

New Media Technology and Policy
COMM 459 Seminar in Media Systems. (3 credits) Fall 2008
University of Michigan Tu Th 2:30-4:00 171 Lorch
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Office Hours Wednesdays 1:30-3:00 1225 S. University Ave

Some say the Internet changes everything. Where once the public sphere was dominated by a few commercial, one-way mass media outlets such as newspapers or TV, now every single node on the net can as easily send as receive. Will YouTube, amateur bloggers and peer-to-peer file sharing put the traditional media out of business? Will political and cultural polarization increase? The seminar reviews the underlying media economics, audience psychology, evolving digital technology and changing legal framework for public communication.

Topical Outline

Identity in the Digital Age

Unlike the media that preceded it such as newspapers and broadcasting, the Internet knows no national boundaries. Along with improved transportation and trade systems, low cost digital communication has contributed to the era defining phenomenon of globalization and perhaps the weakening of the nation state. Ironically, it may also be contributing to a strengthened ethnic and religious identity and religious conflict.

The Age of Information

The quantity and diversity of information flowing into the typical American home continues to grow exponentially. Most employment has moved from agriculture and manufacturing to information processing in various forms. The current era has been dubbed 'The Information Society.' One paradox may be that in response the average American is actually less well informed. Should we call it 'The Information Overload Society'?

The Propaganda Paradigm

The modern field of communication studies traces its origins to the study of mass society and the propaganda of totalitarianism at the middle of the twentieth century. The Orwellian notion of media dominated by all powerful government institutions captures the critical spirit of this tradition. Is it an appropriate model for the age of Google, YouTube, Facebook and the blogosphere?

The Microstructure of Human Communication

Key concepts here include notions of evolutionarily based systematic cognitive biases in human comprehension, selective attention, the magic number seven, the positivity offset and negativity bias.

The Macrostructure of Human Communication

The challenge to media policy in the digital age is how to maintain an open marketplace of ideas. Paradoxically, the concentration of media ownership increases as the means of digital communication multiply. Key concepts include the Attention Cycle, Attention Space and the Iron Law of Oligarchy.

The Digital Revolution

We examine ten generic properties of digital media and their ramifications for public communication.

Digital Media

We examine the technical basis of 'digital convergence.' Key concepts include interactivity, interoperability and digital intelligence.

Digital Concentration

We look further at the paradox of a concentration of public attention on a few Internet sites despite the celebrated diversity of sites available. We examine Benkler's concept of a networked information economy, a system of production, distribution, and consumption of information goods characterized by decentralized individual action and non-market mechanisms such as Wikipedia and open source software.

Digital Rights Management

Peer to peer sharing of movies, books and music make intellectual property rights very difficult to enforce. Allowing creative authors, producers and performers to be compensated for their efforts seems like a reasonably good idea. How will such a system work?

This course is an advanced seminar primarily for Communication Studies concentrators who have been studying many of these issues in their other courses and are generally familiar with the traditions of communication scholarship. There are extensive reading assignments and the readings have to be completed in advance of class meetings in order for seminar discussion to be successful and enjoyable. Students will be graded in part on the basis of class participation. The primary course requirement is a single term paper due at the end of the term on a topic to be chosen by the student and approved by the instructor.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (T) 9/2 Introduction (no readings)

Week 1 (T) 9/4 Introduction (no readings)

Identity in the Digital Age

Week 2 (T) 9/9 Castells, Manuel (2004). "Informationalism, Networks and the Network Society: A Theoretical Blueprint". from The Network Society. Castells, Manuel, Ed. Northampton MA: Edgar Elgar. 3-45.

Week 2 (Th) 9/11 Shoemaker, Pamela J. (2006). "Evolution and News" from News around the World: Content, Practitioners and the Public. Shoemaker, Pamela J. and Akiba A. Cohen, Eds. New York: Routledge. 7-21.

The Age of Information

Week 3 (T) 9/16 Neuman, W. Russell and Ithiel de Sola Pool (1986). "The Flow of Communications into the Home." in Media, Audience and Social Structure. Cantor, Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach and Muriel, Ed. Beverly Hills: Sage. 71-86. and website www.sims.berkeley.edu/resources/infoecon

Week 3 (Th) 9/18 Beniger, James R. (1986). "The Information Society: Technological and Economic Origins." in Media, Audience and Social Structure. Ball-Rokeach, Sandra J. and Muriel Cantor, Eds. Beverly Hills: Sage. 51-70.

Week 4 (T) 9/23 "Supersaturation: The Media Torrent," chapter 1 from Gitlin, Todd (2002). Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives. New York: Owl Books.

Week 4 (Th) 9/25 "Spammed" from Shenk, David (1998). Data Smog : Surviving the Information Glut. New York: Harper.

The Propaganda Paradigm

Week 5 (T) 9/30 Wartella, Ellen and Byron Reeves (1985). "Historical Trends in Research on Children and the Media: 1900-1960." Journal of Communication 35(2): 118-133.

Week 5 (Th) 10/2 McGuire, William J. (1986). "The Myth of Massive Media Impact: Savagings and Salvagings." Public Communication and Behavior 1. Comstock, George, Ed. Orlando: Academic Press. 173-257.

Week 6 10/7 (T) no seminar today

Week 6 10/9 (Th) Review of Paper Topics

The Microstructure of Human Communication

Week 7 (T) 10/14 Tversky, Amos and Daniel Kahneman (1982). "Judgment under Uncertainty." in Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases. Kahneman, Daniel, Paul Slovic and Amos Tversky, Eds. New York: Cambridge University Press. 3-20.

Week 7 (Th) 10/16 D'Alessio, Dave and Mike Allen (2007). "The Selective Exposure Hypothesis and Media Choice Processes." in Mass Media Effects Research: Advances through Meta-Analysis. Preiss, Raymond W., Barbara Mae Gayle, Nancy Burrell, Mike Allen and Jennings Bryant, Eds. Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum. 103-118.

Week 8 (T) (Th) 10/21 10/23 no seminars this week – Fall Study Break (all week)

Week 9 (T) 10/28 Miller, George A. (1956). "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information." in Psychology Review 63: 81-97.

Week 9 (Th) 10/30 Cacioppo, John T. and Gary G. Berntson (1994). "Relationship between Attitudes and Evaluative Space: A Critical Review with Emphasis on the Separability of Positive and Negative Substrates." Psychological Bulletin 115: 401-423.

The Macrostructure of Human Communication

Week 10 (T) 11/4 Napoli, Philip M. (2001). The Marketplace of Ideas. In Foundations of Communications Policy: Principles and Process in the Regulation of Electronic Media. Philip M. Napoli. Cresskill NJ, Hampton Press. 97-124.

Week 10 (Th) 11/6 Downs, Anthony (1972). "Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle." Public Interest 28: 38-50.

Week 11 (T) 11/11 Baehr, Peter (1999). "Review of Sociology of Philosophies." Canadian Journal of Sociology (May).

Week 11 (Th) 11/13 Wikipedia (2008). "Iron Law of Oligarchy."

The Digital Revolution

Week 12 (T) 11/18 “The Generic Properties of the New Media” Neuman, W. Russell (1991). The Future of the Mass Audience. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 12 (Th) 11/20 selections from Negroponte, Nicholas (1995). Being Digital. New York: Knopf.

Digital Concentration

Week 13 (T) 11/25 Hindman, Matthew, Kostas Tsioutsoulis and Judy A. Johnson. (2003). “Googlearchy: How a Few Heavily Linked Sites Dominate Politics Online.”

Thanksgiving Break

Digital Rights Management

Week 14 (T) 12/2 selections from Lessig, Lawrence (2006). Code: Version 2.0 New York: Basic.

Week 14 (Th) 12/4 selections from Benkler, Yochai (2006). The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Wrap Up

Week 15 (T) 12/9

Background and Resource Readings

- Anderson, Benedict (1983). Imagined Communities. London: Verso.
- Anderson, Chris (2004). "The Long Tail:." Wired October.
- Anderson, Chris (2006). The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More. New York: Hyperion.
- Baehr, Peter (1999). "Review of Sociology of Philosophies." Canadian Journal of Sociology (May).
- Barber, Benjamin R. (1995). Jihad Vs. Mcworld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World. New York: Random House.
- Bell, Daniel (1973). The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting. New York: Basic Books.
- Beniger, James R. (1986). The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Beniger, James R. (1986). The Information Society: Technological and Economic Origins. Media, Audience and Social Structure. Ball-Rokeach, Sandra J. and Muriel Cantor, Eds. Beverly Hills: Sage. 51-70.
- Benkler, Yochai (2006). The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bimber, Bruce (2003). Information and American Democracy: Technology in the Evolution of Political Power. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cacioppo, John T. and Gary G. Berntson (1994). "Relationship between Attitudes and Evaluative Space: A Critical Review with Empahsis on the Separability of Positive and Negative Substrates." Psychological Bulletin 115: 401-423.
- Castells, Manuel (1996). The Rise of the Network Society. Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Castells, Manuel (1997). The Power of Identity. Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Castells, Manuel (1998). End of Millennium. Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Castells, Manuel (2003). The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society. New York: Oxford.
- Castells, Manuel (2004). Informationalism, Networks and the Network Society: A Theoretical Blueprint. The Network Society. Castells, Manuel, Ed. Northampton MA: Edgar Elgar. 3-45.
- Castells, Manuel, Ed. (2004). The Network Society. Northampton MA: Edgar Elgar.
- Chandler, Alfred D., Jr. and James W. Cortada, Eds. (2000). A Nation Transformed by Information: How Information Has Shaped the United States from Colonial Times to the Present. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Collins, Randall (1998). The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Craig, Robert T. (1999). "Communication Theory as a Field." Communication Theory 9(2): 119-161.
- D'Alessio, Dave and Mike Allen (2007). The Selective Exposure Hypothesis and Media Choice Processes. Mass Media Effects Research: Advances through Meta-Analysis. Preiss, Raymond W., Barbara Mae Gayle, Nancy Burrell, Mike Allen and Jennings Bryant, Eds. Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum. 103-118.
- Delia, Jessie G. (1987). Communication Research: A History. Handbook of Communication Science. Berger, Charles R. and Steven H. Chaffee, Eds. Newbury Park CA: Sage. 20-98.
- DiMaggio, Paul, Eszter Hargittai, W. Russell Neuman and John Robinson (2001). Social Implications of the Internet. Annual Review of Sociology 27 Palo Alto CA: Annual Reviews. 307-336.
- Downs, Anthony (1972). "Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle." Public Interest 28: 38-50.
- Eppler, Martin J. and Jeanne Mengis (2004). "The Concept of Information Overload: A Review of Literature from Organization Science, Accounting, Marketing, MIS, and Related Disciplines." The Information Society 20: 325-344.
- Freedman, Jonathan L. and David Sears (1965). Selective Exposure. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, Volume 2. Berkowitz, L., Ed. Orlando: Academic Press. 58-98.
- Frey, Dieter (1986). Recent Research on Selective Exposure to Information. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology 19. Berkowitz, Leonard, Ed. Orlando: Academic Press. 41-80.
- Fukuyama, Francis (1992). The End of History and the Last Man. Hammondsworth: Penguin.
- Gitlin, Todd (2002). Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives. New York: Owl Books.
- Hastorf, Albert H. and Hadley Cantril (1954). "They Saw a Game." Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology XLIX: 129-234.
- Hauser, Marc D. (1996). The Evolution of Communication. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Heath, Chip and Dan Heath (2007). Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die. New York: Random House.
- Heath, Robert L and Jennings Brant (2000). Human Communication Theory and Research: Concepts, Contexts, Challenges. Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hindman, Matthew, Kostas Tsioutsoulis and Judy A. Johnson. (2003). Googarchy: How a Few Heavily Linked Sites Dominate Politics Online. Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association., Chicago.

- Hindman, Matthew Scott (2006). A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep: Measuring the Diversity of Political Content Online. Localism and Media Diversity: Meaning and Metrics. Napoli, Philip, Ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hoffman, Lindsay H (2006). "Is Internet Content Different after All? A Content Analysis of Mobilizing Information in Online and Print Newspapers." Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 83(1): 58-76.
- Huntington, Samuel P. (1996). The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Leeds-Hurwitz, Wendy (1993). Semiotics and Communication: Signs, Codes, Cultures. Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum.
- Lessig, Lawrence (2001). The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World. New York: Random House.
- Lessig, Lawrence (2006). Code: Version 2.0 New York: Basic.
- Locke, John ([1689] 1994). An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Amherst NY: Prometheus Books.
- McGuire, William J. (1986). The Myth of Massive Media Impact: Savagings and Salvagings. Public Communication and Behavior 1. Comstock, George, Ed. Orlando: Academic Press. 173-257.
- Michels, Robert ([1911] 1962). Political Parties: A Sociological Study of Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy. New York: Collier Books.
- Miller, George A. (1956). "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information." Psychology Review 63: 81-97.
- Monroe, Kirsten Renwick, James Hankin and Renee Bukovchik Van Vechten (2000). "The Psychological Foundations of Identity Politics." Annual Review of Political Science 3: 419-447.
- Napoli, Philip M. (1999). "The Marketplace of Ideas Metaphor in Communications Regulation." Journal of Communication 49(4): 151-169.
- Napoli, Philip M. (2001). The Marketplace of Ideas. in Foundations of Communications Policy: Principles and Process in the Regulation of Electronic Media. Philip M. Napoli. Cresskill NJ, Hampton Press.97-124.
- Napoli, Philip M. (2007). Hyperlinking and the Forces of 'Massification', McGannon Communication Research Center Working Paper.
- Negroponete, Nicholas (1995). Being Digital. New York: Knopf.
- Neuman, W. Russell (1991). The Future of the Mass Audience. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Neuman, W. Russell and Ithiel de Sola Pool (1986). The Flow of Communications into the Home. Media, Audience and Social Structure. Cantor, Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach and Muriel, Ed. Beverly Hills: Sage. 71-86.

- Newman, Mark E. J. (2005). "Power Laws, Pareto Distributions and Zipf's Law." Contemporary Physics 46: 323-351.
- Pool, Ithiel de Sola (1983). Tracking the Flow of Information. Science. 211: 609-613.
- Rosenberg, Nathan and L. E. Birdzell Jr. (1986). How the West Grew Rich: The Economic Transformation of the Industrial Revolution. New York: Basic Books.
- Sears, David and Jonathan L. Freedman (1967). "Selective Exposure to Information: A Critical Review." Public Opinion Quarterly 31(2): 194-213.
- Shannon, Claude E. and Warren Weaver ([1949] 1963). The Mathematical Theory of Communication. Urbana: University of Illinois.
- Shenk, David (1998). Data Smog : Surviving the Information Glut. New York: Harper.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J. (1996). "Hardwired for News: Using Biological and Cultural Evolution to Explain the Surveillance Function." Journal of Communication 46(3): 32-47.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J. (2006). Evolution and News. News around the World: Content, Practitioners and the Public. Shoemaker, Pamela J. and Akiba A. Cohen, Eds. New York: Routledge. 7-21.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J. and Akiba A. Cohen (2006). News around the World: Content, Practitioners and the Public. New York: Routledge.
- Sunstein, Cass (2001). Republic.Com. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tversky, Amos and Daniel Kahneman (1981). "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice." Science 211: 453-458.
- Wartella, Ellen and Byron Reeves (1985). "Historical Trends in Research on Children and the Media: 1900-1960." Journal of Communication 35(2): 118-133.