

Understanding News Media: Defining Media

Media are channels through which modern society communicates and individuals connect with one another. Media vary in form – from newspapers to the internet to mobile devices. Additionally, media serve many purposes including to express, educate, entertain and persuade.

Early in the 1900s, print, particularly newspapers, dominated the mass media marketplace. Film and radio entered the landscape in 1910s and 1920s respectively and grew in popularity through mid-century. The second half of the 20th century gave rise to a quick succession of technologies that hastened the evolution of mass media, starting with the television in the 1950s. Niche magazines, cable television, video cassette recorders, personal computers, compact discs, the internet, and cellular phones followed in ever faster succession. Only time will tell what new technologies may offer society to again change the face of media. And, if history is any indication, the wait won't be a long one.

So with all these choices and variations, how does one navigate their way through the clutter and determine which channels of communication are wanted and needed in our daily lives?

The answer, in part, depends on what message is being delivered.

Next installment: *What is the Message?*

Newspaper Activities:

- ◆ Look through the newspaper (print or electronic) for articles or advertisements that show examples of media technology. What does the coverage reveal about media?
- ◆ Compare and contrast print and electronic offerings from a single date of the same newspaper. What differences did you find if any? How are the publications the same? How did each experience with the newspaper make you feel?

◆ Media ◆

Communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, or promotional messages are disseminated - including radio, newspapers, TV, the internet, mobile devices and more.