

New Media & Traditional Media

I'm often asked to describe the concept of New Media and how it differs from and intersects with Traditional Media.

The problem with trying to define "new media" is that the definition changes every few years. (It used to take decades – after all, even newspapers were considered "New Media" in Ben Franklin's day.)

Today's New Media is based on digital computer technology, e.g., the Internet, Web sites, blogs, iPhone apps, computer multimedia, Facebook pages, Blu-ray disks, etc. But soon, even these marketing tools won't be "new" anymore, as most forms of culture will be distributed through digital means. ... a concept that strikes fear in the hearts of all those who rely solely on Traditional Media.

New and Traditional Media naturally work in concert with one another. So, the simplest way to understand New Media is to look at some of the things that have come before it:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Television
- Radio
- Books
- Direct Mail
- Catalogues

Now let's look at some examples of New Media:

- Blogs and LiveJournals
- Corporate and personal web sites
- CDs, DVDs and Blu-ray disks
- Massive multiplayer video games
- Networking Sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube
- Podcasts and Internet Radio

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What are some of the attributes that distinguish New from Traditional Media? For starters:

- Traditional Media is static. It cannot be changed, whereas blogs and web sites can be updated instantly as a brand or news story evolves.
- New Media offers interactive qualities and has the ability to be repurposed for multiple audiences. For example, a reader (or visitor) can leave a comment, connect in an ongoing conversation about you, your product, service or a speech you gave last night. The reader can choose to do this anonymously if they wish. In other words, Traditional Media broadcasts a message. New Media starts a conversation.
- The effectiveness/popularity of your message can be tracked and used as part of a comprehensive branding strategy. You can alter your message based on feedback and a variety of statistics (hits, time on site, new visitors vs. returning visitors, etc.). You and your readers can link to other, relevant sites thereby increasing the likelihood of more people visiting your site/blog (also known as “traffic”).
- Researching archives, posts, etc. is vastly more efficient using New Media tools rather than searching through actual newspapers or sitting for hours at the microfiche machine in a library.
- New Media allows for the mixing of text, audio, video, or photos. Not so with newspapers or magazines.

The trick is not to throw away one medium in favor of another. The key is to find the right balance for your product, service or brand that will reach the highest number of people you’re trying to target consistently over time.

Think about your target audience. Do you understand how their readers/clients/customers are already using New Media? Now let’s talk about how we can expand that base...

Success comes when I find the right combination of messaging channels to achieve the greatest amount, and highest quality, of promotion and outreach possible for my clients. Based on my experience across a broad range of industries and products, the best results come from blending Traditional Media with New Media.