

Mary McMahan
Essential McLuhan
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Marshall McLuhan was definitely a man before his time. He had a visionary view of man and his relationship with media and change. It began with the invention of the Guttenberg Press. Man's view of life evolved due to the availability of printed text. Old norms were cast aside to make room as new norms are established. The world was beginning to shrink as communications methods advance.

As I read the "Mechanical Bride" all I could think about is how brash and forward today's magazine ads and television advertisements have become. You no longer see commercials selling tobacco but it is not unusual to watch commercials for lingerie, feminine products, or medications that enhance sexual sensitivity. I find this trend quite disgusting. Next I have to think about how do the changes affect us either positively or negatively? Other than an increase in the company's bottom line, I can't see anything positive. Using blatant sex to sell merchandise distorts everyone's image of how a person should look and act. We are heading down a path that will be difficult to undo.

Marshall McLuhan was a man before his time. He was able to see into the future and predict the coming influences of the Internet. It would bring us together as one global village. We are a culture of instant gratification. In a matter of seconds we download current events, text message a friend, and more. Information no longer takes time to pass from one person to another. For example, we watched as the terrorist attack on September 11th unfolded. The world could feel the pain of those directly touched by the tragedy thus feeling as if the loss was theirs. I understand the need to know important information such as the signing of a peace agreement but living through an event such as 9/11 can be quite traumatic. The Internet has changed our daily lives. It is now possible to get a loan online, make payments, and shop for almost anything imaginable. This has its good points but now people do not have to leave their homes. Is this causing us to become less social because of the lack of face to face contact?

"There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV." (pages 161-162) Hot medium is completely delivered and the participant doesn't really have to interact or think while cool medium required action on the part of the participant. Until one takes a closer look

at the terms it would seem they are backwards. Certain movies are hot because one can just sit and enjoy without thinking about what comes next; at the same time a movie filled with suspense and twists and turns causes the movie goer to constantly think as if they were active participants. In his writings McLuhan prophesized that computers would become a hybrid of the hot/cool medium. Computers have directly affected human nature and if it goes unchecked there could be serious consequences. In one great way technology has brought the world closer together, like McLuhan's global village while opening doors for those who would destroy our world. In a sense it is a struggle between good and evil. To win the struggle against evil responsible parties must take control before it is too late.

From the point of view of an educator, I love to use technology and encourage its place in education. Due to the fact that students receive so much visual and audio stimuli, I need to find new and more motivating ways to reach our students. Today's students are constantly bombarded with sounds and images. Educators can no longer approach the education of our students in the old traditional methods. If education is expected to influence the students' learning teacher must reach them in their own realm. I partially

agree with McLuhan because unmonitored use of Internet and other forms of media by young, naïve students can cause a multitude of problems.

Finally, if teaching methods and strategies need to be revamped so do assessment procedures. The days of multiple choice tests that regurgitate simple facts and data should be gone. Teachers need to use more rubrics, checklist, and portfolios to assess their students' progress. Those that control the purse strings are against this progression because it doesn't provide hard data with which to determine funding and success or failure of schools/teachers/students. Unfortunately, it will take years for education to catch up with the technological age.