



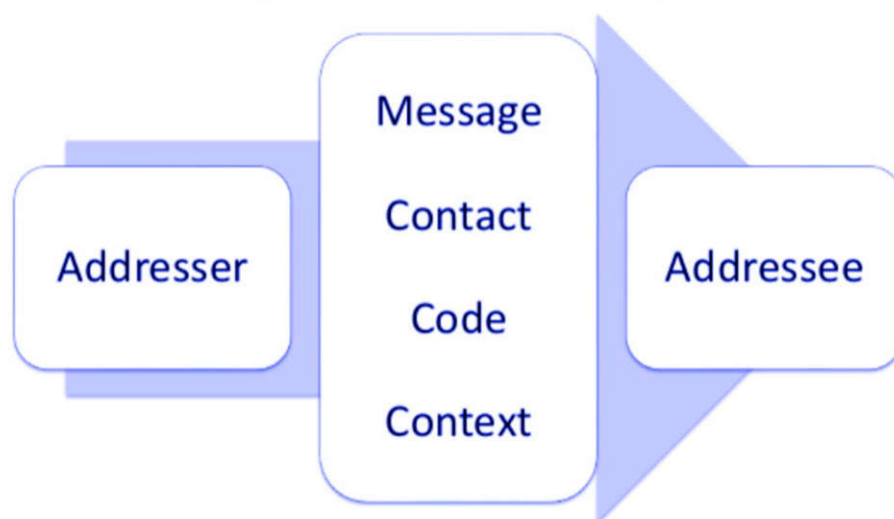
MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

So, what are these media and, more specifically, **mass media** that are so important today?

In order to grasp the role of the media, we need first to understand the role of media in the process of communication. The term media comes from a Latin word medium, which means something in between. In the process of communication, media is thus something that mediates, something that connects or transmits messages or participants in communication.

A *classical model of communication*, as described by a Russian-born linguist **Roman Jakobson**, has 2 basic constituents: an addresser, that is, an instance sending the message, and an addressee, an instance receiving the message. Media is something in between that connects these two or transmits the message from the sender to the receiver.

The Act of Communication (Roman Jakobson)



Imagine an ancient king that wishes to send a **message** to his general. He tells it to a **messenger**, who then runs to deliver it to the other party. In this example, the king is the **addresser**, the general is the **addressee**, and the messenger is the **media**; in a way, he is the device through which this message is delivered. By the way, the notion of a medium in a spiritual séance, for instance, follows the same pattern – here, the medium is a person through which a message from a ghost or another world is delivered, a vehicle through which someone or something else speaks.

The same goes with a more sophisticated process involving the post office. When I send the message, the letter and the postal service are mediums securing that the message is delivered. Historically speaking, this process of transmission was fairly straightforward for much of human history. You write **one message**, use **one medium** and deliver it to **one addressee**.

But what happens if you want to deliver **more messages**, or one message but to **many persons**? In the old days, you needed to have many scribes who would transcribe and copy these messages. In the **late 15th century**, a new machine was invented that revolutionized this process – **the printing press**. The press enabled a message, or in this case, a written text, to be copied and printed out a number of times in as many copies as you like. That way it became possible to send a message to a huge number of people at the same time.



This was the beginning of the mass media. Approximately four centuries ago, this gave birth to **newspapers**, which were the **first mass media**. In the twentieth century, more mass media were invented than ever before in the world – first it was **radio**, then **television**, and now it is the **internet**, with its many forms such as emails, blogs, Facebook, Viber, Twitter, YouTube and so on. The internet in particular revolutionized the process of communication and media transmission for the second time – it enabled potentially all people to **create, send** and **receive** messages in an instant throughout the world.



This is, actually, what we mean by the media – with the uprising of the internet, the definition of the “media” changed to include what we call the new media; so, today, the media are means of communication that influence people widely.



when you become media literate, the world
literally rests at your fingertips!

Now that we have defined the media, let us move to the question of **literacy**.