

Medium is the message essay

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Marshall McLuhan claims that any change taking place around us is an extension of ourselves, or, in other words, any medium is an extension of a human body or mind or senses. For an instance, the hammer is an extension of a human's arm, the wheel is an extension of a human's leg, and the medium of a language helps us to put our thoughts and emotions into words. According to this, things around us would not be the medium unless it does its function.

Like, an electric light itself is a medium without the message, pure information, unless we use it in a verbal ad, for example. Only then it affects us and changes our lives because since then we are surrounded by the medium. In other words, cultures are changed not only by the "content" of technology, but also by the technology itself. The obvious advantage or disadvantage of innovation or technology is easy to see. But, according to McLuhan's theory, the main "content" of any new creation is only not about it. His idea is that the medium is the message itself, and any medium inevitably has its effect on another medium.

For example, the railway was not only the new means of transportation, the main "content" of the railway was about creating new kinds of cities and work and leisure. In other words, in addition to providing fast and cheap transportation for people, the railway also basically restructured society. McLuhan's argument holds that beyond transportation, the railway had tremendous "psychic and social consequences" on society. In order to recognize and understand the social and psychological effects of technology, one must "consider not only the 'content' but the medium and the cultural matrix within which the particular medium operates". McLuhan says that all

technology can be analyzed this way; but many researchers have studied only the effects of the content of technology on our society and neglected to look at it within the “ cultural matrix. In order to understand our culture, it is important to recognize the medium as the message because technology creates a cultural “ grammar,” a system on which messages operate. The technology of print brought tremendous psychological and social changes to society, creating “ individualism and nationalism” among other things.

McLuhan says that “ Alexis de Tocqueville was the first to master the grammar of print and typography,” the first to understand print as a message itself that structures society. But with the understanding that “ the medium is the message” as the approach of his research, de Tocqueville claimed that “ it was the printed word that, achieving cultural saturation in the eighteenth century, had homogenized the French nation” and was fundamentally connected to if not essentially responsible for the French Revolution. De Tocqueville realized that the “ typographic principles of uniformity, continuity, and lineality had overlaid the complexities of ancient feudal and oral society” and empowered the formerly illiterate peasants with a sense of unity that led to their uprising against the upper class. When the peasant people were able to read, they read about other people’s points of view and experiences, and they were willing to fight to change their society as they knew it.

Currently, our society is changing again. Nowadays it is all about the electric media, mostly computers and the Internet, and we, surely, must continue to analyze this technology according to McLuhan’s “ the medium is the

message” notion just to completely understand our culture and the effect of this technology on it, our society and, of course, or our own lives.