



LOL // PROPAGANDA

Understanding Today's Media

A ZINE BY

// The Crow Bureau

CROWBUREAU.COM

illustrations by jacinto // jacintocanek.com

// Part 1

**Nice to meet
you.**



All of us can help each other—and ourselves—to feel more empowered in this world and experience more beauty in it. One way to do that is through media literacy.

Basically, media literacy is:

**the habit of critically inquiring
where media comes from
and why it was made,
so we can make more nuanced
decisions
about what it means to us,
and how we may actively contribute.**



This zine is about how to actively 'read' media,
to understand:

who it's for,
who made it,
what they're saying
and why

And how to 'write' successful media by considering:

who you're talking to
what you want to say and why
what people should do about it

Together our goal is to become more active participants
in our everyday media environments, so we can be more
engaged community members and live more enriched lives.

// Part 2

What is media?

**What is media
literacy?**

Why should I care?



We know. Media can mean a lot of things. It can be a movie, an autobiography, a newscast, or even a shot glass shaped like a light bulb that says “I got lit in Tampa”.

Here are some formal definitions of media:

A plural of medium

An agency or means of doing something

A means by which something is communicated or expressed

All of those (and more) are correct definitions of media. But for now, let’s use this one:

Anything constructed to deliver a message or experience.



Now that we've agreed on a definition of media, let's make it more concrete. On the next page, there's a venn diagram of types of media because venn diagrams are great.

What else can you add?

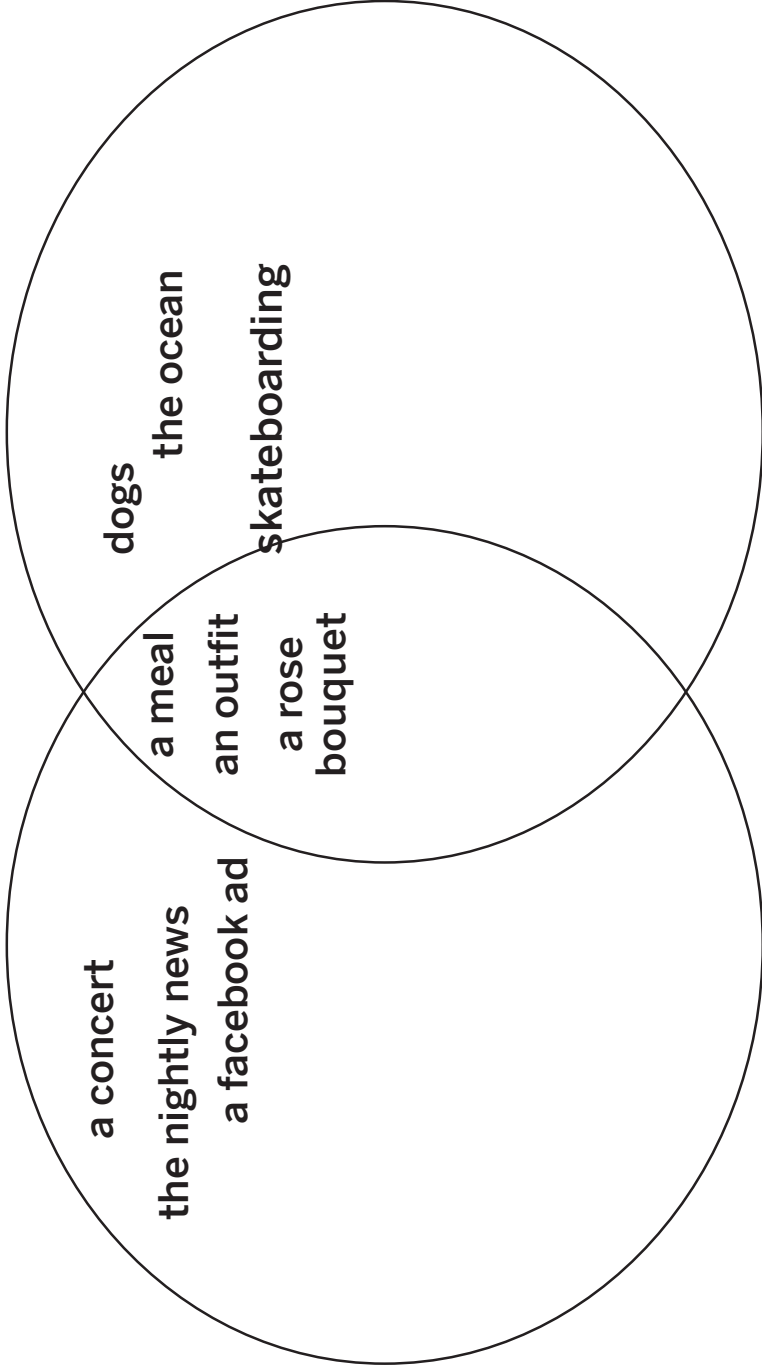


What's media?
What's not media?
What's debatable?

How is media public / private?
intentional / unintentional?
dependent on context?

media

not media



- anything constructed to deliver a message or experience •

Here's a story about another definition of media.

One incredibly hot day in a Nigerian village, two friends swore each other undying love and loyalty. But before making such a promise, they neglected to acknowledge Eshu, the Yoruba deity of thresholds and communication. Now, these friends owned neighboring farm plots. And not long after their promise, each friend was working in their field; Eshu walked right between their plots, wearing a hat that was black on one side and red on the other.

Later the friends started talking about the man in the hat.

'Hey, did you see the man in the red hat?'

'Sure I saw him, but he was wearing a black hat.'

It quickly escalated into an argument. Each called the other blind, crazy, stupid. And the fight kept building, a drawing in family members, neighbors and passersby.

One camp shouted the hat must have been black. The others screamed back it had to be red. The tension boiled until the entire village was almost at each other's throats. Then came Eshu into the thick of it all holding out the hat, black on one side, red on the other.

/// Media is the hat.





With some new ideas about media, let's recall our definition of media literacy from page 2:

the habit of critically inquiring where media comes from and why it was made, so we can make more nuanced decisions about what it means to us, and how we may actively contribute.

When we are media literate, we:

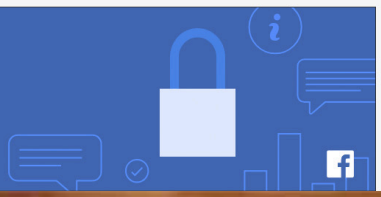
- create community
- act as engaged citizens
- enhance our understandings of our worlds and the messages, stories, and information that comprise them
- know when we're being sold something; e.g. an idea, product, etc.
- realize the interests of media producers, and *investigate who is invested in our experiences*

What other outcomes of media literacy can you imagine, in individuals and communities?



Securing Facebook during elections

[See how](#)



// Part 3

How does media work?

Try this. Recall three pieces of media you've encountered recently. They don't necessarily need to be big, important, or meaningful to you—you just need to remember them.

(Hint: Check the Venn Diagram on page 7 for inspiration)

Include a few details about each piece, like where you were when you encountered it, and how it made you feel.

1.

2.

3.

Choose your favorite memory from the previous page, and try out an analysis. Ask yourself about the following:

CHANNEL // What kind of media is this? Where did I encounter it?

AUTHORSHIP // Who made it? And who else might have been involved? e.g. companies, investor\$, PACs. What research can you do to learn more about the author?

AUDIENCE // Who is this probably intended for?
Do you think it's successful in reaching them?

INTENTION // Why was it probably created?
What's action or change was the author hoping to
incite?

AUTHENTICITY // Did this message feel true or resonate with my worldview? Why or why not?

// Part 4

How can media work for you?



To 'write' successful media takes very similar steps as it does to read it, just in a slightly different order. Try it for yourself below.

Start here: Given unlimited resources, what three messages do you want to produce?

Some examples: *“water should be free,” “I love my dad,” “seek new perspective.”*

1.

2.

3.

Now choose your favorite message to develop into a platform. A platform is the living, breathing framework on which you'll build your message and all future iterations.

It lives and breathes because platforms can (and should) change as events, social climate, and people's attitudes change.

Start by considering:

AUTHORSHIP // Who are you?
What perspective will you begin with?
Who could create this alongside you?
How would you identify yourself as the creator/author?

AUDIENCE // Who is your audience?

Who is your ideal audience? Most accessible audience?

What are their attitudes and mindsets?

Where is their attention?

INTENTION // Why do you want to create this?

What concrete attitude, situation, or belief do you want to shift?

How do you want people to respond?

How will you get them to consider doing it?

CHANNEL/FORMAT // Where and how will you deliver your message?

What type of media and channels are best suited for your message? Which ones are most unexpected?

What form will your message take?

(Check the Venn Diagram for inspiration)



AUTHENTICITY // Is it trustworthy? Does it resonate?

How could you make your message resonate with (a) your ideal audience and (b) your more-attainable audience?

What research might you do to enhance your message's authenticity or resonance?



Imagine you have a year to affect some or all of the change you named above. Now make a plan to roll out your platform.

Where do you launch? What's your next step? What's next after that?

Brief thoughts or bullets will do.



// Part 5

Experiments to try in the world.

Whoo. We've talked a lot about media.
BUT.

Since all media is about human communication, it's most valuable when it's practiced, not just talked about.

So here are some experiments you can try with what we've covered. Feel free to add your own as well. As long as your intention is clear and constructive, you can't make a wrong move.

Go do it.

- Write a facebook ad for an organization you believe in
- Analyze a news article you think is important. Write a letter to the editor about your findings
- Make a zine about something you care about
- Find 3 billboards and imagine alternate uses for them. Post a flyer near each with your ideas
- Use your analysis skills (and creativity) to get media coverage on a cause you think is important
- Plan and produce an event that will bring your community together
- Revisit your most formative media memories with a critical eye. Movies you watched when you were younger, books you read or songs you loved. What do you notice, if anything, that you didn't before?
- Connect with a stranger about media you're witnessing together--a blimp in the sky, a mural on a building, or a passing bus ad, for example.





// References + Further Reading

Wired for Story - Lisa Cron

Spreadable Media - Henry Jenkins

Media Lit Kit - Center for Media Literacy

Media Tool Kit - Center for Media Justice

7 Techniques of Propaganda - Clyde Miller

Propaganda - Edward Bernays

No Logo - Naomi Klein

The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects - Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore

Media Control - Noam Chomsky

Have questions, want to talk more or just stay in touch?

We're here.

hello@crowbureau.com





Thoughts





Notes



