

The Emergence of the Public



History of Information i103
Geoff Nunberg

Feb. 17, 2015



Itinerary, 2/17

From Gutenberg to Samuel Morse: An IT lull?

The birth of the modern informational system

The Interpenetration of the spoken & written

New settings of communication

- Salons and coffee-houses

- The spread of print

- The periodical press, the invention of “news”

- Emergence of “public opinion”



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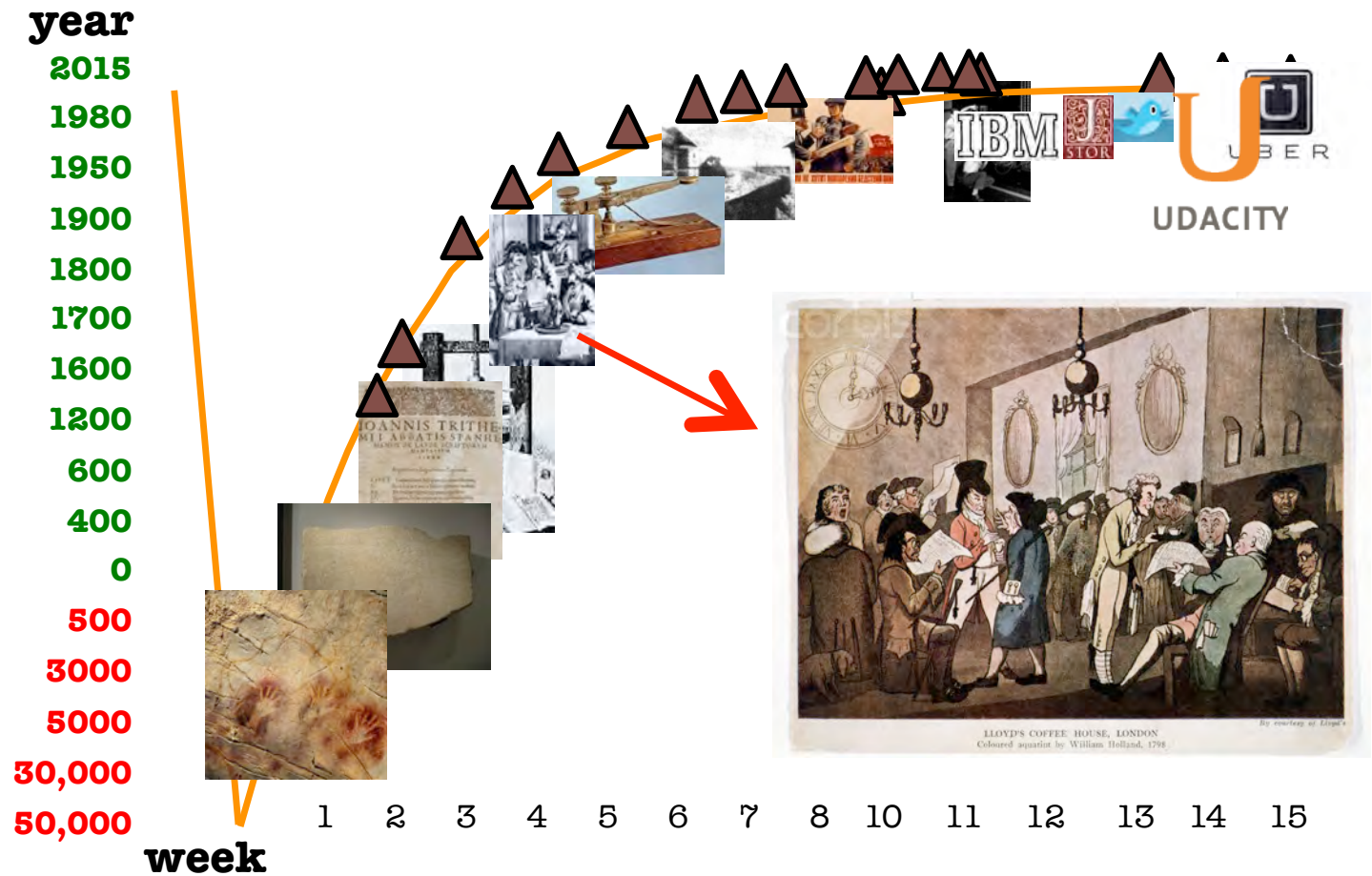
Emergence of “public opinion”

William Tokuma, Madison A., Vivian L. Terrence R.

Ning D.,



The Emergence of the Public

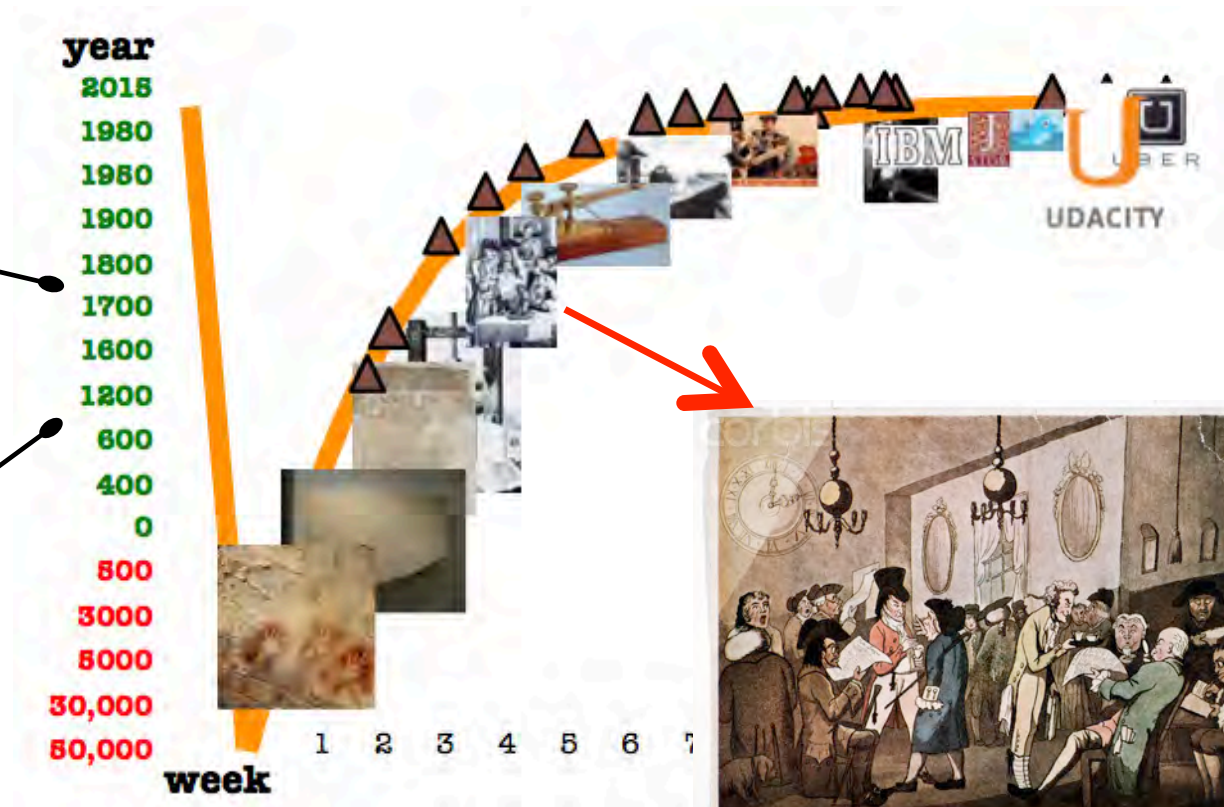




An IT lull?



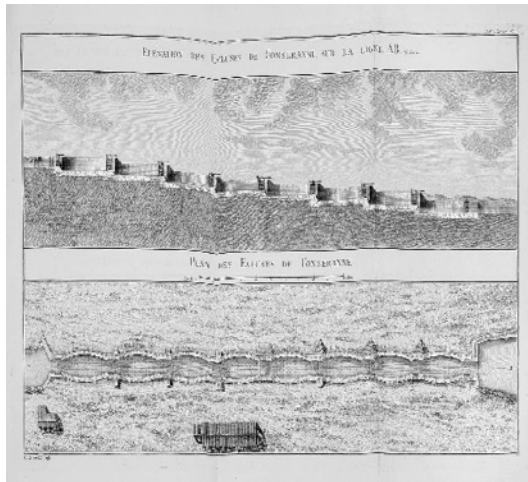
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17th-18th c. Advances

Improved means of diffusion of information: canals



Double lock, Thames and Severn Canal, 1814



17th-18th c. Information Technology

Improved means of diffusion of information:



John Harrison

James Cook



The Socio-Political Life of Information



The Sunlight Foundation
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Net Neutrality Is Essential for a Healthy Democracy

Posted: 02/13/2015 4:14 pm EST | Updated: 02/13/2015 5:59 pm EST

...net neutrality is essential for people's ability to participate in the public debate, journalists' ability to hold our leaders accountable and government's ability to share data and information.

TONKIN: Poorly-informed electorate leads to incoherent voting

By Oliver Tonkiss on November 6th, 2014

Why Mocking Brian Williams Is Good for Democracy

By **Charles Lipson** - February 8, 2015

Holding reporters accountable helps democracy function better because we need reliable information to make choices about candidates and issues.



The Socio-Political Life of Information

"National conduct ought to be the result of national wisdom, a plan formed by mature consideration and diligent selection out of all the schemes which may be offered and all the information which can be procured."

—Samuel Johnson, *Idler* 8, 1751

**TONKIN: Po
electorate
voting**

ocracy

participate
leaders
and

food for

ocracy

information to make choices about candidates and issues.



The Emergence of the Modern "Informational System"

Many, if not most, of the cultural phenomena of the modern world derive from [the 18th century] -- the periodical, the newspaper, the novel, the journalist, the critic, the public library, the concert, the public museum... Perhaps most important of all, it was then that 'public opinion' came to be recognized as the ultimate arbiter in matters of taste and politics."--Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power*



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The political & social significance of "information"



"Print culture" – a multimedia society



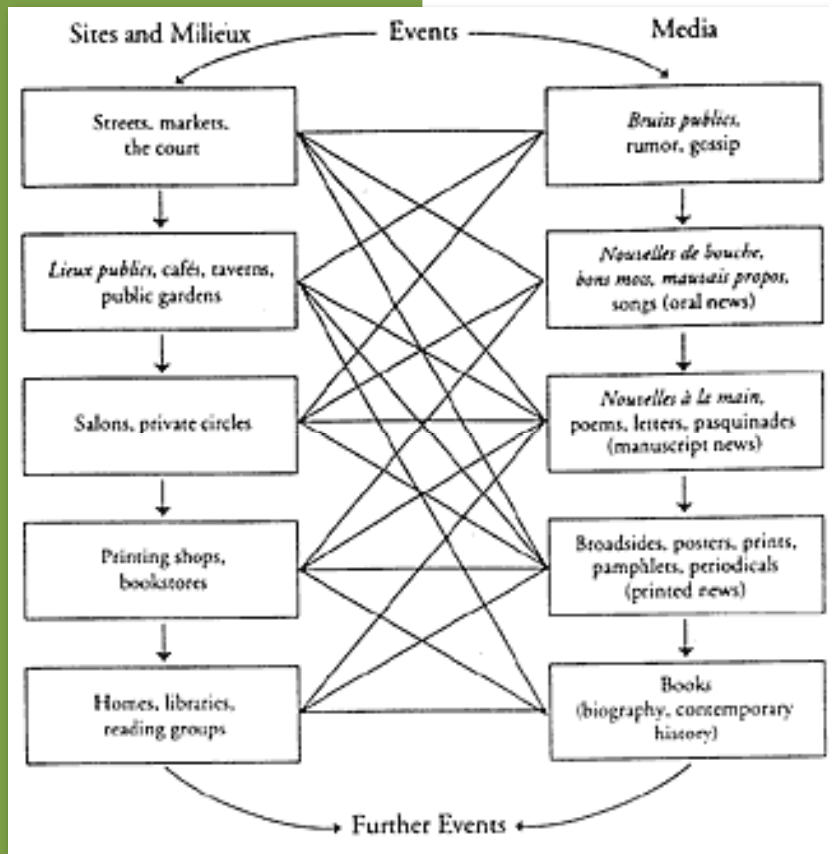
The doctrine of supercession: "Ceci tuera cela"

The archdeacon silently considered the giant edifice, then with a sigh extended his right hand toward the book that was open on the table and his left hand toward Notre-Dame, casting a sad look from the book to the church. "Alas," he said, "This will kill that." Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (*Notre-Dame de Paris*) 1830





Print, Writing, & Orality



"It makes no sense, I think, to separate printed from oral and written modes of communication, as we casually do when we speak of "print culture," because they were all bound together in a multi-media system."
Robert Darnton

HOME U.S. POLITICS WORLD BUSINESS TECHLAND HEALTH SCIENCE ARTS TRAVEL

TIME ON U.S. Edward Jones SEARCH TIME.COM

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California's Crisis Hits Its Prized Universities

By KEVIN O'LEARY / LOS ANGELES Saturday, July 16, 2009

Related Photos

The Evolution of the College Dorm

Students walk by Sather Tower on the University of California, Berkeley, campus. Justin Sullivan / Getty

Special Report

California's crisis continues while Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

From: Robert J. Birgeneau, Chancellor <CALmessages@berkeley.edu>
 Subject: **President Yudof issues an open letter to the people of California and the UC Community**
 Date: November 8, 2010 1:18:54 PM PST
 To: Academic Senate Faculty, Staff, All Academic Titles, Other Members of the Campus Community.

Dear Campus community:

President Yudof has this morning issued an open letter to the

Cal Politics Manual From: UC Berkeley could take \$80M hit in Jerry Brown's budget: The University of California, Berkeley, will have to cu...
<http://bit.ly/hqRwj2>

Print, Writing, & Orality

Sources of information on the UC budget



YouTube Search Browse

UC Berkeley Budget Protest. The Wheeler Frontlines

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34,424

BREAKING NEWS

STUDENTS TAKE OVER WHEELER HALL -34.76
UC BERKELEY 10,297.70

JOHANNES MEHSERLE MURDER TRIAL WILL GC KRON 4
 PLEASANTON Breezy & Rain H:60 L:41 7:54

UC Berkeley Budget Crisis

July 3, 2009
 UC Berkeley Community
 First posted: 7/3/09 11:11 AM

Blog for the UC Berkeley community to post recommendations, articles and letters. This blog can be used to share your own data and experiences so that we can collectively better understand how different departments are dealing with the budget crisis and see campus-wide patterns. It can be used to post and comment on events. Also see email post for the Faculty Budget Forum. Listserve: <http://list.berkeley.edu/~ucbudget>

Capturing the Campus

THE DAILY CLOG

Search

A Cal blog brought to you by The Daily Californian
 "You know what they said?"



Print, Writing, & Orality

Sources of information on the UC budget crisis

Oral

- Conversation

- Meetings

- Demonstrations/rallies

- Classes

Print publications (**newspapers, magazines**)

Broadcast (**TV, radio**)

Online/Networked

- Videos

- Blogs

- Websites

- Email

- Twitter/texting

- Facebook/Soc. Networking

Other

red = also online



Networks in the Developing World

Wired and Shrewd, Young Egyptians Guide Revolt



CIRCLE OF DISSENT Protesters holding candles walked around an Egyptian Army tank parked in Cairo on Wednesday.

By DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK
Published: February 9, 2011

CAIRO — They were born roughly around the time that President Hosni Mubarak first came to power, most earned degrees from their



The day of the protest, the group let it be known that they intended to gather at a mosque in an upscale neighborhood in central Cairo, and the police gathered there in force. But the organizers set out instead for a poor neighborhood nearby....They divided up into two teams — one coaxing people in cafes to join them, the other chanting to the tenements above.



Subtitled Video of Wael Ghonim's Emotional TV Interview

By ROBERT MACKEY

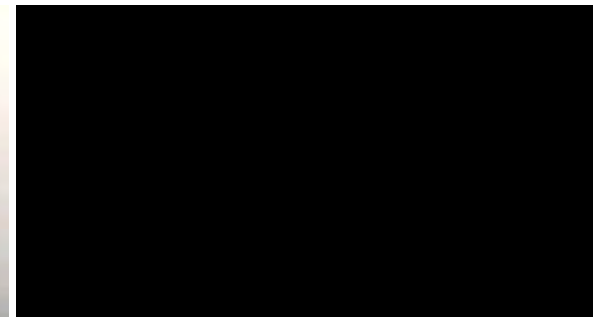
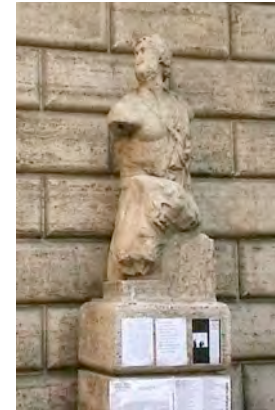
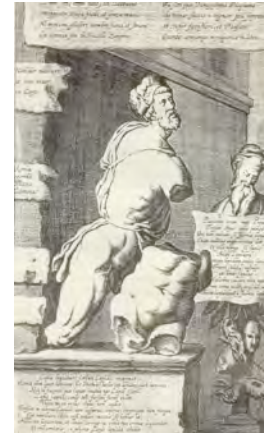
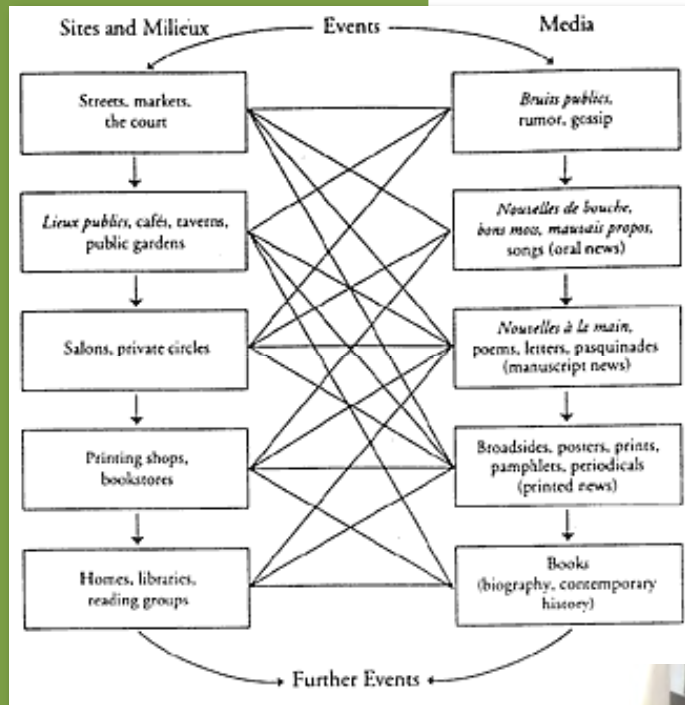


A screenshot on Wael Ghonim crying during an interview on Egypt's Dream TV on Monday, after his release by Egyptian authorities.

Updated | 6:29 p.m. As my colleagues David Kirkpatrick and Anthony Shadid report, tens of thousands of protesters have again packed into Cairo's Tahrir (Liberation) Square on Tuesday.

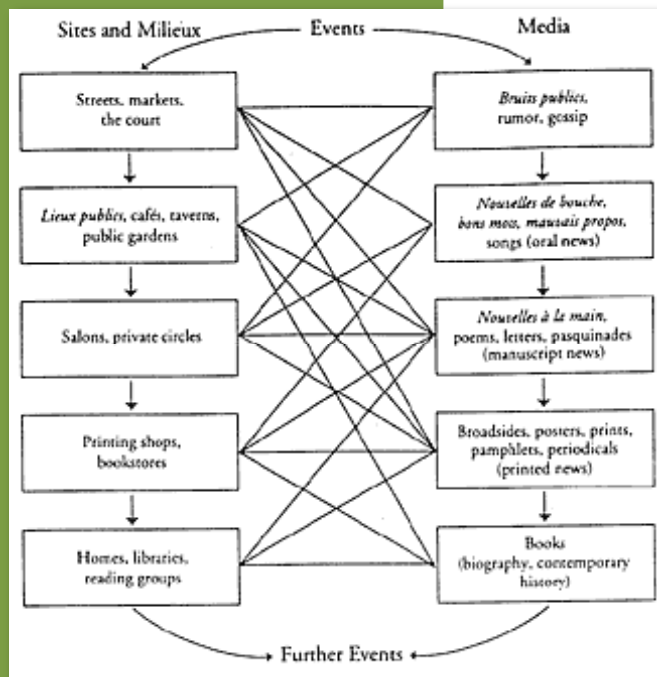


Pasquinades then and now





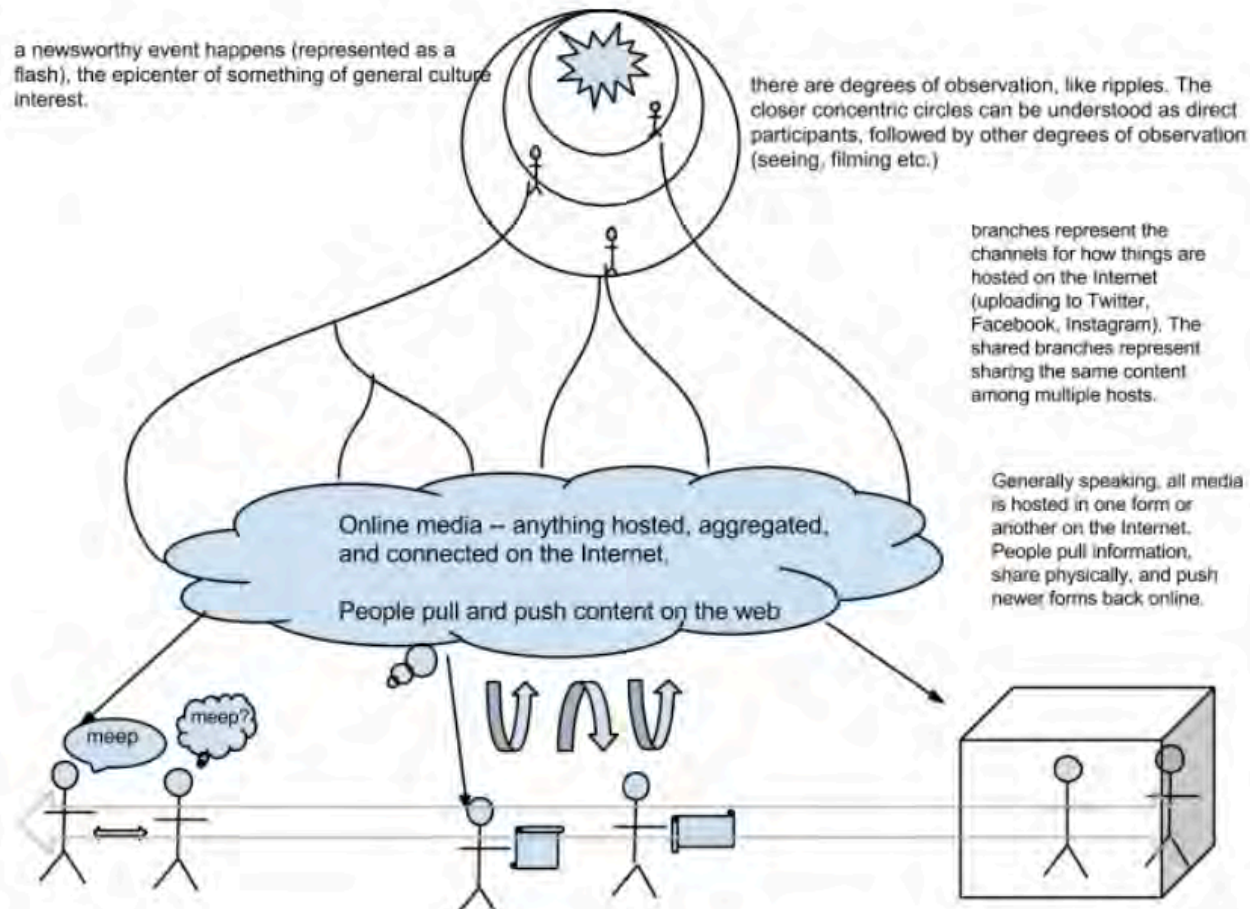
Assignment



Pick a recent story involving UC Berkeley (though not necessarily only Berkeley) that has attracted coverage in the news media and that has been relevant enough to become a topic of local UCB conversation. This could be issues surrounding sexual assault, tuition increases, the “Black Lives Matter” demonstrations and the reactions to them etc. Enumerate the sources from which you obtained information about the story--for example, gossip, conversation, class discussion, social media, broadcast & print media, etc. Making allowances for technological change, would you say that Darnton's observations about the interaction of oral and written genres is still a good model for the transmission of news and information?



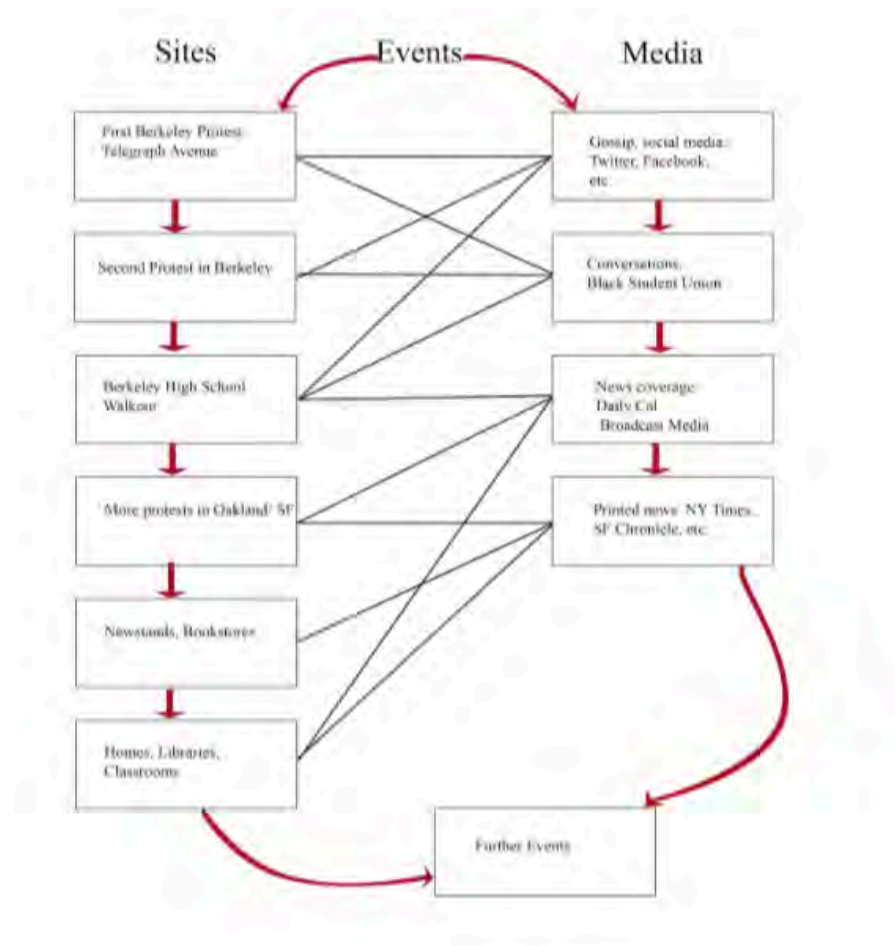
Terrence





Madison

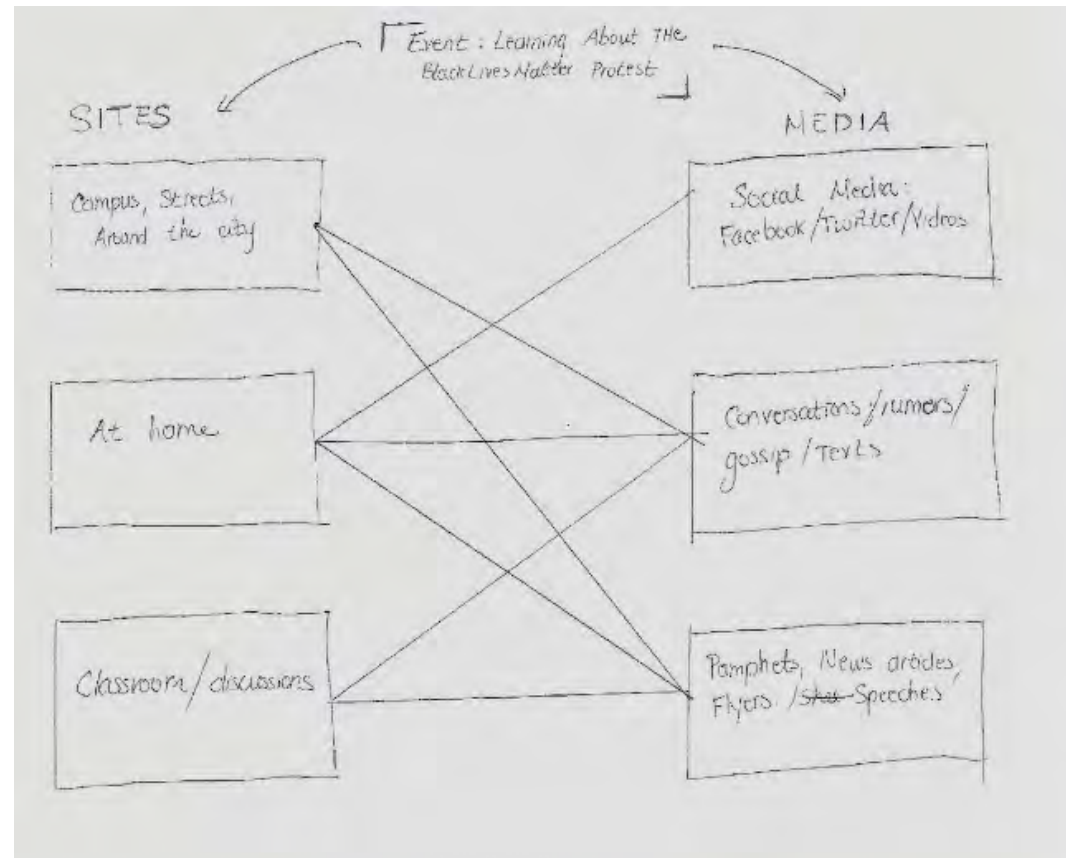
While much of our written media has been shifted onto the Internet, the threads of oral communications continue to be woven into a rich fabric of multi-media news.





Vivian L.

No matter what form, our society continues to rely on these different modes of communication and through that, just as Darnton predicated, it has created a “collective consciousness of public opinion”





Ning

Although written, the comments and articles on Facebook were oral in nature. For example, the political stories shared in this buying/selling group by fellow Berkeley friends were instantly bounced off in the comment threads, as heated discussions or even jokes...

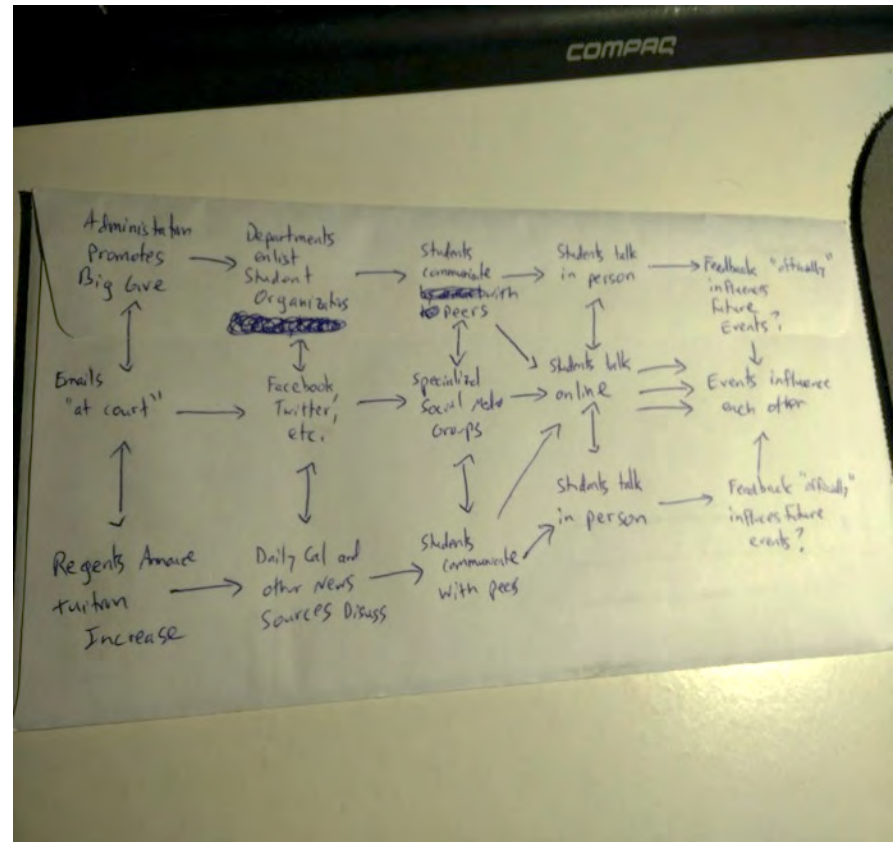
. I experienced this “mixture” of communications (9) when the Peter Thiel event I attended got violently disrupted by the “Black Lives Matter” demonstrators. Oral interactions during this incident re-manifested as Facebook/Twitter rant statuses, online criticisms and later spoken news, fluidly reshaping our views towards the campaign.





William T

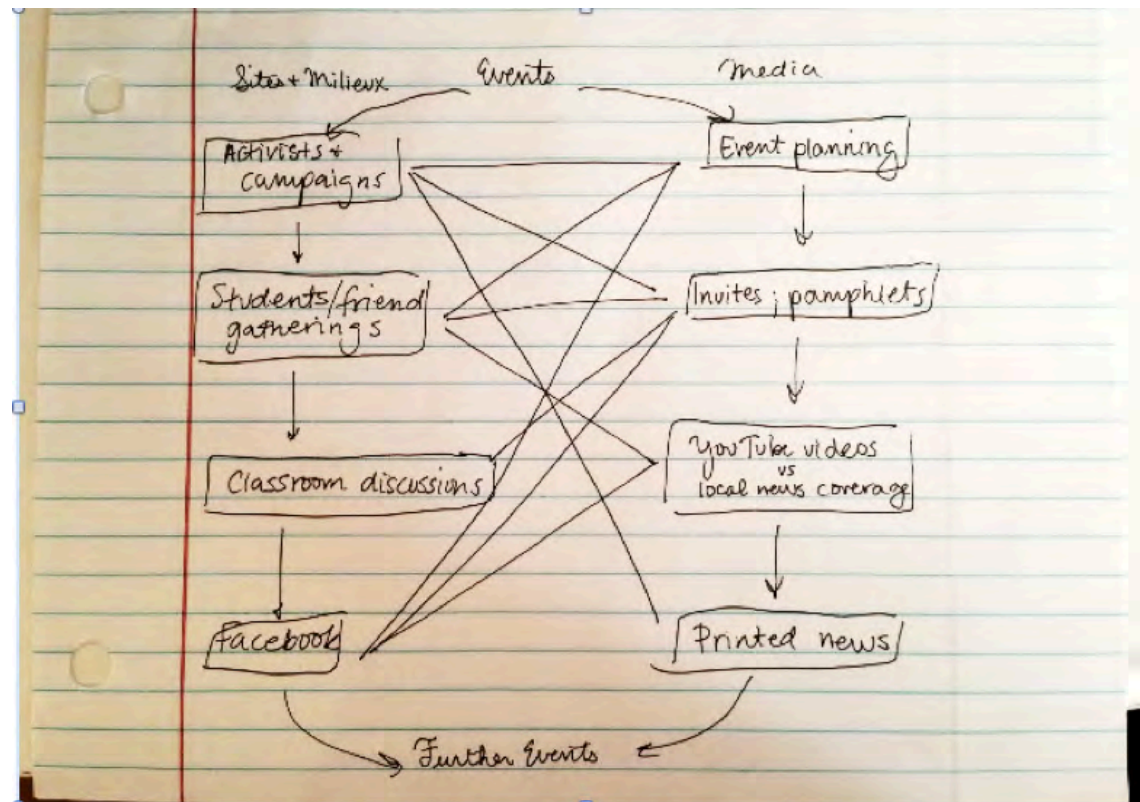
The ironic coincidence between the announcement of tuition increase and the universities “Big Give” fundraiser ... When it was announced, publicized in online print and publicized by social networking, there had already been significant chatter about possible outcomes across campus. I personally heard about much of this early due to my position in a student organization and was an active part of spreading information to my peers. Whether or not the tuition increase necessarily influenced the success of the fundraiser, the accelerated ubiquity of each in parallel contexts could not be independent





Alice P.

Facebook is like a virtual tree of Cracow; it is still a good model to say the oral transmissions color and humanize the written ones.





17th-18th century: New settings of communication



Emergence of the Public

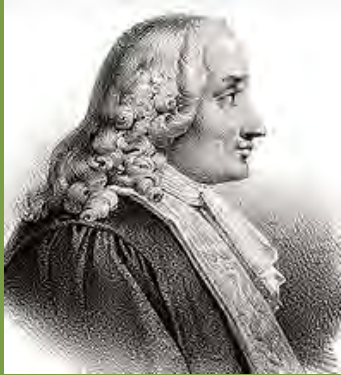
"[In the late seventeenth century] . . a new cultural space developed, ... a 'public sphere' in which private individuals came together to form a whole greater than the sum of the parts. By exchanging information, ideas, and criticism, these individuals created a cultural actor -- the public -- which has dominated European culture ever since."--Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power*

- *Rise of middle class*
- *separation of private from public*

Commodification of news



Emergence of the Public



"A tribunal has arisen independent of all powers and that all powers respect, that appreciates all talents, that appreciates all talents, that pronounces on all people of merit. And in an enlightened century, in a century in which each citizen can speak to the entire nation by way of print, ... men of letters are, amid the public dispersed, what the orators of Rome and Athens were in the middle of the public assembled."

Guillaume-Chrétien de Malesherbes 1775





Defining "the Public"

public, n.

Am. Her: The community or the people as a whole. **2.** A group of people sharing a common interest: *the reading public*.

OED: The community as an aggregate, but not in its organized capacity

Ratio of occurrence in major newspapers:

<i>the American people/public</i>	4 to 1
<i>the Egyptian people/public</i>	80 to 1

Goog Scholar hits for *the nineteenth-century public*: 1300; *the medieval public* 128

The reading public vs. the stamp-collecting public



The birth of the salon



The salon (or *conversazione*): gathering held at (usually fashionable) houses with mix of society, artists, writers, scholars & discuss politics, literatures, etc.





Coffeehouse society



"The English have no settled Academies de Beaux-Esprits, as we have in Paris, but instead of such assemblies, the most ingenious persons ... meet either in places of promiscuous company, as coffee-house, or in private clubs, in taverns."--Abel Boyer, *Letters of Wit*, 1701

Now being entered, there's no needing
Of compliments or gentle breeding,
For you may seat you any where,
There's no respect of persons there.

A Character of Coffee and Coffee-Houses, 1661

An idealization?



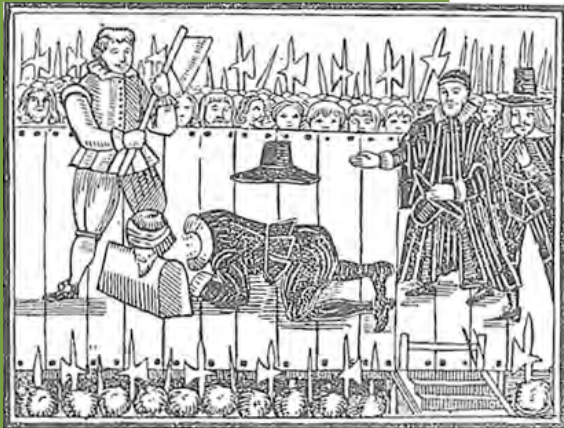


Coffee-House Politics



1675: Charles II tries to close "resorts of idle and disaffected persons [who spread] *False, Malicious, and Scandalous Reports*," ... to the defamation of his Majesty's Government."

When they take from the People the freedom of words,
They teach them the sooner to fall to their swords;
Let the City drink coffee, and quietly groan,
They that conquer'd the father won't be slaves to the son. Andrew Marvell





Coffee-House Politics

"there is an incredible degree of liberty in these places, where not only the generals and ministers but even the emperor is torn to shreds"

Visitor to Vienna, 1706

Men condemn, approve, revile, rail with bitter invectives both in speech and in writing without the authorities daring to intervene. The King himself is not secure from censure. Abbe Prévost, 1729, in London



*Etablissement de la nouvelle Philosophie.
Notre Berceau fut un Café.*



Condorcet, Voltaire, Diderot



Coffeehouse, Vienna



Doubting Thomas

"The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them."

--Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington, 1787

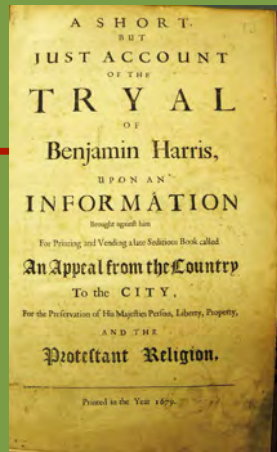
"The man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them, inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods and errors. He who reads nothing will still learn the great facts, and the details are all false."

--Thomas Jefferson to John Norvell, 1807.



Coffee-House Politics

...at a small expense of time or money, persons wanted may be found and spoke with, appointments may be made, current news heard, and whatever it most concerns us to know. In all cities, therefore, and large towns that I have seen in the British dominions, sufficient encouragement has been given to support one or more coffee houses in a genteel manner... NY Journal 1775



The Bostonians Paying the Excise-man, or Tarring and Feathering, 1774. Library of Congress.



King's Arms Coffeehouse, New York, 1690



The spreading use of print



Growing Use of Print

Size of personal libraries

Personal library of typical French magistrate, 15th c. 60 books

Montaigne, late 16th c. 1000 books

Montesquieu, early 18th 3000 books

From intensive reading to extensive reading...

Annual sale of newspapers:

1750: 7 million

1810: 24 million

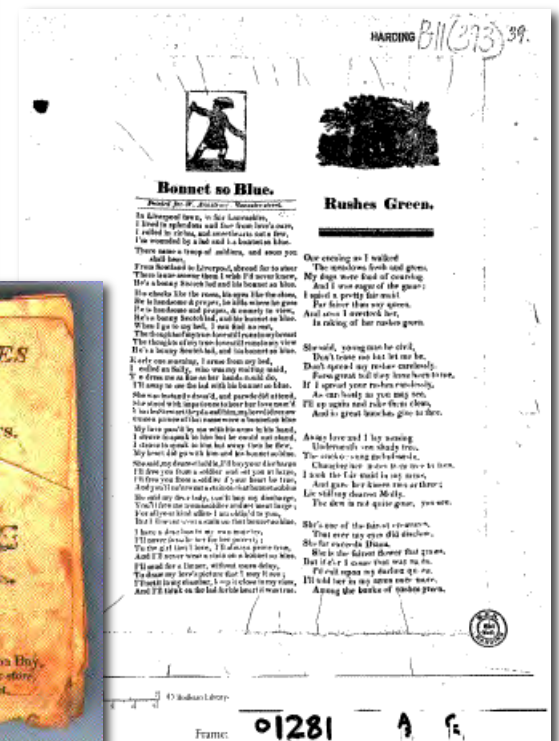
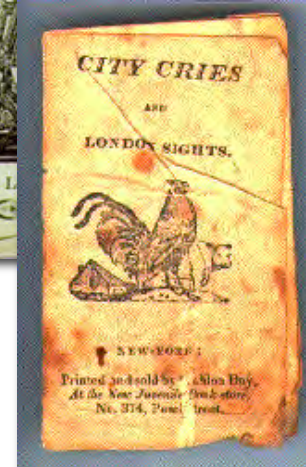
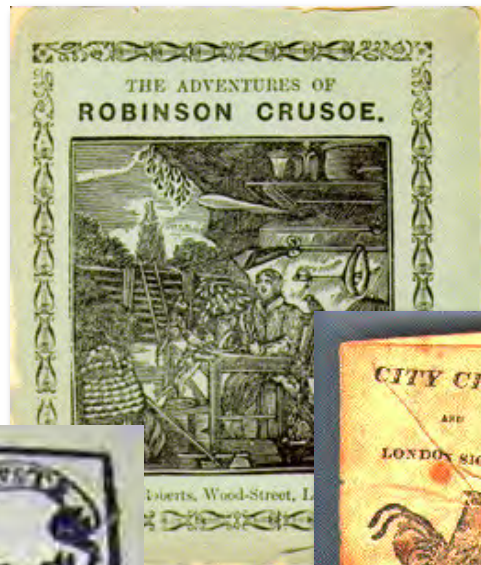
Increase in number of printed genres

Eighteenth Century: Earliest appearance of printed posters, theater bills, newspapers, handbills, labels, tickets, marriage certificates, papers of indenture, receipts, etc.



New & Expanded Print Forms

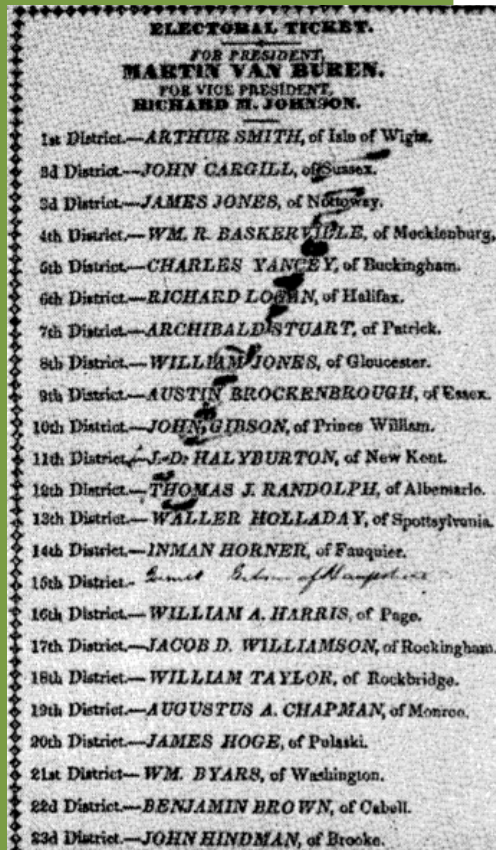
17th-18th c. see rise of chapbooks, broadsides, ballads, almanacs, pamphlets, etc.



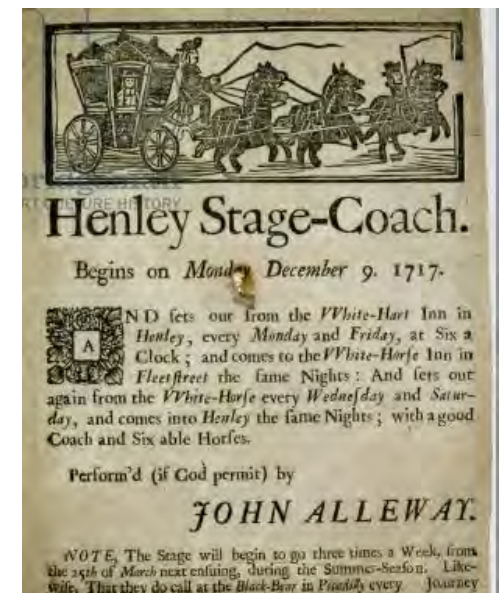


New & Expanded Print Forms

17th-18th c. see rise of chapbooks, broadsides, ballads, almanacs, pamphlets, etc. Also: earliest printed handbills, labels, posters, handbills, forms, indentures, receipts, tickets, ballots, etc.



US Ballot 1840





The Rise of the Periodical Press



Venice: *Notizie Scritte* [bought for a "gazetto"] 1566

Frankfurt: Frankfurter Postzeitung, 1615

France: *Gazette de France* 1631

Leipzig: Einkommendeg Zeitung, daily | 650

Spain, *Gaceta Nueva*, monthly, daily 1661

British America: Publick Occurrences, 1690

Russia: Vedomosti, 35 x per year, 1702





Newspapers that look like Newspapers

1695 -- abolition of the Licensing Act

1702 -- appearance of the *Daily Courant*, usually considered 1st daily newspaper in England





Too much to read

"[in 1709] there were six distinct publications to read .. on Monday, twelve on Tuesday, six on Wednesday, twelve on Thursday, six on Friday, and thirteen on Saturday."

Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers*, 1887

"On Saturdays during 1746 at least 45,000 papers were sold Allowing for the moderate estimate of ten readers per page ... a de facto readership of not far short of half-a-million." Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole*, 1987

[London pop < 700,000]



The Rise of the Periodical Press



1709: the *Tatler* first published by Richard Steele, under the pseudonym Isaac Bickerstaff

1711: Steele and Joseph Addison found the *Spectator*, with contributions from various members of the "Spectator Club."





The Rise of the Periodical Press

"All Englishmen are great newsmongers. Workmen habitually begin the day by going to coffee-rooms in order to read the latest news. I have often seen shoeblacks and men of that class club together to purchase a farthing newspaper" --César de Sassure, 1726



"Lackeys, stable lads, odd-job men, gardeners and porters sit together and chatter about the news in the public prints... So they often think themselves better than the town mayor because they think they know a lot more than he does about every matter of state" Steiler, *The Pleasure and Utility of Newspapers*, 1695



The master of spin



Rob't Harley, Earl of
Oxford

cabinet papers

London Gazette

Review

Examiner

Post-Boy

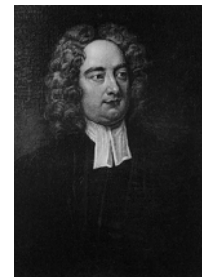
Mercator



in-house journalists

Defoe

Swift ...





The "reading revolution"

"Readers of books...rise and retire to bed with a book in their hand, sit down at table with one, have one lying close by when working, carry one around with them when walking, and who, once they have begun reading a book are unable to stop until they are finished. ... No lover of tobacco or coffee, no wine drinker or lover of games, can be as addicted to their pipe, bottle, games or coffee-table as those many hungry readers are to their reading habit."
Frankfurt 1796

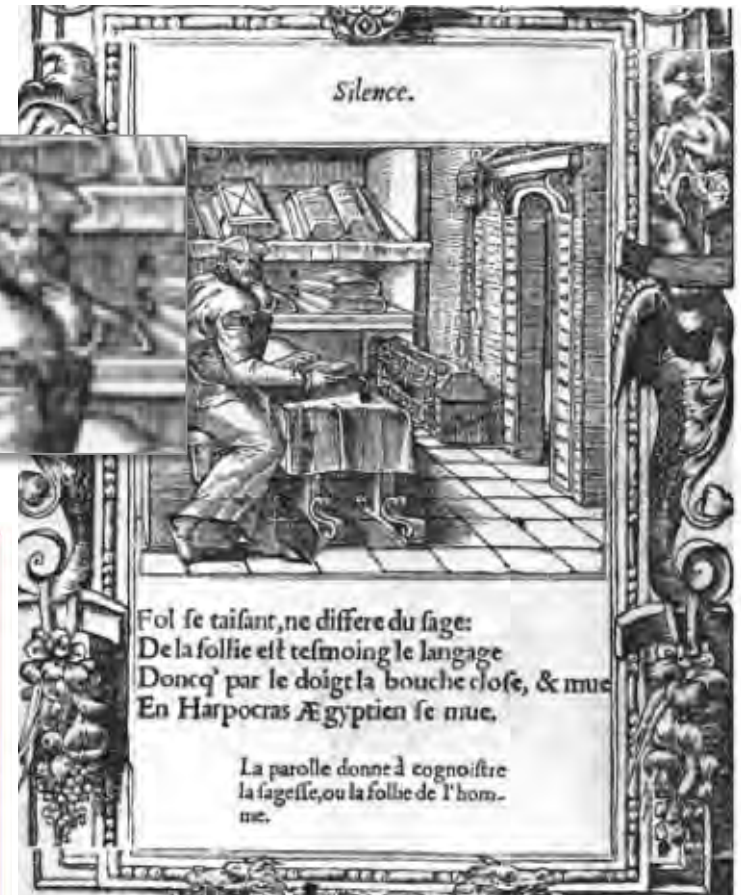


The "reading revolution"



Gérard Dou, woman reading

Silent reading



Paternoster qui es in coelis
sanctificetur nomen tuum
adveniat regnum tuum fiat
voluntas tua sicut in coelo et
in terra. **P**anem nostrum
quotidianum da nobis hodie et
dimittit nobis debita nostra
sicut et nos dimittimus
debita nostris et ne nos
inducas in tentationem sed
liberanos a malo.

Fol se taisant, ne differe du sage:
De la folie est testmoing le langage
Doncq par le doigt la bouche close, & muet
En Harpocras Egyptien se mue,

La parole donne à cognoistre
la sagesse, ou la folie de l'homme.



The invention of "news"



From a print by Vanderghucht.

Daniel Defoe

"We had no such thing as printed newspapers, in those days, to spread rumours and reports of things.... But such things as those were gathered from letters of merchants, and others, who corresponded abroad, and from them was handed about by word of mouth only; so that things did not spread instantly over the whole nation as they do now."-- Daniel Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Years*, 1722, speaking of 1660's

What makes something "news"?



What makes for "news"



Seriality

Periodicity

periodical, journal, daily, weekly, monthly, annual...

Currency

courant, postvoice,

Independence

intelligence(r), informer, observer, spectator, guardian

Voice...

Source

Lloyd's News, Defoe's Review ...

Completeness

full, complete, entire ("all the news...")

[illegible]

POPISH DAMNABLE PLOT

AGAINST

Our Religion and Liberties, lively delineated in several of its Stances.

With an Account of the Manner of the Execution of

WILLIAM Viscount STAFFORD on Tower-Hill.

The Explanation.

SEVERAL things in the foregoing (see English account in the Spectator) "Observations on the Execution of William Viscount Stafford" have been so misapprehended, that it is thought necessary to give a further and more full and plain account of the same, than what has been already published. (See the Appendix to the English account in the Spectator.)

THE FIRST of these things is,

I. That the Viscount Stafford, who was executed on the 29th of January 1680, was not the same person who was executed on the 29th of January 1680, as is asserted in the English account in the Spectator, but that the Viscount Stafford who was executed on the 29th of January 1680, was the same person who was executed on the 29th of January 1680.

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X. That the Viscount Stafford who was executed on the 29th of January 1680, was not the same person who was executed on the 29th of January 1680, as is asserted in the English account in the Spectator, but that the Viscount Stafford who was executed on the 29th of January 1680, was the same person who was executed on the 29th of January 1680.

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The political role of print

18th c. libelles and broadsides



par tes baisers excite mon délire,
je suis ma bonne, au comble des plaisirs.





The political role of print

18th c. *libelles* and broadsides



News mongers of the Quai des Augustins, Paris 1681



Publics and "Public Opinion"

"By 'the public sphere' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy." Jürgen Habermas



The emergence of a public discourse

"Rank and privilege" in theory set aside, and discourse becomes ostensibly impersonal:

"...when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or enmity with the author, I must depart from this situation; and considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being and my peculiar circumstances." David Hume, 1757

Cf modern sport-talk radio...





Publics and "Public Opinion"

"It is certainly right and prudent to consult the public opinion. ... If the public opinion did not happen to square with mine; if, after pointing out to them the danger, they did not see it in the same light with me, or if they conceived that another remedy was preferable to mine, I should consider it as my due to my king, due to my Country, due to my honour to retire ... but one thing is clear, that I ought to give the public the means of forming an opinion."

Charles James Fox, 1792



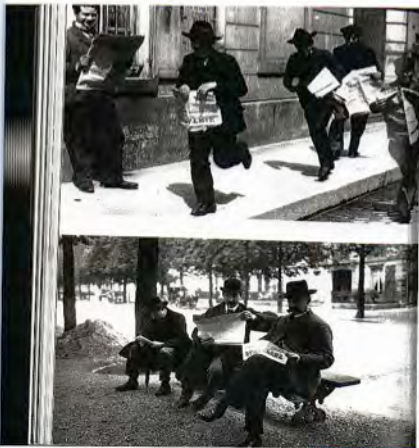


Print and the Creation of "Imagined Communities"



[Britain] has become a nation of readers. --Samuel Johnson, 1781

The newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life...creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations. --Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.





The "Age of Authors"

Emergence of modern notions of intellectual property, publishing, authorship, etc.



The present age... may be styled, with great propriety, the Age of Authors; for, perhaps, there was never a time when men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profession and employment were posting with ardour so general to the press... Samuel Johnson, 1763



Cf "...that fatal revolution whereby writing is converted to a mechanic trade; and booksellers, instead of the great, become the patrons and paymasters of men of genius... Can any thing more cramp and depress true genius, than to write under the direction of one whose learning does not extend beyond the multiplication-table and the London Evening-post?" Oliver Goldsmith, 1761, "The Distress of a Hired Writer"



Economic Shifts

But Goldsmith adds:

For my own part, were I to buy an hat, I would not have it from a stocking-maker but an hatter... It is just so with regard to wit; did I for my life desire to be well served, I would apply only to those who made it their trade, and lived by it.





Economic Shifts



Writers (ostensibly) freed from direct dependence on patronage. Lord Chesterfield offers his patronage for Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*:

Good order and authority are now necessary. .. We must have recourse to the old Roman expedient in times of confusion, and choose a Dictator... I give my vote for Mr. Johnson to fill that great and arduous post. And I hereby declare that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a freeborn British subject, so the said Mr. Johnson... Lord Chesterfield, 1754



DR. JOHNSON IN THE ANTE-ROOM OF LORD CHESTERFIELD



Economic Shifts



Johnson's response:

"Seven years, my lord, have now past since I waited in your outward rooms..., during which time I have ...have it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour..."

Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?"

"the Magna Carta of the modern author..." Alvin Kernan





Economic Shifts

"Writing is become a very considerable branch of the English commerce." Defoe, 1725

Samuel Johnson receives £1575 advance for the *Dictionary*; David Hume receives £1400 for one volume of *Hist. of Britain*; £6000 paid for copyright of account of voyages of Captain Cook.

"Sir, if you talk of it as an object of commerce, it will be gainful; if as a book that is to increase human knowledge, I believe there will be not much of that." Johnson to Boswell



Readings for 2/19

McArthur, Tom. 1986. *Worlds of Reference*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Read: Chs. 12, “The Legislative Urge” [pages 99-103 in reader]

Johnson, Samuel. 1785 (1755). *A Dictionary of the English Language*. London.

Read: entire preface