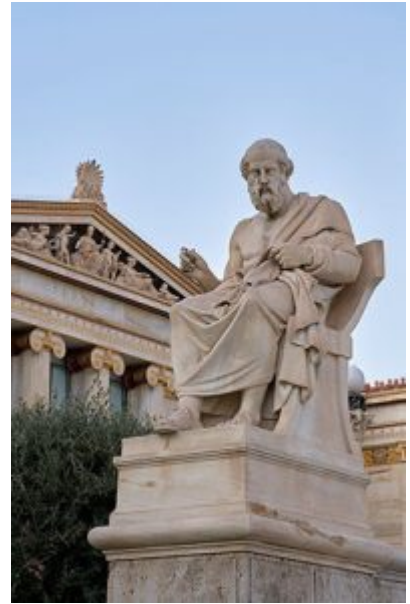
MOVABLE METAL TYPE

Most historians credit the Chinese with the first printing technology that used movable type. In Europe, Johannes Gutenberg's 15th-century innovations using movable metal type enabled mass distribution via the printing press.

John H. Lienhard, a mechanical engineer and historian, wrote an essay titled "What People Said About Books In 1498." The essay included his observation about the immediate impact of the printing press.

> What did they say in 1498? In the end it doesn't matter, because it was — ipso facto — useless commentary. For everyone looking at the new books in 1498, the future was as hopelessly unpredictable as

it is now. We cannot have a clue as to what any technological future will be until we learn it from a new generation of users.

Now that we have more 500 years of perspective about the printing press, we perhaps can make some general conclusions.

Before the printing press, spellings were inconsistent due to regional dialects and evolved quickly with pronunciations. If you study the English author Chaucer, for example, you may come across old texts that use *cnicht* or *knyght* where today we consistently spell *knight*.

Here's a brief video that emulates spelling and pronunciation from Chaucer's day, around the year 1400.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=110#oembed-1

Back then, speakers would have pronounced *knyght* to include all those consonants. As one English instructor said in a video tutorial, you have to pronounce everything and "get phlegmy with it."

Over the centuries, as printed materials were commonly distributed, the spelling of English words became more formalized, and dictionaries became part of the language landscape. Some linguists use the term *fossilized* to describe words that are spelled the way they were pronounced during the adoption of the printing press. Consider, for example, the inconsistent sounds in these examples that all end in *-ough*:

- Through
- Thorough
- Trough
- Rough
- Bough

Because of the printing press, many English spellings sometimes remain mostly unchanged from centuries ago, while pronunciations have evolved. The printing press also led to the need for a new group of language workers, called lexicographers, to compile dictionaries.

SENTENCE LENGTH

Let's focus on the infancy of American English, specifically the year 1776. Here is the opening of The Declaration of Independence:

> *When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*
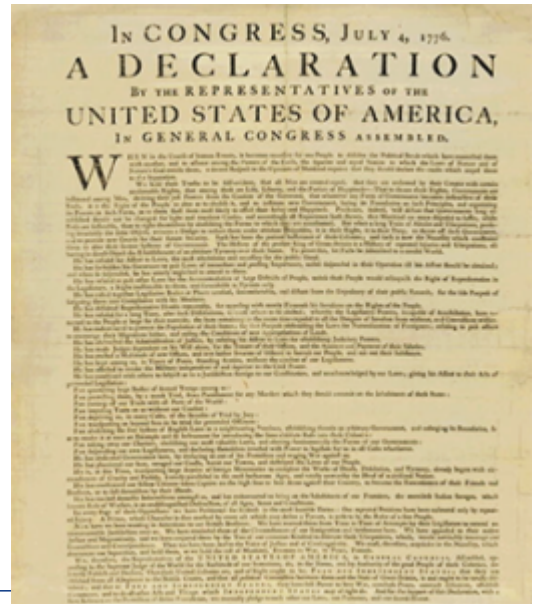
An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=110#h5p-14

Compare the opening sentence of the U.S. Declaration of Independence to this excerpt of three sentences from Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*, which was published in 1926.

> *It was a fine morning. The horse-chestnut trees in the Luxembourg gardens were in bloom. There was the pleasant early-morning feeling of a hot day. I read the papers with the coffee and then smoked a cigarette.*

In 150 years, how did American English evolve from the free-flowing structure of the Declaration of Independence to Hemingway's sparse style?

Part of the answer lies with advances in media technology. The brief presentation below chronicles a few developments that affected the evolution of our language.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=110#h5p-13

As a side note, in his book *The Gutenberg Parenthesis*, Jeff Jarvis wrote that because the telegraph allowed "instantaneous communication with unseen strangers," there were initial concerns about "stranger danger." Some stakeholders thought jobs in the new telegraph industry were inappropriate for women.

RADIO, TELEVISION, THE INTERNET …

Our media technology continues to affect our language usage in ways we don't fully realize yet. Here are a few current examples.

- Texting(capitalization, shortened spellings, emojis)
- Search-engine optimization techniques that emphasize keywords
- AI-generated text

And history repeats itself as many Americans today fear the consequences of our 21st-century tech evolution. Similarly, some philosophers feared the danger of written text in Socrates' day. Centuries later in the late 20th century, some Americans feared that watching too much television would hinder children's language development.

As a recent example related to language usage, in 2023 a few state legislatures mandated cursive writing in public schools so that students do not rely entirely on digital keyboards for writing. One theory holds that cursive writing is more conducive to individual student thinking and learning.

Consider how the communication devices you use today may affect the way you write in the future.

@emojis
FWIW: i think declare of indy wld be diff today / LMK ur thoughts

Will all 📚 soon be printed with emojis that represent 🙀 or 💩 or 🏈? How could that change the way we define literacy?

MORE ABOUT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND WRITING

We can only guess how AI tools may change our future language usage. Large language models (LLMs) use algorithms that can analyze speech and generate words and phrases in context. If you text on a smartphone, for example, you may have noticed that as you type a text message, the app displays commonly used words that attempt to predict what you may want to type next.
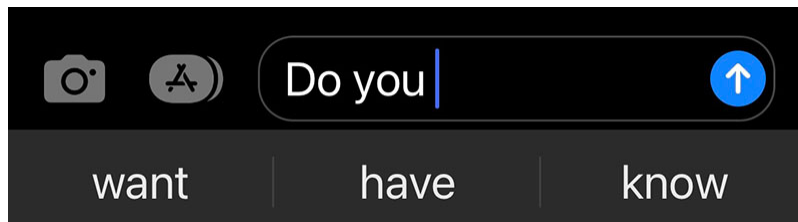
In an online journalism course sponsored by the Knight Center, Sil Hamilton, a language-model researcher, provided the simple example summarized below.

The United States of _____

In a large percentage of instances, an AI tool (such as Chat GPT) will generate **America** as the next word. You can ask the tool to regenerate a response multiple times, but you may never get the word **Pizza**.

On the other hand, if I'm looking for something interesting to read, I'm more likely to engage in a story with this title:

The United States of Pizza

AI tools can work well to give us predictable (sometimes boring) text, but their level of creativity is debatable.

For a conceptual overview of language models, study the following interactive presentation.

📺 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=110#h5p-119

We'll see new employment opportunities and job titles for people who can skillfully use AI tools to generate, edit and publish useful and reliable text. For example, AI programs already require a vast amount of gig workers who sift through and clean language banks that train large language models.

Ironically, the BBC reported that there are jobs for copy editors who rewrite AI-generated text to make it sound more human and thereby avoid AI-detection software.

RECAP

Here's a simple chronological overview to hammer home the disruptive nature of media technology.

- Letters disrupted an oral tradition.
- The printing press disrupted the tradition of handwritten manuscripts.
- The telegraph disrupted tangible (printed) media.

- Radio disrupted the evolution of the telegraph.
- Television disrupted the entertainment model of radio.
- The internet disrupted the evolution and popularity of TV, radio, movies, newspaper, books and magazines. It has changed how we define them.
- Computer-generated words and images have forced us to reconsider ownership and appropriate use of content derived from non-human sources. *(However, we don't yet know the extent of disruption caused by AI-generated content.)*

Because of this continually disruptive process over hundreds of years, many workers, such as my grandmother, have been forced to adapt to new media environments.

CLOSING – A NEW DECLARATION

The opening sentence from the Declaration of Independence seems clunky today. Let's use an AI tool to rewrite it as a hipster version.

ChatGPT

Yo, like, we the people of this rad land, totally want to declare our independence and break free from the mainstream vibes imposed by that old-school British scene. It's time to embrace our own groove and pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of coolness, man! #IndieNation 🇺🇸 ✌️

FILL IN THE BLANKS

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online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=110#h5p-43

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

You've read two chapters that discuss media technology and evolution. Now, your mission is to predict changes in U.S. media usage in the next 50 years, including effects on how we use language.

- Based on the two chapters you've studied so far and personal experiences, what significant changes do you foresee in the delivery of information and entertainment?
- What type of content will consumers deem valuable, and how will the economics of mass media evolve?
- How will today's newest media technologies affect how we communicate and use language in the future?

You are free to find other trustworthy sources to support your predictions, possibly through a library database. Instead of merely listing your predictions, be sure to cite supporting information from this text chapter and outside sources.

You can write your response in paragraph text, but you may prefer to respond through audio or narrated video.

(If you are using this OER text as part of an academic course, your instructor may provide additional submission details.)

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=110#h5p-72

NOTE – With the exception of the opening meme and the first portrait photo of Lesley Bostwick and the uncredited images in this chapter are in the public domain and available through Wikimedia Commons.

video store image – Jon Konrath CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons
opening meme – Ochre Jelly on Flickr

3.

TRAVERSING OUR MASS MEDIA LANDSCAPE

By Dave Bostwick

CHAPTER 3 PREVIEW

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=1452#h5p-73

I want to give you a very personal example about my father. He read two newspapers every day, watched a local news broadcast every evening, and remained highly informed his entire life.

A few years before he died, media coverage of bed bugs spiked, and one morning he woke up with itchy ankles. He was convinced his house had been invaded by bed bugs, and thus began two years of expenditures on a variety of bed-bug eradication strategies, even though he lived alone with few visitors and there was never any physical evidence that bed bugs were in the house.

He didn't suffer from dementia, but it became difficult to have a conversation with him to suggest that, in fact, there might not be any bed bugs in the house. His age may have had something to do with this, but I think our media landscape contributed to the problem as well.

By studying audience analytics, editors and advertisers at the time knew that bed bugs were a trending topic, so my father continued seeing and reading content about bed bugs, such as the following:

Headline – New York Post

- National news articles about bed bug outbreaks in major cities, especially in hotels
- Local news stories that piggy-backed on the bed bug phenomenon
- Advertisements for products to combat bed bugs with sales pitches to make it seem like bed bugs are everywhere

To some extent, we're all susceptible to media manipulation. Part of being media literate may be acknowledging that we're not as invulnerable as we think we are.

And to be fair, as the screenshot below suggests, there are companies that spend ad money in a good-faith attempt to help consumers avoid problems such as bed bugs in the first place.

BROAD PERSPECTIVE

In a [New York Times analysis](#), Shira Ovide wrote that "outrageous, bombastic and sometimes untrue things are more engaging than the truth." That's nothing new in the U.S. media landscape.

In the first chapter, you read about how some early American historical figures, such as Ben Franklin, concocted stories to gain political support. In future chapters, you'll learn about sensationalized newspaper stories during the period of yellow journalism, and you'll study how television quiz show scandals in the 1950s led some Americans to distrust what they saw on television.

For more modern perspectives, read content under the the following four tabs, keeping in mind that many of us are both media consumers and content creators, especially via social media.

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=1452#h5p-74*

QUICK CASE EXAMPLE

We'll examine a specific social media post in the interactive presentation below.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=1452#h5p-75*

The takeaway here is that when we see content that seems bombastic or extreme, especially on social media, we shouldn't repeat that information verbatim unless we conduct our own verification.

TRUST AND NEWS AVAILABILITY

Many Americans say they want objective, facts-only news. They complain about seeing too much biased coverage. However, there is often a difference between what we say and what we do.

For example, the [Associated Press News](#) and the [PBS NewsHour](#) offer mostly staid, objective news content. Both outlets have loyal followers, but not huge audience shares or ratings.

Conversely, MSNBC on the political left and Fox News on the right have generally been successful and profitable in offering subjective viewpoints and commentary based on their audience preferences.

In addition, clickbait articles and ads seem ubiquitous online, mainly because they work. That's the opposite of what many Americans *say* they want.

The outlook for objective news on the local level isn't encouraging. A 2024 article from Harvard's Nieman Lab

Wikimedia image

reported that [most Americans say local news is important, but they're consuming less of it](#). A declining interest in news altogether is "most pronounced among younger Americans."

Furthermore, some research suggests that Americans' trust in media is at [an all-time low](#).

Due to declining audiences and diminishing trust, a 2024 New York Times analysis predicted [the U.S. news business will become grimier](#).

> *The pain is particularly pronounced at the community level. An average of five local newspapers are closing every two weeks, [according to Northwestern University's Medill School](#), with more than half of all American counties now so-called news deserts with limited access to news about their hometowns. Of 1,100 public radio stations and affiliates, only about one in five is producing local journalism.*

FOREIGN INFLUENCE

Partly due to the the decrease in locally based U.S. news outlets, some foreign countries have built campaigns to fill the void. In some cases, they have tried to influence public opinion through political commentary on social media and websites labeled as news.

As an example of foreign influence on American media content, consider a [U.S. federal indictment](#) filed just two months before the 2024 presidential election.

According to the indictment, some conservative U.S. social media influencers allegedly accepted money to post social media videos intended to influence the election and undermine U.S. support for Ukraine. The indictment

said that RT, a Russian state media network, hired a company in the United States to arrange distribution of the videos.

The indictment did not name the U.S. company. However, several U.S. news outlets identified Nashville-based Tenet Media as a company that RT employees used to hire influencers and manage video content.

According to the indictment, a goal of the videos was to amplify political divisions in the United States.

Wired magazine reported that at least five of Tenet's influencers, who were not accused of wrongdoing, "portrayed themselves as victims." They said they were not aware that they were indirectly being paid through RT.

WHAT ELSE IS DIFFERENT ABOUT TODAY'S MEDIA LANDSCAPE?

As artificial intelligence impacts our lives in ways we may not fully comprehend, it's harder to define and categorize which daily media interactions count as part of the mass media landscape.

The following video from Vox emphasizes that we're already using AI more than we realize. Appropriately enough, the video is sponsored by an AI platform.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=1452#oembed-1*

Before the internet led to 24/7 connectivity and paved the way for social media and AI, most Americans only consumed media content through traditional outlets like newspapers, magazines, television, movies and radio.

Today, almost everyone contributes to the media landscape. We're no longer just consumers; we're also creators and contributors on social media and various interactive websites.

We have avenues to share photos with friends on Instagram or post an AI-generated deepfake image of Taylor Swift on X. We can share important safety updates to a community group on Facebook or create a counterfeit robo-call that impersonates a U.S. president.

What's really different today is the firehose of content that washes over us each day and the increasing complexity in determining which content is authentic and truthful.

POISON SCREENS

I opened the chapter with a personal example about my father. But it's not just the elderly who can suffer negative consequences from our media ecosystem. Recent research suggests that teenagers are often negatively impacted, as you'll see in the following presentation.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=1452#h5p-76

This is a theme you'll see in future chapters as well. In June of 2024, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy called for tobacco-style warning labels on social media platforms to advise parents about the potential risks for adolescents' mental health. Some states, including Arkansas, have set up protocols for reducing or eliminating students' access to social media during school hours. And in September 2024, the Arkansas Attorney General filed a lawsuit accusing YouTube and Google of targeting minors with harmful content that can lead to clinical addiction.

As an extreme example of the negative effects of social media on young teenagers, a New York Times article detailed how junior high students in Pennsylvania used TikTok to impersonate their teachers and post lewd, racist and homophobic videos.

Of course, it's not just teenagers who are negatively affected by social media usage. According to one economic research study, social media users perceive that social media has negative economic value and is often addictive rather than helpful. A summary of the research from Harvard's Nieman Lab said, "The findings suggest social media is worth less to us than the zero we pay for it. That we would be better off without it."

In a New York Times analysis of smartphone usage, some sources suggested we need to recalibrate our relationship with technology. It's hard to differentiate between correlation and causation, but the Times' analysis included this observation:

> *By many measures, American society has become angrier, more polarized and less healthy during the same period that smartphones have revolutionized daily life.*

PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA LITERACY

Merriam-Webster's Word of the Year for 2023 was **authentic**. According to a Merriam-Webster news release, the selection was "driven by stories and conversations about AI, celebrity culture, identity, and social

media." The 2022 Word of the Year was gaslighting, selected for its evolving role in the "age of misinformation—of 'fake news,' conspiracy theories, Twitter trolls, and deepfakes."

And as comedian John Mulaney observed about online bots, "We spend most of our day telling them that we're NOT a robot just to log on and look at our own stuff."

Our media technology continues to impact our language usage, our daily routines, and our tools for finding reliable information.

Even media professionals don't fully understand the increasingly complex landscape in which they work, especially related to AI-generated content. Nonetheless, this chapter should end with some general guidance about media literacy.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=1452#h5p-77

The presentation above should also come with a disclaimer. A research study widely publicized in 2024 concluded that asking people to 'do the research' on fake news stories can make the stories seem more believable, not less. Algorithms and AI tools sometimes give people more of the same intentionally erroneous or misleading information that they are trying to fact-check.

You'll have additional perspectives about media literacy in future chapters.

TRUE or FALSE
The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=1452#h5p-78*

MEDIA DIARY ASSIGNMENT

Besides the information and links in our chapters thus far, an additional resource for this assignment can be the following statistical summaries:

U.S. Media Consumption – Oberlo

THE TASK

Track your own interaction with mass media for three days, including radio, television, books, newspapers and magazines as well as your use of computers, tablets and smartphones as they relate to mass media consumption. Your digital consumption can include social media, websites and smartphone apps. Also, monitor how much of your media interaction involves news and information as opposed to entertainment.

- If you are mindlessly web surfing or checking Facebook, TikTok, Instagram or Twitter, that counts.
- If you are typing a personal essay on your laptop or using your smartphone as a calculator for a math project, that does NOT count.
- If you are texting on your smartphone, that does NOT count unless you are sending a message to a very large group.
- If you are reading a book/magazine/newspaper (online or in print) either for pleasure or for a class assignment, that counts.
- Of course, if you are consuming any media for entertainment, that counts (including streaming video from outlets such as Netflix or YouTube).

You should record specific amounts of time spent and information about content consumption so that your written analysis can include actual data.

Also, discuss the types of advertisements that you see, and note any unexpected places where you see ads. As an example, you may play a video game that doesn't seem to clearly fit this assignment. However, if the game includes ads, that would count.

RESPONSES

Write a short (approximately 400 to 500 words) paper summarizing the highlights of your findings. Include some specific data in your paper, and feel free to include a chart or graph.

Following are some recommended discussion points for your response:

- What patterns and habits did you find in your media usage? (include specific data, including news vs. entertainment)
- What benefits do you derive from media consumption?
- In what ways, if any, does your media consumption hinder your personal productivity?
- How do you think your media consumption affects your personal viewpoints?
- In what ways do your media and news consumption habits differ from the typical American consumer? *(feel free to conduct additional research to answer this question)*
- What observations can you make about advertising in your daily media consumption, and in what ways does advertising affect your media habits?

You can organize your submission with a short, engaging introduction followed by a Q&A format and a brief conclusion. In the conclusion, explain what you learned about yourself and the media you consume.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=1452#h5p-79

4.

THE MEDIA BUSINESS AND CONGLOMERATES

By Dave Bostwick

> 📇 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=194#h5p-80*

OPENING EXAMPLE – THE BUSINESS OF ESPN

Most U.S. sports fans spend a lot of time watching ESPN. Beyond the on-air broadcasters, commentators, analysts and reporters, many other media workers contribute to what ESPN's audiences see and hear. Writers, editors and graphic artists prepare special video packages for live games and various other shows, including SportsCenter. Camera operators and producers are crucial contributors, especially for live game coverage.

Walt Disney Company owns ESPN, and executives from Disney and ESPN have made strategic decisions about when to air certain games on which outlets, such as ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU, ESPN+ and the SEC Network. Disney also owns ABC, so occasionally audiences can choose between competing broadcasts of the same big-time game offered live on ESPN and ABC, with different commentary and analysis on each network.

At some point during game broadcasts, a promotional item may suggest that viewers seek more live game info from the ESPN website or through a social media platform. And the ESPN website includes a link to an ESPN-branded gambling platform: ESPN BET.

For the most part, companies and their employees, not the U.S. government, make business decisions about the media content we consume. No governmental officials have told ESPN executives that they have to air certain games at certain times or promote specific items or actions while broadcasting a game.

MEDIA CONTROL

Let's shift from ESPN to the broader landscape of U.S. media as a whole.

To a small degree, you could add the U.S. government to the list of gatekeepers on the opening flip card, but any direct governmental control is limited compared to most other countries. One [2024 survey of internet censorship](#) shows the United States as one of the less-censored countries in the world, but still ranked behind Canada, Australia and several European and South American countries.

By contrast, the more restrictive countries include North Korea, China, Iran, Iraq, Russia and Saudi Arabia. In these countries, content may be subject to government approval or created entirely by the governments themselves.

Many governments with internet infrastructure suppress criticism and protect power by banning foreign websites and platforms. As an example from 2023, Russia [outlawed the independent news website Meduza](#), which is based in Latvia. And in 2024, [Brazilian authorities banned X](#) (formerly Twitter) and ordered Apple and Google to remove the X app from iOS and Android devices in Brazil, although the ban was later lifted.

In 2024, the organization [Reporters Without Borders](#) observed the concerning trend that "Press freedom around the world is being threatened by the very people who should be its guarantors – political authorities."

The U.S. Constitution's commitment to a free press ensures that we do not rely solely on state-controlled media outlets for our information and entertainment. The U.S. emphasis on capitalism also means that companies can make money from media products, with limited restrictions for new companies entering the marketplace.

Here's a flip-card question to emphasize a key distinction.

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=194#h5p-82*

That's not to say that the U.S. government never intervenes in media matters, as you'll read later in this chapter's section about TikTok. Generally speaking, though, business owners have more control over media content than the U.S. government.

In the heyday of U.S. print newspapers and the printing press, a popular expression said that freedom of the press is guaranteed to those who own one. That concept from U.S. media history repeated itself in 2013 when Amazon founder Jeff Bezos purchased The Washington Post and in 2022 when Tesla co-founder Elon Musk acquired Twitter (which was soon rebranded as X).

Today, one could update that that expression to say that freedom of speech is guaranteed to those who own communications satellites. The New York Times' Adam Satariano reported that Musk "is controlling this new, incredibly important area of communication in satellite internet" through hist Starlink company. According

to Satariano's podcast, in 2024 Musk and Starlink owned more than half of the 8,000 active satellites circling Earth.

MEDIA CONGLOMERATES

Some companies are so gargantuan that they own lots of other large companies. The chapter opening mentioned that the Disney conglomerate owns ESPN and ABC, for example. Please spend some time exploring the labeled web links in the following seven presentation slides, paying attention to the companies and assets owned by each media conglomerate.

Study the presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

> An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=194#h5p-15*

Conglomerates occasionally grow so large that the federal government intervenes. In 2024, for example, a judge ruled that Google had become a monopoly that prevented fair competition. For example, Google made deals with Apple for Google to be the default search engine for the Safari web browser on iPhones, iPads and Mac computers, thus limiting consumers' choices for online search tools and dissuading other companies from developing new search engines.

Another case brought by the Justice Department questioned Google's monopoly in online advertising markets. In short, as a New York Times article summarized, Google's fate became uncertain.

ABOUT BYTEDANCE

One additional media conglomerate we should discuss is ByteDance, which is based in China.

According to a 2023 New York Times article, "many U.S. lawmakers and regulators in the United States argue that TikTok can share sensitive data about the location, personal habits and interests of Americans with the Chinese government, and that the app can be used to spread propaganda."

The NY Times article also noted that "TikTok itself is not available in China — users there must access a different ByteDance app, which follows Chinese government directives on censorship and propaganda."

Also in 2023, the chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee said on Face the Nation that the Chinese equivalent of TikTok gives Chinese youth far more STEM-related content to shape their interests toward those careers. Conversely, in the United States, popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X and Snapchat are not required to shape their content to push younger users toward educational goals, such as promoting STEM careers.

Subsequently, in 2024, members of the U.S. Congress passed legislation, signed into law by President Biden, to ban TikTok nationwide or force ByteDance to sell TikTok. This decision relates to the earlier chapter section titled "Media Control" as the Chinese government can require Chinese companies (such as ByteDance) to share user data and run businesses in a manner that benefits the government. This is typically not the case for U.S. media companies.

In January 2024, TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew testified during a U.S. Senate inquiry about Online Child Safety , which led to this confrontation between Missouri Republican Sen. Josh Hawley and Chew.

📄 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=194#oembed-1*

Hawley's style at times is confrontational, but this is not just a Republican vs. Democrat debate. In a separate Congressional proceeding, U.S. Rep. Marc Veasey, a Democrat from Texas, also expressed concerns to Chew about TikTok's data sharing with the Chinese government.

At one point in the interaction with Senator Hawley, the TikTok CEO said, "Senator, as we know, the media doesn't always get it right." Given TikTok's prominence and impact in the U.S. media landscape, this can seem ironic. Chew's comment suggests "the media" is a singular entity that does not include TikTok.

NET NEUTRALITY

Now we'll look at an evolving debate related to internet control and access in the United States.

Differing views about net neutrality have raged for more than two decades. Here's a fun (but maybe opinionated) 2018 video from Burger King that tries to explain net neutrality via the Whopper.

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The video is humorous and provides an interesting case study in corporate advertising for public relations advocacy. The video isn't directly trying to sell Whoppers; instead, it tries to make viewers feel as if Burger King is on their side about the need for net neutrality.

For our purpose in this chapter, though, the video effectively frames one part of the net neutrality debate: Should media companies be allowed to control tiers of internet access and content?

As a simple example, if Media Business A pays an internet service company to prioritize speedy online connections for consumers to access streaming content from Media Business A, does this put the much smaller Media Business B at an unfair disadvantage? Media Business B may be new and unable to pay an internet service company so that consumers enjoy speedier connections.

(Or put another way, would it be OK for Netflix to pay internet service companies more money to ensure the Netflix subscribers have a faster, more reliable connection, even if that puts some of Netflix's smaller competitors at a disadvantage?)

Let's consider a few policy questions in the following presentation.

Study the presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=194#h5p-16*

One net neutrality group, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, provides this definition: "Network neutrality is the idea that internet service providers (ISPs) should treat all data that travels over their networks fairly, without discrimination in favor of particular apps, sites or services."

The evolving debate has already taken several twists and turns. Net neutrality laws were repealed in 2018. However, in 2024 the Federal Communications Commission reclassified broadband as a public utility, such

as water and electricity, which strengthens the government's ability to monitor and enforce net neutrality regulations.

A key question in the net neutrality debate is whether internet access should be considered a right or a privilege.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROTECTION

We've briefly discussed who controls what we see, watch, read, and hear in U.S. media. Due to widespread adoption of the internet, we could add one more question. Who controls and safeguards the data that is collected as we consume and interact with mass media platforms?

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> https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=194#h5p-83

Through IP addresses and other personal identifiers, it's easy for media conglomerates to collect data for future research or sales. With artificial intelligence, some of these processes become more automated.

A programmer for Research Company A can collect data and include a privacy statement about data usage for research only. That may not prevent Data Company B from purchasing Research Company A's data and then selling it to advertisers (now twice removed from the source) or Advertising Company C.

For example, an investigative article in Vice described how the U.S. military bought location data from ordinary apps. It featured this subheadline:

> *A Muslim prayer app with over 98 million downloads is one of the apps connected to a wide-ranging supply chain that sends ordinary people's personal data to brokers, contractors, and the military.*

The article noted that several app developers "did not know their users' location data was being sent to defense contractors."

More recently, a New York Times report chronicled how the Pentagon tried to hide that it bought Americans' data without a warrant. The article detailed the workaround for law enforcement officials to purchase broad swaths of data rather than target individual users' phone records.

> *Obtaining location data from U.S. phones normally requires a warrant, but police and intelligence agencies routinely pay companies instead for the data, effectively circumventing the courts.*

CLOSING THOUGHT

You've read about large global media conglomerates that seek to profit from worldwide consumers. You've also read about some countries' attempts to limit or control citizens' access to outside information. Note the competing interests in the previous two sentences.

You may occasionally hear the term "walled gardens" referring to each country having its own rules for governmental control of media. In the future, large media companies may be forced to alter products, entertainment and information based on the conflicting rules in hundreds of worldwide walled gardens.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=194#h5p-56*

MEDIA CONGLOMERATES

Pick two of the major conglomerates included in this chapter's presentation about media conglomerates. As a reminder, here are your choices.

- Warner Bros. Discovery
- Paramount
- Google *(a subsidiary of Alphabet / products are listed at bottom of web page)*
- NBCUniversal *(a subsidiary of Comcast)*
- Disney *(focus on media-related companies only for this assignment, including ad-supported platforms.)*
- Gannett
- Meta

The links above and in the chapter presentation about media conglomerates will be good starting points, but you can search for additional information outside the chapter content if needed. Be sure to explore each conglomerate thoroughly. Don't just rely on copying or rephrasing website promotional text in your responses.

TASK A – List five more prominent media outlets, companies or products that each one of your two selected conglomerates owns. Pick examples with which you are familiar or want to learn more about; don't automatically list the first five you see on each conglomerate website.

(You will list 5 companies for each conglomerate for a total of 10 companies)

TASK B – Write at least two separate paragraphs (at least one paragraph for each conglomerate) detailing what surprised you most in your research about the two conglomerates you studied, especially related to your personal media usage. Avoid repeating PR content from the conglomerate websites if that content is used to promote how a conglomerate contributes to the health and well-being of society. Follow journalistic style with no more than three sentences per paragraph.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=194#h5p-81

5.

JOURNALISM: OCCUPATION OR SKILLSET?

By Dave Bostwick

> An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
> https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=277#h5p-84

FROM RODEO PHOTOGRAPHER TO OER WRITER

I began my career as a small-town newspaper reporter. My primary role was in sports, but I also did some general news reporting, editing, photography and page design. Occasionally, I even had to write stock-market updates and deliver printed newspapers.

I was thrilled with the occasional opportunities to cover major college football games in Texas and Oklahoma. However, most of my duties were much more local, including rodeos, dirt-track car racing, and lots of high school sports. I was required to wear cowboy boots and a cowboy hat before I was allowed to take pictures in some rodeo arenas.

Today, my journalistic passion is to compile Open Educational Resources such as this one, and I am decades removed from my early days as a newspaper reporter. Like me, many of you will expect a smooth, straight path as you begin your professional journey, only to encounter winding roads or bumpy detours as your career progresses.

(public domain image)

OCCUPATION OR SKILLSET?

When they hear the word *journalism*, people may think of reporters covering important events, or political analysts dissecting daily news. However, jobs in traditional journalistic realms, especially print newspapers, have been dwindling for more than a decade.

As a result, companies and organizations often produce their own feature stories, videos, social media posts and other content. Job opportunities have increased in a variety of areas that emphasize providing consumers with timely, accurate information beyond traditional news.

This leads to a key question. Is journalism an occupation or a skillset? For example, within the Society of Professional Journalists, some members have advocated for an official name change to the Society for Professional Journalism.

Journalistic skills, especially the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, can be helpful in almost any occupation.

For the purposes of this chapter, we'll treat journalism as a skillset and explore jobs beyond traditional newsrooms. These jobs still require journalistic skills that are covered in the presentation below.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=277#h5p-18

Colleges are responding to this change. For example, in 2022 the School of Journalism and Strategic Media at the University of Arkansas launched a new major concentration called Multimedia Storytelling and Production. It falls under the umbrella of journalism, but it is geared toward students who don't picture themselves working as traditional news reporters.

FORECASTS

The Occupational Outlook Handbook, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides the following overall projection for media and communication jobs.

> *Overall employment in media and communication occupations is projected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations from 2022 to 2032. About 114,300 openings are projected each year, on average,*

in these occupations due to employment growth and the need to replace workers who leave the occupations permanently.

In 2023, the media annual pay for media and communication workers was $66,320.

The brief presentation below provides data for few specific jobs that typically require a bachelor's degree:

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=277#h5p-19

ONE PROFESSOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Cindy Royal, the director of the Media Innovation Lab at Texas State University, wrote for Harvard's Nieman Lab that most journalism graduates "probably aren't going to work as reporters and editors."

> *"The good news is that there are jobs (journalism graduates) can fill. Important jobs. Jobs that influence storytelling and affect democratic ideals. These are jobs across industries that rely on the conception, development, and maintenance of digital products. And these products aren't going to manage themselves!"*

Echoing the earlier chapter presentation about journalistic skills. Royal added that employers are looking for the following:

> *"... people who can integrate the rigor of strong communication skills and ethics with technology savvy to develop digital products."*

> *"... people who can understand audience needs and the ways in which the elements of digital products affect information dissemination, audience engagement, and civic participation."*

> *"... people who can influence the direction of digital products and platforms in all industries, hopefully for the greater good."*

THE JOBS LANDSCAPE

If journalism, including strategic media, is among your career considerations, it's a good idea to check employment sites such as Indeed every month to familiarize yourself with job descriptions and availability.

That can help you assess skills you need to develop and prepare you for the day you actually enter the job market.

Indeed has also compiled specific career advice about journalistic skills.

- [Which Journalism Skills Are in Demand?](#) – Indeed

I recently checked Indeed jobs in a large Midwestern city and found lots of interesting openings:

- content editors at a non-profit hospital
- communications strategist for a medical association
- senior writer for a research group
- web specialist for a department store chain.

And here's a sample of job titles for positions outside of traditional newsrooms:

- digital content producer
- communications coordinator
- social media manager
- motion designer
- video producer
- documentary filmmaker

It's also appropriate to mention the impact of AI-generated text on the media job market. Tools that use large language models such as ChatGPT are like digital parrots. They process and repeat words and phrases, but they can't interpret or understand the meaning of the messages. With that in mind, professional judgment about appropriate use of AI content likely will become a hirable skill.

If you seek a media-related career, your professional path probably won't be a smooth, straight road. That doesn't mean you can't enjoy the journey.

TRUE or FALSE
The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

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CAREER CONTEMPLATION

After you've read the chapter, here are a few questions to ponder.

1. What are your career aspirations and how are they related to your perception of journalism?
2. Which journalistic skills are your strengths?
3. Which journalistic skills do you need to improve the most?
4. Are you discouraged or encouraged about the evolution of journalism?
5. How important is salary in your career choice?

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6.

MEDIA LAW

By Dave Bostwick

> An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
> https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=306#h5p-86

Like many Americans, when I see a speed limit of 55 miles per hour on a long stretch of highway, I often drive a bit faster than that. I may be breaking the law at 60, but I do not feel ethically obligated to drive 55 or slower, especially when other cars whiz by me going much faster.

On the other hand, if I were to drive 85 mph on that same highway, I would become anxious about endangering myself and others. Driving that fast would feel unethical and selfish to me.

Conversely, if a dire emergency arose and I needed to transport a friend or family member to a hospital immediately (no time for an ambulance), I might consider it an ethical imperative to exceed the speed limit by a wider margin, even though I would be breaking the law.

Our laws are often based on ethical behavior for an orderly society. However, my opening examples suggest that there can be differences between law and ethics.

Our legal systems are based on external rules to govern members of a society. Everyone is supposed to follow these rules or risk punishment.

On the other hand, our ethical codes are internal guidelines for morality and conduct. The guidelines often are not binding.

This chapter focuses primarily on media law, and then in the following chapter, we'll spend more time studying media ethics.

(MOSTLY) FREE SPEECH

The U.S. Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of speech and press, but there are a few exceptions for media content that is published or broadcast. The interactive presentation below explains some legal exceptions when we can't just publish or broadcast anything we want.

Study the presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=306#h5p-22*

In the presentation above, the concept of libel is applied to people. However, in certain instances, **a company can sue for libel as well.** For example, in 2023, Fox News paid Dominion Voting Systems $787 million to settle a libel suit.

Dominion executives said the reputation of their company had been damaged because Fox News had broadcast false claims about the reliability of Dominion voting machines in the 2020 election.

According to a PBS summary of the settlement between Fox News and Dominion, the lawsuit records showed how Fox hosts and executives did not believe that Dominion machines were unreliable but aired false claims anyway.

PLAGIARISM AND COPYRIGHT

For presentations, blogging and social media posts, many people assume it is OK to recycle any images that they find on the Internet. That's not true, and it's important for media professionals to understand legal and ethical implications for using images, text, audio or video from outside sources.

While some people make videos that include popular songs as background music, this is often a copyright violation as well.

The video below, from Adelphi University's Mark Grabowski, provides a solid introduction to plagiarism and copyright.

> 📰

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=306#oembed-1*

FYI – As a courtesy, I emailed Mark Grabowski to let him know that I appreciated his videos and planned to embed them in some educational resources. However, I was not legally required to get permission. Content creators who post videos to YouTube have the option to make those videos publicly available so they can be embedded and viewed beyond YouTube's website and mobile app. In effect, this automatically gives others permission to share those YouTube videos on other platforms (such as this OER text).

To review a few key takeaways about copyright, study the true-false questions on the following flip cards.

Click on Turn to see the answers, and use the forward button to advance through additional flip-card questions.

> *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=306#h5p-23*

As an additional resource, the Student Press Law Center published a guide to copyright and fair use.

For historical context, it can help to understand that, more than a century after printing presses had begun churning out books in Europe, copyright was still not well defined. Media historian Jeff Jarvis wrote that "Shakespeare himself had limited control over the printing of his works. Often plays were published without authors' names."

THE NEXT FRONTIER

The next legal frontier in plagiarism and copyright likely will focus on content generated by artificial intelligence. Some content creators, both individuals and companies, want compensation if any AI tool scrapes copyrighted material to generate text responses, images, audio or video. For example, The New York Times filed a lawsuit for copyright infringement against OpenAI in an effort to protect the Times' intellectual property. OpenAI released ChatGPT in 2022.

An NPR article noted that "if a federal judge finds that OpenAI illegally copied the *Times*' articles to train

its AI model, the court could order the company to destroy ChatGPT's dataset, forcing the company to recreate it using only work that it is authorized to use."

On the other hand, OpenAI representatives can argue that ChatGPT's reliance on newsworthy content (such as NY Times articles), should be considered fair use, in part because it broadly benefits the public.

Developing and enforcing uniform regulations for AI products will be especially challenging because of the many global conglomerates that dominate the industry, including Google and Microsoft.

INSTANT MUSIC AND FAKE LISTENERS

For an example of media law's complexity in the AI era, consider the case of Michael Smith, a North Carolina man who used AI tools to create what he called "instant music" that he credited to fake bands. He uploaded the music to popular streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music.

Smith also created thousands of fake streaming accounts and then programmed computer bots to loop the fake songs through those accounts.

According to a description of the allegations in a press release from the U.S. Justice Department, Smith "fraudulently obtained more than $10 million in royalty payments through his scheme."

The press release called this the "first criminal case involving artificially inflated music streaming."
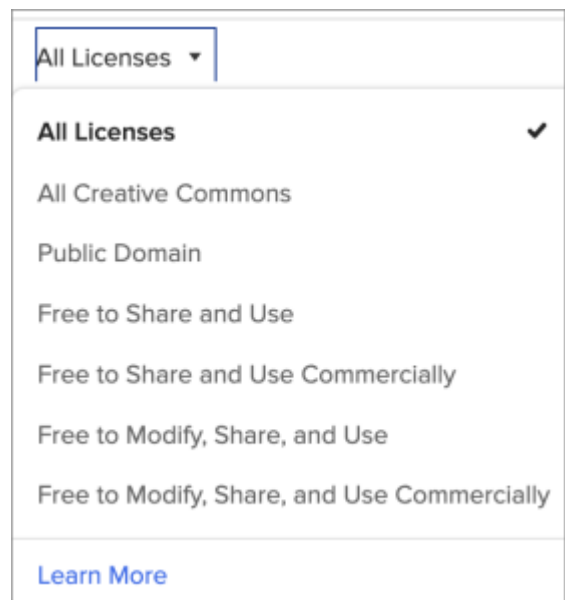

FINDING USABLE IMAGES

The Internet is full of copyrighted images that you should NOT use without permission, but there are also several online sites where you can find ready-to-use images.

For example, DuckDuckGo features a simple search process for Creative Commons (CC0) images. Here's the step-by-step process that I use:

1. Enter a search term in DuckDuckGo.
2. When the results appear, click on "Images" in the top list of options.
3. A list of sub-options will appear. Go to the drop-down menu for "All Licenses" and select an appropriate license, such as "Free to Share and Use" (for non-

All Licenses ▾

All Licenses ✓

All Creative Commons

Public Domain

Free to Share and Use

Free to Share and Use Commercially

Free to Modify, Share, and Use

Free to Modify, Share, and Use Commercially

Learn More

commercial work) or "Public Domain."

4. From there, you should be able to click on links that give you access to image files and information on how to credit sources as needed. For some public domain images, you may not need to credit the source, although it's always helpful to provide a link to the original image.

If you are partial to Google, just remember not to use a standard Google image search. Instead, you can enter a search term in Google's Advanced Image Search. Before you conduct your search, scroll down the page to the drop-down options for usage rights. If you are not benefiting financially from use of the images, you can select "Creative Commons licenses."

Many sites that host creative commons (CC0) images, such as Wikimedia, Wikipedia, Pixabay and Flickr, will provide guidance or copy-and-paste text for giving credit. Otherwise, make a good-faith effort to cite an owner and/or web host for any Creative Commons image that you use, and you should be OK.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

According to the U.S. government's FOIA website, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), established in 1967, gives ordinary citizens "the right to request access to records from any federal agency. It is often described as the law that keeps citizens in the know about their government."

The following video from the U.S. Justice Department provides a brief overview of FOIA.

> One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=306#oembed-2*

Individual states have their own freedom-of-information laws pertaining to state and local governments. For example, the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act is generally considered one of the country's strongest in giving journalists and others access to public records and meetings.

It also was written to ensure that journalists and other citizens should be notified about public meetings, which must actually be held in public view. The Arkansas FOIA stipulates that "governing bodies may only enter into closed sessions for the purpose of considering employment, appointment, promotion, demotion, disciplining or resignation of an individual officer or employee."

As a whole, freedom of information laws increase transparency by ensuring citizens can follow governmental decision-making processes and monitor how governmental bodies spend tax money.

CLOSING PERSPECTIVE

A key theme of this OER text is that media history often repeats itself. When radio surged in national popularity approximately one century ago, newspaper publishers sought legal remedies so that radio hosts couldn't provide daily news updates merely by reading newspaper stories on air.

Similarly, many news organizations today are seeking legal remedies to protect their content from companies that develop tools for generating AI text, images and videos.

In an opinion article written for Harvard's Nieman Foundation, Jeff Jarvis included the following analysis:

> *The real question at hand is whether artificial intelligence should have the same right that journalists and we all have: the right to read, the right to learn, the right to use information once known. If it is deprived of such rights, what might we lose?*

FILL IN THE BLANKS

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MEDIA LAW RESPONSE + ARTICLE SUMMARY

Part A – Short Response

Based on content and links in this chapter, respond to the following prompt.

Summarize some key information that was new to you or that contradicted ideas you previously assumed about media law. Feel free to share self-confessions about when you have not properly followed copyright guidelines in giving presentations or posting your own online content. *(If you initially struggle with this response, review the linked CNN explanatory article*

with hypothetical examples: "[The First Amendment doesn't guarantee you the rights you think it does.](#)")

Your response in Part A should contain approximately three paragraphs with three tightly constructed sentences per paragraph.

Part B – Article Summary

Summarize a current-events article related to media law.

The New York Times, the Student Press Law Center and *The Guardian* provide separate categories for stories related to libel specifically and media law in general. The following are your links:

> [The New York Times](#) (libel and slander)
>
> [The Guardian](#) (media law)
>
> [Student Press Law Center](#) (general news about media law as it applies to student media)

Note that not all of these stories describe U.S. cases.

At the beginning of your submission, provide the headline and link to your selected article/example. Then follow these guidelines for your explanatory text:

- Use short paragraphs in journalistic style of no more than three or four sentences per paragraph.
- Explain the major issues that are involved.
- Explain how your selected article/example connects with the explanatory content and videos in this chapter.
- Write approximately 150 words for Part B.

Additional Guidance for This Assignment

We're in the midst of covering media law and media ethics, so it would be totally inappropriate to work unethically on this assignment.

In your writing, you should not copy and paste any external text, unless you use short snippets within quotation marks and clearly acknowledge the original source. For this assignment, the concept of fair use can apply because you are analyzing and commenting on a newsworthy topic.

You should not use any AI text generating tools such as ChatGPT, Perplexity or Google Gemini.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you are interested in a deeper dive into media law, here are a few starting points.

- The Law and Mass Media Messages – online texbook
- Defamation Law Made Simple Nolo.com Legal Resources
- Obscenity Law – Middle Tennessee State University
- The First Amendment doesn't guarantee you the rights you think it does – CNN

And for an overview on invasion of privacy, you can take an online quiz from the Student Press Law Center.

7.

MEDIA ETHICS

By Dave Bostwick

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=343#h5p-88

When I was working as a news reporter and later as a faculty adviser for a collegiate student newspaper, I observed a few situations when journalists knew much more than they included in their stories. As an extreme example, I remember a case in which police helicopters were scouring a wooded area beside an apartment complex. They were trying to locate the body parts of a murder victim.

It was a high-profile local case, but the journalists did not publish or broadcast specific details about what police hoped to find. It seemed too gruesome and would have caused extreme emotional harm to the victim's family.

This incident occurred before social media and our modern-day emphasis on immediate publishing. I don't know whether that would factor into reporters' decision-making process in a similar situation today.

In the previous chapter, we studied how laws can be based on ethical principles, but there are some distinctions between media law and media ethics. We'll open this chapter with a hypothetical situation that furthers that distinction.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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As you can surmise from this opening hypothetical, ethical decisions are rarely easy for media professionals.

SPJ CODE OF ETHICS

In journalism, freedom of speech comes with responsibility. That's why we need ethical guidelines, and a good place to start is the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics.

The preamble to the SPJ Code of Ethics says, "The Society declares these four principles as the foundation of ethical journalism and encourages their use in its practice by all people in all media." Thus, it can apply to professionals working in advertising and public relations as well as traditional newsroom journalists.

The following presentation briefly examines the four principles in the SPJ Code of Ethics.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=343#h5p-26

WHY NOT HAVE PROFESSIONAL LICENSES?

Lawyers and certified public accountants earn professional licenses by passing standardized exams. The licenses can raise the stature of the profession. Why not journalists?

While this might seem like a good idea, it would clash with the First Amendment. Everyone, not just journalists, enjoys freedom of speech.

Also, if governmental officials set licensing standards, as would likely be the case, what happens when journalists publish information that reflects poorly on those officials? For example, journalists who report regularly on government corruption might risk losing their licenses for reporting the truth.

Social media post from University of Arkansas Professor Larry Foley

ETHICS IN ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The SPJ Code of Ethics applies to all media professionals, but ethical concerns can be trickier for those in the fields of advertising and public relations. PR and advertising professionals must be loyal to clients as well as the public. In some situations, telling the entire truth to the public can harm a client's sales or public image.

Here's another way to frame this friction. Pick the concept below that better aligns with your personal viewpoint.

- A company exists to generate profit for its owners and/or shareholders.
- A company exists to support and sustain its community and key stakeholders, including employees.

For example, let's say an energy company wants to increase profit for shareholders by drilling for oil on local land. However, this drilling may negatively impact some local wildlife and detract from tourist-related businesses in the area. Thus, the drilling would harm some community stakeholders who have minimal control over the energy company's business decisions.

In advertising and public relations, one frequently cited ethical concept, called **corporate social responsibility**, attempts to reconcile the two bullet points above.

According to the management training video below, "Corporate social responsibility is about balancing profit-making against social and environmental concerns."

📰 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=343#oembed-1*

Media professionals increasingly implement corporate social responsibility to promote a positive public image for companies and organizations, even if the organizations are not profit-driven.

Here are additional videos about corporate social responsibility.

- Corporate Social Responsibility Examples: CSR in Marketing (more explanation)
- Boomers Parks' Corporate Social Responsibility (small-business example)
- Valley Bank: Inspiring Change – Our Corporate Social Responsibility (small-business example)

And you can watch a staged video from Fenrir Media that illustrates the importance of sincerity in promoting corporate social responsibility. Using today's digital media platforms, it's easy to say you promote corporate social responsibility. It's much harder to remain socially responsible on a daily basis.

REAL ETHICAL DILEMMAS

An ethical dilemma occurs when two ethical principles compete against each other. In these cases, media professionals may not agree on the proper ethical decision.

For instance, most editors avoid showing bloody photos from mass shootings and wars because they want to minimize harm to the victims' families, who may not want to see visual reminders of horrific scenes. On the other hand, news outlets occasionally publish a few carefully selected graphic photos because they think it has a meaningful impact on viewers.

In 2023, The Washington Post published "Terror on Repeat: A rare look at the devastation caused by AR-15 shootings," which included blood-stained classrooms
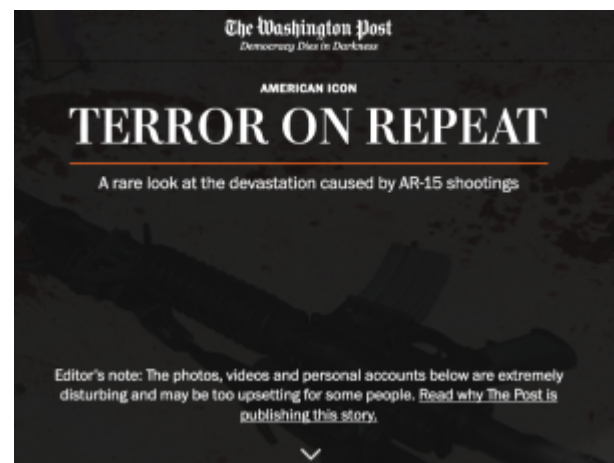
after the 2022 school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. In an explanation to readers, editors wrote that "most Americans have no way to understand the full scope of an AR-15's destructive power or the extent of the trauma inflicted on victims, survivors and first responders when a shooter uses this weapon on people."

This is a legitimate ethical dilemma that pits reporting truthfully against minimizing harm.

As another example, journalists have historically debated whether it is ethically acceptable to publish details about politicians' extramarital affairs. Some argue for truthful reporting because this type of behavior reflects on a politician's moral fitness for public office, while others believe this information is not newsworthy and publishing it will unnecessarily harm affected family members.

FALSE ETHICAL DILEMMAS

A false ethical dilemma implies that there are only two options. When we closely analyze the ethical considerations, though, there may be more options or there may be only one proper choice.

It's OK to pursue fame, prestige or money as long as that pursuit does not lead to unethical behavior. However, a journalist should not prioritize fame, prestige or money over ethical conduct. This is a false dilemma. Ethical conduct should always be a priority.

For example, a journalism photographer may take pride in winning photography contests. If the photographer manipulates the content of a photo in order to win a contest, though, the photographer has fallen victim to a false ethical dilemma.

The photographer in this example incorrectly perceives two mutually exclusive choices: 1) gain prestige by winning the contest with a manipulated image; or 2) follow ethical codes and lose the contest. In fact, the photographer could follow ethical codes and still win the contest with an engaging, authentic photo.

Leading Doctor Reveals the No. 1 Worst Carb You Are Eating
Mediconews

The $$$ Moneymaking Secret that Banks Don't Want You To Know
Bankfacts

These 12 Impossible Pet Rescue Stories Will Melt Your Heart!
Cutepups Inc

CC0 Image – Wikimedia

Similarly, editors who write clickbait headlines prioritize a large audience (and accompanying revenue) over the

ethical standard of truthfulness. This is a false ethical dilemma, though, because a catchy but truthful headline can gain a large audience as well. In this case, the clickbait headline can be viewed as an unethical shortcut.

It's important to note that deceptive, sensationalized news existed centuries before electronic media. In his book *The Gutenberg Parenthesis*, Jeff Jarvis cited a 16th-century fictional tale in which a tradesman reflects on the profit to be gained from selling content that today we would call fake news. The tradesman offers these lines:

> *It doesn't much matter whether the story's true.*
> *The world wants to be deceived,*
> *they buy lies for good money.*
> *The more outrageous the lie, the better the sales,*
> *as all singers know very well.*

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DIVERSITY AND ETHICS

The following quote comes from the Online News Association's statement on diversity.

> *Many journalists see diversity as an issue that overlaps with journalism ethics. It may be a social issue and/or a business issue, but they say it is an ethical issue because failure to reflect the diversity of a community is a matter of accuracy.*

Ninette Sosa was a CNN journalist who later became a professor of practice and the director of outreach for the School of Journalism and Strategic Media at the University of Arkansas. In the audio below, she shared her thoughts on the relationship between diversity and ethics.
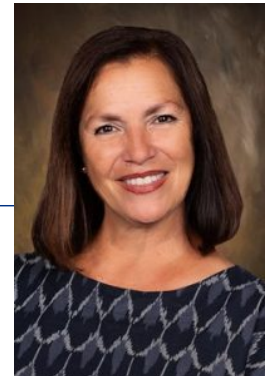
> 🖥 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=343#h5p-37*

Ninette Sosa

Here is a script of the audio.

MEDIA ETHICS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In the next decade, we'll no doubt see a parade of AI-related case studies that test ethical boundaries (or trample them). Media companies may be held accountable for mistakes, or untruthful reporting, in

AI-generated content. To achieve transparency, media professionals need to apply clear standards for acknowledging when content has been created using AI tools.

As an extreme example, Futurism reported in 2023 that "Sports Illustrated published content from nonexistent writers with AI-generated headshots."

- Sports Illustrated published articles by fake, AI-generated writers – Futurism

The investigation concluded that some writers' headshots and profile photos were fake, and some story content may have been AI-generated as well. The Futurism article included this perspective on media ethics.

> Bylines exist for a reason: they give credit where it's due, and just as importantly, they let readers hold writers accountable. The undisclosed AI content is a direct affront to the fabric of media ethics, in other words, not to mention a perfect recipe for eroding reader trust.

TRUE or FALSE

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button or click on sections of the control bar to advance through the questions.

> *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=343#h5p-59*

APPLYING ETHICAL CODES

This assignment is based on a fascinating case example from 2018. First, read the following articles:

- How fake student loan expert Drew Cloud fooled real people – Yahoo! Finance

- 'Student Loan Report' admits its founder and editor is fake – NPR

Drew Cloud was part of a public relations campaign for the Student Loan Report, which merged into LendEDU.

After you've read the articles and conducted your own follow-up research as needed, answer the following questions in approximately three or four sentences per response. Use brief, specific support from this chapter and/or professional codes of ethics in each response.

1. In what specific ways was the Student Loan Report's strategy unethical according to the PRSA Code of Ethics?
2. In what specific ways was it unethical according to the SPJ Code of Ethics?
3. Based on content in this chapter, could this be classified as a false ethical dilemma? *(explain your answer)*

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=343#h5p-89

MORE CODES OF ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES

If you are interested in learning more about professional media ethics, peruse the following websites:

- News Values and Principles – Associated Press
- PRSA Code of Ethics – Public Relations Society of America
- SPJ Code of Ethics – Society of Professional Journalists
- Media Ethics – Purdue OWL

You can also sample some diversity-related content on these sites connected with the Society of Professional Journalists:

- SPJ Diversity Toolbox

- [Diversity Style Guide](#)

MEDIA ETHICS CASE STUDIES

The University of Texas at Austin's [Center for Media Engagement](#) offers a compilation of case studies in media ethics. Here are a few direct links to case studies that seem especially applicable to our OER chapters thus far.

- [Love Yourself or Just Your Selfie](#)
- [It Ain't Easy Being Green](#)
- [Privacy vs. Products in Targeted Digital Advertising](#)
- [ESPN's Adam Schefter: The Ethics of Pre-Publication Review](#)
- [The Ethics of Covering Inflammatory Politicians](#)

Also, you may want to study the following case studies from the Society of Professional Journalists:

- [Kobe Bryant's Past: A Tweet Too Soon?](#)
- [Aaargh! Pirates! (and the Press)](#)

8.

BOOKS

By Dave Bostwick

📊 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=417#h5p-91

When I began planning my first online Open Educational Resource (OER) project in 2020, I made a few assumptions about books and my target audience of college students. Consider whether you agree with these three initial assumptions.

- Printed books are in decline.
- Students (and Americans in general) don't want to buy physical books when they can find similar online information for free.
- As a whole, modern readers prefer the convenience of reading from a screen.

Current statistics about U.S. book consumption tell a much more complex story than my assumptions in the bullet points above. Since the pandemic, books sales have increased. Almost 800 million copies of printed books were sold in the United States in 2022, which was the second-highest sales figure since 2000, although sales decreased slightly in 2023.

Globally, the book market was valued at approximately $130 billion in 2023, and that number is projected to increase through 2030. Furthermore, a New York Times article reported that in the post-pandemic book market, "as the number of stores has grown, the book selling business — traditionally overwhelmingly white — has also become much more diverse."

Customers aren't just buying books through online sites such as Amazon.com. The U.S. bookstore chain

Barnes and Noble, which relies heavily on bricks-and-mortar stores, in 2023 announced [plans to open new locations](#).

Despite the proliferation of digital reading options, it seems unlikely that the fate of printed books will resemble the near extinction of the telegraph, silent movie reels, 8-track audiotapes, or, more recently, printed newspapers. Devoted print readers are passionate about turning paper pages and touching what they read, so they'll keep buying physical books.

I'm still devoted to my OER work and happy that I can help students save $100 or more per course. However, I'm now more fully aware that not everyone prefers to read from a screen.

OPENING PERSPECTIVE ABOUT PRINT MEDIA

As has been noted in previous chapters, media history often repeats itself. Several centuries ago, the widespread adoption of the printing press forever changed the control and flow of information. The printing press gave writers and publishers the power to change the process by which ordinary people accessed information and entertainment, but it also led to criticism that information had become less reliable.

In a 2020 *Atlantic* article titled "Our Predictions About the Internet Are Probably Wrong," Cullen Murphy wrote the following:

> *"When people can publish whatever they want, they do. The printing press made individual books more uniform and more numerous, but it also put the idea of universal truth up for grabs."*

We see a similar process playing out with online publishing. Some media critics argue that online books are generally less reliable (or even less truthful) than printed books. An online-only book can be published with minimal costs and no printing press involved, so in theory anyone can become an author.

One key takeaway: The history of the printing press suggests that the internet was not the first medium to spawn concerns about the reliability of information. Keep that perspective in mind as we study the evolution of print media in the next few chapters.

A BRIEF HISTORY LESSON

Next, a quick history lesson is in order. The following interactive timeline provides an overview of print technology.

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online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=417#h5p-27

Most historians consider the printing press as the beginning of mass media. SFBook, a books-focused website, credited the printing press with playing "a key role in the development of the Renaissance, Reformation and the Scientific Revolution while at the same time spreading a means of learning to the masses and forming the basis for the modern knowledge-based economy we see today."

However, one can also argue strongly that misinformation and disinformation in mass media began with the printing press, not with computers and social media.

In his book *The Gutenberg Parenthesis*, Jeff Jarvis gave this perspective:

> *In its youth, print was seen as less reliable than what we would now call rumor. With word-of-mouth, one could judge the source: the Courier who had just written in from Florence, whose word has been proven reliable before, and the Innkeeper and postmaster who pass on reports, mindful of maintaining their own reputations. Relationships were the wires that connected early, oral news networks. Print, on the other hand, was new and suspicious because its provenance was opaque; someone unseen had produced it.*

Jarvis suggested that the situation is reversed today, as "print conveys authority while content and conversation on social media are regarded as unreliable rumor, and users there are viewed as naive and inexperienced speakers."

For those who want a more in-depth chronicle of book history, an SFBook summary, titled "The Evolution of the Book," begins with an explanation of symbols on tablets and advances through paper, printing presses, paperbacks and Amazon's Kindle.

COPYCAT CONCERN

The history of books also shows how popular media impacted audience behavior long before radio and television. Writing for the Society of Professional Journalists, Julie Scelfo described an early glimpse of the copycat phenomenon that still concerns ethical journalists today.

> *More than two centuries ago in Europe, officials in multiple countries noticed a dreadful pattern: soon after local residents read a popular novel by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe featuring a protagonist who takes his own life, there was a spike in actual suicides.*

STATISTICS ABOUT AMERICANS AND BOOKS

See how well you can answer the following flip-card questions about post-pandemic book-reading habits in the United States. The <u>statistics on e-book reading</u> and <u>information about who doesn't read books</u> come from the Pew Research Center.

Click on Turn to see the answers, and use the forward button to advance through additional questions.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=417#h5p-29

Based on the statistics in the flip-card questions above, one general observation emerges: Some Americans avoid books altogether, but others read enough books each year to maintain a thriving book industry.

BOOKS AND LEARNING

The debate between printed books and e-books began around 2010, especially as educators began adopting digital textbooks to save money for their institutions or for their students. Here's a light and brief infographic video to frame the debate.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=417#oembed-1

As more college professors adopt digital sources for their courses, students rely less on books in their campus libraries. In an essay for *The Atlantic*, Dan Cohen wrote that "university libraries across the country, and around the world, are seeing steady, and in many cases precipitous, <u>declines in the use of the books on their shelves</u>."

At the University of Arkansas in 2018, for example, a library annex was deployed to store books that were previously held in the main library. A major reason cited for an annex system was that the use of printed materials had decreased by 68% in a 10-year span. The annex allowed more space on main floors of Mullins Library to be utilized for student study spaces and meetings.

On other college campuses across the country, similar debates have surfaced about the role of campus libraries.

On the other hand, a strong argument can be made that digital platforms and file types are transitory. Printed books are better sources for long-term documentation and archiving. A Pew Research Center study found that 38% of webpages that existed in 2013 were no longer accessible a decade later.

TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT

Books traditionally have a trickle-down effect to other media. One good example from the current century involves coverage of the steroid scandal in baseball. In 2006, Mark Fainaru-Wade and Lance Williams, who were reporters for The San Francisco Chronicle, published an investigative book titled *Game of Shadows*. Most Americans did not read the book but instead learned about the investigative reporting through summaries and excerpts in newspapers, magazines, cable news coverage (think ESPN) and on websites.

Another example is author Susan Patton, better known on popular media sites at the time as "Princeton Mom." In 2013, Patton wrote a guest-contributor letter to the Daily Princetonian student newspaper advocating that many college women should focus on finding a husband before they graduate.

The letter sparked nationwide attention and led Patton to write a book titled *Marry Smart*. Promotions for her book included numerous television interviews, including some network talk shows such as the interview below with CBS.
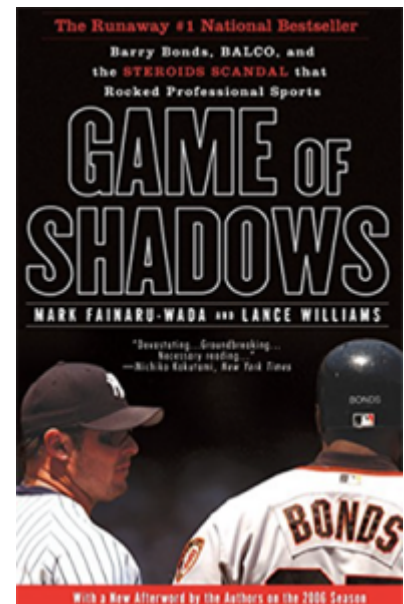
> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=417#oembed-2*

The following list outlines instances of the trickle-down effect from books to other media platforms:

1. Magazines and newspapers (print and online) publish excerpts from books.
2. Newspapers and online sites publish reviews of books or stories about author appearances, such as book signings.
3. Authors appear on television and radio shows to discuss their work.
4. Movies are scripted and produced based on books.

For casual media consumers, examples for #4 abound. Here are just a few notable movies based on books.

- *The Color Purple*
- *The Godfather*
- *Twilight*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *The Harry Potter series*
- *Gone With the Wind*
- *The Lord of the Rings*
- *Schindler's List*
- *Forrest Gump*
- *Jurassic Park*
- *The Exorcist*

Another fascinating example applicable to this list is the 2023 movie *American Fiction*, which was based on the 2001 novel *Erasure* by Percival Everett. It's a movie about an author whose novel is being made into a movie. If you are OK with edgy humor and a bit of profanity, you may enjoy watching the movie trailer for *American Fiction*.

DEFINING BOOKS

Are you reading a book right now? This Open Educational Resource (OER) text is organized in chapters like a traditional textbook, but it's not printed on paper, and it includes videos and interactive elements.

I'd like to think my OER project fits the expanded concept of books in the digital age. However, this OER text is published through an online platform that may not exist a couple of decades from now when I want to explain my work to my grandchildren. A printed book still seems like a more dependable medium for long-term archiving.

Another question for the future is whether a book can exist primarily through sounds, such as an audiobook on Audible, with no text equivalent beyond an automated script of the audio.

Our definition of books will no doubt evolve in future decades, but printed books seem likely to remain an impactful part of the American media landscape.

TRUE or FALSE

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button or click on sections of the control bar to advance through the questions.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=417#h5p-49

READING HABITS AND THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT

Part A

In approximately four paragraphs, analyze your own reading habits and preferences compared to the content in this chapter. Here are a few sample questions you could address, although you are not required to use this list.

- How do your book reading habits compare to statistics cited in the chapter?
- Do you prefer reading in print or on screen, or does it vary by situation?
- Which book format best helps you to understand content and retain knowledge?
- Do you think parents and educators do a disservice to elementary and junior high students when they promote consumption on digital devices rather than printed materials?
- Should colleges and universities still dedicate lots of space and money to provide students with immediate access to printed books?

Part B

One section in this chapter discusses the trickle-down effect of books to other forms of mass media. In approximately three paragraphs, discuss an example of when you consumed media content that trickled down to you from a book, even though you did not originally read the book (or you never read the book at all). Provide context and analysis on how initially reading the book might have changed your perception.

Writing Reminder

For both Part A and Part B, write crisply in journalistic style with approximately three sentences per paragraph.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=417#h5p-90

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

(from the OER text *Understanding Media and Culture*)

- History of Books
- Books and the Development of U.S. Popular Culture
- Major Book Formats

9.

NEWSPAPERS

By Dave Bostwick

> 📄 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=567#h5p-92*

While working for small-town newspapers early in my career, my job was to write sports and news stories, but I often had other duties. When needed, I collected daily stock market prices, edited obituaries and wedding summaries for the society section, maintained a darkroom for printing photos, designed print pages, collected information for ads, and helped load newspapers onto delivery trucks.

Before widespread internet usage, a local daily newspaper was a one-size-fits all publication with something to interest almost everyone in the community, including restaurant coupons, help-wanted ads, movie listings, police and government records (often with weddings and divorces), high-school sports coverage, comics, puzzles and news.

Readers would complain, sometimes for good reasons, about mistakes or biased coverage. However, they kept subscribing to the newspaper because it served as an unofficial record of each day's events as well as a valued source of information and entertainment. Local newspapers were convenient and mostly credible.

Today, restaurant owners can more easily post coupons on social media, commercial websites offer localized job openings, movie theaters list movies and sell tickets online directly to the public, smartphone apps give us an almost-endless variety of puzzles to solve, and sports teams maintain their own websites that offer statistics and promotional stories.

Perhaps the hardest part of this digital transition has been keeping consumers interested in local news when the other parts of the traditional newspaper no longer have as much value.

Print newspapers were once a common way for community residents to keep up with dining and entertainment options, including movies.

HISTORY'S FIRST DRAFT

Philip L. Graham, former president and publisher of The Washington Post, is often cited for this famous quotation:

> **"Journalism is the first rough draft of history."**

As you read this chapter, consider the effects of technology, especially the internet, on the newspaper industry's role chronicling local and national history.

The following presentation provides a brief overview of U.S. newspapers.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=567#h5p-31

TODAY'S BIG 4

Overcoming the decline of print newspaper subscriptions, four newspaper brands have gained traction nationwide in the transition to digital delivery. Learn more in the presentation below.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=567#h5p-30

Even when the newspaper industry thrived, publishers still had to keep pace with technology improvements on other media platforms. For example, by the 1980s, Americans had become accustomed to color television. At the same time, USA Today gained immediate attention and popularity for its extensive use of color, thus modernizing traditional black-and-white newspaper pages.

A STEADY LOCAL DECLINE

Although the four large national newspaper brands discussed above have survived and sometimes thrived in the past 15 years, most local newspapers are struggling. Some have even closed.

As one [Axios analysis](#) said, "The inequity between giants like The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal and their local counterparts represents a growing problem in America as local communities no longer have the power to set the agenda for the news that most affects them."

A similar analysis from the Associated Press recorded that by 2022, [U.S. newspapers died at a rate of two each week](#), creating what have been called **news deserts** where a community has no newspaper coverage. There is even a website titled [Newspaper Death Watch](#).

The AP analysis, citing the Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media and Integrated Marketing Communications, noted that "areas of the country that find themselves without a reliable source of local news tend to be poorer, older and less educated than those covered well." Furthermore, newspaper employment has decreased 70% since 2006, and newspaper revenues have fallen approximately 60% since 2005.

Image made using Microsoft Image Creator with a prompt for "news desert."

One newspaper editor, [Mary Beth Schneider](#), summed up the declining newspaper industry like this:

> *"People who got their news online for free for decades balk at paying for it. And people who still subscribe grumble about cancelling because the paper has shrunk — a direct result of the routine and massive layoffs that have affected newspapers across the nation. Fewer dollars equals fewer reporters equals less news coverage."*

Local newspapers have traditionally functioned as an unofficial fourth estate (or branch) of government, serving as a watchdog over government affairs. However, as Schneider noted, news deserts contribute to lower participation in elections and increased government corruption.

A grave concern in the 2020s is that consumers are no longer interested in local news, even if it's free. For example, [Columbia Journalism Review summarized a research study](#) in which 2,529 people were offered a free

subscription their local newspaper, either the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette or the Philadelphia Inquirer. Only 44 people, or less than 2 percent, accepted the free subscription.

A glimmer of good news is that locally focused newspapers that survive are growing their online traffic and digital revenue even as print revenue declines.

And ironically, many collegiate journalism students are reluctant to give up print in their campus newspapers. This is in part because they think the print edition is more distinctive and provides more opportunities for creativity.

ARCHIVING THE FIRST DRAFT OF HISTORY

In the previous chapter on books, we studied drawbacks with digital archiving. This is even more true for local newspapers, so let's re-examine archiving from a newspaper perspective.

To consider advantages of print archiving and concerns with digital archiving, click on the two topic titles in the interactive graphic below.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=567#h5p-32

THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER ANGLE (Arkansas as an example)

The demise of the newspaper industry in Arkansas mirrors national trends. The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and the Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, under the same ownership, have ceased daily print publication. Instead, subscribers can view a replica of a weekday printed newspaper on an iPad provided by the newspaper as part of the subscription fee. In promoting this offering, the newspaper's publisher said, "They can keep the iPads as long as they continue to subscribe."

In summer of 2024, the Arkansas Democratic-Gazette went beyond advertising and subscription revenue by starting a public fundraising campaign. The [Community Journalism Project](#) was an attempt to raise $100,000 in 100 days.

Journalists have also explored the potential of non-profit journalism. For example, [Arkansas Advocate](#), which launched in 2022, labels itself as an "independent, nonpartisan news organization" that reports on "how state government affects the lives of everyday Arkansans so they can make informed decisions about themselves, their families and their communities."

Arkansas Advocate, which is supported by grants and donations, is one of many state-focused news sites affiliated with the nonprofit [States Newsroom](#).

ANOTHER ARKANSAS EXAMPLE (AI-generated)

Northwest Arkansas has its own AI-generated news platform, [OkayNWA](#), which launched a website in 2024. Although OkayNWA is not a newspaper, it generates local news and could be considered a competitor for established newspaper outlets.

According to the OkayNWA's [About page](#), "Unlike traditional news platforms, our content is generated by sophisticated AI algorithms designed to emulate the curiosity and narrative style of human journalists."

However, an [analysis from Harvard's Neiman Lab](#) noted that "OkayNWA reads closer to a local events aggregator." This is perhaps because it is easier and less problematic for AI tools to scrape event data rather than craft more complex narratives about social and governmental issues.
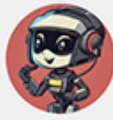
Below is a screenshot of the reporter avatars on the site as of August 2024.

Reporters

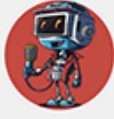Our reporters are always on the ground to bring you the latest news as it happens.

Sammy Streets
Urban Wanderer
Chief of Street-Level Journalism

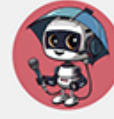**Cultural Carrie**
Culture Queen
Cultural Affairs Correspondent

Benjamin Business
Corporate Crusader
Business Reporting Lead

Techie Tom
Gadget Guru
Technology Analyst

Miles Rhythmic
Jazz Scene Virtuoso
Senior Music Analyst

Wendy Weather
Cloud Connoisseur
Meteorology Expert

Arlo Artiste
Master of Muses
Arts and Culture Correspondent

Eva Eventful
Event Explorer
Extraordinaire
Senior Events Correspondent

Here's a screenshot of a sample article opening with accompanying AI-generated artwork.

COMMUNITY

Razorbash: Marketing Opportunity for Northwest Arkansas

Razorbash is set to offer the ultimate marketing extravaganza for local businesses and nonprofits aiming to connect with the vibrant student population of Northwest Arkansas. On August 21st, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, this high-energy event will provide a VIP invite to a marketing opportunity like no other. With 32,000 eager students in attendance, businesses have the chance to showcase their brand and inform the demographic about their unique offerings, making it a moment to shine and connect with the future movers and shakers of NWA.

Eva Eventful

And for readers who want to learn more about the AI reporter, here is Eva Eventful's bio.

Eva Eventful

Category: Events

Event Explorer Extraordinaire

Senior Events Correspondent

Eva keeps her finger on the pulse of the hottest and most exclusive events around.

Eva Eventful has built a reputation for being the first to uncover and report on the most exciting, unique, and exclusive events worldwide. With a keen eye for what's trending, Eva ensures readers are always in the know about the next big thing in entertainment, culture, and social gatherings.

The Nieman Lab article included an admission from OkayNWA designer Jay Price that "at its core OkayNWA is basically a content management system."

Beyond Arkansas, other traditional newspaper outlets face similar challenges competing with experimental online news sites, including some that rely on AI-generated content.

THE FUTURE OF NEWSPAPERS

History may repeat itself if the federal government intervenes on behalf of journalism. The Postal Act of 1792 subsidized the delivery of printed newspapers (and the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 subsidized local broadcast stations).

Will a new form of governmental assistance emerge for today's local news journalism? This could be a life raft for some rural communities, but critics argue that government-funded journalism would limit investigative stories and potentially allow government officials to determine what does or does not get published.

WHAT IS A NEWSPAPER TODAY?

In 2024, there were more online news sites than print newspapers among the [finalists for the Pulitzer Prizes](#), U.S. journalism's most prestigious award.

Even though printed newspapers are not as relevant or impactful today (and some publishers only distribute physical copies on Sundays if at all), they have a prominent place in any study of the evolution of U.S. mass media.

Most consumers still use the word "newspaper" when describing online content from legacy newspaper sites, even though little or no paper is involved in publishing the 21st-century product.

Thus, online "newspaper" journalists may still provide the first draft of history.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=567#h5p-52

NEWS QUIZ

Wired published a short article suggesting that interactive [news quizzes can make us smarter](#) and have evolved into a way to deepen our understanding of current events.

With that in mind, The New York Times offers a weekly quiz that can be helpful to gauge how well you follow the news.

[Take the most recent quiz](#) and reflect on your score in two or three tightly-written paragraphs. How would your rate your overall knowledge of current events? What sources help you keep track of current events?

If you are submitting this as part of a course assignment, your instructor may ask you to include

a screenshot of your news quiz results.

(https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/news-quiz)

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10.

MAGAZINES

By Dave Bostwick

> 📰 An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
>
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=609#h5p-95*

If you visit the magazine area of a bookstore or grocery store today, you'll probably find a variety of magazines that do NOT interest you. However, you may see at least one or two magazine titles that grab your attention because they focus on jobs, hobbies, celebrities or current events that you are passionate about.

Here are a few examples of current magazines that target narrow interests and audiences.

- *Southern Living*
- *Golf Digest*
- *Better Homes and Gardens*
- *Family Handyman*
- *Taste of Home* (recipes)
- *American Rifleman* (for members of the National Rifle Association)
- *The American Legion Magazine* (for veterans)
- *AARP the Magazine* (American Associate of Retired Persons)
- *Costco Connection* (for Costco members)
- *Fender Bender* (for workers in the field of auto body repair)
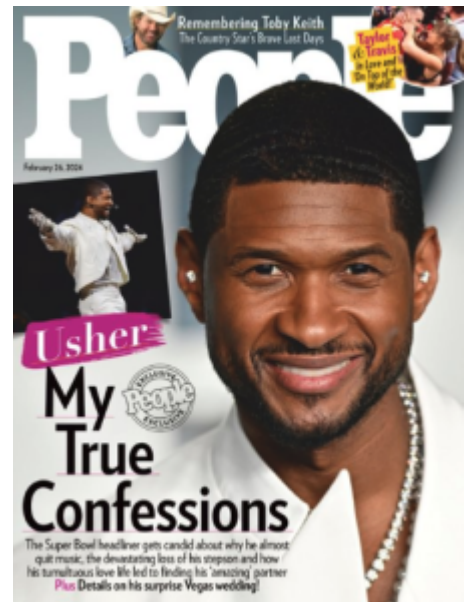
People Magazine Cover: Feb. 26, 2024

Although specialized magazines are common today, American magazines haven't always been so narrowly focused. Before Americans fell in love with television and then the internet, general-interest magazines were an effective way for advertisers to reach a broad national audience. Popular national magazines often focused on current events and featured many of the best writers of their time.

When I was in high school, for example, a highlight of each week came when *Time* magazine arrived in our family's mailbox. It was an easy and entertaining way to keep up with current events. Today, however, not many Americans check their mailboxes each day to see if their favorite national news magazine has arrived.

This chapter looks at the evolution of U.S. magazines and explains why magazines have become more specialized. You'll also consider how online-only publications are changing the concept of a magazine.

Fender Bender Magazine Cover: May 2024

BROAD APPEAL

The presentation below provides visual examples from some of the most popular general-interest magazines of the 20th century. These magazines offered a broad array of content for multiple members of a typical American household.

Study the presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=609#h5p-34

TELEVISION'S IMPACT ON MAGAZINES

As television increased in popularity, national advertisers and consumers were not as interested in general-interest magazines. However, the magazine industry adapted and became more specialized.

Television and radio ads could more easily draw consumers' attention to a product or service, but a printed magazine ad allowed readers to study details before making a purchase.

Categories of specialization can vary. The online textbook *Understanding Media and Culture* lists the following [types of specialized magazines](#):

- Magazines based on hobbies, interests and groups
- Professional trade magazines (for people in jobs and industries)
- Scholarly magazines (such as academic research journals)
- Religious magazines (such as *Christianity Today* magazine)
- Political magazines
- Magazines focused on pulp and genre fiction

The presentation below gives examples of magazines and how they target specific, narrow audiences.

Study the presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar.

The American Legion Magazine – 1951 cover

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=609#h5p-33

Specialized magazines help advertisers reach their target audiences more efficiently.

Here's an example that may help you understand this concept. Let's say I own a company that makes walking canes. I could pay well over $5 million to buy a 30-second Super Bowl ad, but I would be wasting most of that money reaching people who have no interest in walking canes.

However, I could purchase an ad in *AARP The Magazine* at a fraction of the cost of a Super Bowl ad, plus my AARP ad is more likely to reach my intended target audience, most of whom are 50 or older.

Here are three more simple examples of how specialized magazines can guarantee that advertisers will reach a targeted demographic.

- Teen fashion and beauty products in *Seventeen* magazine
- Trendy men's clothing in *GQ* magazine

- Insurance (especially insurance plans to cover delivery drivers) in *Pizza Today* magazine

---

READER-FRIENDLY CONTENT

Magazines today can still include long feature stories in standard paragraphs, but you'll also see quick-hitting content that makes it easier for readers to browse and find items of interest to them. Here are three quick-hitting strategies found in many magazines:

- **Short profiles** of celebrities, experts and other prominent people (often in a Q&A format)
- Stories and graphics formatted with **lists, tips and maps**
- Photojournalism and/or artistic **photography**

TODAY'S MAGAZINE LANDSCAPE

In 2022 the CEO of Condé Nast, which publishes *Vogue*, *Wired*, *The New Yorker*, and *GQ*, said Condé Nast is "no longer a magazine company." He said that audiences for the company's publications primarily come through websites and social media.

As an example, one of my favorite magazines is Wired. I still get printed copies of *Wired* magazine delivered to my mailbox. However, I subscribe to the *Wired* daily email newsletter and visit the magazine website regularly, so by the time I get a print issue, I've already read many of the articles.

Not all the news about print magazines is bad, though. In 2024, Axios reported that print magazines were making a "surprise comeback as a marketing tool," include a print relaunch of the fashion magazine *Nylon*. Also in 2024, Vice relaunched its print magazine.

Stephen Casimiro, founder of the outdoor magazine *Adventure Journal*, described the limitations of online-only publications. "The screen experience is so reductionist," Casimiro said. "It just flattens the world, so that a Pulitzer Prize-winning story feels the same as spam. Some things deserve better."

Similar to discussions in previous chapters about books and newspapers, the concept of a magazine is evolving. When we hear the word *magazine*, we may envision a glossy cover of one of our favorite print publications. However, the 21st century has given us digital newsstands and online-only magazines.

As readers access more content on screens, we are left to ponder the blurry lines of distinctions among online newspapers, online magazines and online books.
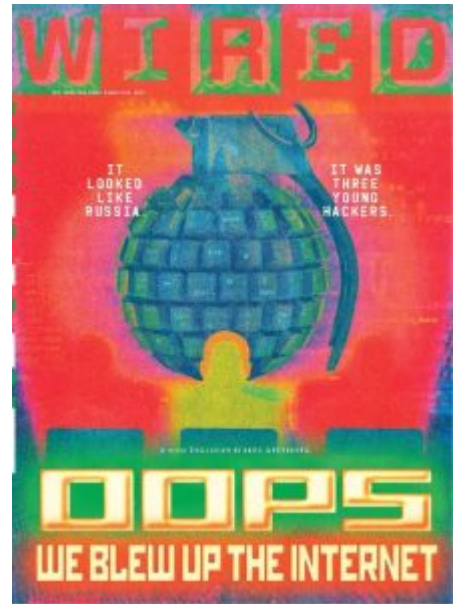
TRUE or FALSE

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=609#h5p-53

MAGAZINE ANALYSIS

Purchase a specialized magazine that contains advertising, or visit a local library to find one.

Based on chapter content, you should select a magazine that falls under the general parameters of one the following:

- Magazines based on hobbies and interests
- Magazines that target specific demographics
- Lifestyle magazines
- Professional trade magazines (for people in jobs and industries)

Using a Q&A format, respond to the following prompts:

1. What is the title of the magazine, and how often is it published? *(Also, provide a web link if possible.)*
2. What is the cost of an annual subscription compared to the cost of a single issue?
3. Describe the target demographic.
4. In what ways do the advertisements reach out to the target demographic? *(briefly discuss at least two examples)*
5. Are there examples of photojournalism or artistic photography in the magazine? *(if so, provide details)*
6. What types of reader-friendly magazine devices are used, such as lists, tips, Q&A or standalone infographics that provide content in a manner other than long-form narrative paragraphs? *(provide details)*
7. Are there any personality profiles about prominent figures related to the specialization? *(if so, provide details)*
8. Do you think this publication is positioned well to survive more than a decade? *(support your answer with specific details)*

You are encouraged but not required to create presentation slides instead of relying on a static text document. For this assignment, it is fair use if your slides include a limited number of visuals (possibly screenshots) from your chosen magazine. You also have the option to include formatted data about your magazine.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=609#h5p-96

MORE ABOUT MAGAZINES

If you are interested in learning more about magazines and the magazine industry, here are three related chapters from the online OER text Understanding Media and Culture:

- History of Magazine Publishing
- The Role of Magazines in the Development of American Popular Culture
- Specialization of Magazines

11.

RADIO AND AUDIO

By Dave Bostwick

🖥 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=642#h5p-98

If you're like many Americans, you are likely to listen to radio in a vehicle or while shopping in a store that has a radio station playing softly on overhead speakers. Today, radio is often in the background, but it wasn't always that way.

Watch the scene below from *A Christmas Story*. It helps illustrate the Golden Age of Radio (approximately 1925 to 1950) when a radio receiver was a dominant form of entertainment, and the radio itself was a vital piece of furniture in many American living rooms. It also shows us that complaints about misleading ads and "crummy" commercials didn't start with television.

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In this chapter, you'll gain an overview of radio's place in the mass media landscape from the early 1900s to today. We'll also briefly look at how advancements in audio recording technology impacted the evolution of radio.

EARLY EVOLUTION OF RADIO

The early days of radio's development facilitated point-to-point communication, especially for ship-to-ship messages. Radio did not begin as a commercial platform for mass communications.

The Radio Act of 1912 required all wireless operators to obtain a broadcast license from the federal government. The legislation was partly a reaction to the sinking of the Titanic. According to one government website, "Following the Titanic investigation, which found that radio interference contributed to delays in rescue operations, Congress began regulating transmissions with the Radio Act of 1912."

A few years later, though, companies began exploring the potential for radio as a mass medium. In 1920, Westinghouse set up the first commercial broadcast station (KDKA in Pittsburgh) partly as a way to sell more radio receivers. AT&T began airing advertisements (called toll radio) on its radio stations in 1922. Until then, people viewed radio as a public information service.

An article from Harvard's Nieman Lab describes how a magazine in 1924 published a contest asking, "Who is to pay for broadcasting and how?" (A century and many disruptive digital technologies later, we can ask the same question.)

By 1925, more than 5 million radio sets were in use across America, and there were hundreds of stations.

The Radio Act of 1927, which later evolved into the Federal Communications Act of 1934, said that licensees did not own their channels but could license them as long as they served the "public interest, convenience or necessity."

The Federal Radio Commission, established for industry oversight in 1927, eventually became the Federal Communications Commission of today.

THE ADVENT OF RADIO SHOWS

The following video provides a brief overview of radio's heyday in 1930s.

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Many of the first television programs, including soap operas and situation comedies, began as radio shows. Soap operas gained their name because, in some cases, a soap company would sponsor an entire weekly drama.

The Guiding Light was the most prominent soap-opera example, debuting on radio in 1937. According to *Smithsonian* Magazine, the show premiered as a 15-minute radio spot and then became a half-hour television program in 1952. When it was cancelled after 72 years in 2009, it was an hour-long show owned by Procter & Gamble.

For a sense of entertainment in the Golden Age of Radio, listen to [an episode of *The Shadow*](#) (or at least listen to the first few minutes). The show featured this question for its catchphrase: "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?"

> ▣ *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=642#oembed-3*

If you want more perspective, [a video from the Needham Channel](#) chronicles early radio programming and shows how several early radio shows were recorded before live audiences.

On the news side, as radio stations began competing with established newspapers for audiences, publishers began feeling threatened and sought to protect their print product. In his book *The Gutenberg Parenthesis*, Jeff Jarvis wrote, "Newspaper publishers tried to disadvantage their new competitors, strong-arming radio executive to agree to abandon news gathering, to buy and use only reports supplied by three wire services, to limit news bulletins to five minutes, and to sell no sponsorship of news."

However, approximately two decades later, both radio and newspapers would be threatened by a new media technology: television.

THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION

Beginning in the 1950s, when TV began taking radio's program ideas and sponsors, radio became dependent on recorded music to survive. Playing recorded music was much cheaper than paying voice actors and technicians to produce original radio content. Thus began a marriage of the radio and sound-recording industries

Luckily for the radio industry, Texas Instruments marketed the first transistor radios in 1953. Because transistor radios were much smaller, they could go places where television could not.

According to *Car and Driver*'s timeline of the history of car radios, the first all-transistor car radio debuted in 1963. When they weren't listening in their vehicles, consumers could carry small portable transistor radios to the beach or the park, where they could listen to stations that played recorded music.

As a cost-cutting measure today, radio disc jockeys often have recorded their audio in advance. During overnight hours and weekends, many smaller radio outlets pre-program their content so that no one is actually broadcasting live or working at the station.

EVOLUTION OF SOUND RECORDING

Because radio relies on audio, it's difficult to study radio in isolation. Let's take a quick detour here to look at a condensed timeline of sound-recording technology.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=642#h5p-35

And if you're specifically interested in analog tape recording, you can view a YouTube walk-through from Daydream Sound.

MUSIC PIRACY

As audio recording technologies have evolved, so too have industry concerns about copyright. In the 1970s and early 1980s, some FM radio stations would attract listeners by playing entire albums uninterrupted by advertising. Station executives knew that audience members could record those albums on cassette tapes and thus avoid buying the albums. Also, one person could buy an album and then record cassette copies of the music for friends.

Fast-forward to 1999 when the peer-to-peer file-sharing service Napster was launched and soon gained widespread popularity. Napster users could download and share digital music files with others. Eventually, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) won a series of court cases that led to Napster's music-sharing service being shut down in 2001.

In the 2000s, concerns about digital piracy led to anti-piracy ad campaigns, including some by universities that wanted to avoid liability for their students who illegally downloaded music and films. Mostly for your entertainment, here's a humorous university example from that period.

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Perhaps ironically, the music and concept in the video above was lifted from a nationwide anti-piracy campaign.

Although Napster is no longer an industry concern, music piracy still exists today. The research firm Muso reported a steady global increase in music piracy, especially involving websites that rip audio from YouTube videos and then convert that audio into downloadable music files.

RADIO CONGLOMERATES

Most local radio stations are now owned by conglomerates. Here are three of today's prominent conglomerates. You can use these links to find stations they own in geographic regions:

1. Audacy *(scroll down the page to browse by market)*
2. Cumulus
3. iHeart *(iHeart owns many stations and may also provide streaming services for additional stations.)*

Conglomerates typically own several stations with various formats in the same market, and these stations'

operations can be housed in the same building, thus reducing operating expenses. Plus, sales executives can offer ad packages with multiple stations catering to a local business's target demographics.

In an example of the ever-changing market dynamics of the media industry, Audacy emerged from bankruptcy in 2024. Similarly, iHeart Radio went through the bankruptcy process in 2018-19, while Cumulus survived bankruptcy in 2017-18.

Here are some of today's most common radio-station formats:

- Country
- News/Talk
- Religion/Christian
- Spanish
- Classic Rock
- Sports
- Top 40
- Adult Contemporary

FM vs. AM

You're probably familiar with the terms AM and FM to describe radio stations. AM stands for amplitude modulation, while FM stands for frequency modulation.

Next, you can consider this related flip-card question.

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Early U.S. radio stations used AM. Although the first FM radio station debuted in 1936, FM didn't gain popularity until the '50s and '60s, when FM signals could be broadcast in stereo. For a more-detailed explanation, you can visit ScienceABC.

When some automakers stopped selling vehicles with AM radios in 2024, Congress began considering the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act, which would require all automakers to install AM radios as a matter of public interest.

CLOSING TIDBITS

Here are a few factoids to wrap up this chapter.

- According to the [Pew Research Center](), approximately eight in 10 Americans over the age of 12 listen to AM or FM radio in a given week.
- Podcasts and online platforms that support podcasting have become increasingly popular, especially for listeners aged 18 to 29.
- Now that more consumers stream popular music rather than buying albums or downloading individual songs, musicians aren't sharing in streaming riches. Shira Ovide wrote an explanation for The New York Times: [Streaming Saved Music. Artists Hate It.]()
- In 2023, Spotify introduced the [personalized disc jockey]() (DJ) powered by artificial intelligence. Spotify [promotional text]() said, "The DJ knows you and your music taste so well that it will scan the latest releases we know you'll like, or take you back to that nostalgic playlist you had on repeat last year." Does this fit within your definition of radio?

FILL IN THE BLANKS

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RADIO MARKET ANALYSIS

Choose a metro area either nearest to where you live or one that interests you, and list the area's radio stations. The conglomerate links are a starting point.

1. [Audacy]() *(scroll down the page to browse by market)*

2. [Cumulus](#)
3. [iHeart](#) *(iHeart owns many stations and may also provide streaming services for additional stations.)*

You are encouraged to find out if there are additional area stations not owned by these three conglomerates.

NOTE – This exercise may occasionally seem confusing because some stations use the iHeart platform for live streaming but are not actually owned by iHeart. Make a good-faith effort to identify ownership, and don't get lost in the weeds.

For your assignment, include the following two parts.

Part A – List at least 8 stations in that metro area along with each station's format and ownership. Your list of stations in that metro area should include at least two conglomerates.

(For example, your selected metro area could include stations owned by Audacy along with other stations owned by iHeart. Or your list could include stations owned separately by Audacy and Cumulus, iHeart and Cumulus, or all three conglomerates.)

Just be sure to select a metro area that has more than one radio conglomerate present in the market.

Part B – Write a brief analysis of the radio market in your chosen metro area.

- Do you think listeners and advertisers have an adequate number of choices?
- Are there any formats that seem to be missing?
- What was the most unexpected information that you found?
- Does it concern you that so many stations are owned by the same companies?

Write approximately two sentences per question in Part B.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=642#h5p-97

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- [100 Years of Radio](#) – California Historical Radio Society
- [Broadcasting – The History of Radio](#) – Law Library
- [Chronology: Technology and the Music Industry](#) – PBS
- [Radio Station Formats](#) – *Understanding Media and Culture*
- [The History of Car Radios](#) – *Car and Driver*

12.

POPULAR MUSIC AND AMERICAN CULTURE

By Alyssa Riley

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Music is a constant in my life, whether I'm listening to Kings of Leon while driving, the Lumineers while studying, Fleetwood Mac when getting dressed for a night out, or Frank Sinatra when cooking. I remain loyal to many of the musicians I grew up listening to, observing how their styles, sounds and brand images have changed over the years.

Recorded music ascended into modern American culture thanks to the inventions of the phonograph and gramophone. Of the many popular genres in existence today – including but not limited to alternative, indie, bluegrass, rap, blues, contemporary pop, country and classic rock – there is at least one genre of musical culture for everyone. Recorded music is in films, in stores, on the radio, on smartphones, and on streaming services.

Music is part of our cultural identity and a universal language. Popular music allows people to dance and sing with others and feel connected through favorite songs. Much of this chapter offers a brief historical overview of American popular music's evolution in the 20th century, beginning with the 1920s.

Public Domain Image

1920s

This decade was renowned for its excessive party lifestyle, technological advancements, an abundance of

money and property after World War I, and resistance to Prohibition. A new generation, including flapper women, sought freedom from societal restrictions. The 1920s paved the way for the Golden Age of Radio and the emergence of jazz music.

A few years before the Roaring '20s began, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band released the pioneering jazz recording "Livery Stable Blues." Also, jazz artists King Oliver and Louis Armstrong changed the American musical landscape by incorporating African rhythms, gospel and blues.

To gain a sense of 1920s music, you can listen to Fascinating Rhythm: Great 1920s Vintage Jazz Music Hits (Past Perfect) on YouTube.

1930s:

Jazz became even more popular in the '30s as jazz artists played on Mississippi River steamboats or performed illegally in speakeasies during the Prohibition era. Many Americans began viewing jazz music as immoral, claiming it threatened the country's cultural values.

Alongside jazz was blues music, which originated when Black slaves adapted their musical heritage to the American environment. When the blues infiltrated Northern states in the late '30s and early '40s, it developed into specific regional styles: jazz-oriented Kansas City blues, swing-based West Coast blues, Chicago's urban-style classic Southern blues, and more.

The following video shows Louis Armstrong and his touring band performing "Dinah" in 1933 Copenhagen:

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1940s

Thanks to a developing alliance between the sound recording and the radio industries, artists like Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald profited from their wide exposure to listeners. Their popularity coincided with a renewed emphasis on American family values during and after World War II. Big-name artists like Bing Crosby, Sammy Kaye and the Andrews Sisters regularly referenced the military and the war, and the United Service Organizations (USO) enabled the big names in music to contribute to war efforts by performing for soldiers and their families.

Mixing sounds to appeal to both the returning soldiers and everyday Americans, rockabilly was born from

the fusion of country with rhythm and blues. Alongside rockabilly, country music became more popular during this decade with the help of Western films and singing cowboys such as Roy Rogers and Gene Autry.

For a taste of the times, you can watch Frank Sinatra perform "Come Fly With Me" or learn more about the connection between movies and music in the careers of Roy Rogers and Gene Autry.

1950s

In 1955, the Top 40 format was born; radio station playlists were based on popularity (usually the *Billboard* Top 40 singles chart), and a popular song could be played as often as 15 times a day on the same station. Radio stations began influencing record sales, resulting in increased competition for spots on station playlists.

Elvis Presley became a radio and television phenomenon, especially after a 1956 television appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show. You can watch that performance below.

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Unlike popular music predecessors such as Frank Sinatra, whose focus was primarily on singing and musicality, Elvis's performances were far more visual. By today's standards, Elvis Presley gyrating his hips in the '50s seems tame, but it was extremely controversial among parents at the time and contributed to a generational gap in attitudes toward popular music of the day. In one of his television performances, his body wasn't shown from the waist down. A few cities even sought to ban or cancel his performances due to "provocative music and suggestive dance moves."

Many historians credit Elvis Presley with integrating popular music and rock 'n' roll. His musical style, heavily influenced by blues and rockabilly, paved the way for Black artists such as Chuck Berry and Little Richard to gain widespread popularity among white audiences.

Also, the birth of Motown Records in 1959 led to a best-selling '60s mixture of soul and pop music by Black groups such as the Temptations and the Supremes with Diana Ross.

1960 and 1970s

Rock 'n' roll took flight in this decade. Although rock 'n' roll began primarily as an American genre, and many U.S. artists reached the top of the charts overseas, the Beatles' overnight fame signaled what became known as music's British Invasion.

The Beatles paved the way for other British bands to reach American charts, including the Kinks, the Zombies, the Animals, Herman's Hermits and the Rolling Stones. Many bands shifted from pure pop to an intersection of urban rock and blues. A developing sub-genre was surf music, which was especially popular in California and is best heard through artists like the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, and Dick Dale.

In the latter years of this decade, popular music reflected the emerging fault lines in American culture, such as civil rights, women's rights, Vietnam War protests, and environmentalism. Folk music, which prioritized meaningful lyrics over elaborate musical style, became the genre of choice for much social activism.

Likewise, protest music became popular among the hippies of the '60s, as many listeners of Jimi Hendrix and the Grateful Dead took to drug use for personal expression and freedom of speech. The belief was that mind-altering drugs could heighten the musical experience and create a bond between bands and their listeners. Romanticism of psychedelic culture, including its emphasis on free thinking and free living, came to a head at 1969's Woodstock Festival in New York.

Watch the following video to learn more about how the 1960s and its music changed America:

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1980s AND 1990s

MTV, which stood for Music Television, launched in 1981 with a constant stream of single-song music videos, which soon placed more emphasis on entertaining visuals, dialing back some of music's earlier focus on social protest. The '80s can be described as a decade of digital innovation with electronic bands such as Eurythmics, Duran Duran and Depeche Mode.

R&B songs – performed by artists such as Michael Jackson, Barry White, Salt-N-Pepa and Diana Ross – regularly topped the music charts in the '70s through the '90s. Originally termed for recording companies to market to African American communities, R&B incorporated aspects of funk and soul music into a nationally popular genre. Branching out from R&B, hip-hop music boomed in the 1990s and included such notable performers as 2Pac, Biggie and Jay-Z.

Even today, R&B and hip-hop remain at the top of U.S. charts; the *Billboard* Hot 100 Songs of 2023 included works by SZA, Metro Boomin, The Weeknd and 21 Savage. Watch the following video to learn about the transformation of R&B and hip-hop through the decades:

IMPACTFUL IN THE 21ST CENTURY

When we think of musicians who have left their mark on American culture, many of the performers previously mentioned in this chapter come to mind, whether it's due to boy-band frenzies, sexual awakenings or rebellion.

Fifty years from now, when someone is writing a summary of American music and culture, which of today's musical artists will be prominently mentioned? Is it Ed Sheeran, The Weeknd, or Selena Gomez? Is it someone whose artistry is not yet fully recognized? Ultimately, the determination will be about more than sales, revenue and social media. It will also involve subjective judgment, through the lens of time, about

TAYLOR SWIFT – Eva Rinaldi, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

artists who had a lasting impact on society's attitudes and norms.

One artist who has clearly influenced popular culture in the 2000s is Taylor Swift. Since her debut in 2006, she has won 14 Grammys, and in 2023 she was named Time's Person of the Year, a title never given to the Beatles or Elvis Presley.

In 2024, Swift released her 11th album, *The Tortured Poets Department*, which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard album chart. Only the Beatles have more No. 1 albums than Swift.

Despite her reputation for writing breakup and love songs, Swift's music includes storytelling and folklore in a wide range of genres – country, pop, rock, indie folk, and alternative/indie. For many fans, she created a globally popular culture of girlhood, friendship, longing, regret, innocence, and revenge.

You can learn more by watching The Evolution of Taylor Swift's Music | Good Morning America (YouTube)

Another influential artist is Beyoncé, who is not only a singer but also a songwriter, actor and entrepreneur. She has been building her career since leading and writing songs for the '90s musical group Destiny's Child. Starting her solo career in 2003 with her first album *Dangerously In Love*, Beyoncé has been in 52 movies, released 11 albums, and won 32 Grammys – the most in music history. In 2024, she even released a country album, titled [Cowboy Carter](#), to critical acclaim.

Watch [Beyoncé – The Music Evolution](#) to learn more.

Will both Taylor Swift and Beyoncé be artists who are remembered 50 years from now for having a strong impact on American culture? Their repertoires suggest that the answer may be yes.

Image from Wikimedia

THE DEVIL'S MUSIC

Beginning as early as the 1950s, some evangelical Christians in the United States complained that rock 'n' roll music was satanic. In an academic essay titled "[The Devil Has the Best Tunes](#)," Nathan Dickey examined this phenomenon, including the following excerpt from [Eric Holmberg's documentary *Hell's Bells*](#).

> *"Like an invisible cancer that inevitably leads to death, so the satanic seed in rock and roll has culminated in a blatant obsession with the occult. Cryptic allusions to the Devil in the music of Blues artist Robert Johnson a generation ago have given place to an open worship of Satan and hell that comes complete with the symbols, liturgies, rituals, and messianic personalities that attend any religious order. No longer the stuff of small underground cults, millions of young people have been caught in its evil sway."*

Over the decades, some musicians have embraced this cultural conflict in their music. For example, the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil" can still be heard on classic rock radio stations today.

Also, a few evangelicals suggested that the most offensive rock songs, when played backwards, yielded Satanic messages. As an amusing response, in 1975 the band Electric Light Orchestra released the song "[Fire on High](#)," which included an eerie opening with a backwards message that (in reverse) said: "The music is reversible, but time is not. Turn back! Turn back!"

More recently, Sam Smith wore a devil costume with plastic horns sticking out of a top hat while performing the song "[Unholy](#)" with Kim Petras at the 2023 Grammy Awards show. Some conservatives criticized the outfit, but Smith gained free publicity along with increased name recognition as a result of the performance.

The "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" music video by Lil Nas X received similar criticism in 2021 for being immoral and harmful to children, mainly because it appeared to encourage devil worshipping.

PERSPECTIVE – BEYOND U.S. BORDERS

In the 1950s, Elvis Presley was threatened with jail time for his allegedly obscene dancing. For an expanded global understanding of how popular music and dance can impact culture and be a form of protest today, it may help to step outside of the United States and look toward Iran. Multiple news outlets reported that the five Iranian girls in the video below were detained for dancing to a Selena Gomez song and having their heads uncovered.

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Also, Instagram videos such as the one below, featuring an Iranian nicknamed Booghy, led to the arrests of 12 men in late 2023. The New York Times reported that Booghy "was detained for several hours and accused of instigating against the government. As part of the crackdown police swarmed street musicians performing in Rasht, arrested some and confiscated their instruments." To conservative Iranians, dancing can be interpreted as a symbol of civil disobedience.

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Similarly, a dissident rapper in Iran was charged with "spreading corruption on earth' and "propaganda against the state." He was sentenced to death in 2023, but that sentence was overturned in 2024.

CLOSING THOUGHT

Popular music as far back as the 1920s pushed against social standards of the day. For at least a century, U.S. parents and other adults have complained about kids' music and dancing. One could argue it's become part of American culture.

ADDITIONAL VIDEO LINKS

We'll close this chapter with some additional examples of how music crosses American media boundaries. Here are some video links that show the cultural intersection of music, television and fashion for younger audiences.

American Bandstand – Top 10 from one week in 1969

Soul Train – Line dancing to Michael Jackson's 1979 hit "Don't Stop Til You Get Enough"

Midnight Special – David Bowie and Marianne Faithfull in 1973

TRUE or FALSE

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

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MUSIC AND CULTURE – LIVING HISTORY

Now is your turn to collect some living history about music and culture.

Interview someone whose lifetime has spanned a broad spectrum of changes in popular music. Age 50 is probably a minimum, but the older the better.

In most journalism settings, it is not appropriate to interview family members and friends, but for this assignment it is OK. Do not interview your parents or guardians. Grandparents could work well, though, if available.

Visit with your interviewee about how their consumption of popular music has evolved over the past decades, both through technology and their own personal musical tastes. How and

when did they listen to music and find new artists when they were younger, and in what ways has that changed over the years?

You also may be interested in learning roughly how much they spent on purchasing music over the years, and what formats they bought (8-track and cassette tapes, vinyl records, CDs, mp3s, streaming services).

You should ask questions about the extent to which the music they enjoy helps define their personal identity or their generation.

Summarize the highlights and key takeaways from your interview in a short narrative of approximately six to eight paragraphs, with three or four sentences per paragraph. There is no template for your writing, but be sure to include the most interesting information that you gleaned from the interview.

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13.

TELEVISION

By Dave Bostwick

When I was an annoying kid in the early 1970s, we had one TV set in our house and three choices for watching television each evening – whatever was broadcast on ABC, CBS or NBC.

The Sunday morning newspaper included a weekly TV schedule. Under my mother's supervision, my sister and I would use different colored pens to circle the shows we wanted to watch that week, thus reserving our TV time in advance. I always circled *The Brady Bunch*.

A decade later, I was fascinated that a cable network that only showed music videos (MTV) or sports (ESPN) could become popular so quickly. Their specialization broke the mold of television's broad appeal and family focus.

As you study this chapter, you'll understand that television's history in some ways repeats the history of radio. Both enjoyed broad nationwide appeal as the medium of choice, but disruptive technology and economic models caused them to evolve toward specialization. For radio, the disruptive technology was television.

For network television, the first disruptive technologies were satellite and cable transmission, which led to more channels and more choices. Next came the internet's impact on the nationwide television industry, which led to an increasing variety of screens, some portable, for consumers to view video content.

INVENTION

A teenager from Idaho is often credited with inventing television, although there were other contributors along with the way. Below is a History Channel documentary about Philo Farnsworth and his early experiments with television. This video is also an example of a documentary that relies partly on staged re-enactments. Consider how that affects your impression of the video.

> ⊞ *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=683#oembed-1*

TELEVISION NOTES AND TIDBITS

American television began to dominate the mass media landscape in the 1950s. According to one historical summary, "The number of television sets in use rose from 6,000 in 1946 to some 12 million by 1951. No new invention entered American homes faster than black and white television sets; by 1955 half of all U.S. homes had one." And by the late 1990s, 98 percent of U.S. homes had a television set.

For additional perspective, here are a few bullet points, in chronological order, about the evolution of television between the 1930s and the 1970s.

- **In the 1930s, television had small screens**, typically no larger than 12 inches.
- Early black-and-white TV sets ranged from $200 to $600 in cost, while the average annual salary was $1,368. **Only the rich could afford one**. As a comparison, if someone today makes $50,000 per year, they probably would not spend $15,000 on a television set.
- NBC was the first national network with regular television broadcasts, including 1939 during the World's Fair in New York. **The first three major networks — NBC, CBS and ABC — began as radio networks and transitioned to television.** (Fox's television network did not launch until 1986.)
- In the 1940s, **the Federal Communications Commission set technical standards** so that content from all networks could be viewed on the same television. Otherwise, people might have needed one TV for NBC and another for CBS, for example.
- In 1954, the first national color broadcast came via the Tournament of Roses Parade on NBC. Although experimentation with color television was part of the 1950s, **the Big Three networks (CBS, NBC and ABC) did not broadcast all of their evening shows in color until 1966**.
- **By 1972, color TV sets outnumbered black-and-white** TV sets in the United States.
- Thanks to satellite transmission and cable, Home Box Office (HBO) launched in 1972 and, by offering premium content, has become the longest-running subscription television service. WTBS became the

first cable superstation in 1976, and **television's revenue model gradually shifted to include cable subscription fees instead of relying solely on advertising.**

FROM RADIO TO TV

Many early programs were merely TV-versions of content that began on radio, including soap operas and variety shows. For example, Jack Benny began hosting radio shows in 1932 and made the transition to television in 1950. Below is the debut episode of *The Jack Benny Show* on television. The video below shows an embedded advertisement for cigarette-maker Lucky Strikes, the show's sponsor, and then a musical sketch so you can gain a sense of early television production.

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SURVIVING SHOWS

A few remnants from the pioneering days of network television survive today. *Meet the Press* first aired in 1947, *Today* in 1952, and *The Tonight Show* in 1954.

You may enjoy watching the start of this archived weather forecast from the first broadcast of the *Today* show.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *I LOVE LUCY*

In 1951, *I Love Lucy* became the first television program filmed before a live studio audience. A PBS feature story listed other ways *I Love Lucy* transformed television, such as casting a Hispanic co-star, setting the

standard for filming a comedy show with three cameras, and incorporating Lucy's pregnancy prominently in some episodes.

In the excerpt below, other characters prepare to take a pregnant Lucy to the hospital.

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And notice the switching of camera angles in the the next excerpt, set in a chocolate factory.

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QUIZ SHOW SCANDALS

Many early shows were created, produced and sponsored by a single company, but longer, segmented programs such as *Today* and *The Tonight Show* started forcing advertisers out of producing their own content.

This change was also related to the quiz show scandals of the 1950s. One prominent case involved Geritol's *Twenty-One*. A contestant who won more than $100,000 later admitted that he had been given answers in advance. Here's a video that summarizes the case.

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Because of rigged quiz shows, television lost credibility. Americans could no longer consider television more honest than printed text. A little over a decade later, this lack of trust likely caused some Americans to believe that TV producers had colluded with the government to stage footage of U.S. astronauts walking on the moon.

On the other hand, as we see repeated throughout media history, audiences sometimes crave entertainment at the expense of truth. A PBS analysis of the quiz show scandal summarized the perspective of Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Joseph Stone:

The true victims were not the contestants, Stone writes, many of whom made money, but the television viewers hoodwinked into believing that the fiction they were watching was actually real-life drama. But even television viewers seemed not to mind.

IMPACT OF TELEVISION ON RADIO AND NEWSPAPERS

TV's immense popularity impacted other media. For example, before television, radio stations and radio networks could afford to produce lots of original shows for large audiences. As advertisers and audiences left radio for television, radio began to rely heavily on recorded music for programming because that was a more cost-effective strategy.

As another example, when evening news broadcasts gained popularity, large-city newspapers began concentrating on morning rather than afternoon delivery of their print product. The afternoon newspaper could not compete with the immediacy of television news. Also, the onset of color television hastened the need for newspaper publishers to print in color, even though it was more costly.

Evening news shows on the major networks became an integral part of many Americans' daily lives. Prominent news anchors such as **Walter Cronkite** ([pictured at right](#)) became extremely influential. In the 1960s, Cronkite was sometimes called "the most trusted man in America." He was also known for his closing catchline at the end of each newscast: "And that's the way it is."

THE DECLINE OF THE MAJOR NETWORKS

Networks often pay a fee to affiliate stations to carry network programs. In return, networks sell advertising time. Networks usually do not own their affiliates.

The three major networks — ABC, CBS and NBC — thrived through the '60s and '70s, accounting for 95 percent of prime-time viewing. When News Corporation launched Fox in 1986, its entertainment targeted younger viewers. Fox also recognized the importance of sports, specifically the NFL, in establishing its brand.

By 2005, the percentage of prime-time viewers for the four major networks had dropped below 45 percent. This decline was caused partly by communications satellites facilitating cable television along with Americans enjoying home video options — first VHS, then DVR and internet streaming.

In 1977, only 14 percent of all U.S. homes received cable. By the summer of 1997, a landmark shift had occurred as basic cable channels had captured a larger prime-time audience than the broadcast networks.

CNN – the Cable News Network — began in 1980 but gained credibility in 1991 with coverage of the Gulf War. Even Iraq's leaders watched CNN's continuous live coverage (something the major networks could not provide).

Also, as cable news networks (first, CNN, and later MSNBC and Fox News) became more popular, the legacy networks (NBC, CBS and ABC) concentrated more on newsmagazines such as *Dateline* and *20/20* in an attempt to replicate the success of CBS's *60 Minutes*.

THE RISE AND FALL OF CABLE TELEVISION

As viewership for the major networks declined, cable networks that focused on specialized entertainment content began to rule the television landscape. Examples include MTV, the Cooking Channel, HGTV, CMT, BET, VH1, TNT, Comedy Central, Lifetime, Nickelodeon, and the USA Network.

In an article from the Associated Press, Eric Degas, an NPR television critic, discussed the popularity of specialized cable television from the '80s to the early 2000s:

> *"People who were previously marginalized by the focus on mass culture suddenly got a voice and a connection with other people like them. So young music fans worldwide bonded over MTV, Black people and folks who love Black culture bonded over BET, middle-*

aged women bonded over Lifetime and fans of home remodeling convened around HGTV and old-school TLC."

Cable television viewership peaked in the early 2000s but then began a slow decline due to competition from internet streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu. Today, some of these once-powerful cable network brands can be described as [TV's ghosts — networks that somehow survive with little reason to watch them anymore](#).

For example, many younger viewers today are not even aware that MTV stands for Music Television Television or that in its heyday, MTV exclusively played new music videos and did not air reality-TV shows.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

These three time stamps are worth mentioning.

1. **The Telecommunications Act of 1996 allowed regional phone companies, long-distance carriers, internet service providers and cable television companies to enter each other's markets.** Today, for example, your internet provider, phone provider and cable television provider can be the same company. This led to massive industry consolidation.
2. **The switch from analog to digital became complete in 2009** with all stations broadcasting digital signals. Television sets no longer receive analog signals via antenna. The FCC has reclaimed and auctioned unused analog frequencies.
3. **The debut of Hulu Plus in 2010 allowed viewers to stream favorite shows to a variety of devices**, opening up a new market area and redefining the concept of television. Today, the distinction between the computer screen and the television screen is melding, partly because of the emergence of streaming services such as Hulu and Netflix.

On the other hand, many streaming services now offer ad-free streaming for a premium price and ad-supported versions for those who prefer to save their money. [The Atlantic's Lora Kelley](#) made this observation:

> *One by one, most of the major streaming services have introduced ads to their subscription offerings. Now consumers face a choice: Pay up, or sit through commercial breaks like it's 1999.*

The free video platform [Tubi](#) gained increasing attention in 2024 as a popular alternative to paid streaming services. Tubi's revenue comes exclusively from advertising and it does not require users to create an account to view content. A [New York Times analysis](#) said, "Tubi's library contains tens of thousands of older shows and movies, many that seem to have been collected from

the bargain bin," which suggests that many U.S. viewers love the idea of free content (with ads). Tubi is owned by the Fox Corporation.

FOOTBALL AND MORE FOOTBALL

As television has become specialized and viewers have more on-demand streaming options beyond large-network shows, there are fewer moments when many millions of Americans are watching the same thing at the same time — with one notable exception.

A Wall Street Journal analysis observed that for television networks, "sports content is outrageously expensive but also critical to own in an industry in which it is one of the few reliable ways to draw in audiences."

The sports business site Sportico concluded that 93 out of the top 100 broadcast programs in 2023 were NFL games.

The only non-sports broadcasts on the 2023 list were the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, the Academy Awards, and the State of the Union address. No scripted or produced entertainment shows made the top 100.

Let's briefly go to the wayback machine to catch a glimpse (no sound in this clip) of the first televised NFL game.

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WRAPUP

Television has had a profound social and cultural impact on Americans. Traditionally, television has given us "common ground," and until the last 25 years it had not been as specialized as other media. There have been historic moments when the majority Americans watched in unison. Here are some examples through time:

- immediate coverage of the Kennedy assassination
- the final episode of M*A*S*H*
- O.J. Simpson chase
- immediate coverage of 9/11
- the beginning of the Iraq wars
- Hurricane Katrina
- Super Bowls

- presidential election coverage
- Jan. 6, 2021

Today's on-demand streaming options have radically changed consumers' viewing habits. Many Americans have been labeled "cord cutters" because they use only wireless devices to access streaming video content, which has threatened the future of traditional cable and network television.

And I'll close with some geezer perspective to echo the chapter introduction. I was once a kid with a choice of watching ABC, CBS or NBC during prime time (7 to 10 p.m., central time) on a box-shaped television with a rotary dial. I couldn't have imagined a television landscape with hundreds of on-demand options and networks based entirely on shows about home and garden (HGTV), cooking (Food Network), or vacations (Travel Channel).

Television has evolved rapidly.

TRUE or FALSE

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=683#h5p-47*

DRAG-AND-DROP: TELEVISION HISTORY *(last half of 20th century)*

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SPECIALIZED NEWS ON TELEVISION – ASSIGNMENT

This chapter discusses the emergence of specialized television content. One significant and successful specialized television format is 24-hour news.

Study at least 30 minutes of content on at least three of these four major national television news outlets (for a minimum total of 1.5 hours of viewing time):

- [Fox News](#)
- [CNN](#)
- [MSNBC](#)
- [CNBC](#)

If you don't have access to television access to these networks, you can watch videos and read content from the linked websites.

What did you learn about the these networks' content? Discuss your views on whether 24-hour television news outlets serve a vital role in our media landscape. Here are two questions to consider:

1. Do these networks create bubbles that limit viewers' perspectives on current events?
2. Overall, do they have a positive or negative impact (or both) on viewers by keeping them informed about current events?

Don't just write in an improvised manner. Include observations from the time you spent viewing content from these news outlets, cite examples of specific content, and focus on objective analysis. You have the option to use other researched information, but clearly cite your sources.

Your discussion should be 250-350 words long, written in journalistic style with approximately three sentences per paragraph.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=683#h5p-101

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- The Evolution of Television – Understanding Media and Culture
- The Relationship Between Television and Culture – Understanding Media and Culture
- *Media & Culture* — by Richard Campbell, Christopher R. Martin, and Bettina Fabos

14.

MOVIES

By Alyssa Riley

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=314#h5p-104

Cinema has been a constant source of fascination for me, with films such as *Interstellar*, *Parasite*, *Whiplash* and the complete *Harry Potter* series among my all-time favorites. Yet these cinematic gems are a tiny slice of the 500,000 movies that have graced the big screens since the creation of the first film in 1888. The movie industry itself evolved from technological breakthroughs in photography, the exploration of motion illusion, and the study of human and animal locomotion during that era.

Movie-watching is one of my pastimes. I can be transported into different lives, breathtaking stories and other worlds. Sometimes I feel as though I know the characters on a personal level.

In the slightly over two decades of my life, the cinematic landscape has gone through a remarkable transformation. Visual quality has improved significantly, animation has become more lifelike, and advancements in green-screen technology and computer-generated graphics are extraordinary have expanded creative possibilities.

Eight movies were produced in the Harry Potter film series.

And it all began over 130 years ago with one invention capable of capturing moving images, forever altering the future of entertainment. In this chapter, I'll take you through the history of the movie industry, from inventions and innovations to cultural persuasion through film.

19th CENTURY: EARLY INVENTIONS

The pre-classical era of cinema started with the invention of the Kinetoscope, but there have been many innovations since that have turned the industry into what we know today. The following slideshow summarizes the earliest technologies in the development of cinema:

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=314#h5p-20

Next, watch the following video for a more in-depth look at pre-classical cinema:

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Thanks to YouTube, you can watch one of the first science-fiction movies ever made: *A Trip to the Moon*, directed by Georges Méliès. This may help you appreciate production techniques for silent films when there were no scripts to further the movie's narrative.

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The 2011 movie Hugo, directed by Martin Scorsese, includes scenes based on the work of Georges Méliès. The video below is cued to start at one of the scenes that may help you envision how *A Trip to the Moon* was made.

1900s: THE MOVIE INDUSTRY

Early in the 20th century, movies began changing rapidly. Films became more narrative in nature and included color and sound. Production companies popped up, and Hollywood emerged as the unofficial capital of the U.S. movie industry.

Motion Picture Theaters

Edwin S. Porter, a projectionist and engineer for the Edison Company, created *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), utilizing Méliès' stage-like composition style through editing, camera pans, rear projections and diagonally composed shots. Establishing the realistic narrative as a new cinema standard, *The Great Train Robbery* can be considered the first major box-office hit and paved the way for industry growth.

Production Companies

With a surge in demand for movies, production companies gained prominence. The Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC) was created in 1908. It pooled the most significant motion picture patents and established an exclusive contract between the 10 leading companies and Eastman Kodak Company, a supplier of film stock. By 1910, there were at least 20 production companies in the United States.

The Art of Silent Film

U.S. films gained popularity in Europe, Russia and Scandinavia from 1911 to 1926, as movies became longer and had more editing and production value for narrative-driven dramas, romances and comedies. With the use of phonographic cylinders and discs, music and soundtracks could be played as background sound in films.

Technicolor

Color was initially brought to films through hand coloring, tinting, toning and stenciling. But beginning in the early 1900s, the British Kinemacolor process – with principles of color separation – began to be used for "natural color"' moving images. Because the technicolor process was expensive and tedious, it was mostly used for documentaries from 1915 until 1932, when the three-color (red, green and blue) technicolor process was introduced. Classic films like *Gone With the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) were among the first to implement technicolor for broad audiences.

1920s-1950s: THE BRIGHT AND SHINY HOLLYWOOD

The Rise of the Hollywood Studios

When the stock market crashed and the Great Depression began, most of the country was hit hard. An exception, however, was the Hollywood movie industry.

In 1927, *The Jazz Singer* became the first feature-length film to have synchronized dialogue. By the early 1930s, a majority of feature-length films had sound, and by the mid-'30s, some had full color, too. The American film industry now dominated the worldwide industry as five major studios reigned supreme with only one real rival: India.

The Golden Age of Hollywood, or the rise of the Hollywood studios, came in the '30s, '40s and '50s as cinema became the primary form of popular entertainment. Many Americans began visiting the cinemas at least two times a week. With the start of World War II and gains in technology, production values improved. Also during World War II, the U.S. government sought help from Hollywood movie studios in creating films with patriotic content.

Appropriate Content and Codes

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) was formed in 1922 to combat government censorship and promote artistic freedom and self-regulation through a rating system. By 1930, criticisms resurfaced, and

Outside the Warners' Theatre in 1926 before the premiere of "Don Juan," starring John Barrymore (Creative Commons Image – Wikimedia)

conservative groups called for censorship. As a result, the Motion Picture Production Code, sometimes called "The Hays Code" for MPAA President Will H. Hays, was implemented. It remained in place until 1967 to ensure movies were "directly responsible for spiritual or moral progress, for higher types of social life, and for much correct thinking."

Watch the following video to learn more about the Golden Age of Hollywood:

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An important legal side note from this era came in 1948. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that movie studios could not have absolute control over which theaters would show their movies.

Prior to this ruling, major film studios often owned the theaters where their movies were shown. Formally titled United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc., it also came to be known as the Hollywood Antitrust Case of

1948. If not for this ruling, you can imagine a U.S. movie landscape in which moviegoers who wanted to see *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo* could have only seen those Pixar movies in cities that had a Pixar-owned theater.

1960s-1980s: YOUTH CULTURE AND THE START OF SEQUELS

The Graduate, released in 1967, was one of the first U.S. films to reflect the attitudes of a younger generation, whom we now call Baby Boomers. Many Baby Boomers were dissatisfied with the repressive social codes established by older conservatives as well as U.S. participation in the Korean and Vietnam wars. In that same year, *Bonnie and Clyde* featured resistance toward patriotism and institutional authority.

Below is the 1967 trailer for *The Graduate*.

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A New Ratings System

You may recognize the terms 'G' for general audiences, 'PG' for parental guidance suggested, 'PG-13' for parents strongly cautioned, 'R' for restricted and 'NC-17' for adults only. Established by the Motion Picture Association (MPA) in 1968, the Film Rating System was created to label movies and help parents determine the appropriateness of a film for their children.

Before these labels were introduced, parents across the nation were calling for government action to censor movies. Jack Valenti, then CEO of MPAA, listened to the concerns and established the Classification and Rating Administration (CARA).

CARA is composed of parents who rate 600 to 900 films a year to help other parents make informed decisions on what is appropriate for children of various ages to view. Additionally, CARA continuously engages with parents to consider changes in their attitudes. Here are a few brief facts about the MPAA's Film Rating System:

- In 1984, 'PG-13' was introduced.
- In the '90s, rating descriptors were included for movies 'PG' or higher.
- In 2007, tobacco imagery was included as a rating factor.
- By the end of 2023, more than 28,000 films had been rated under the MPAA.

Blockbusters, Knockoffs and Sequels

The dawn of the modern film industry – including blockbusters, knockoffs and sequels – came in the '70s with

a new wave of directors, many of whom explored digital and computerized special effects. *Star Wars* (1977), directed by George Lucas, was historically significant in this realm.

Sequels were increasingly popular during this decade, many becoming multi-million-dollar franchises as they are still creating them today. For example, *Rocky* debuted in 1976, and in 2023 *Creed III* was released – the ninth sequel.

Another popular example, *Indiana Jones Raiders of the Lost Ark,* debuted in 1981, and *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny,* the fifth sequel, came out in 2023. An interesting fact about Indiana Jones is that Harrison Ford played Dr. Henry Walton "Indiana" Jones Jr. in each film.

Here's a trailer for the original *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark.*

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The 1990s and Beyond

Released in 1993, *Jurassic Park* relied heavily on special effects and serves as a good example for a movie trend of the 1990s. You can watch an original trailer below.

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Two divergent U.S. cinema strands began to grow in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century.

1. **More blockbusters began relying on special effects**, including *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991) and *Jurassic Park* (1993). Also, the first fully computer-animated film, *Toy Story* (1995) demonstrated what could be done with computer-generated animation in large-market movies, and animated films soon gained popularity. Beginning in 2001, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy relied heavily on computer-generated scenes to gain wide popularity. A few years later, beginning with *Iron Man* in 2008, Marvel's series of superhero movies used special effects to dominate ticket sales for well over a decade.

2. **Independent, low-budget films, including activist documentaries were released to influence public opinion**. The documentary *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) sought to change attitudes toward

American gun culture after the Columbine High School shootings of 1999. The documentary *Super Size Me* (2004) called attention to fast-food consumption and Americans' unhealthy eating habits. Beyond documentaries, another dramatic example was *Hotel Rwanda* (2004).

Below is the 2004 trailer for *Hotel Rwanda*.

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And here's a side note about the 1990s — As file sharing evolved, digital piracy spread from music to movies. However, it was more difficult to quantify how much revenue the movie industry was losing from piracy, partly because many pirated digital files were significantly lower in quality.

The next video is an example of a national anti-piracy ad from the era. You can refer back to chapter 11 to view a collegiate anti-piracy ad that mimicked the original concept below.

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AFTER THE PANDEMIC

In response to the COVID pandemic, Americans increasingly watched movies at home through streaming services rather than going to theaters. A report from Axios summarized how the streaming boom fueled the U.S. film industry's pandemic recovery.

Who will make and market future movies? The paradigm may be changing. In summer 2023, Mattel partially rebranded itself as a movie company with the success of *Barbie*, which was about much more than selling toys, according to a feature article from Variety magazine. Furthermore, according to an article in Forbes, in 2023 Barbie manufacturer Mattel had "up to 45 more movies in development based on toys like Polly Pocket and Hot Wheels." A few other big companies could try to replicate Mattel's success, using movies to increase brand awareness.

Below is a 2023 trailer for *Barbie*.

The hype surrounding 2023 concert movies by Taylor Swift and Beyoncé may also mark a change in movie marketing and distribution. One Associated Press report at the time noted that the two movies were "first-of-their-kind deals made directly with AMC Theaters that circumvent Hollywood studios" and initially left streamers waiting on the sidelines.

As for theater atmosphere, the Alamo Drafthouse chain may be an example of the U.S. movie industry becoming more of a luxury experience for consumers. An Axios article said that the "success of chains like Alamo, prioritizing a higher-end experience for moviegoers, illustrates much about where cinema is going."

Another trend is alternative movie versions for different global markets. As an extreme example, a 2022 NY Times article explained that in China's version of *Minions*, morality triumphs.

Consider the brief history of Redbox as an example of how quickly how quickly we've evolved from physical media to digital streaming. When Redbox launched in 2004 with rental kiosks in front of McDonald's restaurants, the strategy seemed sustainable. Redbox, which started with DVD rentals and later expanded to video games, soon surpassed its competitors. By 2013, it had taken over approximately half of the movie rental market in the United States.

Soon after that, though, the demand for DVD movie rentals began declining due to the emergence of Netflix and other streaming options. The surge in streaming accelerated during the pandemic. Redbox's parent company declared bankruptcy in 2024 and began shutting down the red kiosks.

Creative Commons Image

FUTURE INNOVATIONS

Movies are becoming more technologically advanced, frequently surprising audiences. Here are six innovations that could affect movie production in the future.

> *Virtual Reality*: Like 3D technology, VR is used to boost audience engagement, allowing viewers to see a film with greater sensory stimulation.

Glasses-free 3D: Innovating the concept of 3D films, audiences can see a movie as close as a meter away from the screen, and without the cheap paper glasses.

Augmented Reality: Combining real-time interaction between virtual and real worlds, AR aids in creating realistic 3D representations. In other words, audiences view superimposed images of real objects.

Internet of Things: A network of connected devices and technology that facilitates communication, IoT enables highly immersive and personalized movie experiences, with a possible shift from creator-driven to audience-driven content.

Voice Synthesis with AI: It is no surprise that some movie makers have started experimenting with AI to synthesize voices, sounds and scenes in movies.

3D Printing: This can create props, designs and sets, taking digital visions and producing fine-grained physical realities. Additionally, it aids in reducing the costs for building sets.

BEST OF SHOW

Click through the following slideshow to see a subjectives list of the best movies every year from 1980 to 2023, based on compilations from Rotten Tomatoes and IMBd:

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=314#h5p-21*

FILL IN THE BLANKS

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online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=314#h5p-42

CULTURAL IMPACT OF MOVIES

This chapter included several examples of noteworthy movies and sequels.

Choose one movie or a series of movies/sequels and analyze its significance to American culture and cinema. You can use an example mentioned in the chapter, or you are free to select a different movie.

Beyond being popular, why was it impactful? Did the impact involve technology, scripting, film style, reflection of its historic era, or other elements?

Related to the chapter preview question, you may also want to consider why this movie engaged you to the extent that you still remember its content.

Write approximately 250 words. Use journalistic style with no more than three or four sentences per paragraph.

To strengthen your essay, rewatch the movie and find specific supporting details in the scenery, dialog and presentation.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=314#h5p-103

Background sources for content about movie technology and evolution

- [A Very Short History of Cinema](#) – Science+Media Museum
- [The History of Movies](#) – Media and Culture
- [How the Movies Have Changed, a Timeline](#) – Artifact
- Presentation: "Let's Talk Movies" by Bonnie Bauman, March 2023

Sources for future innovation

- [6 Emerging Technologies Revolutionizing the Film Industry](#) – Raindance
- [What is IoT? – Internet of Things Explained](#) – Amazon Web Services

15.

INTERNET

By Dave Bostwick

> 📊 An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
> https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=747#h5p-105

A little more than a decade ago, I taught a lesson about web searches to a group of graduating high school seniors who were using their own smartphones to experiment in class. I wanted to show them that Google search results often varied depending on data that Google had collected about individual users (and this is true for many platforms beyond Google).

At one point, I asked students to type their school mascot for a Google search. Several students attended a school with the panthers as their mascot, so they did a one-word search for *panthers*. The results were fascinating.

Some students saw a Wikipedia entry for panthers (the animals) at the top of their search results. Some students' results included links related to the NFL's Carolina Panthers. One young woman who was active in cheerleading saw several web pages about "Panther Cheerleaders" on her page-one search results.

At the top of one Black student's search was a link to information about the Black Panther political party, which gained prominence while advocating for Black rights in the 1960s. This student had never heard of the Black Panthers until that day in my class.

Keep in mind this was a few years before the Marvel movie *The Black Panther*, and the search results would no doubt yield different results today.

Nonetheless, this incident helps me establish my opening point for this chapter. The internet has evolved to make our mass media consumption customized and personalized. We peruse popular media platforms to locate

content that algorithms suggest to us. On the other hand, the internet can create partitions among Americans based on their interests and beliefs.

It's a trend that's not likely to end soon. During the 2024 World Economic Forum, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said future AI tools will give different responses to users based on their locations and opinions. Altman, who is the founder of ChatGPT, added, "That's going to make a lot of people uncomfortable."

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

As we've studied in previous chapters, radio, magazines and television all evolved to become more specialized. One could argue that the internet has taken us from specialization to personalization because much of the internet content we see is based on our personal information and data.

The internet is a broad concept, and we could cover several chapters about connectivity and terminology. Instead, though, we'll devote this one chapter to a basic understanding of the following:

- Brief history of the internet's birth and evolution
- General idea of how the internet works
- Ethical and psychological concerns for society

Thanks to the internet, we have streaming video, so parts of this chapter will rely on Google's YouTube to deliver key perspectives.

IN THE BEGINNING

I'm sure the pioneers of the World Wide Web did not envision that one day Americans would get news updates through a vaping device.

With that in mind, let's start with a brief explanatory history video, courtesy of Interesting Engineering. Making it perhaps appropriate for this chapter, the video has a snappy, informal and slightly snarky style with animated graphics, as opposed to a more polished TV or movie documentary format.

> 📄 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=747#oembed-1*

One takeaway from the video: The internet is an open-ended technology that began as a means for researchers

to share information securely and more efficiently. Much like radio, the internet did not begin as a medium for entertainment.

THAT'S THE INTERNET

The internet has rapidly evolved to become an essential part of Americans' lives for job applications, education and daily communication. Next, here's a short animated video from Blaster Technology that explains how the internet works. It includes a brief overview of how DNS technology resembles an old-fashioned phone book by associating an IP address with a lettered address (such as google.com).

> 🖼 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=747#oembed-2*

You can also watch a longer, fully produced video from Vox titled "How Does the Internet Work? Glad You Asked." Here are a few key quotes from the Vox video:

- *"The cloud is a marketing term."* In fact, the internet is also a physical space that includes undersea cables, wires, hubs and routers.
- *"At its most basic, a cell phone is a radio."* Binary information [ones and zeros] is sent through a router instead of a radio receiver.
- *"There are lots of people that still don't have reliable internet access."* Although internet access is a daily necessity for many Americans, it's more of a luxury in some other countries.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Much of this chapter will focus on ethical and psychological issues related to the internet. We'll start with the digital divide.

Americans who can afford smartphones, tablets and computers typically have no problems staying informed. That is not the case for some low-income Americans, especially after the federal Affordable Connectivity Program expired in 2024.

The State of Local News Project at Northwestern University suggested that wealthier, urban Americans have access to more local news. Previous research also showed that a reliable internet connection was essential for many Americans during the pandemic, but not everyone could afford it.

As more of our daily media content becomes digital, including textbooks and government documents, a primary concern is that Americans who can't afford high-speed internet access and smart devices will be at an informational disadvantage compared to wealthier Americans.

The digital divide is even more noticeable when you compare internet access among countries worldwide.

POPULARITY vs. QUALITY

An MIT Technology Review article about how Facebook got addicted to spreading misinformation included the following chart based on information that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg shared in 2018.
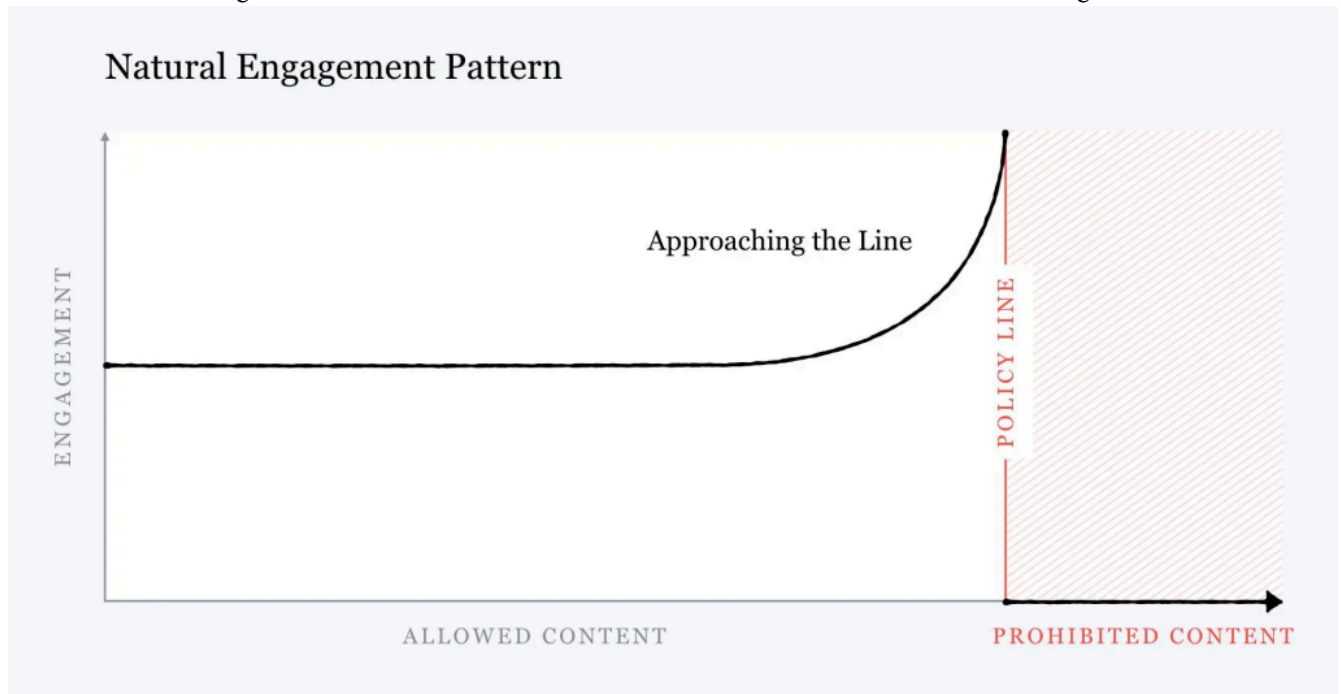
The chart illustrates why it can be so difficult for social media platforms and websites to regulate users' posts and minimize harm. The most popular content is often the closest to violating community standards. Social media and search algorithms tend to reward popularity. Consumers may say they dislike controversial posts and disinformation, but many of them are still lured by clickbait headlines and thus view misleading information or hate speech.

In 2020, New York Times' Shira Ovide made an observation about Zuckerberg's chart that seems pertinent to this chapter:

> "... no matter where Facebook drew the line at activity that went too far — dangerous lies, bullying, calls for violence, sexually suggestive photos — people tended to post material that went right up to the line. And they did that because, again, people found it engaging."

CONNECTING THE WORLD?

In 2017, Mark Zuckerberg changed Facebook's goal from "connecting the world" to "giving people the power to build community and bring the world closer together." Steven Levy of Wired magazine argued that the resulting changes made to Facebook's own algorithms seemed to "pump up membership" in extremist groups, contributing greatly to the D.C. insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021.

Another New York Times article by Ovide said that Facebook does not reflect reality. It included the following observation:

> *"Facebook sells billions of dollars in ads each year because what people see there, and how Facebook chooses to prioritize that information, can influence what people believe and buy."*

Beyond Facebook, this observation applies more broadly to most social media platforms.

More recently, consider how governments pass laws in attempts to control what their citizens see on the internet and social media, including in China. We've certainly seen that in U.S. debates about social media censorship and TikTok, but it's even more evident beyond U.S. borders. The New York Times reported on how other countries are copying China's online blockade.

ONLINE CHILD SAFETY

In the past decade, social media executives have frequently been accused of ignoring the potential dangers for children who use social media platforms, including psychological damage, addiction and sexploitation. A New York Times article cited government documents showing that Meta rejected efforts to improve children's safety.

In January 2024, U.S. senators questioned executives from five companies – Meta, TikTok, X, Snap and Discord – about online child safety. A few senators even compared social media companies to cigarette makers. The most dramatic moment came when Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley spoke to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg (and remember from a previous chapter that Facebook is part of the Meta conglomerate).

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=747#oembed-3*

Despite the drama in the video clip above, U.S. senators and representatives have struggled over the years to pass meaningful legislation to protect children online and safeguard all users' data. This has allowed social media platforms to operate with minimal federal regulations, although a few states have passed their own laws.

For example, in 2023, Arkansas passed the Social Media Safety Act, which required age verification for social media usage and imposed penalties on companies that retain user data illegally and do not verify users' ages.

However, legal challenges, financed by social media companies and based partly on free speech rights, initially blocked the Arkansas law's implementation.

Similarly, the U.S. Congress passed a national ban or forced sale of TikTok which was signed by the president, but the legislation may not survive legal challenges.

IF YOU AREN'T THE CUSTOMER, YOU'RE THE PRODUCT

When we use social media, search engines and websites, we typically allow companies to collect data about our internet usage, such as sites we visit and items we search for. As a trade-off for much of our online content being free, we see lots of ads that can be based on the data that companies have collected about us.

You can say, then, that each American internet user is a product that can be sold to advertisers.

Below is a partial screenshot of Privacy Badger, a browser extension I sometimes use to see hidden trackers that monitor my web browsing activity on various sites. The screenshot shows that, in this case, there were 46 potential trackers connected to a single web page that I visited.
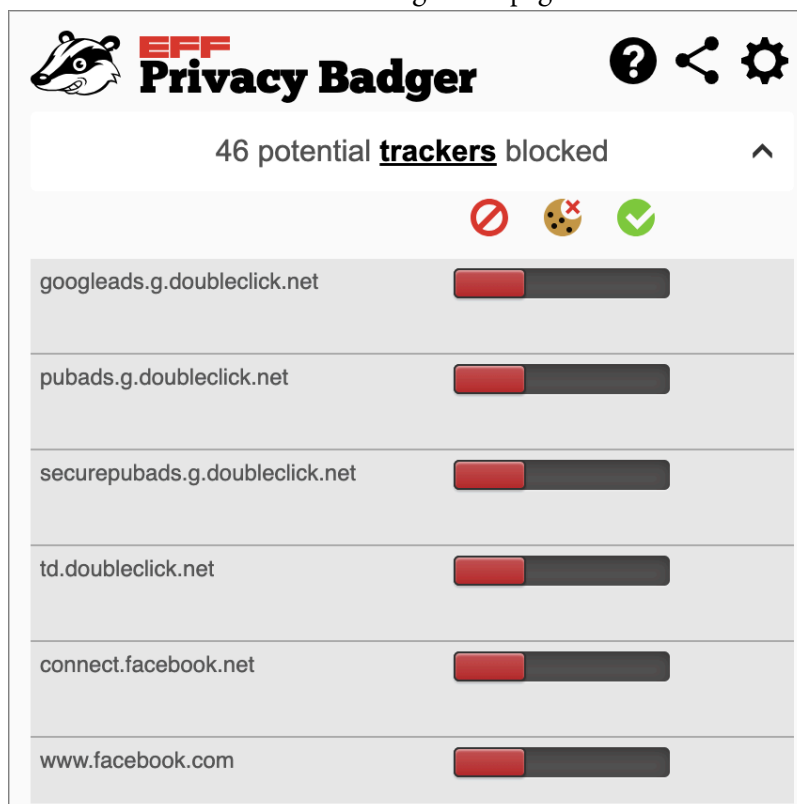
As the Privacy Badger screenshot illustrates, trackers want to invisibly send information about our internet usage to advertisers and data brokers.

Online tracking isn't always a bad thing, though. Here's a kinder explanation from the All About Cookies website:

> *When you visit a website, it gives your browser a cookie to store in a cookie file that's placed in your*

browser's folder on your hard drive. The next time you visit the same website, the browser will give back the cookie to identify you. Then the website loads with a personalized experience.

Online tracking and cookies can help advertisers and public relations professionals measure effectiveness. For example, here are two website addresses that will in theory take readers to the same New York Times article.

ADDRESS 1 – https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/09/magazine/movies-theaters-streaming.html?campaign_id=9&emc=edit_nn_20240127&instance_id=113638&nl=the-morning&regi_id=96912916&segment_id=156565&te=1&user_id=3544579ce1fb22c0827e722878b6f520

ADDRESS 2 – https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/09/magazine/movies-theaters-streaming.html

Why is the first address longer? The first address enables tracking. After the letters *html*, the first address is coded so that media trackers can collect data about how many people click on the link (which was originally embedded in an email newsletter) and where individual visitors go on the website after they click on the link. *(Note: For privacy concerns, I altered a few numbers and letters in the user_id of the first address before publishing this chapter.)*

POPULARITY CONTEST

We'll wrap up this chapter with a video from Data Is Beautiful charting the most popular websites from 1995 to 2023. The video shows "worldwide data based on websites traffic measured by monthly visits or sessions."

> 🖮 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=747#oembed-4*

Consider how valuable it can be for a platform to gain users' loyalty as their initial landing spot for online interactions. In the video above, you'll note the top slot shifted from America Online (AOL.com) to Yahoo to Google as the Internet moved from mostly human-curated content in the heyday of Yahoo to algorithms beginning with Google. That trend will likely continue so that we'll see some embedded advertising in AI-generated search results.

Although the video shows lots of chart movement until 2012, Google then claimed the top spot for the remainder of the decade and beyond, while Facebook and YouTube battled for the second and third positions and all other platforms lagged far behind.

That doesn't mean Google will remain entrenched at the top. For example, in 2024 OpenAI launched a prototype of SearchGPT as an alternative to Google's linked search results.

NOTE: Due to the range of screen sizes (computers, tablets, smartphones) and platforms (websites, mobile apps), metrics used to gauge online traffic across multiple years are imprecise. The video above is merely intended to illustrate broad trends.

CLOSING PERSPECTIVE

If you are a prisoner of the moment, you may think that most mass media content was reliable back in the good old days before the internet ruined everything with fake news. As we've studied several times in this OER text, that's an oversimplification. Here's an additional perspective from *The Gutenberg Parenthesis* by Jeff Jarvis:

> *But it is important to recognize that many of the problems attributed to the internet are ultimately human problems, our failings. We bring to the net a long unbroken history of racism, misogyny, mistrust, and fear. The net did not suddenly teach us to hate. Turn off the internet tomorrow and the hate will still burn.*

On the other hand, the internet gave more people a means to express their ideas and feelings. It has even given some of us hope that, collectively, we can improve the world through our evolving media tools.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=747#h5p-48

THE INTERNET'S IMPACT ON READING AND VIEWING – LIVING HISTORY

Several of our chapters have included stories about the the disruptive impact of the internet on traditional media platforms. Now is your turn to collect some living history about the internet.

The instructions are similar to a previous interview assignment about music and culture, except this time you are covering media evolution outside of music.

Interview someone whose lifetime has spanned a broad spectrum of changes in media consumption habits. Age 45 is probably a minimum for this assignment.

In most journalism settings, it is not appropriate to interview family members and friends, but for this assignment it is OK. You should not, however, interview parents or immediate guardians.

Visit with your interviewee about how their use of internet-connected media devices has evolved over the past decades. Ask questions about how they think the internet has changed their reading and viewing habits:

- Newspapers
- Books
- Magazines
- Movies
- Television
- Advertisements

Discuss the ways they think internet connectivity has changed American culture for better and for worse, including websites, social media and smartphones.

Summarize the highlights and key takeaways from your interview in a short narrative of approximately five paragraphs, with three or four sentences per paragraph.

Your summary does not necessarily need to mention all items in the bullet list above, but share the most interesting information that you gleaned from the interview.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=747#h5p-106

16.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

By Dave Bostwick

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=5#h5p-107

Although I earned my bachelor's degree in journalism, I took several courses about public relations along the way. So when I first graduated from college, I applied for a few PR positions.

I got an immediate call for one of those PR jobs and went to an on-site job interview the next day. I was disappointed to see that this job involved sitting in a cubicle, along with approximately 20 other telemarketers, making unsolicited sales calls. This call-center work didn't align with the engaging lessons I learned about PR in my college classes.

Fortunately, PR professionals today are held in much higher esteem, but the term "public relations" can still seem squishy or broad.

What does public relations really mean? How do we identify authentic PR jobs that require professional skills?

Here's how the Public Relations Society of America defines the profession:

> ***Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.***

The call-center position that I interviewed for didn't fit that definition, mainly because making cold calls no doubt annoyed most people who picked up their old-fashioned phones in the days before caller ID. Also, there

was no long-term strategy to build mutually beneficial relationships. The goal was for the company to make money as quickly as possible.

In this chapter, you'll focus on the growing realm of professional public relations and examine a few brief case studies. You'll also examine ways that public relations is distinct from advertising.

LOTS TO DO

Public relations can be a rewarding career because of its complexity and variety. The following presentation shows the broad range of professional PR activities.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=5#h5p-39

It may be helpful to make a distinction between public relations and advertising.

A PR campaign attempts to increase audience awareness or strengthen people's attitudes about a client – such as a public figure, a company or an organization – often by securing favorable media publicity. However, PR professionals sometimes can't control that narrative.

For example, a PR office can send a news release to a local television station and hope for some positive (and free) publicity IF the station's journalists decide to cover information from the news release. However, the PR office has minimal control over how the TV station frames its coverage.

On the other hand, advertising typically involves buying media space or time to publicize products or services. Unlike the example of the PR news release in the previous paragraph, if an organization buys a television or social media advertisement, the organization controls the content of the initial ad.

The effectiveness of an ad campaign often can be measured by increased sales, name recognition or visibility, while it is more difficult to measure the effectiveness of a PR campaign.

POSITIVE VIBES

Here's an example of a PR campaign that generated publicity and positive vibes for a company, even though

it wasn't directly connected to company sales or revenue. In 2023, Airbnb committed to provide short-term housing for thousands of Ukrainian refugees. The good-will gesture garnered publicity and eventually gave Airbnb co-founder Joe Gebbia an interview with ABC News.

> 🖳 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:* https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=5#oembed-1

As an additional example from Northwest Arkansas, after tornadoes caused extensive damage in June 2024, Tyson Foods Inc. distributed 21,000 free meals to area residents in need. The initiative involved a partnership with Walmart, and it generated [positive publicity for both companies](#).

PUBLICS (plural)

The PRSA definition of public relations uses the plural noun *publics* instead of the singular *public*. PR professionals craft targeted messages to multiple groups and often have different goals and strategies for effectively communicating with each group.

In the interactive presentation below, you can consider the various publics that a university PR staff might target in its communication plans.

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> https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=5#h5p-40

A GOOD EXAMPLE

A couple of decades from now, when people debate the most culturally important music of the 2020s, maybe someone should mention the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The commission dropped an album titled [We're Safety Now Haven't We](#). Besides emphasizing safer habits for a teenage target audience, the album generated lots of positive publicity from media outlets such as [NPR](#).

Here's a lyrical sample from the chorus of the opening song, which advocates wearing a helmet while riding a bike.

When you're in these streets,
Take caution.
Protect your neck and your noggin.

Listeners are free to download, remix and reuse songs from the album, including on social media.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=5#oembed-2

And if you didn't catch those lyrics, here's a condensed text version.

A BAD EXAMPLE

Conversely, here's an example of a PR message that did more harm than good.

In February of 2023, Vanderbilt's Peabody College's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion released a statement intended to show support for the campus community at Michigan State University, where a gunman had killed three students. The statement was sent via email to Vanderbilt students and included this call to action:

In the wake of the Michigan shootings, let us come together as a community to reaffirm our commitment to caring for one another and promoting a culture of inclusivity on our campus. By doing so, we can honor the victims of this tragedy and work towards a safer, more compassionate future for all.

One problem: The statement was generated by ChatGPT, which angered many students who received the email. One student gave the following quote to The Vanderbilt Hustler student newspaper.

"There is a sick and twisted irony to making a computer write your message about community and togetherness because you can't be bothered to reflect on it yourself."

Another student provided this critique:

"It's hard to take a message seriously when I know that the sender didn't even take the time to put their genuine thoughts and feelings into words."

AN OLDIE BUT A GOODIE

I'll close the chapter with one of my all-time favorite examples of a company's PR efforts turning bad publicity into good publicity. It was also one of the first PR case studies that show the power of the internet

and social media to create headaches for large companies that don't pay close enough attention to customer service.

Canadian musician Dave Carroll was upset with United Airlines. He said that one of his prized guitars had been badly damaged during a flight from Nova Scotia to Nebraska. He was most frustrated with the lack of help he received from United's customer service.

After repeated failures to get people from United Airlines to listen to his problem, Carroll turned to YouTube. He wrote a song and then created and posted an accompanying video in 2009. You can still watch his work on YouTube.

📇 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:* https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=5#oembed-3

Soon, United Airlines was facing a PR crisis. Carroll's video, made with a budget of only $150 and volunteer help from others who sympathized with his plight, collected a million YouTube views in four days and became a topic of discussion on national talk and news shows.

United Airlines publicly fixed the problem by offering Carroll $1,200 in flight vouchers and $1,200 in cash. Carroll later summarized the [significance of his song as a PR case study](#):

> *"'United Breaks Guitars' was an early sign that in this new digital world, one customer can affect the profitability of the world's biggest brands on a budget of, in my case, $150. Companies now are listening much more closely than they ever did before, consumers are feeling more empowered and every customer can have a voice … even if he or she can't sing."*

You can contrast United Airlines' approach with [a more recent response to a customer complaint at AirCanada](#). In that case, an AirCanada customer used AirCanada's support chatbot to get information about the airline's bereavement discount policy.

The chatbot gave him erroneous guidance about the steps required to get a partial refund. Due to the chatbot's bad advice, the customer ended up having to pay full price with no refund. The customer eventually filed a lawsuit.

AirCanada representatives argued that the company's chatbot was "a separate legal entity that is responsible for its own actions." However, the court ruled that because the chatbot was part of a company website, AirCanada was responsible for giving the customer a partial refund due to the chatbot's mistake.

Additionally, AirCanada collected a lot of negative publicity along the way.

MANAGING AN ADMISSION STATEMENT

As a more recent example of crisis communications, rock musician Dave Grohl made a public statement about becoming the father of a daughter outside his marriage. One PR executive praised Grohl's admission as being clean, smart and simple, especially because it came before any media outlets had reported on the child's birth.

Grohl's statement was published in September 2024 on the same day as a presidential debate, perhaps making it less likely to gain widespread attention. You can read more here:

Dave Grohl – *Public Domain Image*

- A Rock Star's Mystery Baby Offers a Lesson in Crisis Communication – The New York Times

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REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=5#h5p-50

PR CONSIDERATIONS

If you are a student who is planning a career in advertising and public relations, you likely will receive much more thorough guidance about crisis/image management in future coursework. In

this assignment, the following hypothetical scenarios merely give you an introductory taste of PR considerations.

OPENING NOTE – The two scenarios in this assignment are hypothetical, and Glory State University does not actually exist.

Pick <u>one</u> of the following options:

OPTION 1. A local television station has just reported that the Glory State University budget is so bad that the university is expected to lay off nearly 500 employees (mainly administrative assistants, custodians, food service workers and part-time staff members) within the next six months. You are the head of PR at Glory State. Several other area reporters have asked for interviews to cover this story, and inaccurate information has spread quickly on social media. Some current students are convinced that the university will close at the end of the semester.

Your president has told you that the layoffs are likely but not inevitable. Last month during an informal campus meeting with faculty, she said she shared a chart with information about budget deficits and potential layoffs. She now regrets sharing the chart but says that any information in the chart is already outdated.

- How do you respond to reporters' requests?
- What information do you release to the public via a news release and/or social media?
- What other steps will you take?

OPTION 2. You are the public relations specialist at Glory State University. One of the university's researchers, Dr. Clarence Mellow, has discovered what could be a cure for skin cancer. It truly could be one of the greatest discoveries of this decade. Science reporters from all over the country are heading to your campus to interview Dr. Mellow.

However, Dr. Mellow is extremely shy, stutters when nervous, and has no desire to be a media darling. You have been asked to work with him over the next 24 hours to prepare him for an onslaught of interviews ranging from the Associated Press to National Public Radio to Fox News.

- How do you spend the next 24 hours with Dr. Mellow?
- What other strategic ideas do you have to create a positive public image for Glory State University and Dr. Mellow's work?

YOUR TASK

Explain how you would handle ONE of these hypothetical situations. Use assigned content from this lesson to support your decision-making process.

Your explanation should be written in journalistic style. Write five or six paragraphs with approximately three sentences per paragraph.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=5#h5p-108

17.

ADVERTISING

By Dave Bostwick

> 🖳 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
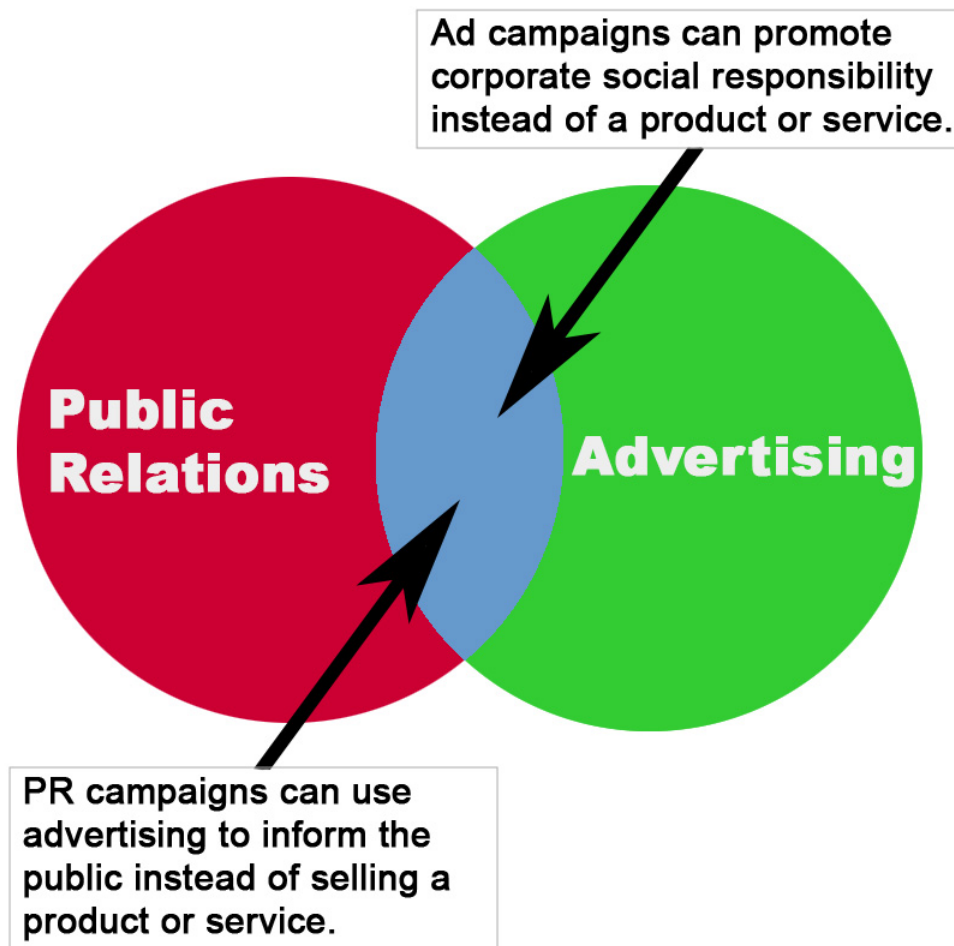> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#h5p-60*

Consider the revenue streams embedded in much of the mass media we consume.

HBO, for example, relies primarily on viewers paying for access to its programming via paid subscriptions. On the other hand, the major U.S. broadcast television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox) generate revenue from advertisers instead of charging a direct subscription fee to viewers.

Movie theaters show a few advertisements before a feature film begins but primarily rely on patrons to pay for tickets before entering the theater. And, of course, movie theaters get some auxiliary revenue from food and drink sales.

This chapter focuses on the second revenue stream in the opening flip card: advertising.

After studying public relations in the previous chapter, it may be helpful to see a simple visualization of how advertising and public relations are separate concepts but sometimes intersect.

Ad campaigns can promote corporate social responsibility instead of a product or service.

Public Relations

Advertising

PR campaigns can use advertising to inform the public instead of selling a product or service.

Simply put, advertisers sometimes focus on PR goals instead of sales, and PR professionals sometimes use ads to promote goodwill and educate consumers.

ADS EVERYWHERE

It's impossible to accurately calculate the number of ads we are exposed to each day, but <u>one video about how leading brands use ads</u> estimated that number is between 4,000 and 10,000.

Marketing and advertising researchers have spent more than a century studying media stimuli that lead consumers to spend money on products and services. The following video offers a brief introductory overview of neuromarketing in advertising.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#oembed-1

WORDS TO MAKE ADS MEMORABLE

Some catchy ad campaigns stick in our heads for a lifetime and can even affect our language usage. Here's an oldie-but-goodie from Rice Krispies.

Next, you can watch a television example of a song that many older Americans heard as children and can probably sing word-for-word (and letter-for-letter, in this case) for the rest of their lives.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#oembed-2

Another older example helped audiences in the 1970s memorize the ingredients in a Big Mac.

> One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#oembed-3*

Slogans and catchphrases – such as "Red Bull gives you wings" or "Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there" – are still a key strategy in many of today's advertising campaigns. They typically sell products and services, but they can also create branding imagery for non-profits and even the military, as in the catchphrase for the U.S. Marine Corps: "The Few. The Proud. The Marines."

Now, let's have some fun testing your abilities to identify ad slogans. Many of the slogans in the brief interactive quiz below are more recent than the examples above.

> An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#h5p-61*

Even news media outlets can promote themselves through slogans. Here are two examples.

- The New York Times: All the news that's fit to print
- The Washington Post: Democracy dies in darkness

And if you want more slogans and related commentary, here are three links to explore.

- 30 Companies with Famous Brand Slogans & Taglines – Adobe
- 21 Unforgettable Advertising Slogans (with Takeaway Tips!) – Wordstream
- The 50 Best Slogans of All Time – Something Great

SLIGHTLY CRINGEWORTHY (by today's standards)

As we learned in a previous chapter, early U.S. television shows were often sponsored and produced by a single company. As programming evolved beyond the quiz show scandals of the 1950s, however, the major television networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) began producing more of their own entertainment content and sold advertising spots for 30 or 60 seconds.

Admittedly, some of the 1950s ads in the following video are cringeworthy or haven't aged well, but they'll give you a sense of early American TV advertising.

📄 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#oembed-4*

Note that these ads were product-specific, and the audience had fewer options to avoid or ignore an ad. They were made in an era when most households had only one television and, of course, there were no smartphones, which meant less competition for a viewer's attention.

Beyond television, some cigarette ads in magazines from the mid-20th century may seem strange by today's standards. Below are two examples.

[Image Source](#)

As you learned in a previous chapter, cigarette ads haven't appeared on U.S. television stations since 1971, when the FCC banned them on public airwaves.

SUPER BOWL ADVERTISING

According to a [statistical compilation from USA Today](#), a 30-second slot during the Super Bowl I broadcast in 1967 would have cost an advertiser $37,500. Fast forward to 2024, and a 30-second ad cost $7 million. Also, 2024's Super Bowl LVIII was the [most-watched American telecast ever](#).

Between 1967 and the 1990s, the Super Bowl evolved to become the most high-profile advertising event of each year in the United States. As media content has become more specialized, the Super Bowl is perhaps the only time each year when Americans are watching the same thing at the same time.

One of the most historically significant Super Bowl ads came in 1984. An [Apple Macintosh ad](#) produced by Ridley Scott (the director of *Blade Runner*) alluded to George Orwell's novel *1984*, which was a warning against totalitarianism. Apple was hinting at the totalitarianism that IBM had developed in the computer tech industry at that time. The ad below, which is a stark contrast to the 1950s ad strategies you saw earlier in this chapter, is often considered the beginning of fully produced storytelling in TV ads.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#oembed-5*

Nationally, Apple's 1984 ad was broadcast only once, during the Super Bowl, at a cost of $1 million. The ad cost almost $1 million to produce as well. A [2016 documentary video from NFL Films](#) chronicled the impact of the 1984 Apple ad. Long before Nike's Just Do It campaign, the Apple 1984 ad prioritized selling a brand's image instead of detailing the features of a specific product. The new Macintosh computer itself did not even appear in the ad.

Fast forward 50 years, and the creative industry had a completely different reaction to an Apple ad titled "Crush!" to promote the iPad Pro. [An Apple marketing executive apologized](#) for [imagery in the 2024 ad](#), which suggested to some viewers that Apple's new embrace of AI tools could crush current creative processes.

ADVERTISING APPEALS

Some advertising analysts cite 20-or-more kinds of strategic appeals to consumers. For simplification in this brief chapter, we'll break those down to two broad categories.

1. Emotional appeal
2. Rational appeal

As the name suggests, ads using emotional appeals attempt to evoke strong emotions from the audience. These ads may rely on appeals to a consumer's moral principles, personal aspirations, hidden fears, or sense of humor.

An example of an emotional appeal would be ads using the Subaru slogan "Dog Tested. Dog Approved."

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#oembed-6*

And this 2019 ad from SimpliSafe shows how fear can be used as an emotional appeal in an ad.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#oembed-7*

Ads based on rational appeal focus more on logical reasons a consumer should consider purchasing a product or service, and they can include specific details for support. Following are two examples of rational appeal.

DECEPTION, DATA, GREENWASHING AND WEASEL WORDS

Of course, as with almost all aspects of U.S. media, portions of the advertising industry are occasionally deceptive or unethical. A study from Juniper Research showed that 22% of online ad spending worldwide in 2023 was lost to **fraud**, which totaled an estimated $84 billion. That number was projected to increase to $170 billion by 2028.

Also, online ads create **ethical concerns about data privacy** for users. Simply put, advertisers and tech companies aren't always transparent about the ways in which they collect data to deliver targeted ads to users. For example, *Wired* magazine reported that "while private modes in web browsers prevent some data from being stored on your device, they don't prevent tracking by websites or internet service providers."

Claims within ads themselves are sometimes deceptive as well. As a 21st-century example, some corporations like to advertise that they are eco-friendly, or green.

Truth in Advertising explained that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has declined to define the terms "sustainable" and "organic" in advertising. As a result, companies can use those terms in product packaging and advertising with minimal fear of legal consequences.

The term **greenwashing** now refers to companies that make eco-friendly claims about their products and services even though the environmental evidence in the ads is misleading or unclear. Greenwashed ads for cleaning and beauty products have been more common in the past decade.

Creative Commons Image

An essay from the Center for Media Engagement at the University of Texas suggested that "corporations should care about their environmental footprint, but some rely on greenwashing rather than genuine solutions for addressing the climate crisis, which can also make it difficult for the public to trust the companies that are seemingly keeping their promises to work towards greener business practices."

And advertisers have historically used **weasel words** to make product claims that can't be proven. For example, Papa John's has used this ad slogan: "Better Ingredients. Better Pizza." Logically, the slogan merely suggests that better ingredients lead to better pizza. We infer that Papa John's uses better ingredients, but the word "better" is a matter of opinion and cannot be proven on a factual basis.

The question in this case: "Better than what?"

AN AD IN OUTER SPACE (Product Placement and Sponsored Content)

In 2000 Pizza Hut paid $1 million for its logo to be placed on a Russian rocket that was sending supplies to the International Space Station. The company also sent a pizza into space for astronauts to cook and eat.

Randy Gier, Pizza Hut's chief marketing officer at the time, said, "From this day forward, Pizza Hut pizza will go down in history as the world's first pizza to be delivered to and eaten in space."

This was a high-profile example of **product placement**, a strategy by which ads are embedded within media content instead of appearing or being broadcast separately. As a similar example, in 2024 an inflatable green dragon was temporarily attached to the Empire State Building as a promotion for HBO's *House of the Dragon*, which prompted publicity from outlets such as NBC's Today Show.

A simple example would be when you see a character in a movie or TV show drink a specific brand of soda or beer. A company may have paid for that product placement. As another example, Macintosh computers appeared in *Mission Impossible* movies, and Apple paid for that product placement.

Creative Commons Image

Occasionally, a movie or show mocks product placement in an entertaining manner so that the audience is aware of product placement but still enjoys it. The 1992 movie *Wayne's World* debuted at a time when U.S. audiences were becoming more aware of product placement in television shows and movies, and the following clip turned that into a parody.

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As another example, the 2006 movie *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby* relied heavily on product placement for humor while also mocking public service announcements, as seen in one of the movie's bonus features.

The New York Times published "Anatomy of a Product Placement" to help readers understand the concept. An industry argument in favor of product placement is that many people no longer pay attention to traditional ads.

Product placement is categorized as one type of **native advertising**. Another type of native advertising appears in online and print publications when a company or organization pays for story content that resembles news or feature stories. This is often called **sponsored content**.

For example, The Washington Post's [Creative Group](#) provides sponsored content opportunities for advertisers who believe they will benefit from paid articles and videos that look like news. One article from the Creative Group, titled "[Time to Tailgate](#)," is sponsored by the supermarket chain Safeway. A small label at the top of the web page says "Content from Safeway," which is intended to provide transparency that the article can also be considered a paid advertisement.

Screenshot example of sponsored content from Safeway appearing on The Washington Post website.

As another example, the [Dallas Morning News](#) markets sponsored content opportunities to advertisers. One article explains how [primary care doctors are a critical link to better health for seniors](#). The article is labeled as a sponsored post. Readers who scroll to the bottom of the web page can learn that the article's author, Dr. Robert Zorowitz, is regional vice president of health services for Humana, a company that sells Medicare plans and health insurance coverage.

Another example, titled "[Young Alumni Pay It Forward With Co-branded Coffee](#)," appeared on the Inside Higher Ed website. In small print under the byline, close readers may see "Content sponsored and provided by NC State University." However, the article's content is written much like a news story, especially in the use of sources and attributions.

PEACE, LITTLE GIRL

As a reminder about the impact of advertising on American society, we'll close this chapter with an ad that some historians consider the [most effective political commercial ever](#). It aired as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's successful 1964 campaign against Barry Goldwater, and it drips with emotional appeal to create fears about what might happen if voters pick the wrong candidate. Formally titled "Peace, Little Girl," it was informally known as [the "Daisy" ad](#).

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FILL IN THE BLANKS

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ADVERTISING IMPACT ASSIGNMENT

The ultimate goal of most advertising is to convince you to spend your money for a product or service. Think of a specific instance when you saw or heard an advertisement that enticed you to purchase something.

What sparked your initial interest? What aspects of the ad motivated you? In what ways did the ad fit appeals or strategies discussed in this chapter, especially concerning rational or emotional appeal?

Write approximately five paragraphs (three sentences per paragraph) with specific details about the ad and its effective components as well as the eventual outcome of your purchase.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=926#h5p-109

18.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

By Alyssa Riley

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=104#h5p-110

I vividly remember when influencers began taking over social media. I was 15 years old when I came across the YouTube page of Indy Blue. Originally known for her visually appealing travel compilation videos, she quickly climbed the social media ladder, becoming something of an obsession for teenage girls like me. I found her life captivating. Here was this girl, only a few years older than me, going viral while doing all the things I dreamed of.

Since she began making videos in 2016, Blue founded an apparel line (Lonely Ghost), participates in numerous marketing campaigns, and has a growing audience base of more than 350,000 Instagram followers.

Influencing has massively intensified in the past decade. Now I keep up with influencers whose brands specifically cater to my interests, whether that be fashion, travel or food. They can influence what we eat, which products we buy and how we dress ourselves to fit current fashion trends.
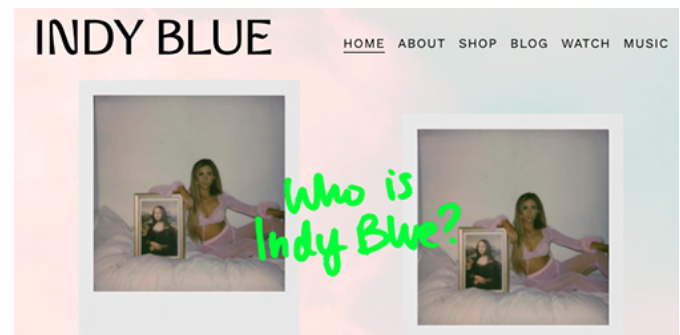
THE BASICS

Now known as a standard strategy on social media platforms, influencer marketing is no longer restricted primarily to fashion. Influencers market everything from healthy, delivered meals and exercise supplements to Korean facial care.

The following brief presentation covers the most common elements of a social media influencer.

Use the forward button or click on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=104#h5p-9

Brands have expectations for marketing, and audiences are vocal about what they want to see. If an influencer's content does not meet those expectations, it can lead to negative feedback.

As an extreme example, the goal of the 2017 Fyre Festival was largely to promote the Fyre app, used for booking and promoting music talent. The festival, organized by con artist Billy McFarland and rapper Ja Rule, encouraged potential participants to enjoy the "best in food, art, music and adventure" festival in the Bahamas.

Some notable influencers, like Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid, promoted the festival, but it turned out to be nothing more than a half-finished construction zone and a complete scam. McFarland was sentenced to six years in prison for fraud, and many locals lost money contributing to the festival.

Here's a trailer for a 2019 Hulu documentary titled *Fyre Fraud*.

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On the other hand, successful influencers can evolve from being typical social media users to garnering millions of followers. For instance, internationally known Emma Chamberlain used to record YouTube videos of herself doing mundane, teenager things. Now she attends Paris Fashion Week dressed head-to-toe in Gucci products, is the founder of Chamberlain Coffee, and often appears on the cover of prominent magazines such as *Vogue*, although in 2023 she decided to stop relying on YouTube videos.

Not every influencer is as famous as Chamberlain. The table below shows some generalized categories and statistics.

LEVEL	Nano-Influencer	Micro-Influencer	Macro-Influencer	Celebrities
FOLLOWERS	Up to 10k	10k-50k	500k-1 million	5 million+
QUALITIES	Personal relationship with the audience	Genuine brand connections and relationships with the audience	Specific skills, from travel to company development	Their standing and personal brand.

The next presentation covers how influencers use social media platforms for different purposes.

Use the forward button or click on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this book, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=104#h5p-10

BECOMING AN INFLUENCER

Social media influencing is not just about making fun videos and getting paid for it. Without a loyal following, an influencer doesn't have much. To gain this audience, a personal brand and appealing content are crucial. There will always be others with similar interests, so influencers must stay up-to-date with the social media landscape. Coursera's guide for <u>how to become an influencer</u> lists 11 steps:

1. Adopt basic business approaches.
2. Identify your niche.
3. Get to know your audience.
4. Create an influencer brand.
5. Explore content strategy.
6. Optimize your online presence.
7. Select the right channels.
8. Post unique content regularly.
9. Engage with your audience.
10. Collaborate with other brands.
11. Refine skills and strategies regularly.

Source: <u>How to Become an Influencer in 11 Steps</u>

Pay particular attention to #2 about identifying a niche. Rather than creating broad content about a variety of topics, most successful influencers develop expertise and credibility in narrow, specific areas of audience interest. Even broccoli is a potential theme for social media influencing.

whatsgabycookin ✔ I'm a broccoli influencer and I'm LIVING for it! Caeser-ish Roasted Broccoli is next level incredible and it's linked in my bio @whatsgabycookin https://whatsgabycooking.com/roasted-broccoli/

POPULAR INFLUENCERS

With so many influencers on social media today, you can expect each to have their own niche, whether it be through their style, brand, expertise, or passions. What's more, there are different genres of influencers, such as health, beauty, fashion, books and travel. With that being said, social media users follow different influencers to align with their individual tastes and interests.

I tend to follow fashion and travel influencers for the sake of inspiration; I may see a cute outfit I want to wear or aesthetic living space that I want to imitate, or I may look for restaurant and shopping recommendations when visiting a city. The influencers that I interact with the most include Emma Chamberlain, Matilda Djerf, Kiel James Patrick, Paige Lorenze and Rusty Featherstone.

Paige Lorenze's IG Account

Rusty Featherstone's IG Account.

The following video discusses the highest paid influencers of 2023, which directly correlates with their popularity on social media.

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Additionally, look over Forbes' Top Creators 2023 to read about more influencers, their earnings, and their climb to online fame and success.

STATS AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

The influencer field is growing rapidly. According to Influencer Marketing Hub, "Despite people losing trust in influencers, the market size has continued to grow over the years," and in 2023 it became a $21.1 billion industry.

It is no surprise that with online marketing comes online shopping. Many social media users make purchases based on influencer recommendations. A survey from the Hubspot found that 31% of social media users prefer learning about new products through influencers as opposed to other channels.

The following chart, based on statistics from Pew Research Center, shows the percentage of U.S. social media users who say influencers impact their purchasing decisions a lot or a little (as opposed to not at all).

	A LOT	A LITTLE
TOTAL	**3%**	**36%**
Men	2%	28%
Women	3%	41%
18-29	5%	49%
40-49	4%	38%
50-64	2%	28%
65+	<1%	26%
Men 18-29	4%	40%
Men 30-49	3%	30%
Men 50+	1%	20%
Women 18-29	5%	57%
Women 30-49	4%	45%
Women 50+	1%	32%
White	1%	32%
Black	5%	38%
Hispanic	7%	41%

TRUE or FALSE

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=104#h5p-51*

INFLUENCER ANALYSIS

Identify a social media influencer to analyze. Answer the following questions in your analysis.

1. Summarize the types of content the influencer shares and include anything else that's important to know for someone who is not familiar with this influencer's work.
2. How would you describe the influencer's content style?
3. Who is the influencer's target audience, and what are some strategies you see that might appeal to the target audience?
4. How does the influencer's use of social media connect to any concepts and information presented in this chapter?

Write approximately three sentences for each of your four responses.

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> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=104#h5p-111*

19.

GENERATIONAL PATTERNS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

By Alyssa Riley

> 📰 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#h5p-112*

Generations, or age cohorts, are distinct groups with common experiences and characteristics related to the period in which they were born in the United States. They provide a framework for understanding how historical events, technological advancements and cultural shifts have shaped the values, attitudes and behaviors of each group. As a valuable tool for sociologists and marketers, generations help explain how people in different age groups interact with the world around them.

Here are the widely used generational categories:

Graphic created from multiple prompts with Bing Image Creator (Dall-E 3)

- **Generation Alpha** – born in 2010 or later.
- **Generation Z** – born from 1997 to 2009.
- **Millennials** – born from 1981 to 1996.
- **Generation X** – born from 1965 to 1980.
- **Baby Boomers** – born from 1946 to 1964.
- **The Silent Generation** – born from 1928 to 1945.

Source: Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins

Surviving members of the Silent Generation spent most of their lives with no social media. After that, social media usage varies greatly across the generations:

- Baby Boomers and Gen X adopted early social media platforms like Facebook to connect with friends and family, share life updates and stay informed.
- Millennials were early adopters of Instagram, Snapchat and similar platforms, valuing visual content and personal expression.
- Born into a digital world, members of Gen Z had a strong presence on TikTok (prior to federal government intervention in 2024) and prefer short-form, visually engaging content.

Understanding generational preferences is crucial for marketers, as it allows them to tailor their messages and engagement strategies to specific generations, optimizing their reach and impact in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

For example, Apple commissioned Olivia Rodrigo to market the iPhone 15 during the fresh release of her second album "GUTS" with her new music video "get him back!" In an Instagram post, she posted a photograph taken with the product, announcing to followers that she made her new music video using the iPhone 15. This marketing tactic allowed Apple to reach Rodrigo's almost 35 million followers, mostly Gen Z and Millennials, with the marketing campaign video below.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#oembed-1*

You can also watch a video by a Washington Post tech reporter who tried to re-enact the creative process for Rodrigo's video.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#oembed-2*

GENERATIONS AND THEIR PREFERRED PLATFORMS

Statistics for social media usage can be difficult to track accurately over time. In 2024, Pew Research Center

published comprehensive social media user analysis across age groups. The interactive presentation below includes some highlights of that research.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this guidebook, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows).

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#h5p-6

You should study the Pew Research Center's Social Media Fact Sheet to view much more demographic information about U.S. social media usage, including gender, race and ethnicity, income, education, community and political affiliation. Consider how detailed information like this can be useful for advertisers and social media influencers to plan targeted campaigns.

THE LONG, BROAD VIEW

For a global perspective of the evolution of social media, the video below shows the most popular platforms from 1997 to 2023.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#oembed-3

CONSUMPTION TRENDS

Generational media consumption trends offer insights into how people interact with and consume content. Baby Boomers and Gen X often gravitate toward traditional sources like television and printed materials. Millennials have played a huge role in the rise of digital streaming services, favoring on-demand content on platforms like Netflix and YouTube. Generation Z has shaped the popularity of visual platforms like Instagram (and TikTok), while also participating in gaming and e-sports communities.

These trends highlight the shift toward personalized, on-the-go media experiences, driving companies to cater to the distinct preferences of each generation.

One research summary from Colorado State University provides the observations used in the following interactive presentation.

Study the following presentation slides by using the forward button or clicking on sections of the control bar. To enlarge any interactive presentation in this guidebook, click on the lower-right full-screen option (arrows) .

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#h5p-7

MARKETING INTERESTS

Social media marketing has become a crucial avenue for brands to engage with audiences, and each generation has distinct expectations for the brands they follow. To profit from social media marketing, brands must ensure they are reaching their targeted audiences with the appropriate marketing tactics. Score, a non-profit resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration, compiled statistics about how different generations act on social media.

- Gen Z, while heavily involved in nearly all aspects of Internet culture, likes visuals of how things are made and business owners' testimonials for the brand's growth. Therefore, they are more likely to try/buy something if many have reviewed it (#Tiktokmademebuyit).
- Millennials follow brands for entertainment (38%) and information (42%). Moreover, they are the most likely to unfollow a business due to a bad experience (21%), or if they found its marketing to be annoying (22%).
- Gen X follows brands for contests (41%) and deals/promotions (58%). They are also more likely to unfollow a business if it offends them or opposes their beliefs.
- Baby Boomers are similar to Gen X in the way that they follow brands for deals/promotions (60%), but they also follow for information (53%). Also, they are likely to unfollow brands if they receive too much spam/irrelevant posts.

Across all generations, there is an emphasis on genuine, two-way communication, and a demand for responsive

customer service. In this evolving landscape, brands must adapt their social media strategies to meet the unique preferences and values of each generation, fostering lasting relationships and trust with their audience.

The generational categories do not just apply to Americans. The following video from Cure Media, a European social media influencer company, analyzes the consumer behavior of Gen Z and Millennials.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#oembed-4

GROWING CONCERNS

As you read in a previous chapters, research on social media suggests that younger, pre-adult audiences are especially vulnerable to social media. A New York Times project, titled "Being 13, cited a frequent concern that "adolescents are moving into this messy digital world at a time when they desire social attention most — and are not yet wired for restraint." Moreover, adolescent girls struggle with depression and anxiety at higher rates than adolescent boys, a trend that the pandemic amplified.

This has led some schools to restrict or ban cell phone usage during the school day.

TARGETED TAKEAWAY

For students who plan to pursue a career in advertising and public relations, this chapter illustrates the importance of identifying the generation(s) of your target audience as you build a campaign. As a simple example, if you primarily want to reach Gen X and Baby Boomers, Pinterest probably won't be the most effective and cost-efficient strategy. If you're trying to reach a younger audience to establish brand loyalty, though, Pinterest or Instagram Reels might be a good choice.

In simple terms, keep in mind that, due partly to generational differences, not everyone likes the content that you like.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions highlight a few tidbits of information from the chapter. Use the forward button to advance through the questions.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#h5p-44

SELF-REFLECTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

This chapter looked at social media consumption patterns for different generations and age groups. Now you should compose a short essay reflecting on your own social media usage. Here are some suggestions to include in your essay:

- Which platforms do you use?
- Approximately how much time do you spend on social media each day?
- What benefits, if any, do you derive from your social media usage?
- What concerns, if any, do you have about negative effects of your social media usage?
- Generally speaking, how does your online self differ from your offline self?
- Most importantly, in what ways do you fit the patterns discussed in this chapter, and in what ways do you differ?

If you avoid social media platforms or use them in an extremely limited manner, explain your reasons for not embracing social media.

Use specific examples when possible to support your reflection.

Write approximately 250 words. Use journalistic style with no more than three or four sentences per paragraph.

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=67#h5p-113

20.

MEDIA LITERACY AND GEN Z

By Alyssa Riley

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=928#h5p-114

As a Gen Zer growing up since the turn of the 21st century, I have witnessed the technological evolution of many media devices and platforms.

The first iPod hit the market before I was 10 years old, but despite my pleas, it wasn't until the release of the iPod Nano that my parents caved in. When e-readers became available, it wasn't long before my parents gifted me a Nook for Christmas, even though I was fearful that print books would soon become extinct. Additionally, because I wasn't allowed a cellphone until I was 13 years old, I regularly utilized digital cameras and my friends' iPads for photos and videos.

Using an iPad to take pictures (2012).

Today, advances in AI and the metaverse seem inevitable but risk damaging the credibility of mass media content.

Media literacy should refer to more than the ability to read and write, especially as daily conversations are steeped in topics about who posted what on social media, which public official used an offensive term, or what's the most recent viral TikTok video.
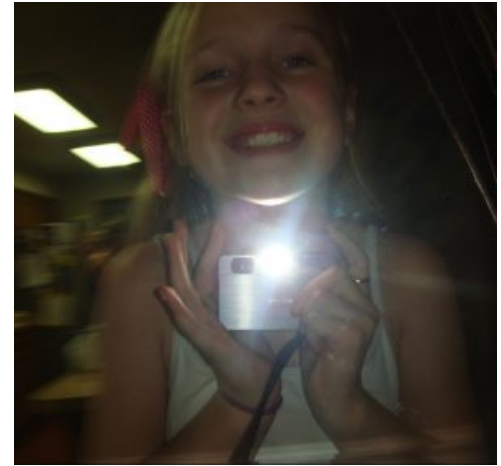
Using a digital camera to take pictures (2010)

WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

Because media consumption has become integral to our daily lives, it shapes our beliefs, attitudes, values and identity. Additionally, media content entertains, informs, and engages users – both in negative and positive ways. Better understanding the effects of our media usage is integral to media literacy, something that is learned and mindfully grown.

Most definitions of media literacy focus on our ability to access and analyze media messages. For media professionals, media literacy also includes creating and sharing messages in a manner that promotes "independent thinking, authentic dialogue, collaboration, reflection, creativity, and social responsibility."

Before diving further into the ins and outs of media literacy, watch the following introductory video from CrashCourse.

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The importance and concepts of media literacy are constantly expanding. Therefore, it is crucial that we, as media users, sharers and creators, are able to understand and practice it.

Click through the following slideshow to learn more about the concepts of media literacy:

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=928#h5p-46

MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

As with traditional subjects like mathematics, history, English, and science, media literacy involves skills that we must learn and practice if we want to keep up with emerging research and evolving technology.

The organization Media Literacy Now stresses the need for enhanced education and skills training before students arrive at college.

> *The ability to navigate within our complex and ever-changing media landscape depends on acquiring skills and tools to know how to consume and evaluate information, ask critical questions, avoid manipulation, and engage in digital spaces safely and confidently. Unfortunately, these skills are not widely taught to our young people – yet.*

The idea of actively practicing media literacy may seem vague or daunting. Thankfully, there are resources that aid in decoding, analyzing, and practicing media literacy.

According to Ithaca College's Project Look Sharp, there are nine categories for decoding media, regardless of form, message, or platform. Click through the following slideshow about ways to decode media through questions to ask yourself:

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https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=928#h5p-66

You can study more from Project Look Sharp's objectives of media literacy for students.

MEDIA PLATFORMS

The term *media* can encompass digital, print, audio, video, social media and a variety of interactive content.

Advertising is included as well. This makes it impossible to create a one-size-fits-all approach to media literacy, as the following perspective from the Center for Media Literacy suggests:

> *Although some groups urge families to just turn the TV off, the fact is, media are so ingrained in our cultural milieu that even if you turn off the set, you still cannot escape today's media culture. Media no longer just influence our culture. They ARE our culture.*

Similarly for Gen Z, media literacy isn't as simple as unsubscribing from social media platforms.

We have covered numerous mass media platforms in this OER text, including social media, books, the Internet, magazines, movies, newspapers, radio, and television. It is important to understand the evolution of these platforms and how they function today so that we are can access, analyze, create, reflect, and interact with them.

To learn more about how we, as news consumers, choose our news, watch the following TED education video:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=928#oembed-2

MEDIA LITERACY IN GENERATION Z

Misinformation, disinformation and non-information seem to saturate U.S. mass media, often made worse by AI-generated content. As we explained in Chapter 3, misinformation can simply describe content with mistakes, while disinformation involves content that is deliberately deceptive.

It is often difficult to discern between what is misleading or completely false vs. what is factual and relevant to our lives.

This is especially true on social media platforms, where members of Gen Z (and other generations) are more susceptible to believing information from content with high engagement levels, such as likes, shares and comments. Most Gen Zers do not consume news from traditional media outlets that are generally deemed more credible.

This begs the question, how can we teach Gen Z a better kind of media literacy?

In *Pacific Standard*, Sam Wineburg wrote that young people's Internet navigation abilities can be summed up with one word: bleak. Although Gen Zers are fluent in social media usage, Wineburg said that "over 30 percent thought a fake news post was *more* trustworthy than a verified one."

He suggests several useful tactics for how members of Gen Z can increase their media literacy, which are detailed in the content below.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=928#h5p-65

Additional Source – [WHAT Is Media Literacy and HOW Can Simple Shifts Center It](#) – PBS

NEWS LITERACY QUIZZES

The [News Literacy Project](#) website features several quizzes for you to assess your media literacy skills.

Take at least three of the quizzes. *(Note – the COVID-19 quiz may feel slightly dated.)*

[News Literacy Project Quizzes Page](#)

Write two reflective paragraphs about your results on each of the quizzes. Within your writing, you should specifically assess your own level of media literacy based on recommendations and ideas in this chapter.

You will write a minimum of six paragraphs (two paragraphs for each quiz) in journalistic style with no more than three or four sentences per paragraph.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://uark.pressbooks.pub/massmedialandscape/?p=928#h5p-115