the communication age

Third Edition

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the communication age

Third Edition

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Autumn Edwards
Chad Edwards
Shawn T. Wahl
Scott A. Myers

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Connecting and Engaging

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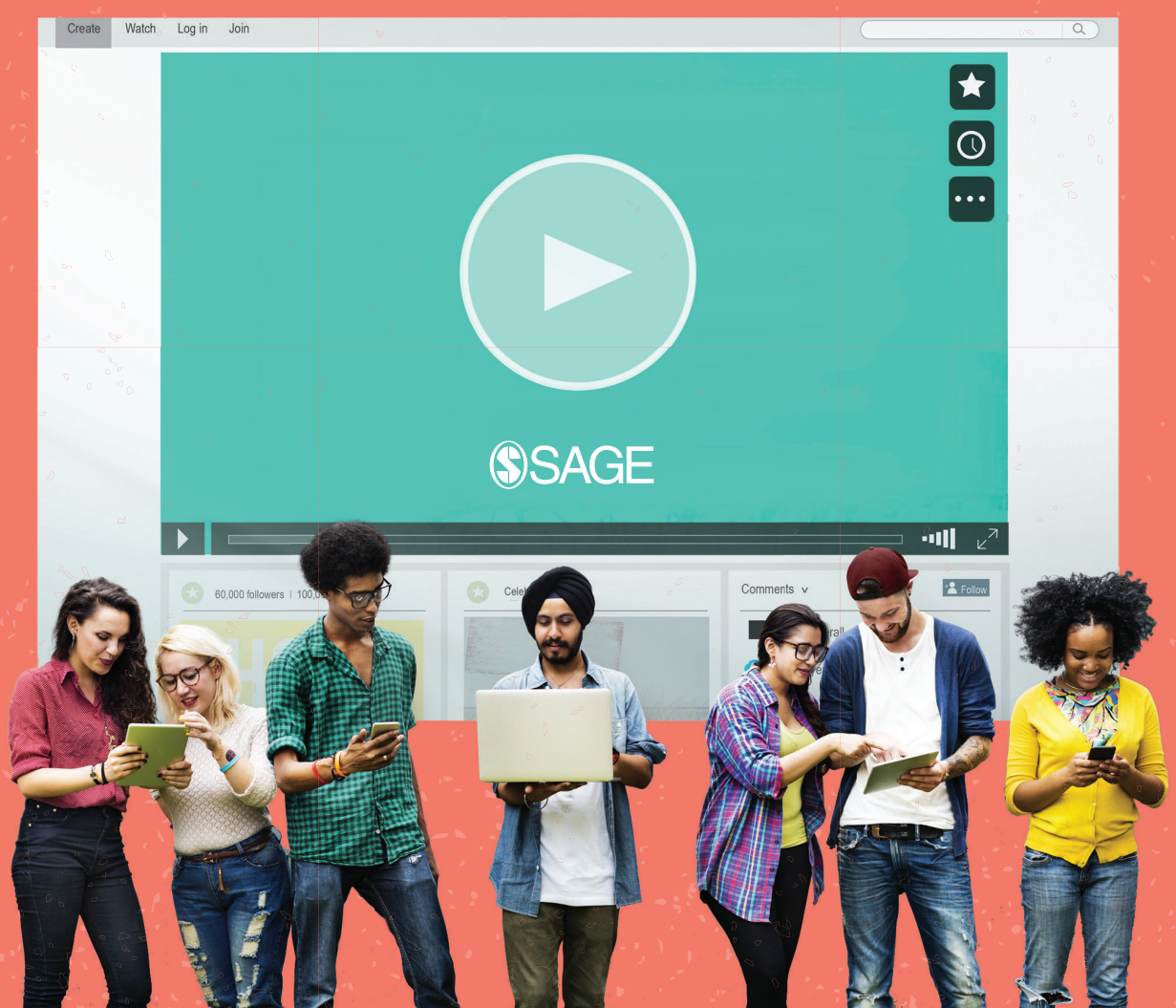

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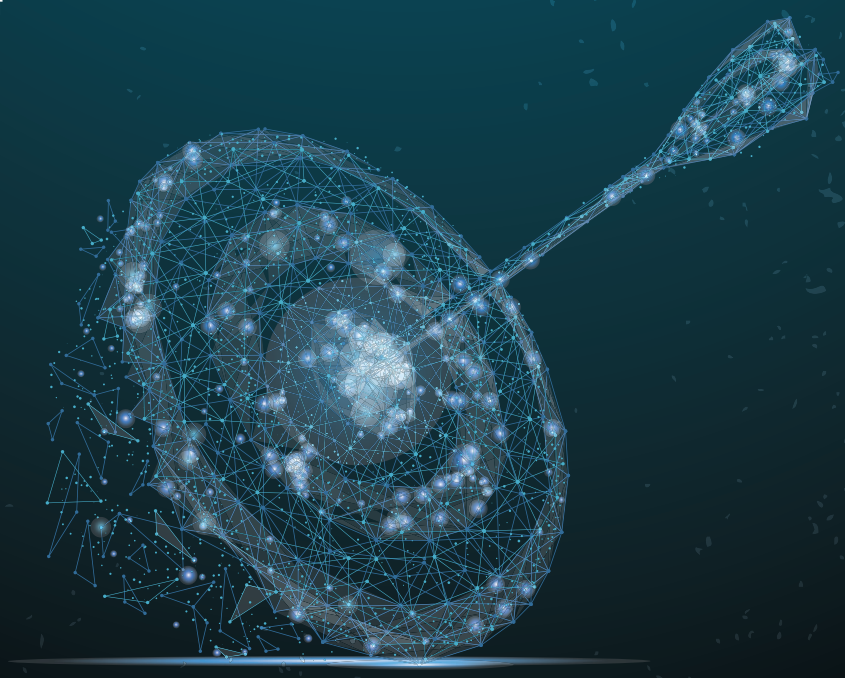
ADAPTING to Others

PRACTICING Effective Listening

EXPRESSING Messages

IDENTIFYING AND EXPLAINING Fundamental Communication Processes

CREATING AND ANALYZING Message Strategies



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THE COMMUNICATION AGE

Third Edition

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Connecting and Engaging

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PREFACE

It is our pleasure to share the third edition with you! This edition is updated with new chapter openers, new research, and cutting-edge feature material. We continue to offer the Communication Unplugged and Career Frontier features that appeared in the second edition. These features offer timely advice for students both to consider their communication choices and to gain valuable career skills in communication.

The Communication Age: Connecting and Engaging provides students a contemporary and relatable textbook with a solid foundation in the fundamentals of communication. The textbook's driving theme is life in the Communication Age. In the Communication Age, technology, media, and communication converge and deeply permeate daily life. The dramatic rise in social media, social networking sites, mobile computing, artificial intelligence, and social robotics has led to increased complexities between face-to-face communication and mediated communication, increasing the need for communication competencies and critical thinking across life contexts.

We wrote this textbook because we noticed that most textbooks in the "introduction to communication" market are written from an "Information Age" perspective, in which people connect *with* and *to* the Internet and technology, not *through* it, as do today's students. Furthermore, in the few years since publication of the first edition, more scholars are discussing HMC: human communication "with" machines.

This textbook treats virtual spaces and communication technologies as places and ways where students develop, maintain, and foster connection and engage with others. We also take seriously the notion that machine intelligences, ranging from algorithms to chatbots to embodied social robots, increasingly stand in for other people in the communication process. In short, this textbook couples traditional instruction on the fundamentals of face-to-face communication with the latest research on mediated communication and machine communication partners.

As an author team, we considered the questions instructors have when planning an introductory communication course. First, we examined the broader conceptual questions:

- What do we want our students to learn?
- How can this information be applied to their current and future life?
- How can we make this material meaningful, useful, and interesting to students considering the presence of new media and convergence across communication contexts?
- How can all of the important information, skills, and competencies relevant to the basics of communication be covered in one term?

Next, we focused on the critical questions that emerge about how to organize core communication skills and competencies in a way that addresses the blend of face-to-face and mediated experience. Instructors often grapple with questions like:

- Should I include a social media component?
- How much attention should be given to topics like listening, interviewing, and public speaking?
- How can the course be relevant due to the influence of new media?

The last five chapters of the textbook focus on giving presentations in the Communication Age. Because of the integration of media and technology into all of life's spheres, the Communication Age is one in which presentations are not simply "public speeches," but multimedia efforts to persuade and inform in a variety of settings and across time. Today's communicators must be able to present in multiple contexts, both virtual and real, for synchronous and asynchronous audiences. This textbook provides instruction relevant to traditional public speaking, along with the additional presentational opportunities and challenges of today's students.

Organizing Theme: Convergence in the Communication Age

We believe that developing an organizing theme lends clarity to a textbook. The **Convergence in the Communication Age** theme of this textbook is one that encourages students to focus on communication competency in both face-to-face and mediated contexts. We believe that one of the strengths of *The Communication Age: Connecting and Engaging* is that it links the research base on new media to basic communication skills in order to promote competency and engaged citizenship. As the various communication contexts and skills are covered, we work to constantly balance the material between the face-to-face and mediated communication experience.

Features of the Textbook

The Communication Age: Connecting and Engaging presents several pedagogical features that students will be able to use and to which they will immediately relate. Each of these features is based on the most current research and information.

Career Frontier

In the **Career Frontier** feature we offer strategies and tips that focus on career preparation and emphasize the importance of communication competence in a student's work life. We encourage application of knowledge to a variety of professional contexts and situations. This feature also discusses employment possibilities for students in communication careers.

Communication Unplugged

The **Communication Unplugged** feature emphasizes communication choices in important face-to-face contexts in light of the constant shifts in human communication between mediated and face-to-face communities. These boxes offer scenarios and topics for students to explore the tensions between online and offline communication experiences, with a focus on important communication skills relevant across life contexts.

Make a Difference

The **Make a Difference** feature addresses the vital relationship between communication and civic engagement by weaving together conceptual material with real-world examples, and showcasing how students, organizations, scholars, and everyday citizens have used communication to address important social issues. These boxes offer ways for students to actively participate in their local communities using communication skills.

Ethical Connection

Each chapter includes an **Ethical Connection** feature that is a brief, real-world case study tackling an ethical issue connected to chapter content. The feature is driven by the National Communication Association's "Credo for Ethical Communication," and it encourages students to communicate with respect to self, others, and surroundings, giving careful consideration to the ways in which our words construct our social realities. **Ethical Connection** boxes promote class discussion, critical analysis, and self-inventory by taking a careful look at real-world case studies that resonate with students.

Assess Your Communication

Chapters include the **Assess Your Communication** feature, which encourages communication competency and self-inventory. This feature includes scales, assessments, and self-reports established by leading researchers in the communication discipline, designed in a way that is easy to understand. The **Assess Your Communication** feature is directly related to chapter content and encourages students to personalize information and to focus directly on communication competency across life contexts.

Writing Style and Examples

The writing style used in this book is designed to connect with students on a personal level. Reviewers and students found the style to be accessible, warm, and engaging while still maintaining a scholarly focus. The examples used in the textbook are taken from popular culture and real-life scenarios. Woven throughout the text seamlessly, these examples are taken from both face-to-face communication and the virtual world to highlight life in the age of communication.

Introductory and Summary Sections

Each chapter begins with a **What You'll Learn** section that lists the top five important concepts or ideas in the chapter. Each chapter concludes with a parallel **What You've Learned** section that provides a summary of the top five things students have learned through reading the chapter. In classroom testing, students find this organization helpful for focusing their reading and studying for exams. These statements are designed to be used in your assessment of student outcomes.

Chapter Openers

At the beginning of each chapter is a recent current event or popular culture item that highlights the basic ideas of the chapter, but does so in a way to demonstrate life in the Communication Age. These chapter openers are a great way to lead a discussion about the material presented.

Pictures

A cutting-edge visual program is featured across chapters. Pictures are related to chapter content and invite students to visualize real-world experiences related to communication. The photo program is culturally sensitive and designed to enhance chapter content and application of knowledge.

New to This Edition

- **The new Chapter 11, Selecting and Researching Your Topic and Knowing Your Audience**, is a combination of the second edition's Chapter 11, Selecting Your Topic and Knowing Your Audience, and Chapter 12, Researching Your Presentation. Choosing a speech topic and conducting research is a fluid process: Sometimes you choose a topic and then conduct research; other times you conduct research first to see how much information there is on a given topic. For this reason, we thought it was more logical to discuss topic selection and research in the same chapter. The new chapter outlines the steps students should take in planning a presentation, from defining its purpose and type, to determining the audience, conducting credible research and avoiding plagiarism, and putting all of their research together into a cohesive presentation.
- **New animation videos** illustrate key concepts in each chapter to help students understand the fundamentals of communication.
- **New student speeches** demonstrate how to give effective informative, persuasive, and small group speeches.
- **The redesigned "What You've Learned" end-of-chapter pedagogy** organizes key terms, review questions, and critical thinking questions according to learning objective.
- **Updated feature boxes** incorporate current events and communication issues into the revised text. The "Make a Difference" feature now includes "Questions to Consider."

Ancillaries

The Communication Age: Connecting and Engaging includes a comprehensive ancillary package that utilizes new media and a wide range of instructional technologies designed to support instructor course preparation and student learning.

Student Study Site

edge.sagepub.com/edwards3e

- Mobile-friendly **eFlashcards** to strengthen understanding of key concepts
- Mobile-friendly practice **quizzes** to encourage self-guided assessment and practice
- Carefully selected **video** and **multimedia content** that enhance exploration of key topics
- EXCLUSIVE access to full-text **SAGE journal articles** and other readings, which support and expand on chapter concepts

Instructor Teaching Site

edge.sagepub.com/edwards3e/instructor-resources

- **Course Management System integration** to make it easy for student test results and graded assignments to seamlessly flow into instructor gradebooks
- **Test banks built on Bloom's Taxonomy** and tagged to the NCA Core Competencies for Introductory Communication courses to provide a diverse range of test items
- **Chapter activities** for individual or group projects, providing lively and stimulating ideas for use in and out of class to reinforce active learning
- **Sample course syllabi** with suggested models for structuring your course
- Editable, chapter-specific **PowerPoint® slides** to offer you flexibility when creating multimedia lectures
- **Lecture notes** that summarize key concepts by chapter to help you prepare for lectures and class discussions
- Access to full-text **SAGE journal articles** that expose students to important research and scholarship tied to chapter concepts
- **Video and multimedia content** to enhance student engagement and appeal to different learning styles, including exclusive access to video clips from the SAGE Video collection for use in course lectures

Interactive eBook

The Communication Age is also available as an **Interactive eBook,** which can be packaged free with the book or purchased separately. The interactive eBook offers integrated video clips of sample speeches, new animations of communication concepts, and communication scenarios. Users of the interactive eBook also have access to unique student quiz material that can feed to instructors' gradebooks through their LMS.

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Autumn Says Thanks to. . .

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Shawn Says Thanks to. . .

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Scott Says Thanks to. . .

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CHAPTER 1

COMMUNICATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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WHAT YOU'LL **LEARN**

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Describe the nature and characteristics of the Communication Age.
2. Define communication.
3. Identify the various contexts within which communication occurs.
4. Describe metaphors used to describe communication.
5. Explain the importance of considering the ethics of communication.

Communication is the key to achieving many of the positive outcomes each of us desires. On the collective level, we may hope to build truly global communities and to make lasting social change. On the more personal level, we may hope to fully and freely express ourselves, to stay connected with a network of family and friends, to build and nurture satisfying intimate relationships, to thrive in our careers, and to become our best versions of ourselves.

Communication is also central to overcoming the serious and unprecedented social and personal challenges we face. Some of you may be troubled by uncaring corporations, the economic downturn, cynical news media, or leaders who divide us and prevent us from getting things done. You may be concerned about environmental issues or social inequality. You may worry about cultural and religious extremism and fear what may happen if we are unable to work through our differences. You may be anxious about living up to expectations and finding true love. And, in our rapidly changing high-tech social landscape, you may wonder how you will balance the multiple and sometimes competing demands of everyday life: to find work that is both meaningful and profitable, to integrate your social life and your work life, to successfully prioritize how you spend your time and energy, and all the while to live up to your potential and make a difference. Whether you worry about a few of these issues or all of them, an understanding of communication equips you with the power to create the best possible outcomes.

Luckily, we do not face the future alone or unarmed. A rich past accompanies us on our journey. Centuries' worth of wisdom and knowledge are at our fingertips. For over 2,000 years, communication has been the subject of serious study. Philosophers and scientists have grappled with fundamental communication issues that are as relevant today as they were in the past. What is the nature of communication? What can communication accomplish? What characterizes communication as ethical, moral, and good? What makes communication successful for attaining goals? What degrades communication and robs it of its potential? In addition, communication has long played a starring role in understandings of identity, relationships, and community formation.

Many of the communication issues we face today are strikingly similar to those faced by generations long past. For instance, the dramatic increase in the use of digital communication technology—including text messaging, instant messaging, social networking, e-mailing, and blogging—is a cause of concern for many people. They worry that we may be paying a price for all this convenience, speed, and access in terms of losing the intimacy of face-to-face encounters, privacy, and control over our information. It might surprise you to learn that the ancient Greeks had similar concerns about the first communication technology: writing! The point is that the history of communication study is useful precisely because it teaches us about current issues. Therefore, we approach the history of communication as a living conversation that awaits our perspectives and voices, not as

a collection of dead facts and lifeless laws. Our challenge is to align the fundamentals of communication with the present moment and, in the process, to shed some new light on both. The following section paints a fuller picture of our present moment, by describing some seismic shifts in contemporary life.

The Communication Age

Connection is everything, and the way we connect is changing. The **Communication Age** is an age in which communication, technology, and media converge and deeply permeate daily life. **Convergence** refers to the ways in which the many forms of technologically mediated and face-to-face communication overlap and intersect in our daily lives. For example, you continue a conversation with a friend in person that you began on Facebook about the TV shows *The Walking Dead* or *Grey's Anatomy*, which you both streamed online. Your friend refers you to a good blog that poses a theory about the show's next episode, which prompts you to text her with your reaction to the post. Face-to-face communication and mediated communication were once treated as distinct and separate modes of interaction. Today, they are intimately interconnected. Perhaps no activity is considered as traditionally face to face as falling in love. Yet more than one third of recently married couples in the United States met online (Cacioppo, Cacioppo, Gonzaga, Ogburn, & VanderWeele, 2013). Online activity is beginning to replace some traditional forms of meeting a mate, such as introductions through friends, family, or religious organizations, and this is especially true for same-sex couples (Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2011). For young adults, the rise of online dating is linked to a dramatic increase in the use of mobile dating apps, with 22% of 18- to 24-year-olds using these services (Smith, 2016).

This unprecedented level of convergence affects not only what we do, but also what we are. For the first time in history, people have a bodily existence as well as a digital existence. We maintain a presence in both physical and virtual space. Think about it. Here you are, in the flesh, holding this book or scrolling its contents on a screen. You are physically present for anyone who happens to be near you. But your boundaries and your effects on the world extend far beyond the physical space you occupy. Digitally, you stretch across the vastness of space and time. The fact that you are reading right now does not stop your friends, family, and acquaintances from sending you an e-mail or posting on your social media pages in virtual space. And, at this very moment, any number of people may be viewing your latest posts, liking your images on Instagram, swiping your profile on Tinder, or viewing your résumé through LinkedIn.

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▲ Look familiar? How does this interaction demonstrate communication convergence?

One of the main effects of communication convergence is a massive increase in the number and types of opportunities to connect with others. Obviously, the positive potential of convergence is tremendous. On the other hand, convergence also introduces new challenges. As we multitask to take full advantage of technology, media, and communication, we may feel easily distracted, overcommitted,

Michael Tullberg/Getty Images Entertainment/Getty Images

or spread too thin. Simply put, dividing our attention scatters our focus. As a case in point, reflect on how you felt when reading the previous paragraph. If you are like us, the mere mention of online activities or mobile applications is enough to cause momentary distraction. We are willing to bet that quite a few of you checked social networking sites or glanced at your phones for notifications. Even more of you let your minds temporarily drift to consider what you might be missing while you read this chapter.

Video 1.1: Communication in Action: Convergence and Distraction

The second characteristic of the Communication Age is that communication, technology, and media deeply permeate daily life. To permeate daily life means to saturate or infuse it. Many of you are **digital natives**, or people for whom digital technologies such as computers, cell phones, video games, and digital cameras already existed when they were born (Prensky, 2001). If so, you grew up in a permeated world. Those of you who are a bit older are sometimes called **digital immigrants**, a term used to refer to people who have adopted and learned digital technologies later in life. Digital immigrants have seen firsthand how communication technologies have become more and more prevalent in everyday life. Regardless of who we are, what we do, or where we go, we are never far from the presence of technology, media, and communication (see "Career Frontier: Life in the Communication Age").

According to the Pew Research Center, 83% of teenagers and young adults sleep with their cell phones. Ninety-two percent of teens report going online daily, including 24% who go online "almost constantly" (Lenhart, 2015). Sixty-three percent of all teens say they exchange text messages every day with people in their lives, which far surpasses the frequency with which they turn to other forms of *daily* communication, including face-to-face socializing outside of school (35%) (Lenhart, 2012).

This trend is only increasing. By 2020, mobile devices are predicted to be the primary Internet connection tools for most of the world. Furthermore, futurists who are field experts at tracking current trends predict that we will quickly see even more radical levels of communication convergence and permeation. We might be the first generation to inhabit both the physical universe and a metaverse (a separate but complementary virtual world intimately interconnected with the real world).

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▲ Communication increasingly involves technologically augmented realities.

Virtual worlds and augmented realities (a blend of physical and virtual realities) are already popular formats for games and other forms of entertainment. In the near future, our lifestyles may involve a seamless transition from virtual reality, artificial reality, and what we call "real life." As you read each chapter in this book, you will encounter a feature titled "Communication Unplugged," which discusses situations in which the older, more traditional mode of communicating face to face, through the basic media of body and

CAREER FRONTIER

LIFE IN THE COMMUNICATION AGE

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FOR A BRIEF and entertaining illustration of the ways in which communication, media, and technology converge and deeply permeate daily life to influence business and careers, watch the YouTube video "Did You Know 6.0: Change to Thrive." As you will see, communication technologies and behaviors are dramatically reshaping global economies and individual prospects.

Questions

1. Were you surprised by the information presented?
2. What facts or statistics did you find most striking?
3. After watching the video, what does your picture of the future look like?

voice, may be preferable to using newer, computer-mediated forms of communication. Face-to-face communication is a powerful but potentially underutilized form of relating with others.

The permeation of communication, technology, and media into everyday life has advantages and disadvantages. Being able to instantly access information and stay in touch with people throughout your daily activities is convenient and often efficient. However, the ability to access information and people on demand has introduced new social problems. Families may worry about how "texting at the table" affects the quality of mealtimes. Lovers may worry about the hurtfulness of getting "dumped by text." Employers may worry that the time employees spend on social networking sites harms productivity. And, in extreme cases, the permeation of communication technologies into everyday life poses a public safety hazard. Cell phone dialing and text messaging while driving are responsible for a number of traffic accidents, injuries, and fatalities (Distraction.gov, 2016). In 2016 alone, some 3,540 people were killed on U.S. roadways by crashes involving driver distraction (Distraction.gov, 2016). Fortunately, following multimedia awareness campaigns led by the U.S. Department of Transportation and several tough new laws, the number of distraction-related fatalities has decreased significantly since 2009. In this case,

Imeh Akpanudosen/Getty Images Entertainment/Getty Images

▲ Distracted driving is a problem both caused and solved by communication technology.

communication technologies and new media are being used to address a problem created by those same technologies.

In this textbook, we treat face-to-face communication and computer-mediated communication as integrated counterparts of our daily lives. That is to say, we try not to favor one over the other, and we recognize that they are often used in tandem. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, depending on the situation. What is most important is to think critically about what is gained and what is lost when we choose to engage in face-to-face communication, computer-mediated communication, or some combination of the two. The advantages, disadvantages, and complexities of each form of communication are addressed throughout the textbook. At the conclusion of each subsequent chapter, we address the impact of convergence on the topic at hand. At this point, we hope you have gathered that this is an exciting time to study communication. The following section discusses some of the many benefits an understanding of communication may bring.

Benefits of Studying Communication

There are many benefits to studying communication. An understanding of communication helps you reach your personal potential and make a positive impact on your relationships, organizations, communities, and governments.

- Good communication abilities are associated with physical, emotional, and psychological health and well-being.
- Strong speaking and listening skills are associated with greater health literacy (Martin et al., 2011).
- The ability to communicate well is the key to fulfilling your need for a satisfying identity (Duran & Kelly, 1988; Duran & Wheeless, 1982; Hecht, 1993).
- According to employers, communication skills are the most valuable abilities employees can possess (Job Outlook, 2016).
- Communication is a primary influence on social and personal relationships. Communication is what creates, maintains, transforms, and ends friendships, romances, and family relationships (Baxter, 2004).
- An understanding of communication promotes media literacy, or the ability to access, evaluate critically, and produce communication and information in a variety of forms and means (Potter & Byrne, 2007).
- Communication skills are critical to building healthy and vibrant communities (Edwards & Shepherd, 2007).
- Communication is the foundation of democratic citizenship (Dewey, 1916/1944).
- Communication drives social change and reform.

Because communication is a valuable professional skill, there are promising career paths for those who are trained in the discipline of communication. But even if you don't have a career in the communication field, your own professional development will be strengthened with an understanding of the fundamentals of communication theory and

COMMUNICATION UNPLUGGED

TO REFRESH YOUR MIND, TAKE A MEDIA FAST

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How much time do you spend each day interacting with information on a screen? Perhaps you use the alarm clock on your phone, which makes it natural to browse your networks and check for messages when you first wake up. By the time you even get started with your day's activities, you may already have watched videos, sent and received texts, checked your e-mail, liked and commented online, and downloaded documents. At school or work, you likely spend considerable amounts of time behind a computer. Meanwhile, you keep your phone nearby should boredom or an urge to connect strike. Maybe, after getting home, you watch a movie or your favorite show.

In the same way that it is sometimes advisable to take a momentary break, or "fast," from some of our foods, beverages, and habits, a media fast may be good for your system. Spending a set period of time unplugged can clarify for you the advantages and disadvantages of your media practices. Life without electronic devices momentarily separates you from constant distraction, online advertisements, and artificial blue light. You'll have more time for other things, like physical activity, face-to-face interaction, and even solitude. You'll also have the opportunity to reflect critically on how life in the Communication Age differs from older modes of living and connecting and engaging with the world.

What to Do Next

To make the most of your time unplugged, try to:

- Decide how long your fast will last (10 days, a week, a few days, a single day?) and what electronic devices or applications you will avoid (social media, entertainment media, Internet, all communication technology?). It may be wise to make voice calls an exception in case of true emergencies or the coordination of essential daily tasks.
- Let important members of your networks know you are taking a break from media, and for how long. The announcement will prevent worry or adjust their expectations for your availability.
- Keep a record of your experience. When was being unplugged the hardest for you? What did you miss most, and why? What did you gain? What surprised you? How has your thinking about media and technology use changed? Will you make any adjustments to your normal living routine as a result of the media fast?

practice. In each chapter, the feature "Career Frontier" includes skills-oriented, forward-looking, practical advice on using communication skills in the workplaces of today and tomorrow.

What Is Communication?

Communication Defined

Communication is the collaborative process of using messages to create and participate in social reality. The most important aspects of our lives—our individual identities,

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▲ Communication affects self-concept and the way others see you.

relationships, organizations, communities, cultures, and ideas—are accomplished through communication. Each of these aspects is a part of **social reality**, or the set of social judgments members of a group agree upon. Social realities emerge through social interaction. Therefore, communication enables us to actualize possibility and achieve change and growth, both for ourselves and for our communities.

Communication Is a Process

Communication is a dynamic, ongoing process. Unlike a thing, which is static, a process unfolds over time. As individuals exchange and interpret messages, their communication develops a particular history. The messages used in the past influence the nature and the interpretation of the messages used in the present and the future.

Communication Is Collaborative

The word *communication* comes from the Latin prefix *co-* (with, or together) and root word *munia* (sharing, giving, servicing). Therefore, communication requires the involvement of others. Just like many other things that you cannot do without the cooperation of others, such as sing a duet, be in a marriage, or count as a basketball team, you cannot communicate by yourself. Communication is a collective activity in which people work jointly to create and share meaning. Although we sometimes say "I communicated" or "You communicated," in reality, communication is not something that an I or a You can do alone. Communication must be accomplished by a We.

Communication Involves Messages

Messages rely on a common system of symbols, signs, and gestures to carry information and to generate shared meanings between participants. Individuals give unique contributions to communication interactions in the form of the verbal and/or nonverbal messages they use.

Communication Is Creative

It sometimes appears that the process of communication merely conveys information about the world "as it is," or that the messages we use simply describe a reality that already exists. In actuality, communication shapes and creates new social realities for ourselves and for others. Anyone who has witnessed the power of a label such as *bully*, *loser*, or *genius* to alter perceptions and reinforce behaviors has seen firsthand the ways in which communication creates reality.

Communication Is Participatory

In addition to playing a role in the creation of social reality, communication allows us to participate, or take part, in social reality. When people communicate, they rely on shared understandings to accomplish objectives. Communication allows us to entertain, persuade, inform, comfort, influence, and support one another.

The fact that communication involves both creation and participation demonstrates communication is fundamentally dual-natured. Communication makes and does. The ancient Greeks referred to the making and doing functions of communication as *poiesis* and *praxis*. Historically, most scholars and everyday people have paid more attention to communication praxis, or how communication can be used as an instrument to accomplish things. Recently, however, the creative (poiesis) aspect of communication has received greater appreciation. As we discuss in the communication metaphors section later in this chapter, understanding how communication brings new realities into existence has major implications for how to communicate and how to judge the goodness of communication. But, before we get to that, let's discuss the various contexts in which communication may occur.

Contexts of Communication

Over the years, communication has been studied in many contexts, or circumstances forming different interaction settings. Each context or situation has unique characteristics or features that influence how messages are used and how meanings are constructed. Traditionally, the distinctions among communication contexts were based on the number of people involved and whether the interaction was face to face or mediated through a technology such as print, electronic broadcasting, or computers. **Face-to-face communication** refers to situations in which physically or bodily copresent participants speak directly to one another during the interaction. **Mediated communication**, on the other hand, refers to communication or messages that are transmitted through some type of medium. Communication media include writing, the telephone, e-mail, text messaging, and many other forms of technological and computer-mediated interaction, which also may encompass interactions with and through social robots and artificial intelligence. In the Communication Age, the boundaries between contexts are increasingly blurry and overlapping. Communication may, and often does, involve an intersection or a blend of more than one context. Each context includes the possibility for face-to-face communication, mediated communication, or some combination of the two. Some maintain, in fact, that all communication is mediated (Peters, 1999). Even face-to-face communication is mediated through the human body, with its intricate organic technologies of voice, hearing, gesture, and sight. The words whispered between friends must still travel gaps in time and space, as well as interpretation. We further rely on the body to mediate our experiences with other communication technologies. In this way the body is "the medium through and with which all other media intersect and interact" (Killmeier, 2009, p. 33). The following paragraphs discuss the interpersonal, small group, public, mass communication, and masspersonal contexts.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication refers to communication with or between persons. The key feature of interpersonal communication is that it occurs between people who approach one another as individuals in a relationship, whether it is a personal/intimate relationship or an impersonal/public relationship. When we express our love for a romantic partner, resolve a conflict with a family member, respond to a friend's Instagram post, negotiate the price of a car with a salesperson, order a drink from a bartender, chat about

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▲ Communication allows us to participate in social reality.

the weather with a neighbor, or discuss an upcoming test with classmates, we are engaging in interpersonal communication. In all of these examples, the communication is between individuals who share a relationship of some sort. The communication that occurs will further influence and shape those relationships. Although interpersonal communication occurs between any two people who share a relationship, most interpersonal communication scholars focus on our closest relationships, such as those between friends, family, and romantic partners. Despite the fact that interpersonal communication is often described as a distinct context, it is useful to understand that there is an interpersonal dimension to all communication (Miller, 1978; Shepherd, 2001). At its heart, communication always occurs between persons, whether they are part of a group, a public, or a mass media event. Chapter 7, "Interpersonal Communication," is devoted to a deeper look at the communication between people in personal relationships.

Small Group Communication

Small group communication refers to the communication among the members of a small group of people working together to achieve a common goal or purpose. Families, organizations, classrooms, and athletic teams are common settings for small group communication. A pair or dyad has only two members, whereas a group must have at least three. Yet the group must be small enough that each person present makes an impression on the others who are present (Bales, 1950, p. 33). Currently, the nature of small group communication is changing due to new technologies like Internet videoconferencing and virtual spaces. Small groups no longer have to meet in a face-to-face setting or be made up of members who are geographically close to one another. These changes in the characteristics of a small group are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 8, "Small Group and Team Communication."

Public Communication

Public communication refers to situations in which a person delivers a message to an audience. Rather than treating the audience as a collection of separate people, the speaker addresses the audience as a public, or a body unified by some common interest. One of the major jobs of a public speaker is to create a sense of unity and solidarity in a large and diverse group of people. The U.S. president's State of the Union address to Congress, a CEO's speech to stockholders, a student's oral presentation to classmates, a professor's lecture to a crowded hall, and a community activist's speech about a local issue are all forms of public communication, or public speaking. Public communication is characteristically formal, structured, and purpose-driven. It is less reciprocal than many other contexts of communication because the audience has limited opportunities for providing feedback.

However, advances in communication technology are expanding the opportunities for audience participation through online comments, listener rating systems, audience

response systems (like classroom "clickers"), and personal blogs. Today's speakers can utilize the powers of communication technologies to share their messages with wider audiences through video sharing in sites like YouTube or Vimeo. Chapters 11 through 15 focus on how to effectively prepare and deliver public presentations in the Communication Age. In those chapters, we discuss ways in which you can use technology to reach a wider audience and how to adapt your message to these forms of technology.

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Mass Communication

Mass communication refers to messages transmitted by electronic and print media to large audiences that are distant and undifferentiated. In other words, these audiences are treated as a mass. TV shows, newspapers, books, webpages, magazines, recorded music, and web videos are all forms of mass communication. Most mass communication involves little interaction between the producer of the message and the audience. For this reason, mass communication has historically been described as one-way in orientation. However, the Internet has allowed mass communication to become far more interactive. Audiences now have the opportunity to provide near-instantaneous feedback through user comments, ratings, and popularity indexes, as well as through open-source programming that allows users to alter or expand existing mass communication messages. For example, Wikipedia.org is an online reference source maintained by millions of largely anonymous writers.

Furthermore, because mass communication is directed to large and diverse audiences, it tends to be less personal than other contexts of communication. To help overcome this limitation, producers of mass communication often focus on the demographics of the audience, or do niche marketing, to help personalize the message. For example, the USA Network's *WWE Raw* is aimed at the demographic group of males aged 18 years and older. *Cosmopolitan* magazine, on the other hand, focuses on appealing to females over age 18 but younger than 30. Advertisers then gain access to their target demographics by purchasing space on programs or pages geared toward their desired consumers.

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▲ How are the mass media you encounter targeted to your demographic?

The Internet has opened opportunities for greater message personalization in mass communication. One of the main ways websites try to attract and keep an audience is through offering content customization. For instance, Zite is a popular application of the Daily Me concept, which is when users personalize their news feeds based on their interests. Likewise, Pandora and Spotify allow you to create a personalized radio station that plays only the music and artists you like. Another way websites seek to gain an audience through personalization is by offering preference information and recommendations. Whether you are informed of the "most e-mailed" news article, the "most viewed" YouTube video, the "most downloaded" iTunes single, or simply that

people who bought Egyptian cotton sheets also bought hypoallergenic pillow cases, you are witnessing the producers of mass communication attempting to personalize their messages to you. Meanwhile, complex computer data-mining operations are using all your online activities—from site visits, to search terminology, to purchase histories, to group memberships—to compile highly specific profiles of you that advertisers can use to customize, or narrowcast, their advertisements to you. In fact, digital media are blurring many of the old lines between mass communication and interpersonal communication.

Masspersonal Communication

Masspersonal communication occurs at the crossroads of interpersonal communication and mass communication. In other words, **masspersonal communication** happens when a person uses a mass communication context for interpersonal communication or when a person uses an interpersonal communication context for mass communication (O'Sullivan & Carr, 2018). Social networking posts are a perfect example of using a mass communication context for interpersonal communication. Primarily, we use posts for building and maintaining relationships. Our messages may convey affection, refer to a shared experience, or comment on the status of the relationship itself. Such messages are personal, but they are also public, being broadcast to all our friends and networks.

Likewise, traditionally interpersonal communication channels are sometimes used for mass communication. Prime examples include computer-generated telephone calls, mass text messages, and e-mail spam. In each of these cases, a medium that was once used primarily for interpersonal communication (phone, messaging service, e-mail account) carries mass messages that are characteristically one-way and impersonal. Such messages can be experienced as irritating (answering the phone only to discover a robotic voice trying to sell you insurance) or even offensive (receiving another e-mail about "male enhancement"). Yet not every use of interpersonal communication contexts for mass communication is unwelcome. Many political supporters of then-candidate Barack Obama, for instance, welcomed his campaign's groundbreaking use of text messaging to announce rally locations and campaign decisions. Obama was the first presidential nominee to unveil his vice-presidential choice by text message and e-mail.

Masspersonal communication seems to increase every year. As more people rely on mobile communication devices for connecting and engaging with others, we are likely to see even more blurring of the traditional contexts of communication.

In Chapter 10, "Communication and New Media," we will further explore mass media messages. But, at this point, let's turn our attention to gaining a deeper understanding of the process of communication by exploring the metaphors through which communication has been explained over the years.

Communication Metaphors

One of the best ways to understand any process is to use a metaphor. This is especially true when you explore a process as complex and important as communication. Metaphors work by comparing one thing to a different, usually more familiar, thing. The power of a metaphor lies in its potential to stimulate new ways of perceiving and talking about things.

Because communication metaphors tend to reflect the assumptions and perspectives of the points in history when they were created, they have evolved through time. Generally, metaphors of communication have become more complex, with greater attention to the many potentials of how communication works and what it can be used to do.

In this section, four metaphors of communication are presented in the order in which they were developed.

AP Photo/Tom Williams

▲ How does this interaction blend communication contexts?

Communication as Transmission

One of the earliest models of communication was based on the workings of the telephone and radio (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). In this model, communication involves a linear, one-way transfer of information (see Figure 1.1). A source sends a message through a channel or a medium to a receiver in an environment of noise that serves as interference with effective transmission of a message.

Viewing communication as transmission allows us to see how communication can relay information from one person to another through a channel. In addition, by including noise as a factor, this metaphor draws our attention to the things that may get in the way of our attempts to communicate. However, the **transmission metaphor** portrays the receiver of a message as passive, even though communication is a two-way street. The interaction metaphor was created to address this flaw.

Communication as Interaction

The **interaction metaphor** of communication (Schramm, 1954) describes communication as a two-way process of reciprocal action. It takes the basic elements of the transmission metaphor and adds two important components: feedback and fields of experience (see Animation 1.1). **Feedback** refers to a receiver's response to a sender's message. Because of feedback, senders may adapt their messages in real time to increase the chances of communication success. In addition, because each sender and receiver is a unique person, this model includes **fields of experience**, which refer to the attitudes, perceptions, and backgrounds each of us brings to communication. However, like the transmission model before it, the interaction model still treats senders and receivers as fundamentally separate and disconnected.

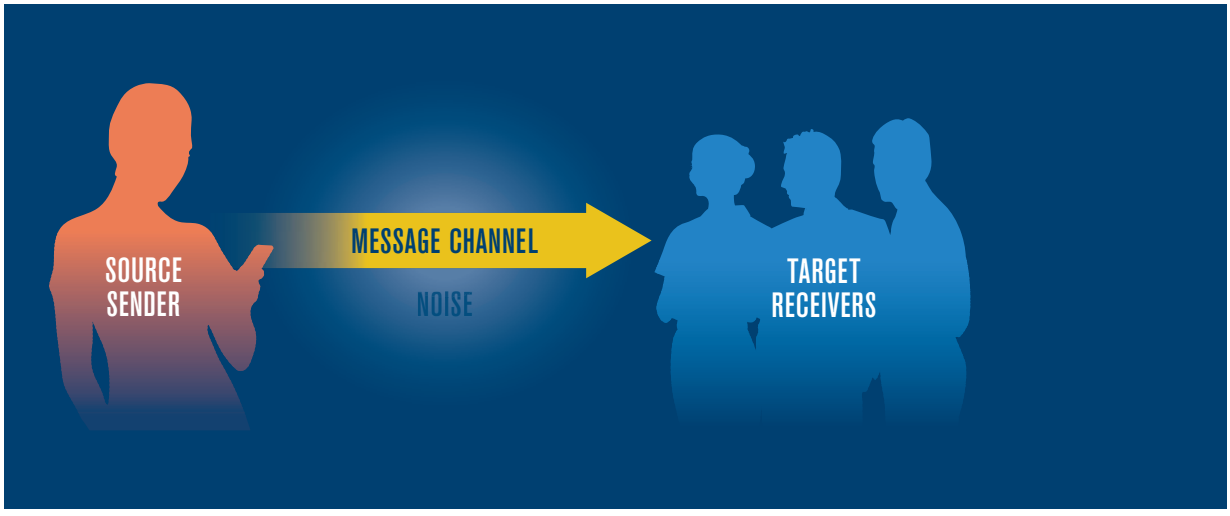
Video 1.2: The Interaction Model of Communication

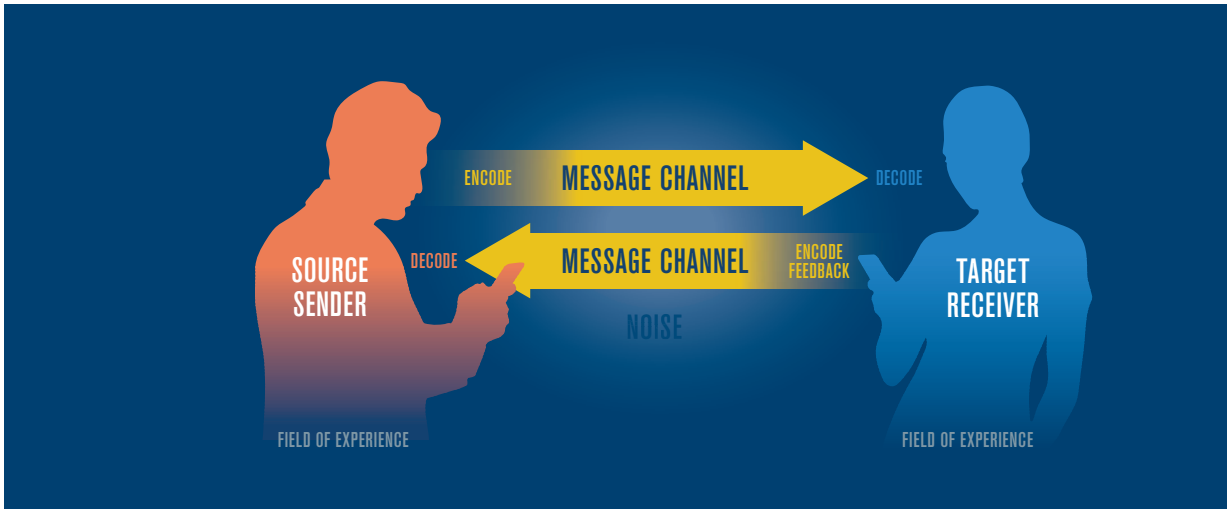
Communication as Transaction

The **transaction metaphor** of communication was introduced to acknowledge that people are connected through communication, and that they accomplish something in communication beyond (*trans-*) merely relaying messages back and forth (see Animation 1.2). The transaction metaphor invites us to do away with the notion of a separate sender and a separate receiver. Instead, participants are simultaneous sender–receivers linked in relationship to one another. In communication, we not only exchange messages but also impact the people involved. Participants and their relationships emerge changed from communication, in ways large and small.

▼ FIGURE 1.1

Transmission Model of Communication





Video 1.3: The Transaction Model and the Social Construction Model of Communication

One of the reasons why communication impacts its participants is that every message has two dimensions: content and relationship (Watzlavick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). The content of a message refers to its surface-level meaning, or what is said. The relationship dimension of a message refers to how a message is said, which always conveys something about the current relationship between participants and shapes their future relationship.

Communication as Social Construction

The **social construction metaphor** of communication further expands upon the idea that communication influences communicators. Specifically, the social construction model stresses the ways communication shapes and creates the larger social realities in which we operate (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Craig, 1999). Participants work together, knowingly or unknowingly, to shape what counts as factual, acceptable, good,

truthful, real, and possible. The social construction model assumes that we become who we are in relation to others through communication, and that the social world becomes what it is chiefly through the process of communication.

Bettmann/Getty Images

▲ How did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. change social reality with his "I Have a Dream" speech?

Metaphors Matter

Each metaphor above builds upon the strengths of the previous metaphor to go one step further toward explaining the power of communication. First, communication was described as the mere transfer of information. Then, understandings of communication were expanded to appreciate the receiver's role in the process. Next, ideas about communication were broadened to understand its impact on participants in a communication transaction. Finally, descriptions of communication were enlarged to acknowledge its role in the creation of social reality. Thus, the evolution of the metaphors represents an unfolding of communication potential.

It is important to note that no one metaphor is the final word on the communication process, but each may be more or less useful for describing certain communication episodes or contexts. For instance, the transmission metaphor may be a useful guide for drafting an informational corporate e-mail but not for engaging in family conflict, which could require greater attention to the linkages between communicators and the social realities surrounding their situation. Research demonstrates that people who understand that communication may be used in all three of these ways, and who develop the ability to do so, have an advantage in communication competence (O'Keefe, 1988).

Communication Competence

Communication competence refers to the ability to communicate in a personally effective yet socially appropriate manner. In other words, being a competent communicator requires using messages that strike a delicate balance between pursuing one's own goals and meeting the needs and expectations of others, given the social circumstances. A major objective of this textbook is to provide you with the information and tools you need to strengthen your communication competence in a host of everyday situations. In addition to chapter content that focuses on how to be a competent communicator in a variety of circumstances, each chapter includes features labeled "Communication How-To." These boxes contain practical guidance for achieving communication goals in contexts ranging from interpersonal relationships, to small group encounters, to workplace interactions, to public presentations. You can also use the "Assess Your Communication" features in each chapter to size up your communication strengths and identify areas for personal growth and improvement. To begin, let's take an inventory of how competent you feel communicating in a variety of common settings.

In addition to striving for competence in our communication, it is important to consider whether our communication is ethical. The next section defines and discusses the topic of communication ethics.

ASSESS YOUR COMMUNICATION

SELF-PERCEIVED COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE SCALE (SPCC)

INSTRUCTIONS: Below are 12 situations in which you might need to communicate. People's abilities to communicate effectively vary a lot, and sometimes the same person is more competent to communicate in one situation than in another. Please indicate how competent you believe you are to communicate in each of the situations described below. Indicate in the space provided at the left of each item your estimate of your competence.

0 = Completely Incompetent and 100 = Completely Competent

_____ 1. Present a talk to a group of strangers.

_____ 2. Talk with an acquaintance.

_____ 3. Talk in a large meeting of friends.

_____ 4. Talk in a small group of strangers.

_____ 5. Talk with a friend.

_____ 6. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.

_____ 7. Talk with a stranger.

_____ 8. Present a talk to a group of friends.

_____ 9. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.

_____10. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.

_____11. Talk in a small group of friends.

_____12. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

Scoring: To compute the subscores, add the percentages for the items indicated and divide the total by the number indicated below.

Public	1 + 8 + 12; divide by 3.
Meeting	3 + 6 + 10; divide by 3.
Group	4 + 9 + 11; divide by 3.
Dyad	2 + 5 + 7; divide by 3.
Stranger	1 + 4 + 7 + 10; divide by 4.
Acquaintance	2 + 6 + 9 + 12; divide by 4.
Friend	3 + 5 + 8 + 11; divide by 4.

To compute the total SPCC score, add the subscores for Stranger, Acquaintance, and Friend. Then, divide that total by 3.

Source: McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (2013). *Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC)*. Measurement Instrument Database for the Social Sciences. Retrieved from http://www.midss.org

Communication Ethics

Ethics is a code of conduct based on respect for yourself, others, and your surroundings. Simply, ethics relates to right and wrong conduct. The topic of being an ethical communicator has received a good deal of attention because ethical communication enhances the well-being of individuals and society. As communicators, we must concern ourselves with the ethical responsibilities of living in a democratic society. We must also consider communication ethics in the workplace, the family, the classroom, and the professions, including the legal, medical, and public relations fields. Our increasingly technological, global, and multicultural society requires us to be ever more sensitive to the impact of the words we choose, the images we portray, and the stereotypes we hold.

So, what counts as ethical communication? How do we determine whether or not our communication conduct respects self, others, and surroundings? Communication philosopher and ethicist Jürgen Habermas (1979) maintained that ethical communication is that which promotes autonomy and responsibility. Autonomy refers to individuals' rights to make choices and self-determine, whereas responsibility refers to being accountable for the welfare of others and the consequences of one's actions. Habermas warned of the potential dangers of communication that strips people of free will. Practices like