

Now: Instant Information

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will focus on how rapidly we are exposed to new information. Five hundred years ago, with the invention of the printing press, we developed the ability to send information in many different directions at the same time. With the internet, we have sped up how quickly we can send this information. Doing things more quickly certainly has its advantages, but this doesn't necessarily mean we do it better. As with any new technology, we need to reflect on if it is really making things better for us. Making sure we use technology well, and not just use it for the sake of using it, is an exercise in agility. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Instant Information

"Computing services and establishments will begin to spread throughout every sector of American life."

Martin Greenberger, 1964



BEFORE YOU START

How is communication technology integrated into your daily life?

1. Instant Information

Different periods in history are often named after the defining innovations of that time (the Industrial Revolution, for instance). Our current era is defined by easy access to information and fast communication, so it's known as the Information Age.

Let's think a little bit about what this means for us. Before the 1990s, almost no one used email for day-to-day communication, but now email is an essential tool in nearly everyone's workplace and personal life. It's not uncommon for someone to send dozens of emails in a day. And what about the news? In the past century, we've seen a transformation in the news industry from paper-only publications to a much wider range of media. Some people still read the newspaper, but many others get their news from the internet, television, or radio. Similarly, we now can choose to read books on paper or electronically.

➔ **EXAMPLE** The Information Age has changed how we access information—for instance, you probably wouldn't think twice about someone reading the news on a tablet while texting on a smartphone. This wasn't always the case!

As we discussed in the last challenge, we're even using technology to get up-to-the-minute information about our health and wellness rather than having to wait for our annual checkup. We can rely on wearable tech to

learn our heart rate or track how many steps we take in a day. Telehealth services let us meet with doctors and therapists without even leaving the house. And genetic tests and medical monitoring devices give us more access to information about our health than ever before (Gee, Ho, & Raab, n.d.).

One of the recurring themes of this course is using **agility** to adapt to change. Communication technology is one of the areas where this is especially necessary—it seems that almost every month, a new technology, social media outlet, or type of software becomes available for learning information, talking to one another, or sharing our own ideas. Because we use communication technology in so many ways, it's become integrated into our daily lives. It's even connected to major economic shifts and social transformations.

Coming up, we'll consider how technologies like print, radio, and television have revolutionized how we communicate. But first, we'll look at the invention of something that made all of that possible: the alphabet.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that the current era is defined by our access to **instant information**. From the news industry to the acquisition of health data, many types of information are now instantly accessible.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Strategic Education, Inc. 2020. Learn from the Past, Prepare for the Future.

REFERENCES

Gee, M., Ho, A., & Raab, J. A Day in the Life of Wearable Tech. *Time*. www.time.com/see-the-wearable-tech-of-the-future