

New vs. old media

- *The Handbook of New Media* (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002) – difficult to define
 - Link with ICT with associated social contexts bringing together
 - technological artefacts & devices,
 - activities, practices & uses
 - social arrangements & organisations forming around the above
 - Essential features:
 - interconnectedness
 - accessibility to individual
 - users as senders and/or receivers
 - interactivity
 - multiplicity of use & open-ended character
 - ubiquity & delocatedness

What has changed?

- Old media feel threatened yet benefit also from new media
- Shift in 'balance of power' from media to audience – more options to choose from & more active uses of media available
 - New media interactive (vs. old media one-directional)
 - Mass media become less massive & centralised(?)
- Transmission – increased capacity of networks, increased volume of traffic at lower costs
- At same time, no change in traditional media content & uses

The Internet

- Claim to be considered as medium in own right due to extensive diffusion (1,173,109,925 users – 17.8 % of world population - June 2007, Internet World Stats)
- Began as non-commercial means of coms for scientists – rapidly adopted as alternative means of purveying goods, services and interpersonal coms (Castells, 2001)
- Diffusion most rapid in North America(69.5%) & Northern Europe
- Some theorists believe Internet will have as high penetration as telephone & TV in half a century (Rainie & Bell, 2004)

The Internet

- Not owned, controlled or organised by any single body
- Network of internationally connected computers operating according to agreed protocols
- No legal entity and not subject to single set of laws & regulations – but users subject to national & international laws & regulations

Characteristics of Internet as (mass) medium

- Computer-based technologies
- Hybrid, non-dedicated, flexible character
- Interactive potential
- Private and public functions
- Low degree of regulation
- Interconnectedness
- Ubiquity & delocatedness
- Accessible to individuals as communicators

The mass media institution

- Main activity is production & distribution of symbolic content
- Media operate in the 'public sphere' & are regulated accordingly
- Participation as sender or receiver is voluntary
- Organisation is professional and bureaucratic in form
- Media are both free & powerless

New media – how it deviates?

- Internet is not only or even mainly concerned with production & distribution of messages – at least equally concerned with processing, exchange & storage
 - New media as much institution of private as of public communication & regulated (or not) accordingly
 - Operation is not typically professional or bureaucratically organized to same degree as mass media
- ==> new media correspond with mass media in being widely diffused, in principle available to all & at least free from control

Uncertainty

- About future uses & institutional forms
- Computer = 'uniquely undedicated' communication technology (Postmes et al., 1998)
- Essence of Internet = its very undetermination not only because of its diversity & uncertainty in future but due to essentially postmodernistic character (Poster, 1999)

Poster (1999)

Internet transgresses limits of print & broadcasting models by

- enabling many-to-many conversations
- enabling simultaneous reception, alteration & redistribution of cultural objects
- discolating communicative action from the posts of the nation, from the territorialized spatial relations of modernity
- providing instantaneous global contact
- inserting the modern/late modern subject into a machine apparatus that is networked

- Livingstone (1999): combination of interactivity with those features that were innovative for mass coms – unlimited range of content, scope of audience reach, global nature of communication ==> suggest extension rather than replacement
- Lievrouw (2004): new media have been gradually mainstreamed, routinized, even banalized
- Herning (2004): CMC is slouching towards the ordinary

- Authors – increased opportunities but conditions of public recognition & esteem not changed
- Publishers – role continues (gatekeeping, editorial intervention, validation of authorship) but ambiguity increased
- Audience – large possibilities for change for greater autonomy & equality in relation to sources – no longer only member of mass but self-chosen network or public – reception + searching, consulting, interacting more personally

Yet, continuity of demand for gatekeeping & editorial guidance

What's new?

- Digitalization of all aspects
- Convergence of different media
- Internet divergence from mass communication
- Adaptation of publication roles
- Greater 'interiority' of the audience role
- Fragmentation and blurring of the 'media institution'
- Reduced social control