

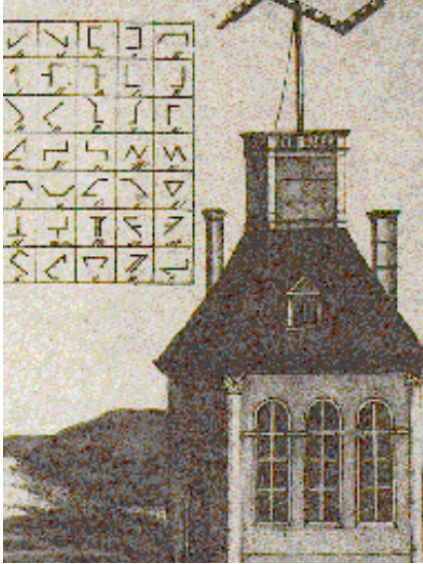
History of Information Spring 2015

Final Exam Study Guide

Part 1. Identification Questions [15 points total]

Section A: You will be asked to identify and explain the relevance to the history of information eight of the following thirteen items. Responses should be one to two sentences [1 point each, 8 points total]:

1. ARPANET
2. "[It would be] inconceivable that we should allow so great a possibility for service to be drowned in advertiser chatter"
3. Crimean War
4. Ada Lovelace
5. German atrocities
6. Common carrier
7. Valentine's Day
8. muckraking
9. Unix System Laboratories v. Berkeley Software Design
10. "It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom."
11. Dr. Strangelove



12.



13.

Part 1, section B: You will be asked to identify and explain the relevance to the history of information of seven of thirteen other items taken from the readings and the lectures. The majority of them have been mentioned in the lectures and/or readings at least twice. Responses should be one to two sentences. [1 point each, 7 points total]

Part 2. Essays [25 points total]

Section A. [18 points total]

Four of the following seven questions will appear on the exam; you will be required to answer three of them.[6 points each]. Be sure to answer all parts of the question and to provide adequate evidence and citations. You should be able to answer each essay question in 200-250

words per essay (word length is a good guide, but will not be strictly enforced for its own sake on the final).

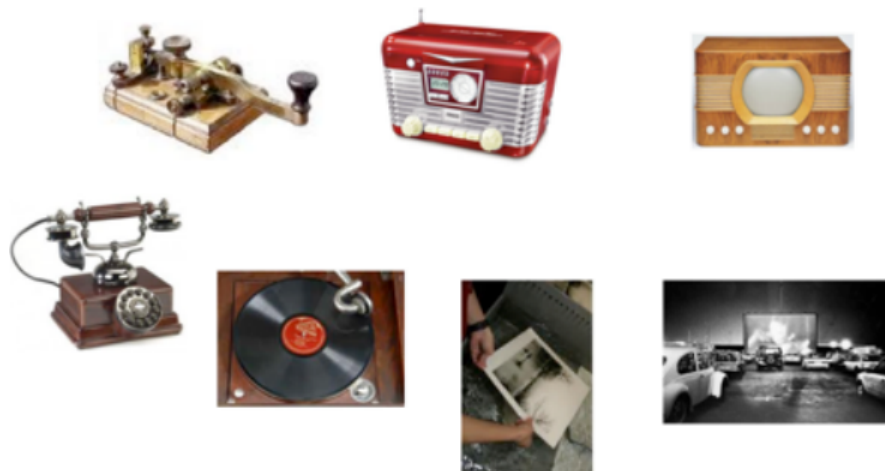
1. Babbage argued that technology was less invention than combination, and Williams argued that the "invention of television was no single event." Choosing a technology that we have discussed, consider the extent to which Babbage and Williams are right or wrong and how their insights affect the way that the history of information is told.

2. In 1904, Henry Adams wrote: "Before the boy was six years old [i.e., 1844] he had seen four impossibilities made actual—the ocean-steamer, the railway, the electric telegraph, and the Daguerreotype." What justifies the inclusion of the fourth of these among modern wonders on a level with the first three?

3. Advertising has been seen as problematic for new communication technologies. Pick two examples we have discussed on the course. Show how the problem has been addressed and what can be learned from the past. Argue whether contemporary solutions do or do not seem to address the problems. What, if anything, might these examples tell us about future technological developments?

4. The theme of the annihilation of space and time has recurred at different times during the course. Use at least three examples from the course, to show to what extent such claims change with different technologies, to what extent they are similar, and show whether with any of your examples the related claim that "this time it's different" can be justified and how.

5.



What principles determine how the devices or means of communication pictured above are classified into distinct "technologies"? Pick three of these devices and suggest what alternate

principles of classification would be possible. Why do you think we classify them as we do, rather than some other way?

6. In recent years, people have predicted that the rise of digital technology would spell the end of the newspaper, the postal service, the printed book, the university, the pencil, home sales. Pick one of these developments that seems plausible to you and one that seems less so. What accounts for the difference? Mention technological, social, economic and other factors as required.

7. Thamus argued that the inventor is not necessarily the best predictor of the use of technology. Argue whether Thamus was right in the case he was describing and choose at least two other cases discussed in the course where similar arguments were made and argue whether these claims were justified. What can we learn by assessing such predictions?

Part B. [7 points]

There will be two additional essay prompts of which you will be asked to answer one.