

COMMENTARY

The Academic Study of Media Has Always Been the Study of New Media

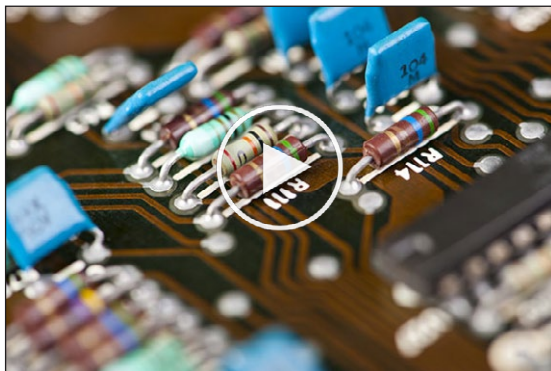
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Has amnesia been a consistent aspect of media studies? This talk argues this may be so drawing upon the insight of Peters and Kleis Nielson (2013: 257) that new media are things we don't know what to do with and 'media we do not know how to talk about'. A sense of crisis always accompanies this sense of the newness of the media. Key moments have shaped this history: the sociology of mass communication (associated with Columbia University, NY); the moment of Media Studies and Cultural Studies 1 (associated with the UK and the Universities of Birmingham and Westminster) and Media Studies 2 (connected to Web 2.0) dating from the beginning of the millennium. At each of these moments (new) media embodied both promise and danger as an object of study against a backdrop of global crisis.

This contribution asks whether media studies has been trapped by a 'presentism' that fails to engage with earlier traditions of communication theory and should undertake some unforgetting.

Keywords: New media; communication studies; history; amnesia



Download the audio file here: <https://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.237.s1>

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

Author Information

Paddy Scannell is Emeritus Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Michigan. A founding editor of the journal *Media, Culture and Society* he was also one of the early pioneers of media studies with colleagues at the University of Westminster. His publications include *Television and the Meaning of Live* (2013), *Media and Communication* (2007) and *Radio Television and Modern Life* (1996). 'An Interview with Professor Paddy Scannell' concerning his career was conducted by Tarik Sabry and published in *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, vol: 4(2). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.80>

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