

McLuhan's Four Laws of Media

- Marshall McLuhan felt that medium is the extension of some human quality
- The radio is the extension of the ear, the t.v. is the extension of the eye
- Human desire to our collective capabilities that inspires invention

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Key Question	Law	Examples
What does the new medium enhance?	#1 Any major medium enhances or accelerates a certain process or thing.	- money enhanced trade - computer enhanced information processing - telephone enhanced person-to-person communication
What does the new medium make obsolete?	#2 The new medium tends to render obsolete another process or thing.	- money made barter obsolete - computer made the typewriter obsolete - telephone and cheap communication made the personal letter obsolete
What does the new medium retrieve from the past?	#3 Any major medium retrieves some process or thing that had been previously obsolete.	- money revived the spirit of conspicuous consumption - computer revived reading and writing - telephone revived p2p communication for people who had been separated by distance
What does a new medium reverse or flip into?	#4 Any major medium, when pushed to its extreme, flips into something entirely new	- money flipped into credit cards - desktops became laptops - telephone flipped into cell phone