



‘Media’ are consumer goods. The word ‘media’ is the plural of medium, which comes from the Latin word for ‘middle’ or ‘centre’. Today, the term ‘medium’ is used in many ways: It can mean media products (e.g., a film), technical tools or devices (e.g., a projector or the internet), or an institution that uses media tools and produces media content (e.g., a television station). The meaning of ‘media’ goes beyond that of simple consumer goods. Their influence on society is undeniable.

Looking at the development of printing, newspapers, radio, television, and the internet, we can see how each of these media types influenced social change – just by being available.
vgl. www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX87HNINO3A und https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digitale_Medien

In recent years, there have been strong changes in the media landscape. On the one hand, media companies have changed. On the other hand, access to media, especially for children and young people, has increased. Media use is now a part of everyday life.

One of the largest current studies about media and young people is regularly conducted in Germany by the Media Education Research Association Southwest (mpfs). For 2024, it showed that most households have full access to smartphones, Wi-Fi, and computers or laptops. In addition, 93 % of young people aged 12 to 19 said they own a smartphone.
vgl. <https://mpfs.de/studie/jim-studie-2024>, Seite 7

The study also shows what young people used media for most in 2024. Using the internet was the top activity, followed closely by listening to music, watching videos online, watching TV, playing digital games, using video streaming services, and listening to the radio.
<https://mpfs.de/studie/jim-studie-2024>, Seite 14

Media are used in many ways – for young people as well as for adults. These include communication, information, entertainment, and learning. By choosing specific information channels and sources – and through the selection of news by media companies (such as Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp ...) or ByteDance (TikTok)) – digital media influence and reinforce certain trends and can cause people to (dis-)agree more.

Media consumption has therefore changed a lot. With digital media, people use media in more active ways. Media production has become easier and more accessible. This also changes the role of media in society. The quantity and quality of today’s media consumption also exhibits problematic elements, such as internet addiction or fake news. Thinking about and using the media carefully is therefore an important skill.

The Austrian curricula address this by defining goals in two teaching principles. The teaching principle of Economic and Consumer Education says: “Students reflect on and critically assess the influence of media and advertising on their own thinking and actions.” And the teaching principle of Media Education states: “The goal of media education in schools is to develop and promote media literacy.”
vgl. <https://rundschriften.bmbwf.gv.at/rundschriften/?id=703> und www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/prinz/medienbildung.html