

# Mass media influence on society



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BUSTER**

Over the last 500 years, the influence of mass media has grown exponentially with the advance of technology. First there were books, then newspapers, magazines, photography, sound recordings, films, radio, television, the so-called New Media of the Internet, and now social media. Today, just about everyone depends on information and communication to keep their lives moving through daily activities like work, education, health care, leisure activities, entertainment, traveling, personal relationships, and the other stuff with which we are involved.

It's not unusual to wake up, check the cellphone for messages and notifications, look at the TV or newspaper for news, commute to work, read emails, take meetings and makes phone calls, eat meals with friends and family, and make decisions based on the information that we gather from those mass media and interpersonal media sources. We need to be aware that the values we hold, the beliefs we harbor and the decisions we make are based on our assumptions, our experiences, our education and what we know for a fact. We rely on mass media for the current news and facts about what is important and what we should be aware of.

We trust the media as an authority for news, information, education and entertainment. Considering that powerful influence, then, we should know how it really works and how does it really influence us. The degree of influence depends on the availability and pervasiveness of media. All of the traditional mass media still have great influence over our lives. Books once were supremely influential because they came first before newspapers, magazines, radio or television. Newspapers and magazines became great influencers after they were developed.

Sound recordings and film were and still are influential. Radio and then television were very influential. As the 20th century closed, TV exposed us to untold numbers of images of advertising and marketing, suffering and relief, sexuality and violence, celebrity, and much more. New and influential media-distribution channels have appeared in the 21st century. Delivered via the World Wide Web across the Internet, we are influenced daily by blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds and myriad forms of content sharing. “ The media’s the most powerful entity on earth.

They have the power to make the innocent guilty, and to make the guilty innocent, and that’s power. Because they control the minds of the masses. ”

– Malcom X The media makes billions of dollars with the advertising they sell and that we are exposed to. We buy what we are told to be good, after seeing thousands of advertisings we make our buying decisions based on what we saw on TV, newspapers or magazines to be a product we can trust and also based on what everyone else that we know is buying and their decision are also based on the media.

These are the effects of mass media in teenagers, they buy what they see on TV, what their favorite celebrity advertise and what is acceptable by society based on the fashion that the media has imposed them. There are some positive and negative influences in young people. Here is a positive influence example, if there is a sport that is getting a lot of attention by the media and gains popularity among your friends and society, you will more likely want to practice the sport and be cool with all your friends. The result is that you will have fun with your friends and be healthier because of the exercise you are doing.

However a negative influence in teenagers is the use of cigars by celebrity movie stars, the constant exposure of sex images, the excessive images of violence and exposure to thousands of junk food ads. Young people are in a stage of life where they want to be accepted by their peers, they want to be loved and be successful. The media creates the ideal image of a beautiful men and women and tells you what the characteristics of a successful person are; you can see it in movies and TV. It's a subliminal way to tell you that if you are not like them you are not cool yet so it's time to buy the stuff they buy and look like they look.

Another negative influence in teenagers that has grown over the last years are anorexia and obesity. There are millions of adolescents fighting obesity, but at the same time they are exposed to thousands of advertisements of junk food, while the ideas image of a successful person is told to be thin and wealthy. Also more women are obsessive with losing weight even when they are not obese; there are many thin women that want to look like the super models and thin celebrities so they engage in eating disorders which leads to severe health issues and even death.

There is no mistaking that modern day society is greatly influenced by mass media every day, and in many different forms. People often remember all of their favorite television shows they watched growing up as well as the ones they view now. Some of these shows signposting many of their memories in a nostalgic manner. There is favorite music you may listen to, and how does it move you? Possibly affecting you emotionally, or perhaps sparking a dream. There is news heard and witnessed on mass broadcasts across major

network channels. Is it necessarily accurate? Does it invoke a sense of security or alarm?

One should not forget cell phones, laptops, notepads, I-Pods, touch pads and kindles. It is obvious to see every day the incessant use of these interconnected items? Then there are movies; with everyone churning through the ticket booths to experience another rollercoaster ride on the big screen, taking them to some distant galaxy, or maybe just next door to the neighbors house where a family desperately struggles through a crisis. Inevitably, much of what people hear, see, and experience every day comes from some sort of electronic device which transmits media material all of the time.

The internet is a media tool almost worth talking about in an entirely separate forum, yet it is comparable to most media exposure. The World Wide Web is probably the most unified and far reaching media channel to date. You can converse with someone in Kamchatka in the eastern hemisphere while viewing an advertisement in a foreign language on the same page. Then if you enter some of your personal information online, forgetting later that you did so; and then wondering why you get so much junk mail in your E-mail box.

The mass media finds its way into almost every aspect of peoples lives. Advertisements are the most blatant way of influencing our choices, but a more discreet approach is through the daily news, for they are also an important part of the media and influence us in a more discreet way. While objectivity is generally the goal, judgments, and biased information often finds its way into broadcast. Because the news is run by people, and because

the program is owned by the network, it is often biased in how it portrays information or certain people.

This becomes more evident during elections, when some networks spend more time on one candidate over the other, or fail to report all sides of the story. We believe what we hear and the daily news that often starts and ends our day is how most of us get their information. Because for most, it is the only source, they blindly accept what they hear as the absolute truth. Advertisements target various audiences, depending on the product, but a lot of it is directed towards young adults.

Over time, this technological media entity has become mammoth and omnipresent. It is everywhere you go, finds its way into most of what you do, and even provides you sometimes, with what you need; almost becoming a cybernetic surrogate mother we all readily accept without much question. It can be beneficial to society in its influence, yet sometimes have a bad effect. It can lead or mislead people into the wrong direction or belief. There are times in history, distant and near, where it has greatly inspired, united, and motivated the masses.

Let it be known, that it can also be used maliciously; to injure, or even achieve an injustice. The mass media can be a very powerful tool, and if not handled properly, with good judgment to govern, can become an enemy of society. Anywhere in the world, this media instrument greatly affects all persons indigenous and non-indigenous to where that region may be. So, to take a look at some of the most prominent and powerful sources of mass media, the influence they have on society, and the resulting effects on individuals in that society.