

# MEDIA EFFECTS

HOW MASS MEDIA INFLUENCE INDIVIDUALS  
AND SOCIETY

**MANY MASS MEDIA CAN INFLUENCE PEOPLE  
INCLUDING TELEVISION, RADIO, BOOKS, VIDEO GAMES.**



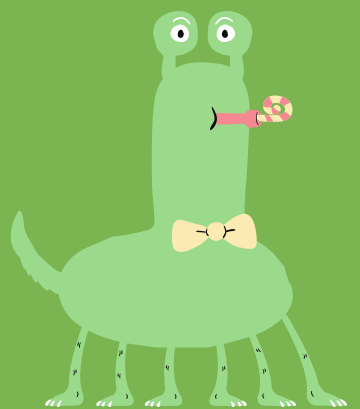
Orson Welles' infamous 1938 radio program: War of the Worlds



## WAR OF THE WORLDS

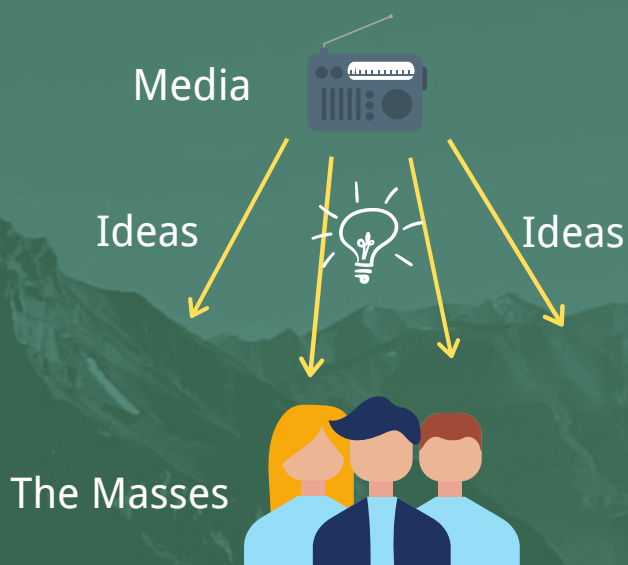
### WHAT HAPPEND IN 1938

Wednesday is the 75th anniversary of Orson Wells' "World War" radio, which announce the Martian start to invade the Earth. After the broadcast, millions of Americans believed that the United States had been invaded by aliens in a very short period and began to panic on an unprecedented scale. (Pooley, 2013)



## HOW DOES BROADCASTING AFFECT PEOPLE?

### MEDIA EFFECTS PARADIGMS



Media directly instills its ideas into people 's minds through its content. However, according to the survey, only about 2% of people listened to the radio in 1938. Most of the others were listening to other programs or not listening at all. So why did it cause a large-scale panic overblown?

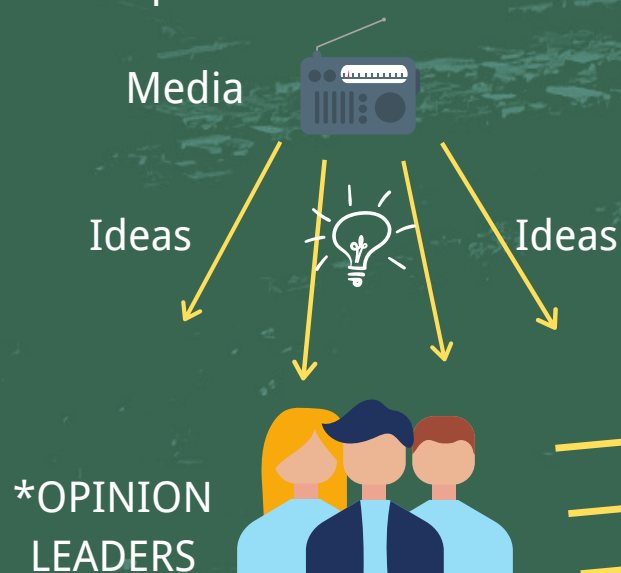
## Why Mass Panic Overblown?

1. Reliance on the media
2. Non-scientific estimations of the audience
3. Anxieties about the new medium



## How "Media effect" influence people

two-step flow model of communication



\*Opinion leaders are usually not celebrities or influential people in society. People tend to believe more in familiar people around them, especially their relatives or friends. Opinion leaders will not be a fixed person and will often change with the subject.



# Four areas of research

WHO says WHAT to WHOM with WHAT EFFECT

Media effects can also divide into four components:

- 1. Propaganda analysis
- 2. Public opinion research
- 3. Social psychology
- 4. Market research

Here, I will use the example of my brother to explain how media convinced him that there is Santa Claus in the world.



## PROPAGANDA ANALYSIS

“THE CONTROL OF OPINION BY SIGNIFICANT SYMBOLS” (LASSWELL, 1927: 9)



At Christmas, I took my brother to the shopping mall. At that time, there were photos of Santa Claus hanging in front of every store. My brother asked me: Who is this? I told him this is Santa Claus and will come to give you gifts on Christmas Eve. At that time, the streets were full of Santa Claus images, so the sign "Santa Claus" gradually convinced my brother that Santa Claus exists.

## PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN FORMING PUBLIC OPINION(LIPPMANN,1922)

Back home in the evening, my brother asked our parents and me if Santa Claus existed in the world. When I was a child, everyone believed Santa Claus existed, so neither my parents nor myself told my brother that Santa Claus existed. My brother believes that Santa Claus was existed because of us. Going back to the previous opinion leaders' point, here, my parents and I are acting as my brother's opinion leaders. Since my brother fully trusts us, our opinions are also transmitted to him.



## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

GENERAL INFLUENCE X CONTENT X ATTENDANCE = TOTAL INFLUENCE

At night, my brother sits alone in front of the TV and watching cartoons. The story of Santa Claus is broadcast on TV. My brother was very happy watching it. He is looking forward to Santa Claus coming to provide him with gifts at night. Here, the cartoon program played on the TV has gradually changed his point of view. He initially didn't believe in Santa Claus, and now he began to believe it.



## MARKET RESEARCH

ADVERTISEMENT AND PURCHASE DECISION

During Christmas, my brother often watches the advertisements about Christmas sweets on TV. So, when we asked him what kind of gifts he would like to receive for Christmas, he would always choose candy instead of the toy car he enjoyed. Because, in his mind, Christmas should receive "Christmas candy" on TV instead of toy cars. So these advertisements subtly changed my brother's consumption choices, especially during the Christmas period.





# MEDIA EFFECTS

## A SCIENCE OF COMMUNICATION



“Communication, even with the technological sophistication of modern media, remains a human activity - sensuous, infinitely varied, often ambiguous, stubbornly resistant to the kinds of laws found in the physical sciences.” (Czitrom 145)

In most cases, people cannot accurately measure media effects because most of them are difficult to track and ambiguous; communication is not scientifically statistical. Still, media has an impact on the whole society and everyone. They may not force us to make changes like the kidnappers, but the media gradually change us.

## Reference

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