



## 21 Advantages & Disadvantages Of New Media (College Essay Ideas)

By Chris Drew (PhD) / November 29, 2022



**When writing a college essay on new media, make sure you cover the following points. These points can help you add depth and detail to your essay.**

To write a strong essay, I recommend [paraphrasing](#) the following points and turning each point into a [full paragraph](#). Provide clear examples and reference a

source for each paragraph. You can use the sources listed below, but remember to use your college's referencing style when citing your sources.



**There are both pros and cons of new media.** So it's important to give a well-rounded analysis that shows you have considered your essay from both old and new media perspectives.

**Contents** [ [show](#) ]

## Old Media Vs New Media

Here's the difference between old and new media:



- **Old media** are media that were owned and controlled by large companies and disseminated through one-way communication methods. Examples include newspapers, film and television.
- **New media** are media that can be produced and distributed digitally by anyone with an internet connection and generally involve two-way communication. Examples include blogs, social media (like Facebook and Twitter) and online forums.

My favorite definition is from [Logan \(2010, p. 4\)](#):

*“The term ‘new media’ will generally refer to those [digital media](#) that are interactive, will incorporate two-way communication, and involve some form of computing.”*

New media like Facebook and Twitter have made communication, socialization, sharing and interacting easier for people with an internet connection. We can now not only be the *consumers* of information but also *information producers*. Sharing news, thoughts and opinions to a global audience is no longer something *only* the rich and powerful can do. Anyone with a Twitter handle now has global reach.

## **Advantages Of Old Media**



### **1. Old media have broad reach.**

Old media were designed as a form of mass communication that was to be broadcast to the masses. From the [invention of the printing press](#) in 1440 to the 1980s, [print media](#) such as newspapers, then radio, and finally television, followed this same broadcast formula. One message was broadcast to an entire population of a nation. People of all ages got their news from a small amount of publications that had extremely broad reach across a population.

### **2. Urgent information is broadly dispersed.**

A follow-up benefit of this broad reach of old media was that information of public importance was distributed rapidly. Still today, when a public disaster occurs, most people turn to old media of television and radio to get important information from authorities. This information is often controlled by, distributed

by, and policed by the government so everyone gets the same information about how to protect themselves during times of emergency.



### **3. The people who control news dissemination are authorities and experts.**

Old media has important gatekeepers ([Carr, 2012](#)) to ensure the quality and authenticity of information. Published information is parsed by editors and producers to ensure it is true. People along the information supply train are trained and experienced journalists, and their editors provide checks and balances to what is distributed in newspaper, radio and television broadcasts. By contrast, new media can be produced and disseminated by anybody with an internet connection, leading to misinformation.

### **4. Extreme views do not spread easily.**

Because of the control that [gatekeepers](#) exert over old media, unfettered [media bias](#), extreme and radical opinions are curtailed. Untrue information can be prevented and filtered and offensive information can be bleeped out to protect children. Unfortunately with the rise of social media, our world has become increasingly polarized and radicalized ([Thompson, 2011](#)). This is largely due to the fact those gatekeepers aren't there to provide quality control for information anymore.

### **5. A sense of community and social cohesion develops.**

[Benedict Anderson \(1983\)](#) theorized that the emergence of the printing press led to the concept of the 'nation'. He said that when people of a nation all started to read the same information each day, they began to see themselves as a community. Before then, our sense of community was to people in our villages.

After that, we saw ourselves as an “imagined community” who share a common set of values and culture.



*Related: [Imagined Communities Pros and Cons](#)*

## **Disadvantages Of Old Media**

### **6. Minority views can be marginalized.**

There is extensive literature that shows that people of color, women, and other minorities have had their views curtailed and silenced in old media. Instead, dominant views are perpetuated by old media. Critical theory and [post-structuralism](#) (inspired in large part by Michel Foucault) have long stressed that media has produced unfair stereotypes and narratives about minorities. Old media were complicit in the reproduction and normalization of ‘dominant discourses’, and have long silenced minority or unpopular opinions.

### **7 The government and oligarchs often control the message.**

Throughout the 20th Century, the ability to share information was controlled by a small group of people. This helped them to maintain their power. In [Manufacturing Consent](#), Herman and Chomsky (2010) highlight how corporate America and media oligarchs (such as Rupert Murdoch) have had a mutually beneficial relationship where they perpetuated untruths and propaganda in order to maintain their positions of power in society. To a greater extreme, in socialist nations, governments literally censor the ‘old’ press and only allow favorable media coverage.

### **8. Old media don’t get much instant feedback.**

Today, when you broadcast something on the internet, it gets comments and re-



tweets to provide the writer with instantaneous feedback. This isn't the case with traditional media like television, which broadcast information without an instantaneous response (one exception might be talk back radio). Interestingly, many major [communication models](#) in the 20th Century that had a linear structure (e.g. the [Laswell model](#) and the [Shannon-Weaver model](#)) are largely outdated due to the two-way communication features of new media.

### **9. People don't listen to or respect old media anymore.**

The declining trust in expertise and authority is widely a result of the emergence of new media. As previously marginalized and even extreme voices have been magnified by new media, people have started turning away from old media and considering it to be elitist and untrue. Whether these claims are accurate or not, the declining trust in old media means it doesn't have the clout it once did.

### **Advantages Of New Media**

## **10. Information production is no longer just for the elites.**



In the era of blogs, [social media](#), and instant communication, elites and the powerful no longer hold a monopoly on mass dissemination of information.

Anyone with an internet connection can now have their beliefs and opinions broadcast to anyone around the world who wants to listen. This removal of gatekeepers has allowed us to become not just information consumers, but also information producers.

## **11. People can find their 'tribe'.**

With the rise of the internet, people can connect to people who share their interests from around the world. This has led to the rise of a multitude of internet subcultures where people get together on forums and associate with their 'tribe'. Now, subculture groups (goths, LGBTQI youth, punks, etc.) who feel out of place among their friends from school can go online and connect with people who share their experiences.

## **12. National borders are less of a barrier.**

In the 20th Century, our ability to communicate was often restricted to people in our local community. This limited who we could associate with. The rise of dispersed tribes could have the effect of undermining traditional cultural groups (based around national identities, etc.) and instead allow us to link up with our dispersed sub-cultural groups around the world.

## **13. Minority views and opinions can gain traction.**

People from minority groups that were traditionally excluded from old [mass media platforms](#) have found platforms to share their opinions online. Together, they have been able to form groups large enough to have their voices heard.



Silenced voices have risen up – from the [#metoo movement](#) to the [Arab Spring](#) - to change our world for the better.



#### **14. We can stay in touch.**

Prior to social media platforms like Facebook, we often lost touch with people from our past. But now, thanks to social media, we can watch people from a distance and share our major achievements, milestones and life changes to stay in touch with people on our distant periphery.

#### **15. News is instantaneous.**

Thanks to news apps, Twitter, etc., news spreads faster than ever. We no longer need to wait until the 6pm news to access our news. As part of this instantaneous access to knowledge, we now have what's known as the "24 hour news cycle". Consumers have an insatiable appetite for news, so new media have to pump out an ongoing stream of ever more sensationalized news articles.

#### **16. News producers get instant feedback.**

As soon as a piece of news is pumped out, tweets fling back and comments are provided to show feedback. Digital analytics software identifies which headlines get the most clicks and can show how long people spend [reading each article](#).

These qualitative and quantitative big data coalesce to help news producers to create content that best serves their consumers.

### **Disadvantages Of New Media**

#### **17. Misinformation spreads like wildfire.**

Without traditional gatekeepers of knowledge such as editors and publishing

houses, there is nobody controlling which information is disseminated.



Misinformation has become widespread in the [21st Century](#) thanks to social media (Allcott, Gentzkow & Yu, 2019). This causes fringe conspiracy theories and even doctored images to influence people's political and social views.

### **18. We can live in an ideological bubble.**

New media often allow us to 'subscribe' to our own news networks and favorite information producers. Without the need to have widespread mass appeal, new media target dispersed niche and ideological markets. Conservatives begin to only consume conservative media; and liberals only consume liberal media. People begin to only reinforce their personal views, causing social polarization.

### **19. There is fierce media competition.**

While in the past there were three or four major news organizations, now there are diverse and numerous sources for news. Small news websites with fresh takes for niche audiences popped up, crowding the market with information. In this crowded media market, there is competition in all niches, and brands need to have a fresh take to get attention.

### **20. There is a wider customer base for companies large and small.**

While competition is more fierce than ever, there is also a bigger customer base than ever before. Websites target global audiences and have global reach. A savvy media producer or social media marketer can expand their market globally – beyond what traditional media was generally capable of.

### **21. Children can access inappropriate information more easily.**

New media gives on-demand access to information. While in the past adult

content was broadcast late at night, today it can be accessed day and night.



Scholars like [Neil Postman \(1985\)](#) argue that there is a “disappearance of childhood” as a result of how media is changing. As children have greater access to adult information, the innocence of childhood is being decayed earlier than ever.

## Conclusion

For your essay you might have to take a position on whether new media has been a ‘positive’ or a ‘negative’ force in society. In reality, there is no clear answer here: it’s been both positive and negative, in different ways. But we can clearly see that it has changed society significantly. It plays a huge role in political campaigns and changing how companies communicate with potential consumers. By outlining all the different facets of the advantages and disadvantages of new media, you can show the person grading your paper your deep and nuanced knowledge of the impact of new media on society.

## References

Allcott, H., Gentzkow, M., & Yu, C. (2019). Trends in the diffusion of misinformation on social media. *Research & Politics*, 6(2).

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. New York: Verso books.

Carr, J. (2012). No laughing matter: the power of cyberspace to subvert conventional media gatekeepers. *International journal of communication*, 6, 21.

Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (2010). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York: Random House.



Kellner, D., Dines, G., & Humez, J. M. (2011). *Gender, race, and class in media: A critical reader*. New York: Sage.

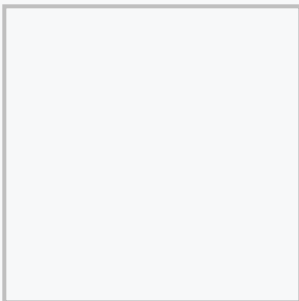
Logan, R. K. (2010). *Understanding new media: extending Marshall McLuhan*. New York: Peter Lang.

Postman, N., (1985). The disappearance of childhood. *Childhood Education*, 61(4), pp.286-293.

Thompson, R. (2011). Radicalization and the use of social media. *Journal of strategic security*, 4(4), 167-190.

## [Chris Drew \(PhD\)](#)

[Website](#) | [+ posts](#)



Dr. Chris Drew is the founder of the Helpful Professor. He holds a PhD in education and has published over 20 articles in scholarly journals. He is the former editor of the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education.



## Leave A Comment

Logged in as Staff Writer. [Edit your profile](#). [Log out?](#) Required fields are marked \*

Type here..

Post Comment »



This Article was Last Expert Reviewed on November 29, 2022 by Chris Drew, PhD

We cite peer reviewed academic articles wherever possible and reference our sources at the end of our articles. All articles are edited by a PhD level academic. [Learn more about our academic and editorial standards.](#)

### Cite this Article in your Essay (APA Style)

Drew, C. (November 7, 2020). *21 Advantages & Disadvantages of New Media (College Essay Ideas)*. Helpful Professor.  
<https://helpfulprofessor.com/new-media-advantages-and-disadvantages/>

Search for a Study Guide

Search

Accessibility Statement

Video Transcripts



As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.

About The Helpful Professor

Copyright © 2023 Helpful Professor

All the advice on this site is general in nature. Seek professional input on your specific circumstances. Students should always cross-check any information on this site with their course teacher.