

Mobile Culture & Urban Spaces

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02. Media and the City

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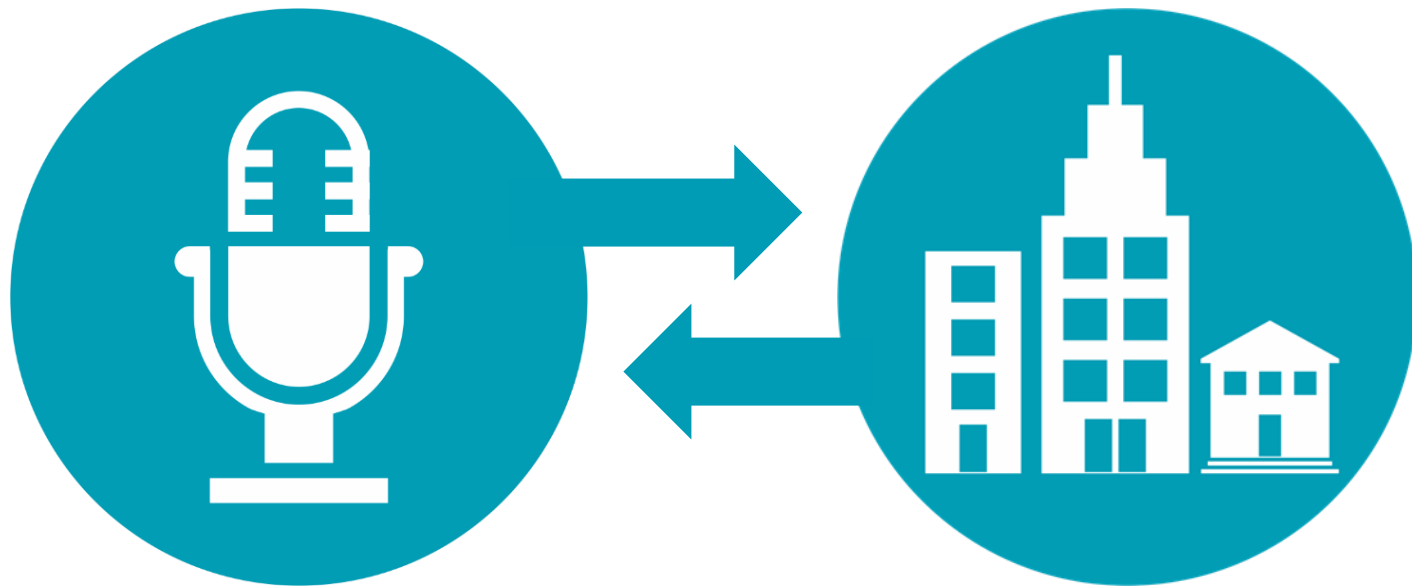
Media and the City

How is the relation between
Media and City



Media and the City

Relation between medium + city?



Media and the City

Digital media are present in public spaces and are connected to activities of people's routine in a way that cannot be dissociated of the idea of urban spaces anymore.

Media and the City

If in the beginning they were announced as emblematic innovations, representing a new era, nowadays the most part of them are barely noticed.

On the urban places, which are the epicenter of the governmental, social and economic life; the digital equipment belongs to the people's routine.

Media and the City

Gadgets, such as parking-lot information booths, vending machines, and public telephones are a part of the city life.



Media and the City

These items are increasingly being amalgamated to the city scenario and even turning into an important part on the description and characteristics of a city.

The formation of the cities

How the cities transformed



The formation of the cities



The formation of the cities

The urban space is associated to the concentration of services, commerce, political and administrative institutions, but as a consequence of this concentration, it is also characterized by the intense flow of people. It belongs to a cyclic relation of cause and consequence.

The formation of the cities



The formation of the cities

However, the concentration on the urban centers related by the organization of the cities around the production – one effect of the industrial revolution in the 19th century – was drastically changed after the middle of the 20th century.

The formation of the cities

According with the ideas of Fotsch (2007, p. 4), the development of the communication improved the velocity and safety on the high speed transportation, moving the production of goods to the external areas of the city.

"Since the 1980's, cities have gone through yet another major transformation: improved transportation and communication have allowed the global decentralization of production and centralization of business services in a few large cities (...)".

The formation of the cities

This process can be observed in a global scale, but the same situation can be observed in a small scale – such as the cities. With the transfer of the production's places, the work force moved closer to the labor places and changed the characteristics of the city to a scenario closer to what can be noticed nowadays.

The formation of the cities

As a consequence, the cities started to be the scenario of another flow: the cars and the public transportation, connecting the people who live outside of the urban perimeter but who still need the services that are concentrated around the central area, such as financial, commercial, educational, governmental and other kind of services and institutions.

The formation of the cities

These services, on the other hand, must be available quickly and easily to attend the growing demand and are, in several situations, replaced by the self-services machines, representing a large amount of the observed digital media in the city.

The formation of the cities

The urban tram and bus tickets – which in the specific case of Germany are mostly available for purchase inside the vehicle itself, in automatic machines – can be an example of an automation process that happened also in other areas.



The formation of the cities

They are a representative cause-effect of the constitution of the cities, characterized by the concentration of services and the flow of the citizen to use those services and, at the same time, to increase the offer to attend this flow demand.

What is Medium

Definitions



What is medium



What is medium

One of the simplest definition of medium (or media – in its plural form) is

- *“a means by which something is communicated or expressed”*

(“definition of medium from Oxford Dictionaries Online,” n.d.).

What is medium

In other words, it can be interpreted as any item that carries some form of communication, such as paper, screen or radio. Media are strong tools in our society and play a strong role in enhancing the communication and expression between people.

What is medium

An alternative definition by Hoenisch (2005), is that

- *“‘media’ includes any medium or object used to communicate a message or a meaning”.*

What is medium

McLuhan goes further and defines that

- ***"The medium is the message"***



Marshall McLuhan

1964 - *Understanding Media:
The Extensions of Man*

Image retrieved from <http://www.classroom20.com/profiles/blogs/marshall-mcluhan-s-tribal>

What is medium



Video retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMUuHNP8ixY>
Originally retrieved and edited from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImaH51F4HBw>

What is medium

Marshall McLuhan

(Edmonton 1911 – Toronto 1980)



- The medium is the message
- Global village
- Figure and ground media
- Tetrad of media effects
- Hot and cool media
- Predicted the World Wide Web

Image retrieved from <http://www.classroom20.com/profiles/blogs/marshall-mcluhan-s-tribal>

What is medium

With those assumptions, the importance of the technological aspect is evident since it determines the way that the message is perceived. It is possible, therefore, to jump to the discussion of the relation between media and urban spaces.

The way that media are expressed inside the city – its medium – is also an expression of the city itself.

What is medium

There are several additional definitions of media, mostly gravitating around **three** main spheres:

What is medium



the ***technology***
which works as
a propagation
support;



the ***social*** role
of this support;



the ***content***
that is being
transmitted.

What is medium

However, before connecting these thoughts to the digital media itself, some discussions regarding the concept of *digital* is also required.

What is Digital

Definitions



What is digital

The original definition of digital is
"relating to or performed with the fingers"

("WordNet Search - 3.0," n.d.), which is not directly related to the current usage in the domain of programming and tools based on multiple binary sequences.



What is digital

It also belongs to the cave men and their finger prints, which connects again with McLuhan, when he mentions that

- *technological innovations are extensions of human abilities and senses"*

("The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan," 1969).

What is digital

Currently, this meaning of the word is almost forgotten. The so-called information-era gave a new perspective to the word 'digital'.

What is digital

It is possible to understand digital as

- *[e]xpressed in discrete numerical form, especially for use by a computer or other electronic device".*

("digital - definition by the Free Online Dictionary," n.d.).

What is digital

The German philosopher and mathematician Wilhelm Leibniz (1647-1716) could also express the digital evolution (Rutt, 2002, p. 91). He developed a mathematical representation system

- *“that relies upon the ten digits (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9), generated all arithmetical calculations using only two numbers (0 and 1)”* (Mungello, 2009, p. 101).

What is digital

Leibniz published his tractate denominated *De progressionem dyadica* in 1679 and it later became the basis of the machine language of the computers.

What is digital

From this perspective, digital can be understood as the opposite to analogical, but not limited to it.

Analogical relates to the scale representation of physical objects; digital is then a transposition, when some analogical information is represented in a discrete mathematical scheme.

What is digital

- *“Digital systems do not use continuously variable representational relationships. Instead, they translate all input into binary structures of 0s and 1s, which can be stored, transferred, or manipulated at the level of numbers, or “digits” (so called because etymologically, the words descends from the digits on our hands with which we count out those numbers)”* (Lunenfeld, 2000, p. 15).

What is digital

Gere (2002, p. 15) also offers a deep discussion on the definition of digital. Among the approaches, he mentions that

- *“[i]n technical terms it is used to refer to data in the form of discrete elements. Though it could refer to almost any system, numerical, linguistic or otherwise, used to describe phenomena in discrete terms over the last 60 or so years, **the word has become synonymous with the technology** which has made much of the aforementioned possible, **electronic digital binary computers**”.*

What is digital

Gere says that the terms “computer technology” and “digital technology” are often used as synonyms, and “have become interchangeable”. In addition, to reinforce the idea, the author wrote that

- “[c]omputers are digital because they manipulate and store data in digital, binary form, zeroes and ones. But, as the above indicates, the term digital has come to mean far more than simply either discrete data or the machines that use such data”.

What is digital

Again, Marshal McLuhan argued that the electronic media was a relevant marker on human history, making the society a reflection of the new media technology. Based on McLuhan thoughts, Richard Barbrook pointed:

- *"During the 1950s, the spread of television had led to the electronic media finally supplanting printing as the dominant extension of man. Although important, this historical moment wasn't the end of the process of social transformation."* (2007, p. 72).

What is digital

This reflection is important to reinforce that the new media revolution is a continuous process and its reflections are intrinsically present on several environments of the modern life, including, as a consequence, the urban spaces.

- *"Technologies not only provide us with new tools for communication and expression, but also provide a new social context for our daily existence"* (Lunenfeld, 2000, p. 2).

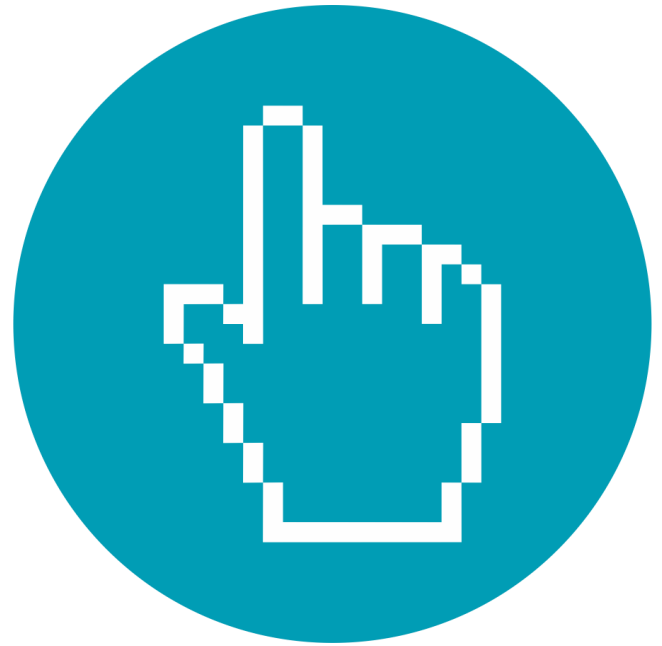
What is Digital Media

Definitions



What is digital media

The term digital media, which is gaining evidence nowadays, results from the conjunction of these ideas.



What is digital media

The concept is commonly translated as **new media** and understood as phenomena represented by the addition of technologies in order to create and distribute all sorts of contents.

What is digital media

Digital media represent a change on the available technologies to distribute information as sound, video, photography and other sort of meaningful data, and also allows the combination and unlimited re-organization and re-distribution of content.

What is digital media

- *“The digital is more than simply a technical term to describe systems and media dependent on electronic computation, just as the analog, which precede it, describes more than a proportional system of representation”* (Lunenfeld, 2000, p. 15).

What is digital media

Pavlik (2008, p. 8) also defined that

- *“digital media as the systems of public communication, the systems of content production and distribution, and the computer and networked-based technologies that support and shape them”,*

but considering “public” not only the domain of the public, but also the private media production for public consumption.

What is digital media

The term digital media could also be understood as a substitution for the original "new media" concepts.

- *"(...) [F]ield of new media studies (sometimes called "digital studies") (...)"*

(Manovich, 2002, p. 10).

What is digital media

The term new media is often used in contrast to the “old” media: the analogical television, the radio and the newspapers.

In simple words:

- *“New media are networked and digital”*

(Hearn, Tacchi, Foth, & Lennie, 2009, p. 9).

What is digital media

With all that in mind, this class concerns with digital media items as all sorts of equipment or gadgets based on binary computing, interactive or not, updateable or not, being able to display or manipulate any kind of information.

What is Urban

Definitions



What is urban

The word “urban”. It comes from the Latin word “Urbis”, which means “city” (“Latin to English definition of urbs urbis,” n.d.).

The way in which urban spaces are organized often varies according to different cultures and geographical settings.

What is urban

Nowadays, it is possible, however, to observe that most of the world's main cities have some aspects in common, as pointed Monkkonen:

- The city "(...) is characterized by its nonvisible foundation, a political center around which its citizens have built the physical and institutional bases of modern transportation, welfare, and education."
(1988, p. xi).

What is urban

The urban space is the epicenter of the organization and of the identity of the city, and reveals the cultural heritage and costumes of their citizens.

- *"Historically, cities have been the seats of learning and education, they have been the centers of governmental and administrative organizations, and they have performed the function of religious or cultural rallying points."* (Hoselitz, 1953, p. 197).

What is urban

The concept of the urban space – which can also be understood as “the city” itself – could be related to two direct meanings.

- The **first**, more personal, leads to a specific city and its landmarks and environment.



What is urban

- The **second**, more general, automatically sends the thoughts to the imaginary of the city, which coincides with the concepts previously presented: the agglomeration of buildings, the intense traffic of public and private transportation, the services, commerce and social interaction occurring simultaneously.



What is urban

- *“City space is a space of concentration, vis-à-vis the dispersal that characterizes the territory, the countryside”* (Brighenti, 2010, p. 475).

The bright lights, the vending machines, the information displays, the communication devices are also immediately introduced to this mental concept of city.

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Thank You!



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http://www.uni-weimar.de/medien/wiki/IFD:Mobile_Culture_and_Urban_Spaces

