

**JOSEPH TUROW**

# MEDIA TODAY

**MASS COMMUNICATION  
IN A CONVERGING  
WORLD**



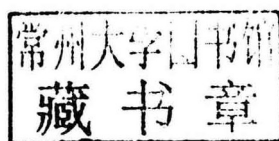
# MEDIA TODAY

MASS COMMUNICATION IN A CONVERGING WORLD

— 6TH EDITION —

**JOSEPH TUROW**

*University of Pennsylvania*



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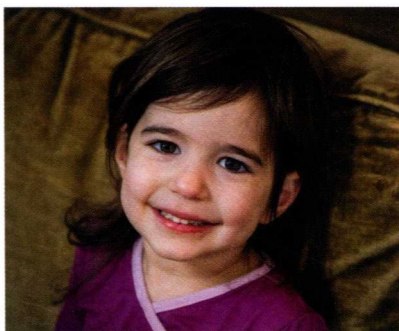
# MEDIA TODAY

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MASS COMMUNICATION IN A CONVERGING WORLD

— 6TH EDITION —

*For Oriana Avra*



*and Felix David*





# About the Author



**J**oseph Turow is the Robert Lewis Shayon Professor of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. He has been described by the *New York Times* as “probably the reigning academic expert on media fragmentation.” He holds a PhD in communication from the University of Pennsylvania, where he has taught since 1986. He has also served on the faculty of Purdue University, where he received two departmental teaching awards. Turow has lectured at many other universities in the United States and around the world, including Oxford University, where he was awarded an Astor Visiting Lectureship. He is a fellow of the International Communication Association and was named a distinguished scholar by the National Communication Association.

Turow has authored 10 books, edited 5, and written more than 150 articles on mass media. His other books include *The Aisles Have Eyes* (Yale University Press, 2017); *The Daily You* (Yale University Press, 2012); *Playing Doctor: Television, Storytelling, and Medical Power* (University of Michigan Press, 2010); *Niche Envy: Marketing Discrimination in the Digital Age* (MIT Press, 2006); and *The Hyperlinked Society* (coedited with Lokman Tsui, University of Michigan Press, 2008). Additionally, he is the editor of the New Media World book series out of University of Michigan Press. Turow currently serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* and *Poetics*. He has also written about media and advertising for the popular press (e.g., the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Boston Globe*) and has been interviewed many times on National Public Radio.

# Preface

## Our Approach to Studying Media Today

Welcome to *Media Today: Mass Communication in a Converging World*!

As the subtitle suggests, this sixth edition of *Media Today* uses convergence as a lens that puts the reader at the center of the profound changes in the 21st-century media world. Through the convergence lens, readers learn to think critically about the role of media today and about what these changes mean for their lives presently and in the future. The book's media systems approach helps readers to look carefully at how media are created, distributed, and exhibited in the new world that the digital revolution has created. In this way, *Media Today* goes beyond the traditional mass communication textbook's focus on consuming media, to give students an insider's perspective on how media businesses operate. How exactly does Google profit from web searches? What will the magazine look like in five years?

Joseph Turow—who has been teaching Intro to Mass Communication for well over a decade—demonstrates the many ways that media convergence and the pervasiveness of the internet have blurred distinctions between and among various media. After looking at the essential history of each media industry, Turow examines the current forces shaping that industry and explores the impact of emerging trends. From newspapers to video games or social networking to mobile platforms, Turow's *Media Today* prepares students to live in the digital world of media, helping them to become critical, media-literate consumers of mass media and, if they go on to work in mass media industries, more alert, sensitive practitioners.

*Media Today*, Sixth Edition, is characterized by its focus on the following:

- convergence
- consumer education
- comprehensive media industry coverage
- contemporary student-friendly examples

## Convergence

Today, it is impossible to write about the workings of the newspaper, television, magazine, recording, movie, video game, advertising, and public relations industries without taking into account fundamental changes being wrought by websites, blogs, e-mail, video and audio files, social media, and multimedia streams. Consequently, readers will find that every chapter incorporates digital media developments into the main flow of the material.

## Consumer Education

The overarching goal of the sixth edition of *Media Today* is to help students become media-literate members of society. Being media-literate involves applying critical thinking skills to the mass media. It also involves reasoning clearly about controversies that may involve the websites students use, the mobile devices they carry, the television shows they watch, the music they hear, the magazines they read, and much more. It means becoming a more aware and responsible citizen—voter, worker, adult—in our media-driven society.

After reading *Media Today*, students should be

- savvy about the influences that guide media organizations,
- up-to-date on political issues relating to the media,
- sensitive to the ethical dimensions of media activities, and
- knowledgeable about scholarship regarding media effects.

## Comprehensive Media Industry Coverage

What distinguishes mass communication from other forms of communication is the industrialized—or mass production—process that is involved in creating and circulating the material. It is this industrial process that generates the potential for reaching millions (and even billions) of diverse anonymous people at roughly the same time. *Media Today* uses this production-based approach to scrutinize the media in order to show students how the industrial nature of the process is central to the definition of mass communication.

*Media Today* also introduces the media as an interconnected system of industries—not as industries totally separate from one another. Of course, an introductory text cannot begin with a sophisticated exploration of boundary blurring. Students have to first understand the nature of the mass communication process. They must become aware that taking a mass communication perspective on the world means learning to see the interconnected system of media products that surrounds them every day in new ways.

## Contemporary Student-Friendly Examples

As much as possible, the textbook incorporates stories and events that are happening *now*. In the text, readers will find a wide variety of pop culture examples taken from across different industries—from music to TV to video games.



# How to Use This Book

Unlike other texts for the introductory course, *Media Today* takes a media systems approach out of the conviction that the best way to engage students is to reveal the forces that guide the creation, distribution, and exhibition of news, information, entertainment, education, and advertising within media systems. Once students begin to understand the ways these systems operate, they will be able to interact with the media around them in new ways.

Many features have been built into the text not only to help students learn about the inner workings of key industries in mass communication, but also to help them engage with this media, deepening their understanding of their own roles as both consumers and producers of media.

## Chapter Opening Pedagogy

### Chapter Objectives

Students are provided with the key learning objectives for the chapter at the very beginning so that they know what is ahead of them.

#### CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- 1 Discuss what mass media convergence means and why it is important
- 2 Explain the differences between interpersonal communication and mass communication
- 3 Explain why an unorthodox definition of mass communication makes the term especially relevant in today's media environment
- 4 Explain the meaning and importance of culture's relationship with the mass media
- 5 Analyze the ways in which the mass media affect our everyday lives
- 6 Explain what the term "media literacy" means
- 7 List the key principles involved in becoming media-literate

### Vignettes

Relevant and current stories about events or trends in the world of mass communication connect students with what they will read in the chapter and how the information applies to the world in which they live.

Are you like the average American when it comes to being connected to the internet? According to the Experian research firm, Americans "on average" have three or more internet-connected devices.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the company says, "throughout the day we are consuming content wherever and whenever we like." In fact, notes Experian, "forty-two percent of smartphone owners watch video on their phones during a typical week." It adds that millennials—that is, people born between 1980 and 1996—are "the most device agnostic" of all adult age groups, "with more than one-third saying they don't mind watching video on a portable device even if it means a smaller screen."

Not only are more and more people "consuming content"

"Whoever controls the media controls the culture."

ALLEN GINSBERG, POET

"Information is the oxygen of the modern age."

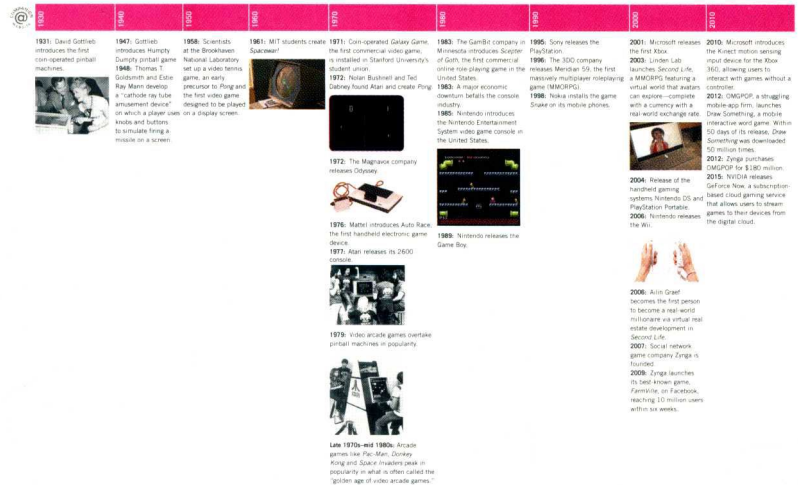
RONALD REAGAN, U.S. PRESIDENT

## Quotes for Consideration

Compelling quotes from media figures draw attention to key ideas and spark discussion.

## Timelines

Timelines in all the industry chapters help students visually organize the relevant historical information that has shaped that particular industry. Students can go to the book's companion website to explore the historical events and figures in more depth using our interactive timeline feature, which links to further resources such as newspaper clippings, photos, video clips, and more.



### GLOBAL MEDIA TODAY & CULTURE A CONVERGING MARKETPLACE

Online technologies complicate traditional relationships between producers and consumers. Digital platforms move analog media to the Web and give audiences the ability to interact with content. Convergence also provides new advertising opportunities as corporations seek creative outlets for brand exposure.

Think for a minute about your favorite cereals. When you were a kid, you probably saw commercials for Cap'n Crunch on TV or read advertisements for Life in magazines. But today, even breakfast is going digital. Post Fruity Pebbles and Cartoon Network<sup>1</sup> partner to host online games where you help cartoon heroes find stolen Pebbles. And Kellogg's launched its own gaming site for Cinnamon Jacks,<sup>2</sup> where you guide a dreadlocked CinnaMon through island adventures.

Of course, it's not just cereal brands that have harnessed the power of the dot-com boom. In the 2014 documentary *Generation Like*,<sup>3</sup> PBS Frontline's Douglas Rushkoff interviews YouTube video bloggers (*vloggers*) whose popularity skyrocketed as corporations such as Taco Bell, Adidas, and Primitive Skateboards sponsored their videos. Corporations compensate vloggers in exchange for airtime (a vlog about eating Doritos Locos Tacos, for instance), page views, and "likes." Convergence critics argue that the line between individual and digital brand continues to blur, but corporations see dollar signs.

How do you think convergence changes the face of advertising? What are the differences between analog and digital brands? What about analog and digital audiences? Should media policymakers encourage a "separation of church and state"—the labeling of advertising versus other types of web content? Why or why not?



Kellogg's Cinnamon Jacks commercial from 2005, featuring the character CinnaMon.

## Global Media Today & Culture Boxes

Global Media Today & Culture boxes provide stories about current trends in media around the world and help students appreciate the media's global impact. Discussion questions encourage students to think about how different cultural perceptions or experiences may inform the way media are experienced around the world.

## New Media Literacy Questions

Throughout the chapters, students will find media literacy questions that ask them to reflect on what it means to be a consumer of mass media and how that impacts their lives.

### mass production process

the industrial process that creates the potential for reaching millions, even billions, of diverse, anonymous people at around the same time

However, the view in this book is that mass communication is still a critically important part of society. As we will see, what really separates mass communication from other forms of communication is not the size of the audience—it can be large or small. Rather, what makes mass communication special is the way the content of the communication message is created.

### THINKING ABOUT MEDIA LITERACY

Key to understanding media literacy is recognizing the proliferation of media platforms. This proliferation has affected all communication, not just mass communication. Think about all the ways you can communicate with people. Now, think about how you prefer to communicate with your parents, your grandparents, your best friend, your boss, your professor. Do you use the same communication method for each? Now, think about how *they* would prefer you communicate with them? Is there a disconnect? What advantages and disadvantages do each of these communications methods provide?

### industrial nature

the aspect of industrialized—or mass production—processes involved in creating the message material that distinguishes mass communication from other forms of communication. This industrial process creates the potential for reaching billions of diverse,

Mass communication is carried out by organizations working together in industries to produce and circulate a wide range of content—from entertainment to news to educational materials. It is this industrial, **mass production process** that creates the potential for reaching millions, even billions, of diverse, anonymous people at around the same time. And it is the **industrial nature** of the process—for example, the various companies that work together within the television or internet industries—that makes mass communication different from other forms of communication even when the audience is relatively small and even one-to-one. To help you understand how mass



## Key Terms

Key terms and their definitions have been placed where students need them most—next to their usage in the text. Students can practice their mastery of these terms by using the flash card feature on the companion website.

### industrial nature

the aspect of industrialized—or mass production—processes involved in creating the message material that distinguishes mass communication from other forms of communication. This industrial process creates the potential for reaching billions of diverse, anonymous people simultaneously.

### communication

refers to people interacting in ways that at least one of the parties involved understands as messages

### messages

collections of symbols (words, signs) that appear purposely organized (meaningful) to those sending or receiving them

### interpersonal communication

a form of communication that involves two or three individuals signaling to each other using their voices, facial and hand gestures, and other signs (even clothes) to convey meaning

### mediated interpersonal communication

a specialized type of interpersonal communication that is assisted by a device, such as a pen or pencil, computer, or phone

### medium

part of a technical system that helps in the transmission, distribution, or reception of messages

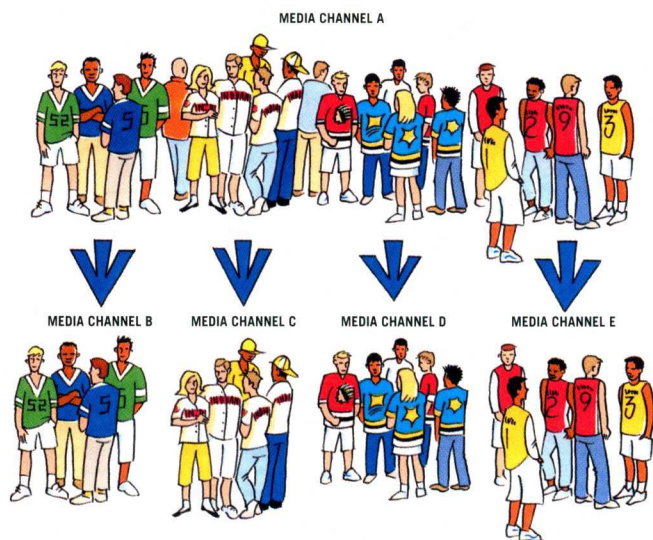
Mass communication is carried out by organizations working together in industries to produce and circulate a wide range of content—from entertainment to news to educational materials. It is this industrial, **mass production process** that creates the potential for reaching millions, even billions, of diverse, anonymous people at around the same time. And it is the **industrial nature** of the process—for example, the various companies that work together within the television or internet industries—that makes mass communication different from other forms of communication even when the audience is relatively small and even one-to-one. To help you understand how mass communication relates to other forms of communication, let's take a closer look.

### The Elements of Communication

Communication is a basic feature of human life. In general, the word “**communication**” refers to people interacting in ways that at least one of the parties involved understands as **messages**—collections of symbols (words, signs) that appear purposefully organized (meaningful) to those sending or receiving them.

When you signal your needs or thoughts to others, the signals you send are both verbal and nonverbal. When Jane shouts excitedly to her friend Jack and leaps with joy into his arms after she wins a tennis match, that's a form of communication. It's likely that Jack, whose arms she almost breaks, realizes that she wants to tell him something. People who study communication would typically call the interaction just described **interpersonal communication**, a form that involves two or three individuals signaling to each other using their voices, facial and hand gestures, and other signs (even clothes) to convey meaning. When you talk to your parents about your coursework, discuss a recent movie over dinner with friends, or converse with your professor during her office hours, you are participating in the interpersonal form of communication

**Mediated interpersonal communication** can be described as interpersonal communication that is assisted by a **medium**—part of a technical system that helps in the transmission, distribution, or reception of messages. The medium helps communication take place when senders and receivers are not face-to-face. The internet is an example of a medium, as are radio, CD, television, and DVD. (Note that the term “medium”



**Figure 1.1**

The arrival of the diverse array of media channels has had a fragmenting effect on audiences—as audience members move to watch, read, or listen to a new channel, fewer people use any single channel.

## Infographics

Vibrant and instructive art provides students with a visual study tool for understanding key concepts in the text.

## End-of-Chapter Materials

### Activities

Students are given issues to explore and report on based on a debate or topic that was covered earlier in the chapter.



#### Activity

The section “How to Make Sense of Discussions and Arguments about Media Effects” lists questions to ask yourself. Read this excerpt from an NBC News report about a study of preschoolers’ exposure to fast-paced television programming (NBC News, September 12, 2011, [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/44460161/ns/health-childrens\\_health/t/pants-wearing-sponge-blamed-kids-poor-attention-spans/#.VRXAznF98E](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/44460161/ns/health-childrens_health/t/pants-wearing-sponge-blamed-kids-poor-attention-spans/#.VRXAznF98E)).

Answer these questions about the research:

1. What is the question the researcher is asking? Is it interesting and important?
2. In what research tradition does the study fall?
3. How good is the research design?
4. Are the research subjects appropriate, and are there a sufficient number?
5. How convincing is their analysis?

University of Virginia researchers recruited 60 mostly white and middle- or upper-middle-class 4-year-olds and randomly divided them into three groups. One group watched a 9-minute clip of “SpongeBob SquarePants,” a second watched a 9-minute clip of “Caillou,” a realistic PBS cartoon about a preschool boy, and the third drew pictures for 9 minutes instead of watching television.

Immediately afterward, the researchers tested what psychologists call “executive function” in the children. “What executive function basically measures is your ability to stay on task, to not be distracted and to persist on task,” Christakis explains.

Turns out the PBS and picture-drawing groups performed equally well on the tests; the SpongeBob group scored significantly worse. Watching a full half-hour fast-paced cartoon show could be even more detrimental, the study authors write.



#### Key Terms

You can find the definitions to these key terms in the marginal glossary throughout this chapter. Test your knowledge of these terms with interactive flash cards on the *Media Today* companion website.

active audience	digital divide	polysemous
agenda setting	knowledge gap	priming
capitalism	magic bullet or hypodermic needle	propaganda
colonialism	approach	propaganda analysis
co-optation	mainstream approaches	social relations
critical theory	mass media research	two-step flow
cultivation studies	naturalistic experiment	model
cultural colonialism	panel survey	uses and gratifications
cultural studies	political economy	research



#### Questions for Discussion and Critical Thinking

1. If the early researchers who concluded media had a “magic bullet” effect on audience were doing research today, how might they use social media to support their theory? What evidence would they see in how people engage with social media that would counter the “magic bullet” theory?
2. Thinking about the concept of “cultural colonialism,” what do you believe is the major potential harm to the culture being “colonized”? What impact might there be for media audiences outside the culture being “colonized”?
3. The “mean world” syndrome posits that media create the sense that the world is a more dangerous place than it really is. Think of examples of media that has created this sense of a “mean world” in yourself and how you could counter that message.
4. How might you think the impact of video games could be considered using “cultivation theory”?

### Review Questions

End-of-chapter review questions give students the opportunity to recall topics discussed in the chapter and to test their conceptual understanding of these topics.

## New to This Edition

- Enlarges its coverage on how convergence is expanding as digital media take on greater roles in old and new media industries.
- Focuses on the social implications of many of the new digital-media developments, including for industries, organizations, workers and various segments of the population.
- Emphasizes the unstable nature of traditional terms such as magazine, television, radio, book, and movie in an era of digital convergence, thereby encouraging students to think about how the meanings and uses of these terms are changing.



## Companion Website

A freshly updated website provides students and instructors with all the tools they will need in their mass communication course: <http://www.routledge.com/cw/turow>.

### For Students

The student website features content-rich assets to help students expand their knowledge, study for exams, and more. Features include the following:

- *Practice quizzes for each chapter*: help students test their knowledge and prepare for exams.
- *Interactive key-term flash cards*: provide students with a fun way to review important terms and definitions.
- *Interactive industry timeline*: brings the timelines from the chapters to life and allows students to learn more about the important people and events that have shaped the media business.
- *Chapter recaps*: summarize the key points and themes of each chapter.
- *Media Today internship and career guide*: offers students information and links to job listings to help them get started in a career in media.
- *Links to further resources*: direct students to key media websites for further study and the latest news on media industries.
- *Media Literacy Questions*: ask students to further reflect on the nature of mass media and its impact in their lives.

### For Instructors

The password-protected instructor website provides completely updated instructor support materials in the form of the following:

- *Complete, online, and downloadable instructor's manual revised for this update*: this manual summarizes the key learning objectives of each chapter and provides instructors with discussion starters to help build a dialogue in the classroom.
- *Extensive expanded test bank*: provides multiple-choice, true–false, and fill-in-the-blank questions as well as new short-answer questions for exams for each chapter.
- *Fully revised PowerPoint presentations*: offer lecture outlines for each chapter, along with a set of slides for every figure in the text.
- *Sample syllabi*: help instructors plan their courses using the new edition.
- *Textboxes* from previous editions of *Media Today* for instructors who would like to continue to incorporate them into their classes.
- *Links to all videos from the Interactive Timelines*, plus additional video recommendations.

# Acknowledgments

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# To the Student

I hope that you will find *Media Today* fun to read, helpful for understanding the media-saturated world around you, and (if you're so inclined) useful for thinking about a future career in mass media. More likely than not, you've grown up with all or at least most of the media we cover in this book. Your family has probably had newspapers, books, magazines, CDs, radios, and a television set in your home from the time you were born. It's likely, too, that you have also had a computer and the internet in your home from the time you were small. In one sense, then, you're already an "expert" at mass media: you've seen a lot of it, you know what you like, and you know what you don't like. At the same time, there's probably a lot about the content mass media present, the industries behind them, and their roles in society that you haven't considered yet.

The purpose of *Media Today* is to introduce you to these ideas, with the expectation that they will help you think about the media you think you already know in entirely new ways. To get the most out of this text, use all the bells and whistles that come with it. The chapter objectives, the marginal glossary, the timelines, the art and photo selections, and the boxed features all have been created with an eye toward making the text itself as clear and relevant as possible. The companion website (<http://www.routledge.com/cw/turow>) will also be of enormous value for learning more about book topics, studying for exams, learning about careers in mass media, quizzing yourself, and more. Get to know all these learning aids, and let us know what you think of them.

Best wishes,  
*Joe Turow*



# Brief Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xiv
<i>How to Use This Book</i>	xvi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxi
<i>To the Student</i>	xxiii

## Part I

### **The Nature and Business of Media 2**

1 Understanding Mass Media, Convergence, and the Importance of Media Literacy	2
2 Making Sense of Research on Media Effects and Media Culture	28
3 The Business of Media	57
4 Financing and Shaping the Media: Advertising, Public Relations, and Marketing Communications	90
5 Controls on Media Content: Government Regulation, Self-Regulation, and Ethics	123

## Part II

### **The Media Industries 157**

Preface: The Forces Driving Convergence in Media Industries	157
6 The Internet Industry	168
7 The Book Industry	191
8 The Newspaper Industry	219
9 The Magazine Industry	246
10 The Recording Industry	271
11 The Radio Industry	301
12 The Movie Industry	335
13 The Television Industry	366
14 The Video Game Industry	398

<i>Epilogue</i>	423
<i>Notes</i>	425
<i>Photo Credits</i>	431
<i>Index</i>	433