

The Medium is the Message - Marshall McLuhan 1964

As technology evolves, it brings more light to the idea of the 'medium being the message'. The advancements in hardware and software have created platforms for instantaneous communication and has connected cultures and nations across the globe. The social and political impacts of these platforms can be seen in our society today. People have become almost reliant on these media platforms for the elimination of ignorance on what is going on in the world around them.

I find it fascinating that the ideas postulated by McLuhan in 1964 still have value today. In a time where print, radio and television were the main media for communication, he still managed to point out the enormous influence that media has on society. For example, social media platforms have allowed individuals to create a digital avatar of themselves to share with the world. The medium being the smartphone with the relevant software, and the message being the digital extension of oneself.

McLuhan compares the medium to a lightbulb. A lightbulb itself has no content, however it creates an environment where content or information can exist. The lightbulb can be compared to the internet. The internet itself has no meaning or purpose without content. The internet is the lightbulb which provides light for a globally connected society. However, the internet can be broken down further. Different platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Tik Tok attract different people. This is where the medium becomes the message. The content of YouTube is vastly different compared to the content of Tik Tok. The medium itself has become the message that people want to portray. It is amazing how McLuhan hypothesized a future that looks very similar to the world today.

"For the content of a medium is like a juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind". I find this quote very powerful in describing the addictive nature that the media possesses. The impact of large tech companies can be seen in society today. This addictive nature of social media has changed the way the world operates. Instagram ads have rendered billboards irrelevant. LinkedIn has made newspaper job classifieds a thing of the past. Amazon.com made \$367 billion in 2021 compared to Walmart's \$75 billion. A digital revolution has begun, and the impact will continue to grow for generations to come.

McLuhan, M., 1964. Marshall McLuhan's "The Medium is the Message" : History of Information. [online] Historyofinformation.com. Available at: <<https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?entryid=2781>> [Accessed 11 March 2022].