

Chapter 20: Culture and Community in the Global Age: 20-2b Global Communication  
Book Title: The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History 7th Edition Update, AP® Edition  
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## 20-2b Global Communication

CNN (Cable News Network) expanded its international market after becoming the most-viewed and informative news source during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when it broadcast the coalition aerial assault on Baghdad live. Other 24-hour news broadcasters followed this lead. Some offered fundamentally American viewpoints. Others were independent. Al-Jazeera, based in the Persian Gulf emirate of Qatar, broadcast statements by Osama bin Laden from 2001 onward and offered video footage and interpretation that differed greatly from American coverage of the war in Iraq. Yet during the Arab Spring it gained a reputation for vivid and generally reliable coverage of news events in the Muslim world.

The internet, a linkage of academic, government, and business computers developed by the U.S. Department of Defense in the 1960s, began to transform world culture in the early years of the twenty-first century. Personal computers proliferated in the 1980s, and with the introduction of the easy-to-use graphic interface of the World Wide Web in 1994, the number of internet users skyrocketed. Myriad new companies formed to exploit “e-commerce,” the commercial dimension of the internet, and students were soon spending less time studying conventional books and more exploring the Web for information and entertainment. Blogs, or weblogs, offered a vehicle for anyone in the world to place his or her opinions, experiences, and creative efforts before anyone with access to a computer. E-commerce websites such as Amazon, eBay, or Alibaba became dominant players in the worldwide retail industry, heralding the decline of main-street and mall shopping. Easy access to the internet took a step forward with the establishment of “social media” sites like Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2006). Social media played a key role in mustering the massive popular demonstrations of the Arab Spring, and Donald J. Trump used Twitter as his preferred channel of mass communication during the presidential campaign of 2016.

As had happened so often throughout history, technological developments had unanticipated consequences. Although the new telecommunications and entertainment technologies derived disproportionately from American invention, industry, and cultural creativity, Japan and other East Asian nations took the lead in manufacturing and refining consumer electronic devices. Cellular mobile phones became increasingly used for taking and transmitting pictures and connecting to the internet. Non-Western countries that had adopted telephones late and had limited networks of copper wire benefited most from the improved communication. In 2012 the United States ranked 114th in per capita cellular phone use, sandwiched between the Congo Republic and the Dominican Republic. Qatar topped the list as the country with the highest per capita use.

## Japanese Comic Books

After World War II comic magazines emerged as a major form of publication and a distinctive product of culture in Japan. Different series are directed to different age and gender groups. Issued weekly and running to some three hundred pages in black and white, the most popular magazines sell as many copies as do major newsmagazines in the United States.



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