



# The Emergence of the Public

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**History of  
Information i103  
Geoff Nunberg**

**Feb. 14, 2014**



# This just in...

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## **The Intercampus Undergraduate Symposium**

where undergraduate students can present their research, thesis, paper or ideas.

The conference will be held on Friday, April 26th, 2013 at UC Berkeley and will give UC undergraduates the great opportunity to present their research projects to faculty and students in an exceptional creative environment.

We are looking for high quality projects, which illustrate the interaction between science and society and bring together the social, environmental, political and the scientific disciplines.

Students can present their work in one of the following formats:

**Formal:** traditional research presentation, ideal for students working on an original thesis

**Mixed Media:** such as, visual installation, performance, mp3, video

**Informal:** 'implosion' projects about (an) 'object(s)' that provide(s) insight on unexpected connections between society and science.

We invite engaged and creative undergraduate researchers to submit their proposal form by Tuesday, March 5th and to follow the submission guidelines.

More details are available at

[http://cstms.berkeley.edu/2012/uncertain\\_boundaries/](http://cstms.berkeley.edu/2012/uncertain_boundaries/)



# Itinerary, 2/19

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From Gutenberg to Samuel Morse: An IT lull?

The birth of the modern informational system

The Interpenetration of the spoken & written

New settings of communication

- Salons and coffee-houses

- The spread of print

- The periodical press, the invention of “news”

Emergence of the public

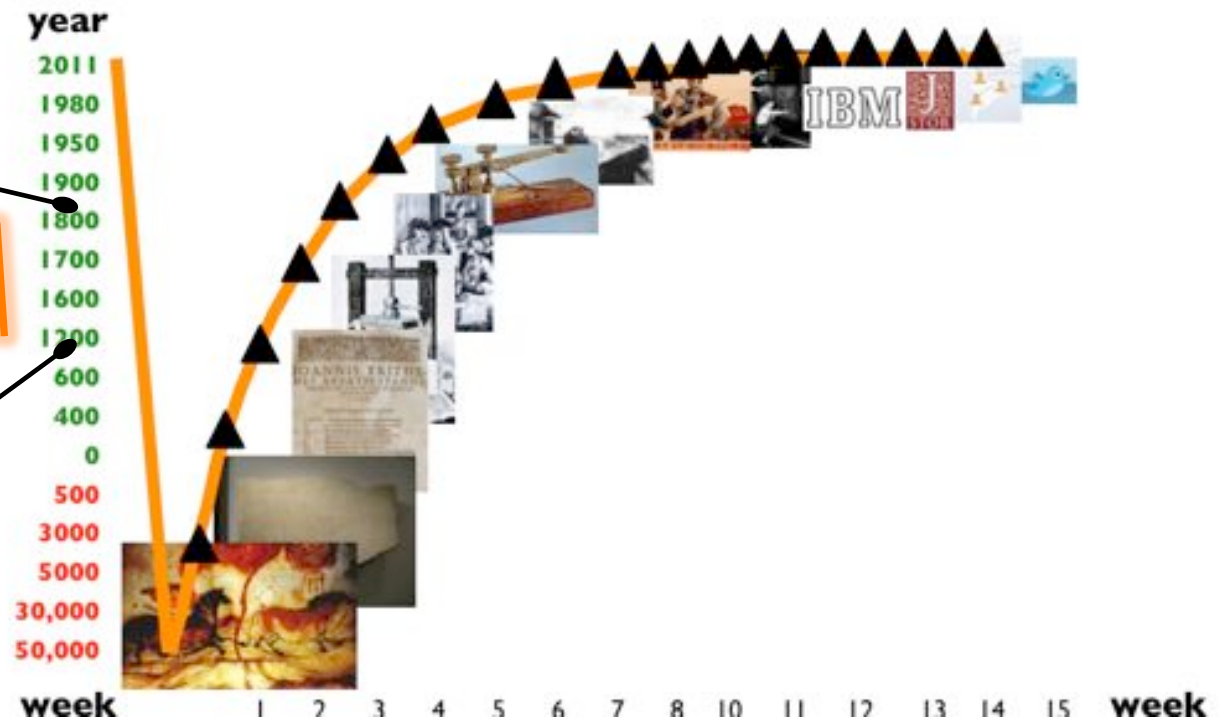
New forms of knowledge



# Where We Are



an IT lull?





# 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c. Technology

Improved means of diffusion of information: Improvements in roads; catching up with the Romans...



C. Vernet, Construction of a Great Road, 1782



Main English roads, 1756

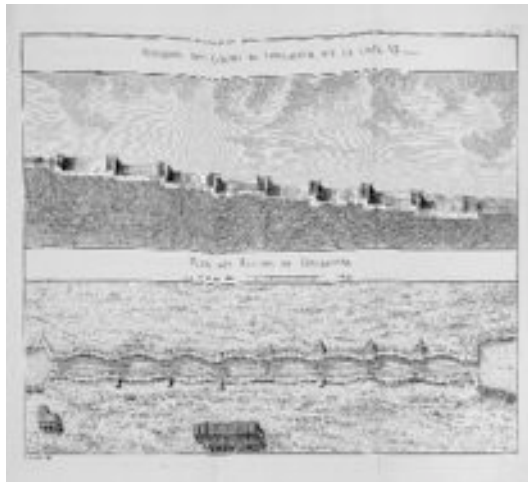


Roman roads in Britain, ca 300 AD



# 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c. Technology

Improved means of diffusion of information: canals



Double lock, Thames and Severn Canal, 1814





# 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c. Technology

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Improved means of diffusion of information:





# The Emergence of the Modern "Informational System"

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Many, if not most, of the cultural phenomena of the modern world derive from [the 18th century] -- the periodical, the newspaper, the novel, the journalist, the critic, the public library, the concert, the public museum... Perhaps most important of all, it was then that 'public opinion' came to be recognized as the ultimate arbiter in matters of taste and politics."--Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power*

The political & social significance of "information"





# The Emergence of the Modern "Informational System"

Many, if not most, of the cultural phenomena of the modern world derive from [the 18th century] -- the periodical, the newspaper, the novel, the journalist, the critic, the public library, the concert, the public museum *[not to mention advertising, intellectual property, propaganda, the scientific society (and science itself), the modern dictionary and encyclopedia, etc.— GN]*. Perhaps most important of all, it was then that 'public opinion' came to be recognized as the ultimate arbiter in matters of taste and politics."--Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power*

The political & social significance of "information"



# **"Print culture" – a multimedia society**

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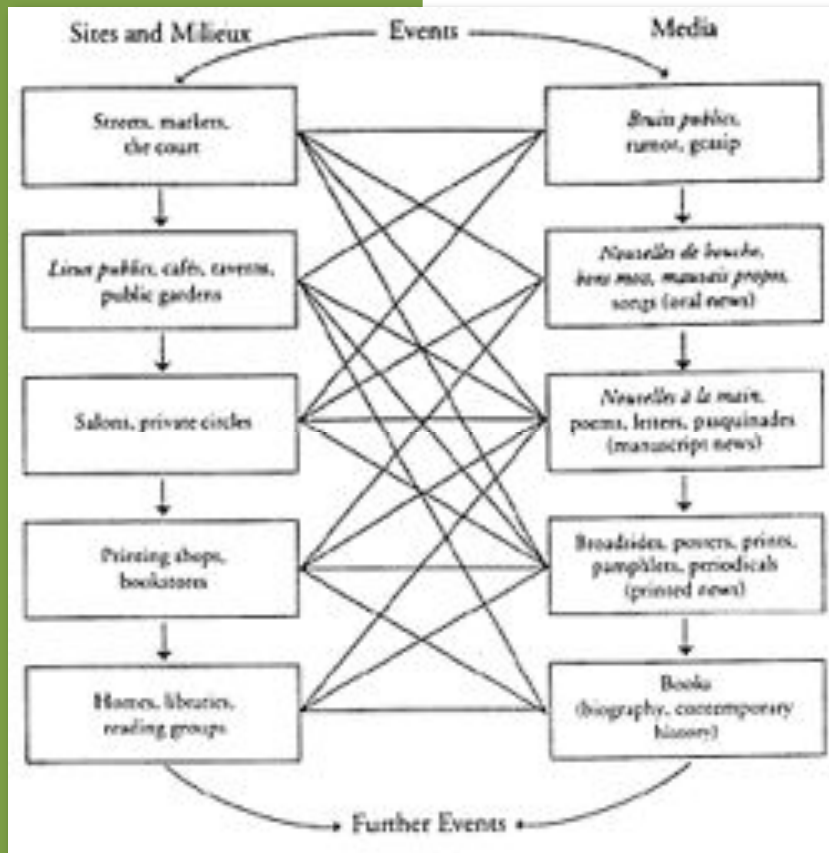
# The doctrine of supercession: "Ceci tuera cela"

The archdeacon silently considered the giant edifice, then with a sigh extended his right hand toward the book that was open on the table and his left hand toward Notre-Dame, casting a sad look from the book to the church. "Alas," he said, "This will kill that."





# Print, Writing, & Orality



"It makes no sense, I think, to separate printed from oral and written modes of communication, as we casually do when we speak of "print culture," because they were all bound together in a multi-media system." Robert Darnton



# Print, Writing, & Orality

## Sources of information on the UC budget



From: Robert J. Birgeneau, Chancellor <CALmessages@berkeley.edu>  
 Subject: **President Yudof issues an open letter to the people of California and the UC Community**  
 Date: November 8, 2010 1:18:54 PM PST  
 To: Academic Senate Faculty, Staff, All Academic Titles, Other Members of the Campus Community.

Dear Campus community:

President Yudof has this morning issued an open letter to the

**Cal Politics** Martell Thornton  
 UC Berkeley could take \$80M hit in Jerry Brown's budget: The University of California, Berkeley, will have to cu...  
<http://bit.ly/hqRwj2>  
 7 Feb



**THE DAILY CLOG**  
 Search

A Cal blog brought to you by The Daily Californian  
 "You know what they said?"



# Print, Writing, & Orality

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Sources of information on the UC budget crisis

## Oral

- Conversation
- Meetings
- Demonstrations/rallies
- Classes

Print publications (newspapers, magazines)

Broadcast (TV, radio)

## Online/Networked

- Videos
- Blogs
- Websites
- Email
- Twitter/texting
- Facebook/Soc. Networking

## Other





# Networks in the Developing World

## Wired and Shrewd, Young Egyptians Guide Revolt



CIRCLE OF DISSENT Protesters holding candles walked around an Egyptian Army tank parked in Cairo on Wednesday.

By DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK  
Published: February 9, 2011

CAIRO — They were born roughly around the time that President Hosni Mubarak first came to power, most earned degrees from their parents' generation.



The day of the protest, the group let it be known that they intended to gather at a mosque in an upscale neighborhood in central Cairo, and the police gathered there in force. But the organizers set out instead for a poor neighborhood nearby.... They divided up into two teams — one coaxing people in cafes to join them, the other chanting to the tenements above.



## Subtitled Video of Wael Ghonim's Emotional TV Interview

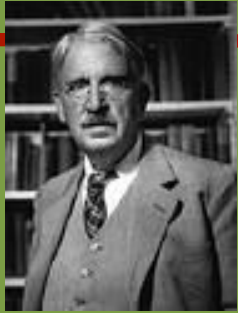


A screenshot of Wael Ghonim crying during an interview on Egypt's Dream TV on Monday, after his release by Egyptian authorities.

Updated 1:46 p.m. As my colleague David Kirkpatrick and Anthony Shadid report, tens of thousands of protesters have again packed into Cairo's Tahrir (Liberation) Square on Tuesday.



# All technologized cultures are "multi-media"



Cf modern interaction of print/broadcast, intermediate oral forms...

"Vision is a spectator; hearing is a participator. Publication is partial and the public which results is partially informed and formed until the meanings it purveys pass from mouth to mouth." John Dewey

But where is "mouth-to-mouth" in the age of Facebook & Twitter?

Cafe owner asks patrons to log off, talk

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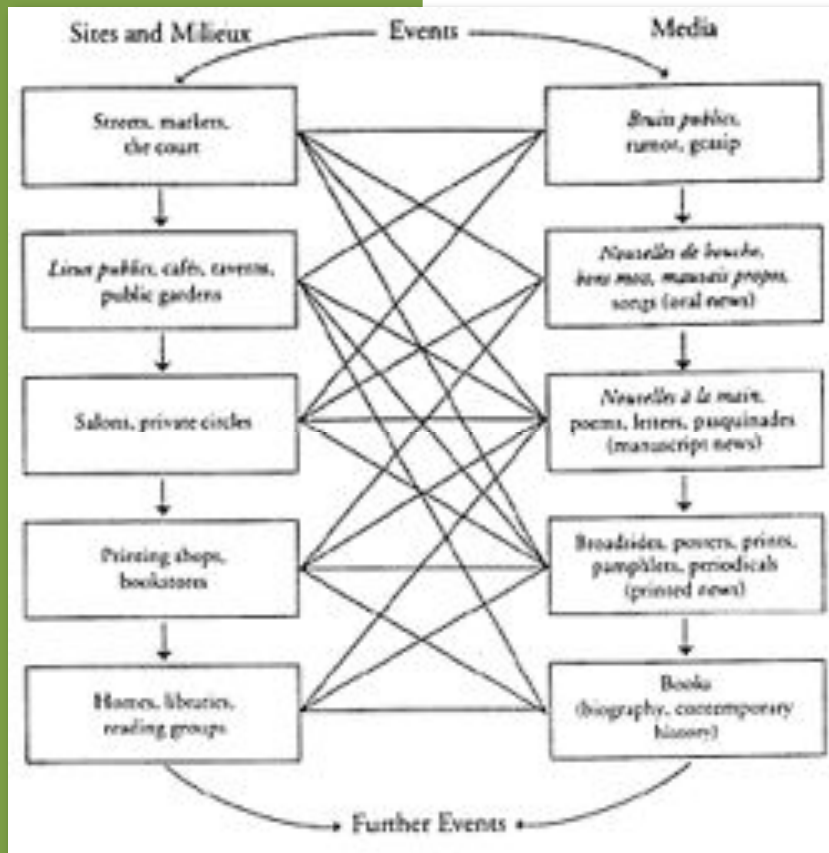




# Assignment

## assignment

Darnton shows us how news travelled in eighteenth century Paris. With his example of the multiple channels, sources, and media in mind, compare how a particular item of news travels in your world with how it seems to have travelled in the café society you read about in the four articles from the *Spectator* and *Tatler*.





# Christina Arneson

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One thing that I don't think has changed at all is the desire of the public to be informed of and discuss the politics and intrigues of the day. I think the biggest change is just the proportion of information exchange that takes place in either oral vs. print vs. online formats (of which there are many subtypes of course). Translated to the present day: Addison and Steele would be prominent bloggers; Eubulus would have a huge Twitter following and lots of retweets; coffeehouses take shape in the linking, sharing, and commenting of peers in social media networks like Facebook and Google+; satirical ballads are created with Autotune and posted on Youtube; all of the above can be the source of news or commentary on it; and the people about whom such news is shared will pay attention to it all and try to manage their public image by addressing issues via even more kinds of media.



# Jahela Hasle

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At every point we see evidence that efficiency is nothing more than reducing resources required to perform a task. For dispersing gossip, surely there is no difference between the words spoken by a chambermaid, or in the corner of a coffee bar, or in a tweet. Today we also have -- like the destitute upholster in *The Tatler*, no. 155 -- those who cannot be without the very latest news. Those who have text alerts set for major or minor happenings, cannot separate themselves from their Facebook feed, and seem unconcerned with ought by recounting their findings to others....

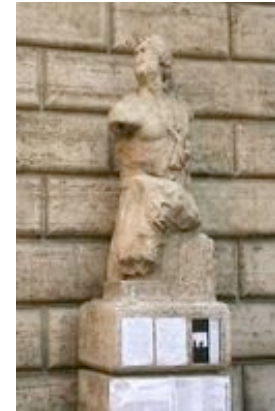
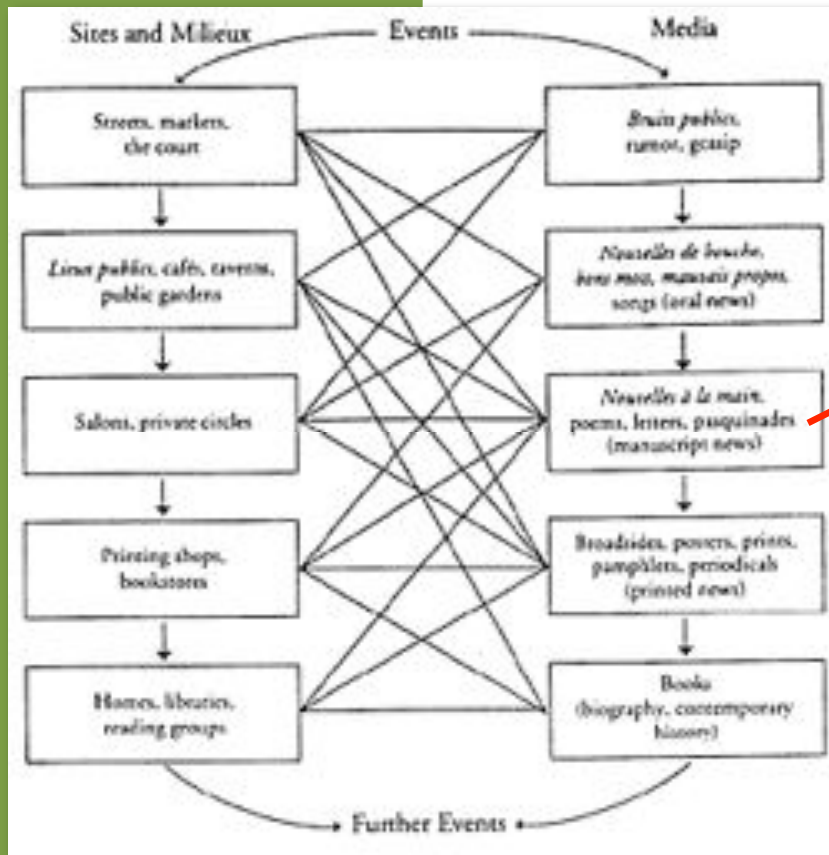
...The Listserve delivers one daily email to each subscriber. The content of the email is created by a randomly selected member of the directory, who has 3 days to draft what will instantly reach ~22,000 people (itself a small, nearly instantaneous miracle). Last Sunday's email was a discussion of the USPS decision to no longer deliver envelopes on Saturday. The author interestingly highlights the resounding public indifference towards this news. In a classic example of Schumpeterian creative destruction, extensive hand-delivery of written communications in the US falls prey to dwindling profit. The same eventually came to be true about the various systems that became obsolete in Paris, as Darnton lists readily: “*mauvais propos, bruit public, on-dit, pasquinade*” (p. 7). We longer even have translations for these media, so completely were they supplanted by a more efficient and liberated printing system. Just like France in the 1800s, we constantly are rearranging our information technologies.





# Print, Writing, & Orality

## The pasquinade



Mò so' ccent'anni e ppiù ch'hanno occupato;  
so' ccambiati i governi co' su' capi,  
ma anvedi te che cambiamento è stato:  
ar posto 'n do' era er Papa ora c'è er papi.







## Brian Freese

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Both cultures seem to have an inclination towards using their respective media technology to promote discourse of seemingly frivolous things, and, this gossip seems to play a dominant role in the spreading information in both. ...The flow of information is slightly different today though, as things usually tend towards going either from word of mouth to online or to straight online, where again everyone again has public access to copy, cut, and paste tidbits of the public opinion just like the songs and scandalous books circulating France (and still today the original author usually remains somewhat Anonymous, unless through Facebook). Today's information seems to cut out the feedback loop seen in France; instead of leaving the royal court only to spread by words and come back in writing that was shaped by the public, we post whatever "news" we find interesting, where it can be continuously updated and seen by everyone. Also, cafes have become quite less social; the exchange of news once performed by talking there has been replaced by the typing noise of everyone in Starbucks simultaneously maintaining their own sphere of information independently of everyone else in the same room.



# Sophia Skowronski

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Considering that the media of the café society of the mid 18th century, as described by Darnton, mainly focused on royal gossip, extraneous social engagements and political folklore, the celebrity culture that consumes gossip magazines and editorials of today's society is comparable.... In "The Uses Of The Spectator," the writers saw their viewers are those who "consider[s] the world as a theatre, and desire[s] to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it." Today, the The National Inquirer, The Daily Mail, and equivalents across the globe also intend on capturing the attention of those who want to read about the drama of "significant" figures in the news. In a fanatical way, you can see similar themes of "decadence" and "corruption" spreading in these sources similar to the "libelles" that the newsmongers of the 18th century read and heard about (34).



## Brett Johnson

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Darnton makes the claim that there is no point to distinguishing printed, oral, and written communication because “they were all bound together in a multi-media system”[30], which I think is largely true today, but to a lesser extent than in the Paris of the past. One difference in the spread of news in my world versus that of eighteenth century Paris is the extent of discourse on the news. For the most part, I read my news online from a few different sources in my home and rarely discuss the stories with friends.

Without technology such as what I use to view news, a computer that pulls down the latest information from anywhere in the world, the Parisians at this time had to seek out their news in places like the coffee houses in *The Spectator* No. 49, or benches or other places of congregation as described in *The Tatler*. However, while this did not mean that everyone participated equally in discussion of news, as evidenced when Richard Steele talks about Eubulus, a pundit of the coffee-house, saying “every man is Eubulus as soon as his back is turned.”[71] Here Steele points out that this situation lacked original thought, as people were following Eubulus’s every word. .



# **17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century: New settings of communication**

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# Emergence of the Public

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"[In the late seventeenth century] . . a new cultural space developed, ... a 'public sphere' in which private individuals came together to form a whole greater than the sum of the parts. By exchanging information, ideas, and criticism, these individuals created a cultural actor -- the public -- which has dominated European culture ever since."--Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power*



# The birth of the salon



The salon (or *conversazione*): gathering held at (usually fashionable) houses with mix of society, artists, writers, scholars & discuss politics, literatures, etc.







# Coffeehouse society



"The English have no settled Academies de Beaux-Esprits, as we have in Paris, but instead of such assemblies, the most ingenious persons ... meet either in places of promiscuous company, as coffee-house, or in private clubs, in taverns."--Abel Boyer, *Letters of Wit*, 1701

"The coffee-house... admits of no distinction of persons, but gentleman, mechanic, lord, and scoundrel mix." Samuel Butler, 1667



Now being entered, there's no needing  
Of compliments or gentle breeding,  
For you may seat you any where,  
There's no respect of persons there.

*A Character of Coffee and Coffee-Houses*, 1661

An idealization?



# Coffee-House Politics



1675: Charles II tries to close "resorts of idle and disaffected persons [who spread] *False, Malicious, and Scandalous Reports*," ... to the defamation of his Majesty's Government."

When they take from the People the freedom of words,  
They teach them the sooner to fall to their swords;  
Let the City drink coffee, and quietly groan,  
They that conquer'd the father won't be slaves to the son.  
Andrew Marvell





# Coffee-House Politics



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1676: Charles rescinds proclamation on condition that the proprietor shall "endeavour to prevent and hinder all Scandalous Papers, Books, and Libels concerning the Government... from being brought into House... And in any case such papers, Books or Libels, shall be brought into his said House or False and Scandalous Reports shall be there openly declared or uttered, ...the [proprietor] shall within Two days give information to one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace..."



# Coffee-House Politics

"there is an incredible degree of liberty in these places, where not only the generals and ministers but even the emperor is torn to shreds"

Visitor to Vienna, 1706

"...loud-mouths sounding forth about the actions and plans of great sovereigns..."

Men condemn, approve, revile, rail with bitter invectives both in speech and in writing without the authorities daring to intervene. The King himself is not secure from censure. Abbe Prévost, 1729, in London



*Établissement de la nouvelle Philosophie.  
Votre Berceuse fut un Café.*



Condorcet, Voltaire, Diderot



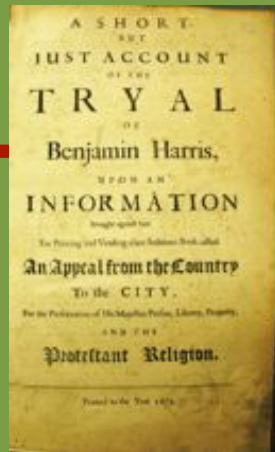
Coffeehouse, Vienna





# Coffee-House Politics

...at a small expense of time or money, persons wanted may be found and spoke with, appointments may be made, current news heard, and whatever it most concerns us to know. In all cities, therefore, and large towns that I have seen in the British dominions, sufficient encouragement has been given to support one or more coffee houses in a genteel manner... NY Journal 1775



Publick Occurrences 1690

King's Arms Coffeehouse,  
New York, 1690



# **The spreading use of print**

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# Growing Use of Print

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## Size of personal libraries

Personal library of typical French magistrate, 15<sup>th</sup> c. 60 books

Montaigne, late 16<sup>th</sup> c. 1000 books

Montesquieu, early 18<sup>th</sup> 3000 books

From intensive reading to extensive reading...

## Annual sale of newspapers:

1750: 7 million

1810: 24 million

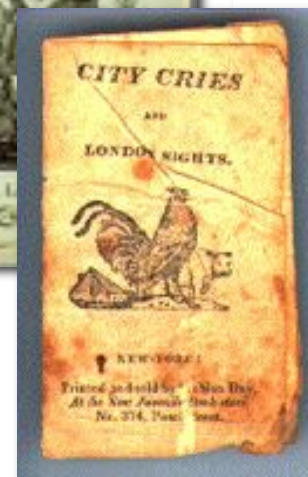
## Increase in number of printed genres

Eighteenth Century: Earliest appearance of printed posters, theater bills, newspapers, handbills, labels, tickets, marriage certificates, papers of indenture, receipts, etc.



# New & Expanded Print Forms

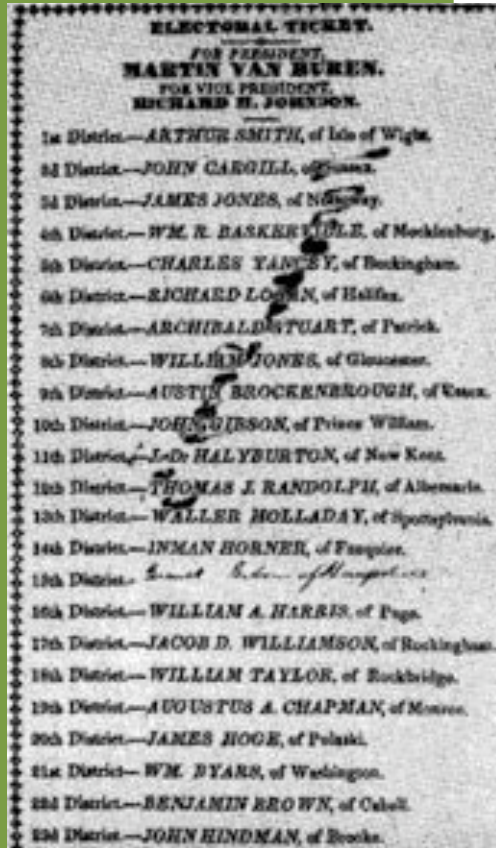
17th-18th c. see rise of chapbooks, broadsides, ballads, almanacs, pamphlets, etc.



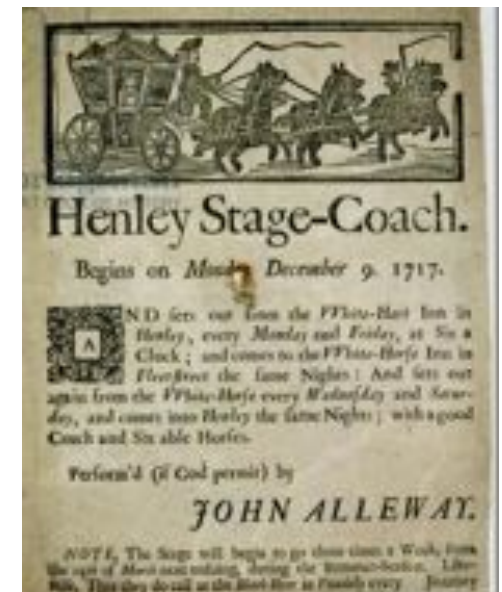


# New & Expanded Print Forms

17th-18th c. see rise of chapbooks, broadsides, ballads, almanacs, pamphlets, etc. Also: earliest printed handbills, labels, posters, handbills, forms, indentures, receipts, tickets, ballots, etc.



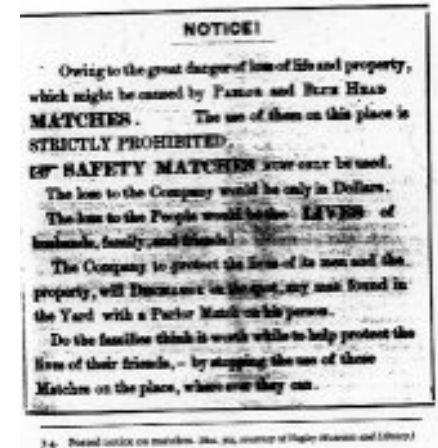
US Ballot 1840







# Epigraphy in modern life: Hortative & Commercial





# **The Rise of the Periodical Press**

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# The Rise of the Periodical Press

## Europe, 16-17c

**Venice:** *Notizie Scritte* [bought for a "gazetto"] 1566

**Netherlands:** *Nieuwe Tydinghe*, 1605 (weekly from 1617 and thrice weekly from 1621)

**Frankfurt:** *Frankfurter Postzeitung*, 1615

**England:** *Coranto or Weekly Newes*, 1622

**France:** *Gazette de France* 1631

**Turin:** *Successi del mondo*, 1645

**Leipzig:** *Einkommendeg Zeitung*, daily 1650

**Spain:** *Gaceta Nueva*, monthly, daily 1661)

**British America:** *Publick Occurrences*, 1690

**Russia:** *Vedomosti*, 35 x per year, 1702



# Newspapers that look like Newspapers

1695 -- abolition of the Licensing Act

1702 -- appearance of the *Daily Courant*, usually considered 1st daily newspaper in England

Printed on one leaf, with blank side (like earlier news-letters) for insertion of handwritten additions.





# The Rise of the Periodical Press



1709: the *Tatler* first published by Richard Steele, under the pseudonym Isaac Bickerstaff

1711: Steele and Joseph Addison found the *Spectator*, with contributions from various members of the "Spectator Club."







# The Rise of the Periodical Press



"All Englishmen are great newsmongers. Workmen habitually begin the day by going to coffee-rooms in order to read the latest news. I have often seen shoeblacks and men of that class club together to purchase a farthing newspaper" --César de Sassure, 1726

"Lackeys, stable lads, odd-job men, gardeners and porters sit together and chatter about the news in the public prints... So they often think themselves better than the town mayor because they think they know a lot more than he does about every matter of state ...." Steiler, *The Pleasure and Utility of Newspapers*, 1695



# the news master



cabinet papers

*London Gazette*

*Review*

*Examiner*

*Post-Boy*

*Mercator*



in-house journalists

*Defoe*

*Swift ...*





# The "reading revolution"

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"Readers of books...rise and retire to bed with a book in their hand, sit down at table with one, have one lying close by when working, carry one around with them when walking, and who, once they have begun reading a book are unable to stop until they are finished. ... No lover of tobacco or coffee, no wine drinker or lover of games, can be as addicted to their pipe, bottle, games or coffee-table as those many hungry readers are to their reading habit."  
Frankfurt 1796



# The "reading revolution"

Silent reading



Gérard Dou,  
woman reading





# The invention of "news"



"We had no such thing as printed newspapers, in those days, to spread rumours and reports of things.... But such things as those were gathered from letters of merchants, and others, who corresponded abroad, and from them was handed about by word of mouth only; so that things did not spread instantly over the whole nation as they do now."--Daniel Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Years*, 1722, speaking of 1660's

What makes something "news"?



# What makes for "news"



## **Seriality**

## **Periodicity**

periodical, journal, daily, weekly, monthly, annual...

## **Currency**

courant, postvoice,

## **Independence**

intelligence(r), informer, observer, spectator, guardian

## **Voice...**

## **Source**

Lloyd's News, Defoe's Review ...

## **Completeness**

full, complete, entire ("all the news...")





# The political role of print

Newspapers, broadsides, etc. rouse popular feeling in periods of crisis...



Mock procession of the Pope during "exclusion crisis" of 1681





# The political role of print

## 18<sup>th</sup> c. *libelles* and broadsides



par tes lèvres d'écrite aux lèvres,  
je suis une femme, au combat des plaques.





# The political role of print

18<sup>th</sup> c. *libelles* and broadsides



Newsmongers of the Quai des Augustins, Paris 1681



# The "Age of Authors"

Emergence of modern notions of intellectual property, publishing, authorship, etc.



The present age... may be styled, with great propriety, the Age of Authors; for, perhaps, there was never a time when men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profession and employment were posting with ardour so general to the press... Samuel Johnson, 1763

Cf Oliver Goldsmith, 1761, "The Distress of a Hired Writer":

"...that fatal revolution whereby writing is converted to a mechanic trade; and booksellers, instead of the great, become the patrons and paymasters of men of genius... Can any thing more cramp and depress true genius, than to write under the direction of one whose learning does not extend beyond the multiplication-table and the London Evening-post?"





# Economic Shifts

But Goldsmith adds:

For my own part, were I to buy an hat, I would not have it from a stocking-maker but an hatter... It is just so with regard to wit; did I for my life desire to be well served, I would apply only to those who made it their trade, and lived by it.





# Economic Shifts



Writers (ostensibly) freed from direct dependence on patronage. Lord Chesterfield offers his ipatronage for Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*:

Good order and authority are now necessary. .. We must have recourse to the old Roman expedient in times of confusion, and choose a Dictator... I give my vote for Mr. Johnson to fill that great and arduous post. And I hereby declare that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a freeborn British subject, so the said Mr. Johnson...  
Lord Chesterfield, 1754







# Economic Shifts



Johnson's response:

"Seven years, my lord, have now past since I waited in your outward rooms..., during which time I have ...have it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour..."

Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?"

"the Magna Carta of the modern author..." Alvin Kernan





# Economic Shifts

"Writing is become a very considerable branch of the English commerce." Defoe, 1725

Samuel Johnson receives £1575 advance for the *Dictionary*; David Hume receives £1400 for one volume of *Hist. of Britain*; £6000 paid for copyright of account of voyages of Captain Cook.

"Sir, if you talk of it as an object of commerce, it will be gainful; if as a book that is to increase human knowledge, I believe there will be not much of that." Johnson to Boswell





# **Emergence of the Public**

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# Emergence of the Public

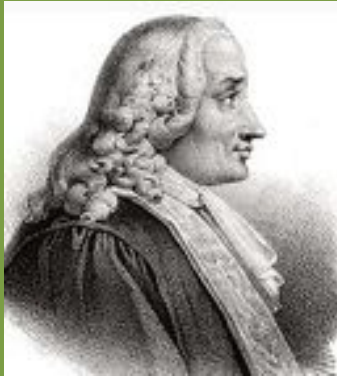
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"[In the late seventeenth century] . . a new cultural space developed, ... a 'public sphere' in which private individuals came together to form a whole greater than the sum of the parts. By exchanging information, ideas, and criticism, these individuals created a cultural actor -- the public -- which has dominated European culture ever since."--Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power*



# Emergence of the Public

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"A tribunal has arisen independent of all powers and that all powers respect, that appreciates all talents, that appreciates all talents, that pronounces on all people of merit. And in an enlightened century, in a century in which each citizen can speak to the entire nation by way of print, ... men of letters are, amid the public dispersed, what the orators of Rome and Athens were in the middle of the public assembled."

Guillaume-Chrétien de Malesherbes 1775



# Defining "the Public"

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## **public, n.**

Am. Her: The community or the people as a whole. **2.** A group of people sharing a common interest: *the reading public*.

OED: The community as an aggregate, but not in its organized capacity



# Defining "the Public"

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Ratio of occurrence in major newspapers:

<i>the American people/public</i>	4 to 1
<i>the Egyptian people/public</i>	80 to 1

Goog Scholar hits for *the nineteenth-century public*: 1300; *the medieval public* 128

The reading public vs. the stamp-collecting public



# The emergence of a public discourse

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"Rank and privilege" in theory set aside, and discourse becomes ostensibly impersonal:

"...when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or emnity with the author, I must depart from this situation; and considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being and my peculiar circumstances." David Hume, 1757

"Civility: of conversing in quiet one with another, without being ingag'd in the passions, and madness of that dismal Age."

Sprat, *History of the Royal Society*, 1667



# The emergence of a public discourse



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Cf modern sport-talk radio...





# Publics and "Public Opinion"

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"By 'the public sphere' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy." Jürgen Habermas



# Publics and "Public Opinion"

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"It is certainly right and prudent to consult the public opinion. ... If the public opinion did not happen to square with mine; if, after pointing out to them the danger, they did not see it in the same light with me, or if they conceived that another remedy was preferable to mine, I should consider it as my due to my king, due to my Country, due to my honour to retire ... but one thing is clear, that I ought to give the public the means of forming an opinion." Charles James Fox, 1792

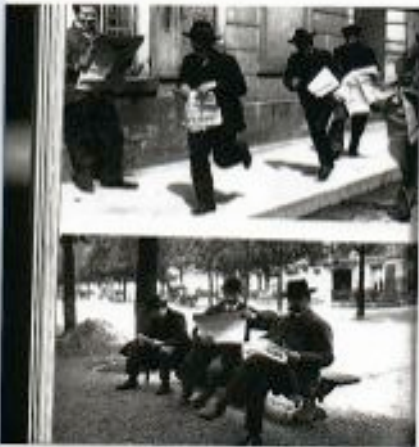


# Print and the Creation of "Imagined Communities"



[Britain] has become a nation of readers. --Samuel Johnson, 1781

The newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life...creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations. --Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.





## Readings for 2/21

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McArthur, Tom. 1986. *Worlds of Reference*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 13, “Reference and Revolution” and Ch. 14, “Thematic Lexicography,” pp. 128-138 in the reader.

Book of plates from Diderot & d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie* at [archive.org](http://archive.org).