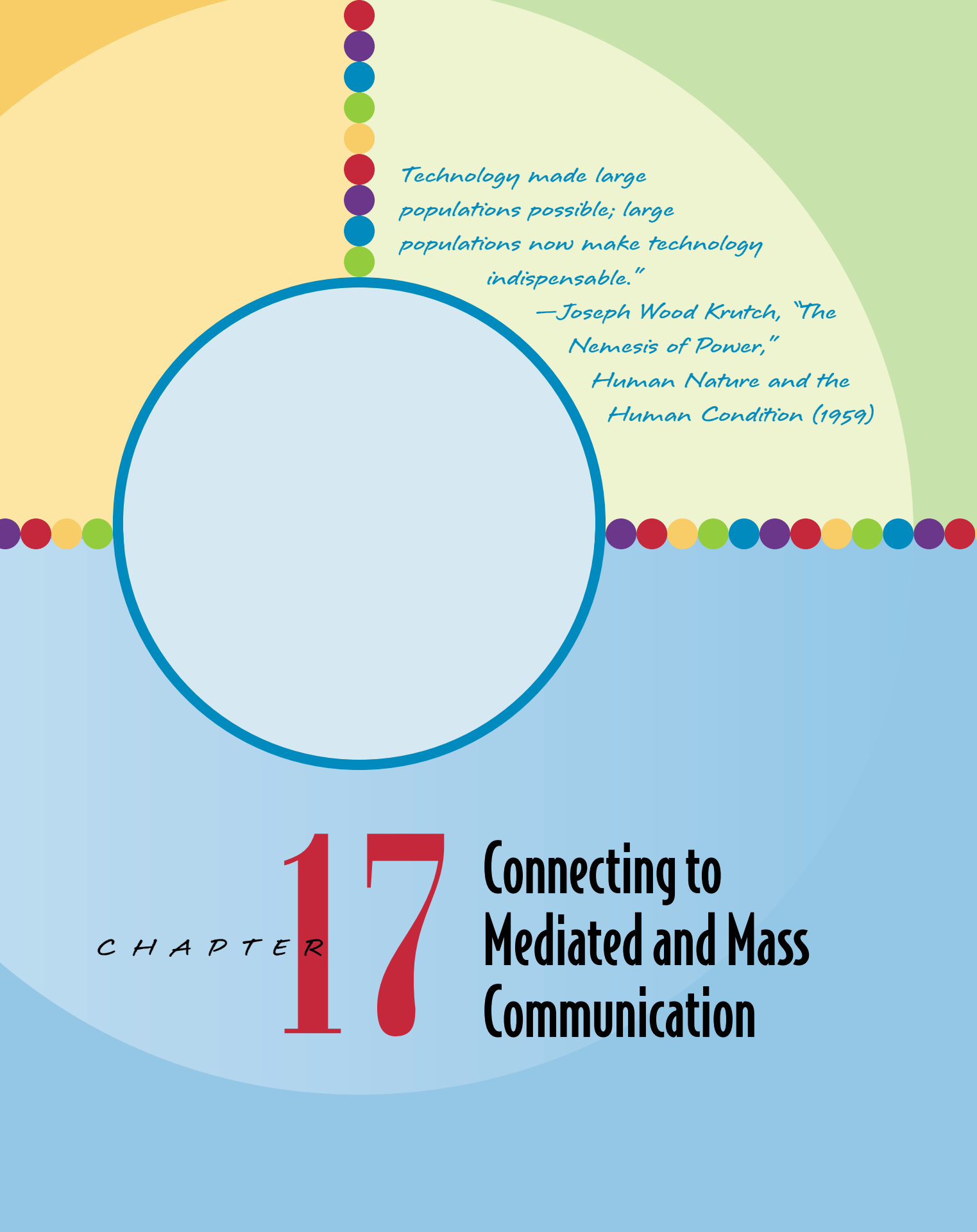


Prologue to Chapters 17 and 18



“Businesses are changing the way they are doing business” is an often-used phrase in today’s world. This statement is probably more true now than ever because of the Internet. Textbooks are also changing in the way they present materials. These chapters are different from most because they come to you via the Internet, and, when appropriate, we have included a direct link (Internet address) to a source of information whereby you can, with a simple click, gain access to more information. For example, if you click on an address related to an organization, you will be able to study the organization’s description, locations, products, services, management philosophy, career opportunities, and other related information. In some cases, you will simply find additional resources or information that may expand on or provide examples for the information in the chapter. We hope you will enjoy this type of interaction as well as learn more about communication and technology.



*Technology made large
populations possible; large
populations now make technology
indispensable."*

*—Joseph Wood Krutch, "The
Nemesis of Power,"
Human Nature and the
Human Condition (1959)*

CHAPTER **17** **Connecting to
Mediated and Mass
Communication**

THIS CHAPTER WILL HELP YOU:

- Describe the impact of technology on communication.
- Understand the impact of human communication on technology.
- Be able to describe the impact of mediated communication on beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.
- Know when mediated communication sources are trying to manipulate you.
- Know how to effectively create and produce mass and mediated communication.
- Know how to be an effective consumer of mass and mediated communication.

CASE STUDY

Xiaofan sits in the computer lab at her U.S. university and emails her friends in China. She writes about her daily life, about classes, and the kinds of experiences she is having as a student in the United States. Her friend emails a response the next day, and the two carry on an extended “conversation” on a daily basis for all the weeks Xiaofan is in residence in the United States. When asked about her friends and life in her own country, Xiaofan replies that she doesn’t feel she’s that far from home, because she’s in daily contact with her friends. And, while her family does not have a computer and access to the Internet, she can talk with them on occasion because she has the telephone and letters to fill her in on important events in their lives. ●

Questions to think about

- 1 What happens to students who don’t have computer and Internet access? Will their education be diminished because they cannot get the same information as those with a computer and Internet access?
- 2 What are the effects on other social institutions such as places of worship, cities, states, and even nations? Will the advantages to some outweigh the disadvantages to the many?
- 3 What effect does mediated communication have on people and their communication and relationships? Are they negative or positive effects?

Xiaofan is a typical student. She uses email to stay in touch with her friends and, even though she's many miles from her home, she feels that she can make contact easily. The Internet and the World Wide Web have opened new doors for all of us. The number of people actively using the **Internet** (connecting computers and their operators between different points) or the **Intranet** (a network connection within a specific unit, organization, or institution) is rising rapidly.

Many of us spend a great deal of time on “the Web” actively seeking information, or maintaining contact with friends, relatives, and colleagues. This author, a serious Nebraska Huskers fan, has often been frustrated because Nebraska games and scores are generally not available on local television and radio. Even when listening to or viewing an Iowa University game, the Nebraska score is not announced. As recently as five years ago if I wanted scores, I had to resort to phoning my Nebraska family to find out what was happening. Now, however, a click of the mouse allows me to sign on to the World Wide Web and scores, pictures, and comments are right there, on the same screen I now face as I write this chapter.

With the Web, I can learn who won the “national college football championship” and the Heisman trophy within moments of the announcements. Even better, I can seek out information about health issues, travel, weather conditions, and write letters to family, friends, and students. I can provide my students with additional information on my listserv, Web Page, or WebCT site. Students can chat with each other and make contact with students from other institutions as we study communication and communication theories. There is a vast amount of information available at any time to anyone with access. Hundreds of new Web sites are added daily. While much of it is wonderful, there are also reasons for concern. For example, anyone with Web access can now quickly learn your phone number and address. But did you know that anyone who wants to search and pay a “nominal fee” (generally from \$19.95 to \$39.95) could also get *supposedly* confidential information about you? This can include your assets and their values, how much money you owe, who your neighbors are, your neighbors' phone numbers, if listed, whether you've ever been involved in lawsuits, etc. If good citizens buy this information, there's no problem. In the hands of the unscrupulous, however, who knows what can be done with that information?

Today's world is filled with many new, exciting, and sometimes frightening innovations. The fact that there are new inventions, new machines, new software, and new ways of knowing is a further reason for studying communication and how it affects people and the world. As the above case study indicates, the recent technological advances can save us all a great deal of time and provide major advantages. At the same time, these tools can be used to help others gain at our expense, and not just in the brief example outlined above. Since technology seems to rule the world, and technology is a part of the mediated and mass communication identified in the title of this chapter, it seems apparent that we all need to know as much as we can about mediated and mass communication and their effects. **A competent communicator needs to interact effectively with both people and technology.** Unfortunately, since many of us spend so much time with computers, the Web, and the various other forms of mediated and mass communication, it becomes easy to forget about face-to-face communication and our relationships with people.

The nature of mediated and mass communication makes it ever more important to think about interpersonal, and group and team communication, as well as the effects of mediated communication on individuals. In order to do so, we'll pursue a his-

torical perspective of mediated and mass communication; we'll look at the effects of people on technology, and technology on human communication; and, finally, we'll identify some guidelines for being or becoming an effective communicator given the mediated and mass contexts, as well as our other communication needs.

Mediated Communication

What do we mean by mediated communication? While the terms *mediated communication* and *mass communication* are often used as synonyms, they are not exactly the same things. **Mediated communication** is any communication transmitted by some kind of mechanistic means, such as radio, television, telephone, or Internet. **Mass communication**, on the other hand, generally means that someone is communicating with or to a large number of people. Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books, the World Wide Web, movies, recordings, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are types of mass communication. What makes this distinction confusing is that we often use some form of media when we communicate with large numbers of people. And, despite the popularity of mass communication, there is very little interaction between the sender and the receiver of mass communication “events.” So, you can see that we are surrounded both by mass communication and by mediated communication.

When we think of mediated communication, the most common form is that of computer-mediated communication. People the world over are logging on and “talking” with each other. Many people are concerned that the Internet is one of America’s newest addictions. Dr. Kimberly Young, president of the Center for On-Line Addiction (<http://netaddiction.com>) urges parents to monitor and restrict their children’s on-line time. “When kids start to form intense relationships on-line, they typically abandon their real-life friends, withdraw from the family, and ignore once-enjoyed school activities.”¹

Andy Gilpin, University of Northern Iowa professor of psychology, says there is little valid research on the impact of heavy Internet usage, but agrees that young people probably use the Internet too much. Gilpin states that adults and young people alike are heavy users of the Internet:

It’s certainly the case that not just teenagers, but many adults, are spending extraordinary amounts of time on the Internet, and any behavior that we do to excess tends to be dysfunctional. And teen-agers typically are not in a position to judge what excessive use is, because they don’t have the experience.²

Gilpin teaches a one semester class that examines Internet usage and its impact on people. He maintains a Web site with extensive links on the topic of heavy Internet usage (www.uni.edu/gilpin/seminar). If you

Making Connections

How to Avoid Net Overload

Read the following suggestions about heavy Internet use and how to avoid it.

1. Avoid prolonged use.
2. Stay involved in extracurricular activities.
3. Use the Internet to foster off-line interests.

What other suggestions would you add to this list? Why?

Visit with a classmate and compare your lists.

Seek other information and add that information to your own list.

Suggestions from Kimberly Young, Center for On-Line Addiction <http://netaddiction.com>

cannot access that specific site, try (www.uni.edu/gilpin) and check out some of the other links Professor Gilpin has provided.

A similar concern about over use also existed when the telephone (another form of mediated communication) was labeled “A Dangerous New Web of Communication.” In a January, 1900 article, reprinted in *Sky* magazine, Mr. Owen Richards said,

A dangerous new universe of communication threatens to ensnare us, so seductive and insidious that it must be recognized for what it is: a web!

A web which, once we are trapped within it, will do nothing less than change the boundaries of human decency, decorum, and behavior! Do nothing less than change the way we speak, think, and, yes, act!

And what is the spider weaving this web, which mesmerizes and even enslaves its users? The spider that has crept unchallenged into offices and homes? The spider which, while promising extraordinary new avenues of discourse and delivery, has spun its web wider and wider and, yes, world-wider?

It is Mr. Alexander Graham Bell’s pernicious instrument, the telephone!³

In the article, Richards asserts that the telephone will change the nation from friendly people “into a nation of lonely, housebound hermits.” Further, he suggests that the telephone would increase immorality, harm innocent children, create a nation of illiterates who could neither read nor write, and even bring an end to travel. The article ended with the statement, “Perhaps we should be grateful that these telephones are held in one place by their wires, lest those who have been ensnared by the illusion of incessant “communication” carry these devices everywhere, speaking to unseen listeners like madmen haunted by disembodied spirits.” Ironically, Richards’s final point has come true with the popularity of cell phones, and his fears about the “web” are similar to those charges made about the computer and the Internet, which is actually a part of the World Wide Web. Now that we’ve looked generally at mediated communication and focused on the Internet, let’s take a look at the various forms of mediated communication.

Interpersonal and Group Messages

The telephone allows individuals to contact each other and conduct conversations. In the past, a telephone conversation was limited to two people communicating in a linear fashion, just as the Shannon and Weaver model depicted: a sender who sends a message through a channel to a receiver⁴ (Shannon and Weaver, 1949). Recent technological advances allow several people in different locations to talk with each other in conference calls. If two or more of the people have computers and video cameras, they can also conduct interviews or conversations while seeing and hearing each other.

The Internet is an easy, efficient, and rapid means of staying in touch with relatives, friends, and colleagues. Some of us also use our Internet capabilities to set up convention sessions, contact colleagues for information, send chapters to our editors, and even to send messages to entire student populations. For teachers, the Internet is an efficient means of communicating with one or all students in a class. It saves paper, time, and other resources.

The Intranet listserv enables one to send out exam reviews, additional information, reminders, and the like. For example, by keying in the department number, the course number, and the section numbers, I can create instantaneous interpersonal communication with each of the students in my basic communication course. I can respond to their questions at any time, day or night, that I happen to be connected to the university Internet system. Students can ask me questions whenever they think of

them, or whenever they happen to be studying. Even if I'm not *on-line* at the time, I can still respond more rapidly than it would be possible to do if the students could only come in or telephone me during office hours. While the Internet will not likely take the place of interpersonal communication between teachers and students (or any other groups of people) it can create **virtual office hours** and **virtual conversations** that can enhance both the teaching-learning environment, and interpersonal and group communication situations.

People can connect with their classmates or co-workers and "discuss" issues, assignments, problems, or any other topic. New software and sophisticated computers allow people to have meetings, conduct interviews, and even to send pictures and carry on extended conversations over the Internet. Software programs such as "**Net-Meeting**" and "**ICQ**" allow people to meet each other over the net, and become acquainted so that the participants can "recognize" each other when they meet face-to-face. It helps them feel that they are "friends," even though they've never actually met in person. The Internet has made the world our neighborhood.

Chat rooms allow people to become a part of a group and exchange messages. It is important to recognize that the Internet has its own unique culture and rules. If you've never been a part of a chat room, before you "jump into" the dialogue, observe (watch and "listen" for the rules, policies, procedures, and norms) for a time so that you are aware of how things are done. Some groups get very angry with interlopers who barge in, uninvited, to their conversations. Get a feel for the way language is used and for the kinds of messages that are sent. Learn how people address and respond to each other. Analyze how and what issues are handled within the group. These observations can save time and, perhaps, embarrassment, if you understand the rules for each chat room.

The Internet or Intranet listserv allows both individual interpersonal and group communication messages. While it is convenient to get messages and information across it is not as interactive as the chatrooms are. And, it's asynchronous and quite linear. All of these Internet applications allow individuals working for the same company, in different locations, or students from different institutions across the world, the opportunity to meet, discuss, and solve problems without ever being in a face-to-face situation.

Chat rooms are particularly interesting to students, partly because they are more interactive, and allow some give and take, much as one has in a regular conversation. Some concerns have been voiced and college administrators, in particular, have said that students spend more time in chat rooms than they do on their studies. The Web site on Internet Addiction (<http://netaddiction.com>) has a page devoted to "Time Management for the College Student" as well as other pages and links to help the student who may spend too much time conversing with friends across the world.

Businesses and organizations that have chat rooms are concerned about the content of chats and the possibility of libel lawsuits. In order to avoid such lawsuits, the rule of thumb has been either to allow anyone to say anything or, to have a 24 hour a day chat room editor who will monitor the chats. This can be very expensive, and still doesn't eliminate the possibility of a lawsuit. The editor of the *Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier* says the newspaper will never have a chat room while he is editor, for that very reason⁵ (Sunday, February 20, 2000, F1). The University of Northern Iowa's athletic department chat room was recently removed because of derogatory comments made about athletes, coaches, and the department. The University has announced that people need to be careful about what they say, and that there will be no tolerance of derogatory remarks. Once they have tried to educate the public, UNI will put the

athletic chat room back on line. If, however, there are continuing infringements, it will be permanently shut down.

Ethics and Chat Rooms

As chat room users, we need to monitor our own behavior. We should not comment disparagingly, use hate speech, or make unsubstantiated claims about others. Nor are chat rooms the place for extreme profanity. As effective communicators, we should be aware of the rules of a particular chat room culture. We should also be aware of our responsibility for ethical communication.

Ethics in mediated communication means that we should not say things that are illegal, harmful, or even hurtful. Just as media and other professional organizations have a code of ethics, we as producers and consumers of mediated communication need to have a code for our own behavior. We need to arrive at ethical decisions in a careful, thoughtful manner. As a part of that critical thinking process, we need to look at the issues, identify intent, identify values (ours and others involved in the issues), analyze the content and values, and make a decision on correct behavior. When we are done we should be able to explain and defend our choices, and demonstrate that decisions were based upon valid criteria which we apply to ourselves and others.

Keep Your Perspective!

What do we need to be aware of when we think about mediated interpersonal and group communication? The Internet can be fun, addictive, informative, and mind opening, all at the same time, but we should carefully weigh the information and opportunities available on the Web. Not all information is good; not all on-line relationships are good. We must learn to differentiate between the beneficial and the harmful. You may wish to consult articles about computer-mediated communication to help you decide what is good or useful, and what is not. Two sources that may be helpful are the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, available on-line at www.jcmc.huji.ac.il; the other is *Computer-Mediated Communication*, a magazine published from 1994 through January 1999, available at www.december.com/cmc/mag/index/html.

Just as you would not automatically trust a stranger you meet on the street, you should not automatically trust someone with whom you have been conversing on the

Web. The guidelines for self-disclosure we identified in Chapter 13, page 370, should also be considered as you develop mediated and on-line relationships. People will say things when chatting on the Internet that they might not say elsewhere. Mild-mannered people may send **flaming messages** or use more aggressive language than they would in person. The message might be more emotional and in tense because the sender can “hide” behind anonymity. On the Internet, the text makes us concentrate on the message, so communicators tend to use strong metaphors and develop unique language to make their messages more memorable, or more “real.”

Good teachers will carefully weigh what can and should go on the Web for their

Making Connections

Censorship and the Net

Many feel that the Internet should be censored. We have Television and Movie Ratings, warning labels on CDs and Audio Tapes, as well as pressure from local and national groups to limit or ban books and magazines.

Should we censor the Internet? How would we do it? Should anything be censored? Why, or why not? Take a position on these questions and create your own justification for it. Compare your views with those of your classmates, your roommate, your parents, and your instructors. What are the similarities? The differences? Why are there similarities? Differences?

courses, and how much to use mediated interpersonal and group messages. Equally, students should determine what they hope to accomplish with mediated communication and remember the guidelines for effective communication in interpersonal and group settings. And apply those guidelines to their Good thinking, open communication, and engaging in powerful intrapersonal communication by thinking through all aspects of our mediated interpersonal and group communication will help us be effective on-line and in-person. Online communication, however, should not replace communicating with our family, friends, and roommates.

Public Messages

Public messages may be transmitted in a variety of ways. Usually, we think of newspapers, radio, and television as the medium for public messages, but they may also be communicated through billboards or other mediated means.

The public mass media is used for a variety of purposes. Politicians and elected officials at all levels use the public media as a means of communicating with their publics, to help them win elections or sway legislative votes. Cartoon strips run stories for weeks and can be used for many purposes. Sometimes the cartoonist speaks of the human condition. Sometimes the cartoonist takes the opportunity to send a variety of personal or social messages.

For example, Lynn Johnston, creator of *For Better or Worse*, sent a Valentine's Day greeting to Charles Schulz, creator of *Peanuts*. Johnston had previously stated that she believed Charles Schulz was one of the world's greatest cartoonists. In it, the character Ellie was making a Valentine and her daughter, April, asked who it was for. Ellie replied that it was for friends in California. April's comment was "Today is Valentine's Day. We can't mail it to get there on time." Ellie responded that this was a "media Valentine." The final panel showed all the cartoon's characters holding a multiple heart with the message, "To Sparky and Jeannie Schulz with much love from all of us." Keep in mind that cartoons are created six weeks before they run in the newspapers. Ironically, the Johnston Valentine cartoon appeared one day after Schulz's final original cartoon strip in the Sunday papers, and one day after his death.

Mediated and mass messages seem to bombard us. Because they are everywhere, it is easy to just accept them without thinking about the true intent of the messages. We're very familiar with this type of communication, but we must remember to analyze and evaluate what we see and hear, and then carefully weigh what has been presented. If the message doesn't make sense, try to determine why. If it sounds "too good to be true" it probably is. We should apply the same standards of evaluation to mediated public messages as was suggested in Chapters 11 and 12 as we do to informative and persuasive speeches we hear and present. We should look for consistencies and inconsistencies and weigh the total impact of the message presented. A competent communicator is an effective producer *and* consumer of all messages, real or virtual. As such, competent communicators open their minds, but evaluate carefully.

Mass Communication

Historical Perspective

Technology is not only a "buzzword," but also a way of life. In the last ten years, the world has changed drastically, due largely to technological inventions. Fifty years ago, when the word emerged from World War II, people relied on the radio, newspapers,

Making Connections

You Are A Net Consumer

Think about yourself as an Internet consumer, then answer these questions. Compare your answers with those of one or two of your classmates and friends.

1. How do you use the Internet?
2. What kinds of information and activities do you pursue? Why?
3. How much time do you spend?
4. How is this different from the way you searched for information or sought entertainment five years ago?
5. How do you know when you've found a good site?
6. What criteria do you use in your analysis of sites?
7. What kinds of questions do you ask your chat room friends about themselves?
8. How do your responses compare to those of your classmates and friends?

and magazines to learn what was happening both locally and globally. Although today we instantaneously get information from a variety of sources, we are very much connected to traditional forms of mass communication. We use books, magazines, newspapers, radio, television, music as well as the Internet to gain information, to relax, and to be entertained. Let's take a look at the various forms of mass communication to which we are exposed daily. You may wish to access the Media History Project (www.mediahistory.com) to get further information on media research, theory, and history, as well as links to related sites.

Books

Books are considered aspects of both education and entertainment. Some of us read hundreds of books each year. Others rarely read a book unless forced to. Historically, books empowered people, because they allowed everyone the right to gain knowledge. Until Gutenberg invented the printing press, clergy in monasteries were the only people who had books, and thus, knowledge and power. With the advent of the printed word, more resources and more learning opportunities became available to the common people. Books became a form both of education and enjoyment. And, the greater the availability, the greater the diversity in materials and in content. Gradually, the book became an agent of social change, with works such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* bringing new awareness of society's problems. Paperbacks brought even greater availability of reading materials and were a reflection of economic as well as social changes. Recently, other forms of mass communication, such as television, have influenced America's reading patterns. Oprah Winfrey has popularized reading in general, and various authors in particular, with her book club and television promotions. Books have also influenced other areas, such as music, television, home video, and movies.

Technological advances have altered the traditional "book." Audiobooks are a popular way for people to "read" while traveling or relaxing at home. Electronic publishing and CD-ROM and Web editions bring books to the computer screen. The interactive nature of computer technology creates exciting possibilities, including interesting activities and graphics. People who never liked to read now enjoy reading ma-

Making Connections

Books and You

Books are a part of every student's life. Some of us enjoy them, others only put up with them. Whatever your view is, books, in the form of textbooks, are an everyday part of your life as a student. Think about these questions, answer them, and compare your answers with three or four of your classmates. Try to determine why the people in your group have come to view books and reading as they have.

1. Why do you read books? Identify as many reasons as you can.
2. How many books have you read "just for fun" in the last year?
3. How would you describe the act of reading?
4. How much reading is enough? Too much?
5. Identify five books you would recommend to others.
6. Identify your personal favorite and provide a reason for that.
7. What kind of reading is done in your family?
8. Do you listen to audiobooks? Why?
9. How many of your textbooks have a CD-ROM version? Do you read them?
10. Which forms of books do you find most enjoyable?
11. What similarities do you and your classmates have in your answers?

terial on their computer. These versions of books have become very popular in the last five or six years and will likely continue to be approved by both publishers and consumers. According to Folkerts, Lacy, and Davenport (1998), the book industry will see

- (1) Increasing involvement with electronic and computer technologies, (2) increasing use of multi-media packages and multimedia promotion, (3) Increasing growth of the super-store [e.g., Barnes and Noble and Borders bookstores], and, (4) a continuing realization that content is still a basic determinant of success.⁶

Newspapers

Newspapers have long been a popular and common form of mass communication. Generally, the newspaper offers citizens not only the important news of the local and surrounding areas, but also the state and the world. "Of the 9,435 newspapers in existence in 1996, about 7,915 were weeklies."⁷ Historically, newspapers played an important role in the development of the United States, both in the push for the colonies to stick together and fight against the tyranny of England, and in the creation of new laws. In the early 19th century, the "penny press" brought inexpensive newspapers to the masses, and created the need for reporters and managing editors to seek out all that was newsworthy.⁸

Radio and television reduced the number of people who read newspapers, and thus created a drop in circulation. Today's newspapers, however, have found new ways to compete: Web sites and Web editions and targeting of specific audiences. A heavier emphasis on advertising to generate profits has emerged as the result of declining readership and greater competition. Electronic access such as Lexis-Nexis allows students, in particular, to find information in newspapers around the world, and

Making Connections

Newspapers and You

Some believe that young people, particularly students, do not keep up with what's going on in the world, either with television, radio, or newspapers.

Others believe that newspapers are promoting more readerships with innovations such as on-line editions, and use of other new technologies.

1. How often do you read a city or national daily newspaper?
2. Do you read the campus newspaper? How often?
3. Survey your classmates in your communication class and another class. How many regularly read a local, regional, or national newspaper? How do they define "regularly"?
4. What do you think newspapers could do to attract readers?
5. Survey students in another class and determine how many are aware of and/or use Lexis-Nexis or other such electronic newspaper sources.

probably increases overall newspaper readership significantly. Have you ever found an article or a needed bit of information on Lexis-Nexis?

Magazines

Magazines have been a part of the American scene since the mid-1700s but were first enjoyed by the wealthy rather than the common citizen. But, social, economic, and technological changes brought more time for reading, and an increased hunger for something more than the news. By the mid-1800s several hundred magazines were printed. The change from agrarian to industrial society created an economic middle class comprised of people who were well educated and who used magazines as an agent of social change. Later, radio and television created competition, but publishers targeted their audience members, and thus continued to thrive. Today there are scores

Making Connections

Top Ten Paid-Circulation Magazines

Advertising Age (February 24, 1997) identified the ten "top paid-circulation U.S. Consumer Magazines" (in descending order) as follows: *Modern Maturity* [with over 20 million monthly subscriptions], *Reader's Digest*, *TV Guide*, *National Geographic*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *The Cable Guide*, *Family Circle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Woman's Day*.⁹ Folkerts, Lacy, and Davenport also identify the top four magazine publishers as Time Warner (*People*, *Time*, *Fortune*, *Sports Illustrated*), Hearst Magazines (*Good Housekeeping*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, *Esquire*), Conde Nast Magazines (*Parade*, *Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Vanity Fair*, *Traveler*), and New York Times Company.¹⁰

of specialty magazines reaching specific readers and specific advertisers. There are advertising-free magazines and “free” magazines that are filled with advertising. Magazine readership seems to be fairly stable over time.

As is the case with books, combined or converging technologies have changed the methods of production and distribution as well as the look of magazines. Increasing numbers of magazines are available on-line or can be accessed by CD-ROM. Undoubtedly, magazines will continue to adapt to consumer needs and with the technologies available.

Movies

Movies first targeted family audiences and were considered a “wholesome form of entertainment.” If you were to ask your grandparents, they would probably tell you they viewed a feature, some news, and a full-length movie for the cost of five to 25 cents! Today’s \$7 to \$10 tickets seem expensive to someone who saw almost a year’s worth of movies for that amount. During World War II, the movie industry became a propaganda agent for the United States government. Since then, however, movies have become a vehicle for entertainment and social commentary.

The movie industry has had its share of challenges. Television created a formidable competitor, so the movie industry shifted its focus to a younger group of consumers. Emerging technologies brought the VCR and videotape, and thus took significant numbers of consumers away from the movie theaters. The industry capitalized on this technology, by adapting their movies for the small screen, and supplying videos for sale and rentals. Corporations such as Blockbuster have generated wealth for their owners as well as for the movie studios, and brought movies to the comfort of our homes at a reasonable cost. There is now so much variety available, that almost any taste can be accommodated.

Radio

Radio did not begin as a mass communication medium. Instead, radio was first a means for one person to communicate with another person at a distance (the wireless where operators used Morse code to communicate messages with each other). The convergence of many technologies allowed voice transmission by wireless means, and the forerunner of modern radio was born.

Radio played an important news and entertainment role in the 1930s and 1940s in the U.S. and throughout the world. During World War II, radio provided speedy news of the war and allowed those at home to know what was happening globally. Since then, radio has remained a popular mass communication medium, partly because it provides specialized content for its listeners. Music is the most popular radio programming with about two dozen music formats available to radio stations. Talk shows such as *Dr. Laura* and personalities such as Howard Stern are popular with some audiences. Rush Limbaugh’s show is a staple for many, as is Paul Harvey’s version of the news. Because radio is flexible, and because individual radio executives know their audiences and their likes, and can sell their advertising time effectively, radio is likely to remain popular. As technologies continue to change, merge, and converge, radio will very likely expand, as well.

For historical information on radio, see Old-Time Radio, at www.old-time.com. Another web site is The Museum of Television and Radio at www.mtr.org which provides information about museums and their contents.

Television

Television developed over a period of time and has been shaped by various networks. Early television programming borrowed heavily from radio and was usually a live broadcast. Three television networks, CBS, NBC, and ABC, were dominant throughout the first four decades of television. Cable television, the Fox network, and others, have reduced the dominance of the “big three” networks in the past twenty years. News has become a staple in television broadcasting. In fact CNN and other “news” networks provide constant updates of all the news.

Television technology also has changed dramatically over time, and often serves a **gatekeeper** function for its viewers (television broadcasts determine what is news, who receives the news, how it is presented, and how often). Television is truly a convergent technology because it involves a variety of technologies for distribution, ranging from broadcast, satellite, cable, microwave, fiber optics, and combinations of these and other transmission processes. Audience consumption largely determines content of programs because that consumption affects the amount, type, and content of advertising. Television is a regulated industry, subject to rules and regulations provided by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). The Telecommunications Act of 1996 generated great changes in television because of the new rules for licensing, ownership and services.

Technology continued to alter television. New technologies such as Digital Video Disks (DVD) and High Definition Television (HDTV) will likely expand the possibilities for PCTVs (combinations of television sets and personal computers). This will probably lead to higher quality television broadcasts, variety in programming, and more interactive television formats.

Web searches allow you to find information about your favorite shows, as well as more information about the history and the industry itself. *Broadcasting and Cable* magazine has an on-line version at www.broadcastingcable.com.

The Music Industry

While the primary purpose of music is entertainment, it also serves personal and social functions in our lives. Music has often been a part of the traditions of the various cultures of the world. America’s European settlers brought the religious and popular music forms used in their native countries. African-Americans also brought their own forms of music, stories, and traditions with them. The music of these two cultures have influenced the majority of music popular today. Music is a cultural experience and brings social groups together through shared experiences. Like language, music serves as a meaningful reminder of the cultural traditions, ceremonies, rites, and rituals in our lives.

Modern music relies heavily on commercialization and caters to the musical needs and appeals of young people, especially those who question society and social norms. The recording companies control the industry, and serve as gatekeepers for the artists and their music. A company can end an artist’s career simply by deciding not to promote his or her recordings. The recording industry is subject to mergers, as are banks and other media, with a handful of companies controlling about $\frac{3}{4}$ of all musical recordings.

Technological development is responsible for the music industry. The first technology used was the printing press, which allowed sheet music to be printed and sold.

During the 1950s 33½ r.p.m. and 45 r.p.m. formats were developed on vinyl discs known as records. Audiotapes and compact discs replaced records. The advent of the VCR and videotapes allowed for music videos, which have become popular since the 1980s. Music videos, in turn, popularized music channels on television, which in turn resulted in more music video sales. Technological advancements have improved delivery of music through disk and tape as well as through fiber-optic cable. Multimedia productions and packaging of music will undoubtedly continue music's pervasive influence. Only the creativity of the artists and their producers will determine new trends in the music itself.

For more information on popular music forms, see www.iuma.com. There are also some web sites on the history of specific musical forms. Of particular interest to many are the various sites on the history of rock and roll.

The Internet

Computers have greatly influenced our lives. Computers serve many functions, provide many applications, and have many uses. Almost every one of our actions somehow involves a computer: from the automobile to the ATM machine, from having our groceries scanned at the checkout counter to paying for our purchases with a credit card. All of these activities involve interacting with a computer. The Internet is a network of computer networks, initially developed by the U.S. Defense Department. The federal government wanted an easy and efficient communication system for use in times of emergency and disaster. Thus the Internet was created. **Media convergence** can be defined as the combining of two or more traditional media in one process. The Internet allowed innovative people and companies to create a rapid mail system, email, using computers and telephone lines. With the use of more technology and media, more advances have come about. People can even see each other in real or lag time as they send and receive email messages. The computer is used by newspapers, radio, television, and magazines to deliver text. CD-ROM technology and Zip drives and disks allow us to save greater amounts of information to be retrieved and used at a later time. Bulletin board systems allow people to talk with each other and access specialized information. On-line services provide information and access to the networks.

We live in an information age. While this can be positive, many people are concerned that we now face a “digital divide” in which only those with money and access will have the advantages brought by technological convergence. Those who can afford to pay for computers and on-line services will have more information, and thus more power than those who cannot afford them. So far, there are few laws regulating the Information Highway. Some believe that this should remain so. Others feel that laws are needed to avoid excesses and to limit the digital divide. Other issues surrounding computer technology are cost, availability, and amount and types of information we can access. Privacy, ownership, and copyright issues have not been resolved. And, issues of freedom of expression are constantly raised, but not often settled. Earlier in this chapter we dealt with censorship of the Internet as well as Internet addictions. These

Making Connections

Ethics and Technology

Seth has to write a report on the ethical issues surrounding computer technology and communication. He asks you for advice. What will you tell him? Identify (list) the top ten ethical issues. Compare your list with those of others in your class.

and other issues will need to be resolved as people continue to rely heavily on computers and the Internet.

There are numerous print and non-print sources of information about computer applications. One site, www.islandnet.com/~kpolsson/comphist.htm provides a list of the important dates and developments in computers from 1947 to the present. There are also links to information about dates and the people associated with those important developments in computing.

Distance Education

“Distance education” is a popular form of learning. While it is viewed as a “new” form of mediated education, the concept is really quite ancient. We’ve had correspondence courses for years. And, with the advent of recording, it became possible for a teacher to tape record a lecture or lesson, and send the tape to students wherever they might be. This format is still used to provide opportunities for people who might not otherwise be able to receive an education.

Many universities in the United States and around the world utilize the taped classroom concept. Costa Rica, for example, has a large university dedicated to “distance learning” where students never set foot on campus. Instead, the university sends videotapes to them; they take notes, complete their assignments, and mail back the tape and their assignments. The students may create their own tapes to send to their professors. This is known as an **asynchronous** (not occurring at the same time) system.

Another asynchronous distance learning system is the televising of a professor’s lesson. The students receive it at the same time, or at a delayed time, but do not interact with the professor. They are passive receivers of the mediated communication, and send their assignments back to the professor using letters through the postal or some courier service, fax responses, or even an audio or video taped response.

Distance learning continues to change and expand, growing out of the need to provide learning environments for people who are geographically removed from an academic institution, and who might not otherwise be able to get an education.

Another form of distance learning is through **two-way interactive television**. This is a **synchronous system** that allows people in various sites to see each other, talk with each other, and respond both to teacher and other students, in “real time.” In other words, when I can see the teacher, you can also see the teacher, and each location or distance site can interact with both the teachers in a classroom far away, as well as with the other students who are separated by often great distances. Two-way interactive television allows academic institutions to hold classes for people scattered over a large area, and still have a degree of community, so that people feel they are “connected to” the students in the other sites, even though they are not in the same physical space.

Large organizations or private businesses that wish to convey a consistent message to the workers in widely scattered locations, but do not want to have the expense of travel, can utilize this synchronous system as well. They can conduct simultaneous workshops, meetings, and information sessions with people from different locations. Two-way interactive television simulates a regular conference room, where presenters and participants can interact with each other. This allows people to get to know each other, just as they would in a “regular” meeting or seminar, even though the images and voices are mediated through the television.

WebCT is one of a number of software programs that allow professors and others to create interactive Web sites. The advantage to teachers is that a wealth of in-

formation can be brought into the classroom or into the consciousness of students in the class. WebCT, Web Board, Course in a Box, and other such programs allow for more variety and more outside sources, thus, they can enhance the teaching-learning process in ways only dreamed about in the past.

Summary

In this chapter we have looked at mediated and mass communication, trying to make the connections between them as well as separating them. Mediated communication occurs when some mechanistic form of media (channel) is used to send messages to others. We also identified mass communication as a form of communication aimed at large (mass) audiences.

We looked at the development of mediated and mass communication through history and talked about the technological advancements that helped to bring about new forms. In each section we asked you to think about the ethical implications of technology and its applications. Many of the ethical issues have yet to be addressed, particularly in regard to those issues about freedom of speech, privacy, ownership, and copyrights. There is much we have yet to learn about technological convergence and its effects on people. What we do know, however, is that communicators need to make the connections between effective communication and ethical behaviors and ineffective communication and unethical behaviors.

KEY TERMS

Asynchronous: not occurring at the same time. The term is used to refer to a system of distance learning where the teacher and students are not acting at the same time, but rather, where the teacher usually sends a videotape to students or a television production is created, and the students in the class watch the tape or watch the production, complete their assignments, and send them back to the institution.

Chat rooms: Internet locations where people log on to converse (chat) with each other. There are specialized chat rooms for special interests, and general chat rooms, which allow people to develop on-line relationships.

Distance education: may take many forms. Distance education ranges from correspondence courses, to the exchange of videotapes, to asynchronous and synchronous televised classes.

Emoticons: use of symbols to create additional meaning or to provide more emotion in the mes-

sage when communicating via the Internet. Examples are: @-- > --@-- > -- (Roses for you!) :-)

(Smiley face).

Flaming messages: messages which contain more aggression, stronger language, and perhaps even anger, than a sender would normally state in a face-to-face situation.

Gatekeeping: the process of controlling the flow of information into and through the mass media.

ICQ: program that allows people to seek each other out, meet, talk, and conduct extended conversations over the Internet.

Internet: a network connecting computers and their operators between different points.

Intranet: a network connection within a specific unit, organization, or institution.

Mass communication: a term generally used to mean that someone is communicating with large numbers of people.

Mediated communication: any communication transmitted by some kind of mechanistic means, such as television, telephone, or Internet.

Netmeeting: a meeting on-line, generally facilitated by a computer, the Internet, and a small video camera that allows people to “broadcast” their messages and images across the net.

On-line: when one is connected to the Internet and sending, receiving, or reading messages, or gathering information.

Synchronous system: a system that allows for all participants to be seen and heard in real time. The participants can see each other and hear each other at the time that communication efforts occur.

Two-way interactive television: a synchronous form of learning where teacher and students can

see each other and hear each other without a delay in the transmission of voice or video.

Virtual conversations: conversations that take place on-line.

Virtual office hours: accessibility or office hours at any time of the day or night. Virtual office hours aren’t real office hours, but students can contact their professors at any time they are on-line, and professors can reply as soon as they log in. **Virtual** anything means that while it isn’t the “real” thing, it closely approximates the real thing and allows people to connect from a variety of locations at all times.

WebCT: software program which allows instructors to put a course on-line, or to enhance a traditional course with web materials.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What do you think the role of technology will be in the workplace in the future?
2. How do you use computers and technology now?
3. How much do you use the media?
4. What is media’s effect on you?
5. What restrictions should there be on the Internet?
6. What restrictions should there be on media?
7. How do you think policies governing mediated communication will change in the future?
8. What will happen to those students who do not have access to the Internet?
9. Will mediated communication “ruin” families and personal relationships as some people believe?
10. How will/do you monitor your children’s use of the media?

NOTES

1. Young, Kimberly, Center for On-Line Addiction, quoted in Waterloo-Cedar Falls *Courier*, May 2, 1999, E1.
2. Gilpin, Andy, UNI Professor of Psychology, quoted in Waterloo-Cedar Falls *Courier*, May 2, 1999, E1.
3. Richards, Owen, January 1900 article reprinted in *Sky*, January 1999, pp. 80–83.
4. Shannon, Claude, and Weaver, Warren (1949). *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
5. Shapiro, Saul, “Web Opens New Libel Possibilities,” Waterloo-Cedar Falls *Courier*, February 20, 2000, F1.
6. Folkerts, Jean, Stephen Lacy, and Lucinda Davenport, *The Media in Your Life*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 100.
7. *Ibid.*, 108.
8. *Ibid.*, 113.
9. *Advertising Age*, February 24, 1997, cited in Folkerts, Lacy, and Davenport, 155.
10. Folkerts, Lacy, and Davenport, 155.