



A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet

By Asa Briggs, Peter Burke

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Written by two leading social and cultural historians, the first two editions of *A Social History of the Media* became classic textbooks, providing a masterful overview of communication media and of the social and cultural contexts within which they emerged and evolved over time.

This third edition has been thoroughly revised to bring the text up to date with the very latest developments in the field. Increased space is given to the exciting media developments of the early 21st Century, including in particular the rise of social and participatory media and the globalization of media. Additionally, new and important research is incorporated into the classic material exploring the continuing importance of oral and manuscript communication, the rise of print and the relationship between physical transportation and social communication.

Avoiding technological determinism and rejecting assumptions of straightforward evolutionary progress, this book brings out the rich and varied histories of communication media. In an age of fast-paced media developments, a thorough understanding of media history is more important than ever, and this text will continue to be the first choice for students and scholars across the world.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Every new mode of communication provokes passionate debate about its moral and social repercussions. Today we fret over the negative influence of television and the Internet; in the 16th century, it was feared that reading would arouse dangerous emotions, especially in women. Briggs (chancellor, Open Univ.) and Burke (Eyewitnessing) present many such parallels in this overview of media history. They also assert that no medium has ever completely supplanted another. Given their belief in the nonlinear evolution of media, the text moves dizzyingly back and forth, at times verging on stream of consciousness: "The ability to get to Mars would depend on advances in space communications, and this already had its own history in 1960, a point to which we must now return." The index (not seen) and a meticulous chronology should help to alleviate confusion. Readers may feel frustrated, however, by the lack of explanatory notes; the suggested reading for each chapter rarely gives the source for particular quotations or assertions. Recommended for academic libraries needing a general survey of media history. Susan M. Colowick, North Olympic Lib. Syst., Port Angeles, WA

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Review

'Media history may be the single most important chapter of human history. If we want to understand wars, revolutions, religions, and intellectual movements, then we must ultimately confront the question "Who communicated what to whom -- and how?" For both students and specialists, Briggs and Burke have produced the most comprehensive and concise synthesis of what we know about this subject.'

Jonathan Rose, *Drew University*

'A Social History of the Media is the best synthetic overview of media history available, and is deservedly becoming the standard introduction to its topic. Far more than any competing textbook, this book thoroughly integrates the development of the mass media into the wider fabric of social, cultural, economic, and political history.'

Mark Hampton, *Lingnan University* and co-editor of *Media History*

'A richly informative account of developments from Gutenberg to Google by two of Britain's leading social and cultural historians. Highly recommended as a source book for all students of media.'

Paddy Scannell, *University of Michigan*

From the Back Cover

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