Media Genres
by Jürgen Wilke

Media defined as technology for the mass distribution of messages to large audiences are a recent phenomenon in human history. For a long time, the printing technology invented in the 15th century was the only means capable of such achievements. Various press genres have been created to fulfil different functions (instruction, specialised information, education, entertainment, advice, advertisement). The journal was divided into particularly numerous subtypes. New media (film, electronic media) added toward the end of the 19th century have further diversified social communication.

TABLE OF CONTENTS
1. The term "medium"
2. Print media
   1. Books
   2. Small prints: broadsheets, handbills, newsbooks
   3. Pamphlets
   4. Newspapers
   5. Journals
   6. Intelligencers (advertisement sheets)
3. Film
4. Electronic media (broadcasting)
   1. Radio
   2. Television
5. Appendix
   1. Bibliography
   2. Notes

Citation

The term "medium"

The term "medium" is currently applied to very different subjects. Some authors consider it to mean in a broader sense all possible carriers and channels of transmission for symbols and messages. The Canadian media critic Marshall McLuhan even used it to describe all civilisational means of compensating for deficiencies of human organs (e.g. cars, clocks, trains etc.).

The first technology to perform in this manner was print using movable letters, invented by Johannes Gutenberg (ca. 1400–1468) around 1450 in Mainz, Germany. Only then did it become possible to speak of media in the narrower sense. However, precursors have existed back to the dawn of history. Books were used in Antiquity and the Middle Ages but their distribution was limited because manuscript (re-)production was very time consuming. A number of media genres have emerged from print but for 300 years it remained the only media technology. New media were only added starting late in the 19th century – first film, then in the 1920s electronic media radio and television. A further multiplication of media has been in progress since the late 20th century.

Media can be classified according to the symbols (primarily) used for encoding (word/image and digital/iconic symbols), the channels of perception addressed (one-channel/two-channel, optical/acoustic/audiovisual), the technology (print/radio) and availability (stored/unstored).
Print media

Print media are differentiated according to a number of characteristics: whether they are non-periodical or periodical, by content and subject matter, by format, by type of presentation, by purpose or function, and by readership.

Books

The book took on the shape familiar to us in the 16th century. While the codex was the standard form of the book in the preceding millennium, block books with texts carved in wooden templates were the immediate precursor. However, only the use of movable letters permitted the production of larger editions. Initially, the Bible and other ecclesiastical works predominated, but textbooks, academic and "belletristic" works were soon added using this technology.

From Mainz, printing rapidly spread throughout the German-speaking territories and other European countries. By 1500, print shops existed in some 265 locations, of which 62 were located in German-speaking countries, 80 in the territory of modern Italy and 45 in France. The number of editions printed by then is estimated at 40,000, of which about 10 million copies were produced. A European book market (Media Link #ac) was created.

The supply of books further diversified over the course of centuries as a result of intellectual, cultural and social developments. New genres took shape. These can be classified according to various principles that can overlap: according to content and type of presentation (fiction, non-fiction etc.), readership (children's, youth books), form or format (paperback, hardcover, picture book etc.), and even the intended purpose (lexicon, encyclopaedia, cook book, travel guide etc.).

Small prints: broadsheets, handbills, newsbooks

Apart from books, which can feature a larger number of pages, small prints, i.e. editions of no more than a few pages, arose in the 15th century. These include, for example, broadsheets, which often showed illustrations along with the typographical print. Later, the term "Flugblatt" was established in German, translated from the French term "feuille volante". These popular prints could have religious, official, scientific, propagandistic or literary content. However, they were only printed in large numbers starting in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Broadsheets were also used to distribute news. The "Newen Zeytungen" (news reports, lit. new tidings), which could be several pages long, coalesced into a separate genre early in the 16th century. Their number is estimated – by approximation – to have been about 16,000 to 17,000 in the German-speaking territories during the 16th and 17th century. These "Newen Zeytungen" were printed depending on events and flowered in the second half of the 16th century. They preferentially reported on wars and military matters but sensational events were also included.

Similar printed works also appeared in other European countries during the 16th century. In France they were called "feuilles occasionelles" or "canards". In Italy Venice was initially the centre of production, where they appeared as "avvisi" or "gazette". In the Netherlands, they circulated as "Nieuwsbrieven" and printed "Nieuwe Tijdingen". In England they were called "corontos", "newsbooks" or "diurnalls". In Spain these news sheets were known as "relaciones", in Portugal as "relações".

Pamphlets
The pamphlet must be distinguished as a separate genre from the handbill and the broadsheet because of its outer form, its content and its function, though the boundaries and transitions between them are at times blurred. Pamphlets characteristically comprise more than one page thus allowing space for longer expositions. Therefore, they were not only used for mere information purposes but also for influencing opinions and convictions. They even served as means of propaganda.

Pamphlets (German: Flugschrift) experienced a boom during the Reformation and the accompanying confessional confrontations. This certainly applies to the German empire. The number of pamphlets produced between 1501 and 1530 is estimated at 10,000 editions and there must have been more than ten million copies in total. In England, a new wave of these printed works arose in the 1580s. Pamphlets developed less strongly in Catholic countries but nevertheless occurred there as well. For example, there was intense pamphlet-publishing activity during the struggle of the Parisian Fronde against Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1648–1652) (Media Link #ae).

As a media genre, pamphlets – like handbills – experienced periods of flowering in later times of political turmoil and moments of crisis. For example, this was the case in France during the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789 (Media Link #af), which has been labelled a "brochure crisis". This media genre also experienced peaks in Germany during the Thirty Years War, the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon as well as the period before and around the Revolution of 1848.

Newspapers

Newspapers in the modern meaning of the word only fully developed when current and thematically universal news was continuously printed in regular intervals. Periodicity is also essential. Already the "Messrelationen" (fair relations), the oldest of which date from 1583, exhibited regularity. They appeared annually or semi-annually at trade fairs with information from the preceding (half-) year. A first sequence of 12 monthly papers is preserved from 1597 (Annum Christi or "Rorschacher Monatsschrift"). However, these publications lacked sufficient immediacy due to the long intervals between publications. This was only provided with a weekly publication rhythm.

The oldest paper to possess this characteristic is the Relation, which was printed in Strasbourg. The 1609 volume is the earliest to have survived, but a petition by the printer Johann Carolus (1575–1634) (Media Link #aj) to the city council suggests that it must have already appeared in 1605. Another paper is also preserved from 1609, the Aviso, which was printed in Wolfenbüttel. With these two papers, Germany stood at the beginning of newspaper history. There, this medium developed most abundantly in the 17th century, which is related to the territorial fragmentation of the old empire. There were 60 to 70 titles in existence around 1700. Newspapers also gradually began to appear more frequently, initially twice weekly, then three to four times weekly in the 18th century. The first daily newspaper was published in Leipzig in 1650 and was already printed six times a week (Einkommende Zeitung). However, this was an exception. The average edition size of early newspapers has been estimated at 400 to 500 copies.

Newspapers also came into existence in other European countries during the 17th century. The first to follow were the States-General (United Netherlands), where the development was most turbulent after Germany. The oldest known Dutch newspaper editions date from 1618 (Courante uyt Italien, Duytsland &c). Next to Hamburg, Amsterdam became the most important centre of newspaper production in the early period of the European press. In the Spanish Netherlands (present day Belgium) the first paper was published at Antwerp in 1620 (Tijdinghe...).

In France the first regular newspaper was established in 1631. The Gazette, which was founded at this time, was preceded by the Nouvelles ordinaires de divers endroits, with the latter giving way to the new competition. The Gazette was able to preserve its monopoly into the middle of the 18th century but was reprinted in many cities of the country. A
special case are French papers printed outside the home country for reasons of censorship, such as the *Gazette de Leyde* (1677ff.) and the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* (1688ff.). The (official) *Oxford Gazette*, which was published by the government in 1655 and changed its title to the *London Gazette* in the next year, is considered to be the oldest periodical newspaper of England.\(^\text{18}\)

In Italy full-fledged newspapers appeared in 1636 in Florence and 1639 in Genoa. They were preceded in Venice by the "awisi" or "gazette". The first Swedish newspaper was published in 1645 (*Ordinaries Post Tijdender / Post- och Inrikes Tidningen*) and still exists. The *Gaceta Ordinaria de Madrid* became the first Spanish weekly in 1677 but was preceded in 1661 by the monthly *Gazeta Nueva*. Two copies of newspapers from Barcelona stem from 1641 but they are simply translations of French sources. 1661 also marks the birth of the oldest newspaper in Poland (*Merkuriusz Polski* (Media Link #ak)). The first newspaper in Danish appeared in 1672 while the first Russian newspaper was printed in 1703. Several decades more passed until the first newspaper appeared in 1771 in the Finnish university town of Åbo/Turku.

The newspapers of various countries were initially quite similar in appearance and content. Political and military reporting dominated. Newspapers primarily presented news from abroad, that is from other European countries and, consequently, contributed greatly to the transmission of information among them. The emphasis of reporting shifted over the course of time and according to historical events.\(^\text{19}\)

Change in the basic newspaper format did not occur until the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The precondition for this was the invention of the high-speed press and innovations in paper production which made it possible to print larger formats and editions that numbered in the thousands. With the advancement of advertisements in newspapers and the elimination of taxation, the genre of the mass paper came into being. Though the prototypes of the "penny press" originated in the United States, in France two newspapers of the "presse à bon marché", *La Presse* (Media Link #al) and *Le Siècle*, already appeared in 1836. They turned the advertisement section into their major source of revenue, allowing the retail price to be lowered and achieving mass sales as a result. Readers' interests were satisfied by expanding the content (e.g. features). In the 1850s, popular dailies also found a home in the United Kingdom, beginning with the *Daily Telegraph* and *Courier*, which was able to raise its edition size to 250,000 copies by 1880. In Germany the transition to the popular mass press occurred in the 1870s and 1880s in the form of the "Generalanzeiger" [general advertiser]. They were entirely based on the advertisement section but also provided local and entertaining reading materials. Their pages also contained advice. The most successful of these publications in Germany was the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* (edition size: 150,000 copies).

The editorial and partisan press became a common phenomenon next to the rather apolitical mass papers. The former could only rise to prominence when freedom of the press was assured. Since England led the way and freedom of the press virtually prevailed there since 1695, a politically polarized press formed in which the Whigs and the Tories had their own papers. In other countries, such as Germany and France, the partisan press followed parliamentisation and the formation of parties in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The editions of the partisan press remained limited because they were primarily read by politically like-minded individuals. By contrast, politically less decided papers were able to achieve larger editions. The most successful newspaper in 19\textsuperscript{th} century France was *Le Petit Journal* (1863ff.), (Media Link #am) with *Le Petit Parisien* (1876ff.) (Media Link #an) and *Le Matin* (1883ff.) also achieving editions in the millions of copies.

Journals

Apart from newspapers, which served to provide current information, another print media genre appeared from the middle of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century: the journal (Zeitschrift). The term *Zeitschrift* was first documented in German in 1751. Previously, Latin titles (*Acta, Ephemeriden*) were used or one spoke of a "Journal", "Wochenschrift" (weekly) or "Monatss-
The *Journal des Sçavans*, published in 1665 in Paris, is considered to be the first journal. It was a journal for the learned that provided excerpts and summaries of books, novelties from the literary world, obituaries and eventually original treatises and reviews. Imitators were already found in the same year in England (*Philosophical Transactions*). The Italian *Giornale dei Letterati* was produced three years later in Rome. In Germany the genre of the learned journal was only adopted with the *Acta Eruditorum* in 1682. As the title shows, Latin remained in use as the language of knowledge.

In France another type of journal followed in 1672 with the *Mercure galant*. It supplied novelties from court society and cultural life, with riddles, verse and short prose pieces being added. This journal aimed to entertain. In Germany the political and historical journal appeared with *Der Verkleidete Götter-Both Mercurius* in 1674, which used important political events as the occasion for controversial debates, allowing political reasoning to enter journalism. The *Monatsgespräche* of the Leipzig professor Christian Thomasius (1688–1692) is considered the first literary journal in the German language.

In the 18th century, the journal became the publishing medium of a growing specialization. The number of titles rose rapidly with new subgenres continuously forming. Often they were only short-lived series because the sales were low. Few journals achieved larger editions of several thousand copies. Joachim Kirchner recorded more than 6,600 titles in his bibliography of journals from 1682 to 1830 and classified them according to types. Although this classification is not unproblematic in many cases, it nevertheless illustrates the diversity of journal genres.

During the 18th century, the journal spread throughout Europe. France was fertile soil for a whole series of literary and philosophical publications that took radical positions and were contested by others. Titles are, for example, the *Journal encyclopédique* (1755ff.) and the *Journal de Trévoux* (with precursors since 1701). The moral weeklies are among the culture-specific journal creations of England. Joseph Addison (1672–1719) and Richard Steele (1672–1729) created the *Tatler* (1707–1711), the *Spectator* (1711–1712, 1714) and the *Guardian* (1713). This genre found its equivalent and successor on a large scale in the German *Moralische Wochenschriften* (classified by Kirchner as "Sittenschriften"). This is a fairly coherent genre that is characterised by original titles, fictional authorship and a programme for improving the mores and life-styles of the citizenry. Dozens of titles appeared in Germany between 1713/14 and 1775. There were imitations – though less numerous – in France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Spain. Hardly any other journal concept found such a transnational distribution in Europe during the 18th century. In England the scholarly journal was represented above all by the "learned journals" and the entertainment magazine by the "miscellany journals", which were written in the style of personal letters, starting with the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1731ff.), the *Universal Magazine* (1747ff.) and the *Monthly Magazine* (1796ff.). Journals in Italy followed English and French models, the former by the *Magazino universale* (1751ff.) and the latter by the *Novelle letterarie* (1740ff.).

New journal types originated in turn during the 19th century. Some achieved mass editions because of the material of-
ferred and their production methods. First to deserve mention are the "penny magazines" created in England (1832ff.). They offered inexpensive reading materials of general interest. In Germany, the immediate descendant of this concept was the *Pfennig-Magazin der Gesellschaft zur Verbreitung nützlicher Kenntnisse* (1833ff.) and similar titles of this kind. These publications were richly illustrated. A new technology was available for this purpose with the wood engraving. Another journal genre that arose in the 1840s, the "illustrated magazine", also made use of it. This group included the *Illustrated London News* (1842 ff.), the Leipzig *Illustrirte Zeitung* (1842ff.) and *L'Illustration* (1843ff.) in Paris.

Magazines experienced another rise starting in the late 19th century when it became possible to print photos. The invention of lithography was also followed up with the creation of a new journal genre that primarily contained caricatures. In France, *La Caricature* (1830ff.) and *Le Charivari* (1832ff.) became famous, while in Germany various humour magazines of the 1848 Revolution and the *Simplicissimus* (1896) followed later (from 1896). In England, the caricature already experienced a first flowering in the 18th century. *Punch* or *The London Charivari*, which was first published in London in 1841, was the most important journal of this type.

Intelligencers (advertisement sheets)

In the 18th century, a third genre of press medium, for which the term *Intelligenzblatt* (intelligencer) established itself in Germany, joined the newspaper and the journal. However, it originated in France. Théophraste Renaudot (c. 1586–1653) (*Media Link #av*) established in 1630 in Paris the "Bureau d'Adresse et de Rencontre" for promoting business. It was possible to deposit and request offers of goods and services there. Renaudot had the idea of printing these offers and requests and enclosing them in his paper, the *Gazette* (*Feuilles du Bureau d'Adresse*). Thus, the intelligencer, which used the potential of print to enhance circulation for advertisements, was born.

Renaudot's example was first taken up in England. Attempts to establish an address office are already known from the 1640s there. In 1667, the *Publick Advertiser*, which exclusively consisted of advertisements, appeared in London and established this category in England. In Germany it only gained a foothold in the early 18th century. In 1722, the *Wöchentlichen Franckfurter Frag- und Anzeigungs-Nachrichten* began to appear with a title referring to the type of publication, place, content etc., which is typical for this genre. The term "Intelligenzblatt" only established itself in the title around 1760. (It is derived from Latin *intellegere*, "to have insight"). The intelligencer became widely distributed in 18th century Germany. There were about 170 titles in 1800.

In Prussia the existence of the intelligencer was linked to a state monopoly of advertisement, which was only voided in 1850 and until then obstructed advertising in the (political) daily press. The function of intelligencers for publishing no longer remained limited to advertisement. Official notifications, local reporting in a manner of speaking, advisement and also entertainment material (in inserts) were added. There were several variants of the genre, especially in the early 19th century. The genre of the advertisement journal only returned in the middle of the 18th century via the German model to France, where the idea of the intelligencer was born. Now the titles carried the word "affiches". Apart from the *Affiches de Paris* (1745ff.), similar titles appeared in French provincial towns such as Lyon, Montpellier, Orléans, Rennes and Rouen.

Film

The printed press (with its subgenres) was the only mass medium for a long period in European history. A new medium developed only towards the end of the 19th century in the form of film. The first public film presentations took place in 1895 in Paris (and Berlin), which is why this year has been called the birth year of film. However, there was a long prehistory. The human desire for moving images is old and was already expressed in inventions such as the *laterna magica* and other instruments for creating optical illusions. The oldest photographs have been dated to the 1830s. Additional inventions were required so that images could "learn to walk". After several precursor stages, the brothers Auguste (1862–1954) (*Media Link #aw*) and Louis Lumière (1864–1948) (*Media Link #ax*) in France succeeded in 1895 with their *cinématographe* in constructing a unit that was suited both for recording and projecting film.
Film is another medium that diversified into a series of subgenres. Specifically, they can be distinguished according to length, form, function, content etc. into full-feature films and short films, black-and-white and colour films, cinema and TV films as well as genres like crime, love, Heimatfilm (films with local background), science-fiction, music and westerns. While the feature film has a fictional plot, the documentary describes factual situations. Initially, silent movies were produced that were accompanied by music and at most had language interposed on the screen. These were readily shown in different countries without problems of understanding. When sound technology was invented in the mid-1920s, international sales of films became difficult and required synchronisation in foreign languages.

The French film industry dominated in Europe during the early days of film. The French production company of Charles Pathé (1863–1957) also marketed the first weekly review in 1909 and thus founded the news theatre. Before 1914 Italian and Danish movies also dominated the German market. The German film industry only experienced an upswing as a result of the First World War, which made the importation of foreign films more difficult. During the war, film was also discovered as a propaganda tool. Germany's most important film company, Universum Film AG (UFA), arose after the war from the Image and Film Office (Bild- und Film-Amt, BUFA) that the military had wanted.

Electronic media (broadcasting)

The discovery of electromagnetic waves by Heinrich Hertz (1857–1894) in 1888 was the technical breakthrough from which the broadcast medium arose in the 20th century. Initially, this only meant the transfer of acoustic signals, but in the meantime it has become a generic term for two genres of electronic media, radio and audiovisual television.

Radio

During the First World War, radio transmission technology was entirely used for military purposes. Civil use only came about in the 1920s. While private entrepreneurs (printers, film producers, cinema owners) had made press and film media of mass communication, it was the state that ran radio from the start in Germany. The telecommunications monopoly, which was already laid down in the Constitution of the German Empire (1871), was crucial in this regard and was later expanded to wireless signals. The first radio programme in Germany was broadcast on 29 October 1923 by the Berliner Funkstunde (Berlin Radio Hour). Apart from it, an additional eight regional radio companies, which had started broadcasting operations by October 1924, were founded in Germany. The Deutsche Reichspost (Imperial Postal Service) owned the majority of shares with 51 percent, while the other 49 percent were mostly owned by private investors on whom programme financing depended. The Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft, RRG (Imperial Broadcasting Company) functioned as the umbrella organisation.

Due to its technical character and organisational requirements, radio was unable to diversify into subgenres as the press had done. However, it developed different programme genres. Word and music programmes must be distinguished at a fundamental level. Both consist of several subtypes: Spoken-word programmes include news and news reports shows aimed at target groups (e.g. children, women, churches), education (lecturing), literary shows (e.g. radio plays), sports shows, service programmes etc. Music programmes are usually differentiated into serious music, consisting of opera, classical concerts etc., and light music, consisting of folk music, pop etc. Over the course of development, fixed programme structures developed on the basis of these subgenres.

Radio stations also developed in other European countries during the 1920s. In part, they arose as the result of private...
initiatives, e.g. in Belgium, Italy and Spain. Later, they also came under the influence of the state, which happened sooner in some countries (e.g. Denmark) than others. In the Netherlands, radio was left to various organisations that had to divide the broadcasting time amongst themselves. Britain, where the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was declared a public institution in 1927, took its special path at an early point. This was to guarantee the broadcaster's independence from the state and from private interests. In Sweden, radio was also organised under public law but in Russia it was state-owned, as it was in Germany from 1932 to 1945. After 1945, the BBC became the model for public broadcasting institutions in Germany.

Television

Already in the 19th century, experiments were undertaken with remote image transmission. However, early mechanical methods remained insufficient. These technical problems were only solved later with technical inventions by physicists and engineers. On 22 March 1935, the first continuous programme was opened in Berlin. The Nazis wanted to demonstrate German superiority with it. Britain followed on 2 November 1936. However, the Nazi rulers did not yet recognize the potential of this medium. The screen was still too small and the number of available receiver units low. However, specific programme genres and sequences modelled on radio, film and theatre also took shape in TV. This development was discontinued with the start of the war because all resources were needed. Thus, television programmes in the Third Reich ended with request shows for hospitalised soldiers. (Media Link #b2) Television only experienced its rise as the dominant modern medium after World War II.

Jürgen Wilke, Mainz

Appendix

Bibliography

Boyce, George / Curran, James / Wingate, Pauline (ed.): Newspaper history: from the 17th century to the present day, Beverly Hills 1978.
Dahl, Folke / Petitbon, Fanny / Boulet, Marguerite: Les Débuts de la Presse Française, Paris 1951.


Lerg, Winfried B.: Rundfunkpolitik in der Weimarer Republik, Munich 1980 (Rundfunk in Deutschland 1).


Murialdi, Paolo: Storia del giornalismo italiano, Bologna 1996.


Pizarroso Quintero, Alejandro (coord.): Historia de la Prensa, Madrid 1994.


Schiiling, Michael: Bildpublizistik in der frühen Neuzeit: Aufgaben und Leistungen des illustrierten Flugblatts in Deutschland bis um 1700, Tübingen 1990 (Studien und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur 29).


Notes

8. cf. Raymond, Invention of the Newspaper 1996.
10. On Italy see Wilhelm, Italienische Flugschriften 1996.
11. cf. See Anger, Flugschriftenpublizistik 1957.
12. cf. Kupfer, Studien zur Broschürenliteratur 1931
corresponding number(s), for example 2 or 1-4.

Link #ab

Link #ac

Link #ae

Link #af

Link #aj

Link #ak
- "Merkuryusz Polski" 1661; Bibl. Uniwersytecka w Warszawie

Link #al
- La Presse 1836, BnF, Gallica

Link #am
- "Le Petit Journal" 1863, BnF, Gallica
"Le Petit Parisien" 1876, BnF, Gallica


Types of journals in Germany, 1682–1830


Richard Steele (1672–1729) VIAF (http://viaf.org/viaf/22167754) DNB (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118752936)

"La Caricature" 1830, BnF, Gallica

"Simplicissimus" 1886

Théophraste Renaudot (c. 1586–1653) VIAF (http://viaf.org/viaf/83101172) DNB (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118936522)


Charles Pathé (1863–1957) VIAF  DNB  

The first German newsreel cinema in Berlin, 1931

Heinrich Hertz (1857–1894) VIAF  DNB  
ADB/NDB  

Promotional campaign for radio, 1927

Television in the military hospital, 1942