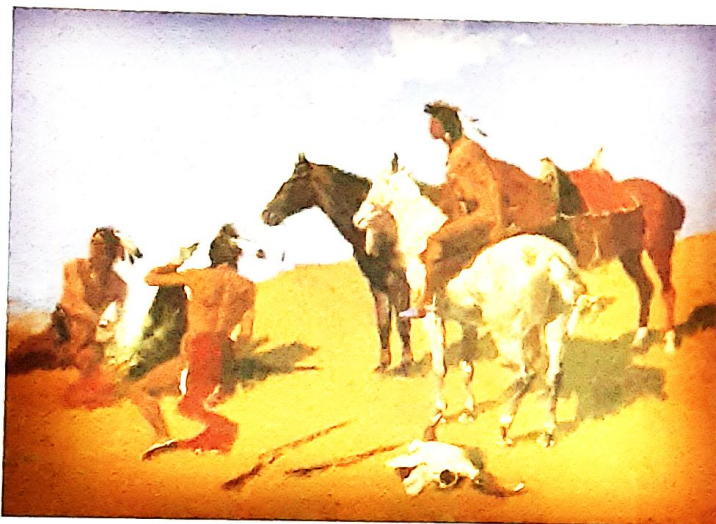# FORMS AND MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

Early societies used a variety of interesting forms of communication. These included:

- facial expressions and gestures
- smoke signals
- sounds from drums, bells, rattles, etc.
- messengers on foot
- messengers on horseback (the Pony Express of the USA)

The main obstacles to these systems of communication were time and distance limitations.

PRINTING PRESS

A major step in the development of communication was the invention of the printing press in the 1450's. This facilitated written communication. The technology was improved considerably through the centuries. Today, with the introduction of computer-aided technology, thousands of newspapers, books and pamphlets can be made available overnight.

Smoke signals as a medium of communication

An early printing press

A Pony Express rider
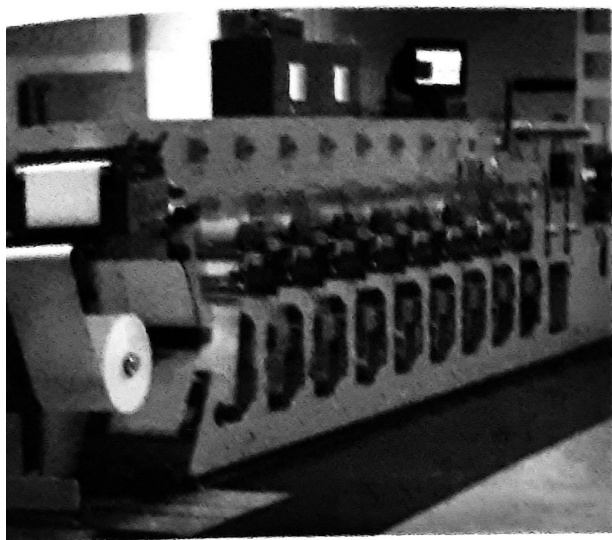
odern day printing press

For convenience, post boxes are placed at different locations for the mailing of letters.

POSTAL SYSTEM

The postal system had its beginnings in the y Express in the USA. Under this system, mail carried by messengers on horseback. Offices inns were set up along the routes to allow rs to rest and change horses. The places along routes were marked by special posts, hence development of the name 'Post Office'.

Today, Post Offices are set up throughout length and breadth of the country where ers are brought in to be mailed. To mail letters, mps are bought and attached to the envelopes. st boxes are also placed at different locations the convenience of mailing letters. Post Offices today have introduced courier services which ow for express delivery of mail.
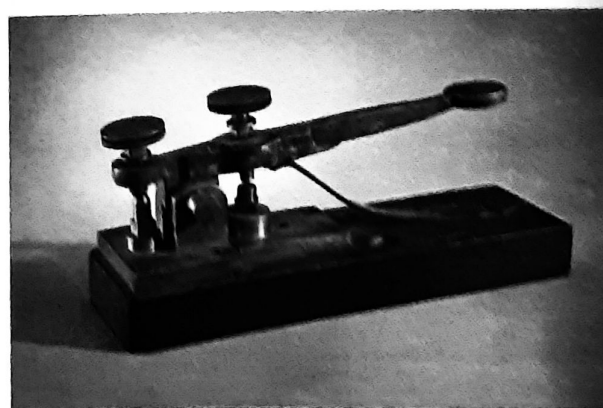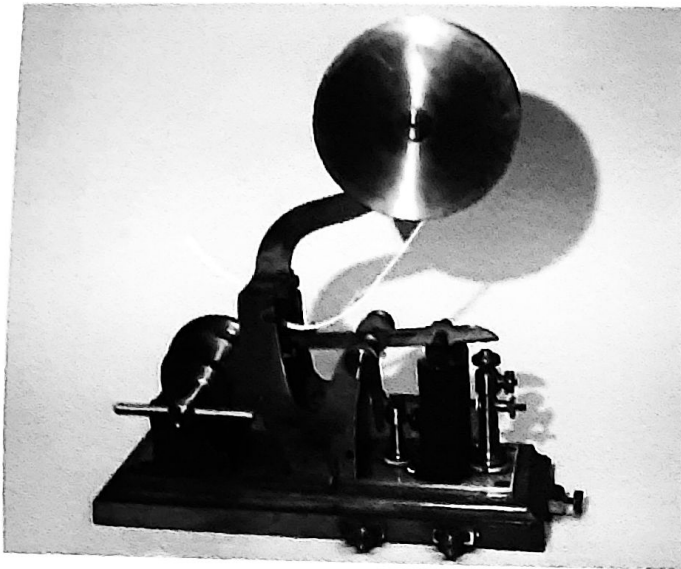
TELEGRAPH

The telegraph was introduced around the 1840's. It was the first invention which facilitate the instantaneous transfer of messages over lo distances. The system consisted of a transmitte and receiver which were connected by wires. T sending mechanism (transmitter), when activat sent electrical impulses through connecting wir to an electromagnet (receiver) which typed the message.

TTPOST van on its way to deliver mail

A Morse code telegraph transmitter

A Morse code telegraph receiver

In the original telegraph, messages were transferred, not by the written language of today, but by a code, known as the Morse code, which was devised by Samuel Morse. This code consisted of dots and dashes which, in their various combinations, represented different letters and numbers.

Improvements to the telegraph resulted in the substitution of the Morse code with a simpler international code, and the introduction of the teletypewriter as the transmitter and the teleprinter as the receiver. In addition to cables, messages could then be sent through radio waves which provided high-speed data transmission which were unaffected by atmospheric conditions. An important development was the telex which allows a subscriber to dial another subscriber and establish two-way communication.

Although many of its functions have been taken over by the radio, telephone, television, cell phones and the Internet, the telegraph is still an important medium of communication. Its importance is based on the following factors:

- Messages can be transmitted instantly
- Atmospheric conditions do not hamper transmission by radio waves
- It provides a reliable means of communication for oceangoing vessels equipped with radio frequencies
- Since the teleprinter types messages, these can be received without an attendant being present

COURIER SERVICE

Corporations and businesses with branches throughout a country usually employ couriers to ensure speedy delivery of documents from one branch to another. This is particularly important for banks, insurance companies and law firms where same-day closure of business deals is required. The safety and security of confidential materials are also guaranteed.

Companies hire couriers for urgent delivery of documents and packages.

Most postal services also provide an inland courier service for the general public for a fee which is substantially higher than postage costs.

With globalization and trade liberalization, the need arises for the speedy transfer of documents and cargo from one part of the world to another. Companies such as FedEx and DHL have been formed to meet these challenges. With a fleet of aircraft for air delivery and motor vehicles for land transport, such companies provide expeditious delivery of cargo, parcels and post from any part of the world to the doorstep of the recipients. With computerized package sorting, consumers can track the delivery of their shipments.

The workings of an international courier service

TELECOMMUNICATION
(COMMUNICATION AT A DISTANCE)

Telephone

The telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876. Initially, messages over the phone were transmitted through wire. Today, fibre optics have replaced wire, thereby improving the efficiency and quality of the service.

The telephone facilitates two-way communication throughout the world within seconds; the distance and time barriers have been broken. Modern facilities provided through the phone include 'call waiting', 'caller ID', and 'voice-mail' services. A person who telephones the airport for flight data can receive the information through an answering machine.

Large business organizations have established internal telephone networks which facilitate instant communication among departments.

A PBX (private branch exchange) phone system. It is a private telephone network used within a company or organization.

Radio

The radio, which facilitates one-way communication, was invented at the beginning of the 20th century. The Citizen's Band, however, allows two-way communication. The police service uses two-way radio to communicate in its fight against crime.

Mobile 2-way radio

Television

Television came into widespread use around the 1950's. An innovation which television introduced was the transmission of visual images together with sound.

The invention of the communication satellite around the 1960's greatly improved the quality, quantity and speed of messages through the telephone and television.

The Impact Of Television – Pros And Cons

There are conflicting views with respect to the influence which television, as a medium of communication, has on young people. Some hold on to the idea that television viewing has influenced young people positively, while others

*Is viewing of TV by children good or bad?*

- Information is another important service which television provides. We are kept informed of national, regional and international events through news broadcasts. Information and warnings on hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters are brought almost instantly to our attention. Advertisements carried on television inform the population of the availability of goods and services which enable consumers to make choices and decisions within the comfort of their homes. Talk-shows and guest speakers provide information on health issues such as AIDS, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, rest, exercise and stress management.

Finally, television services the viewing public by providing entertainment. Movies, cartoons, songs, beauty pageants and sporting events are viewed by many because of the recreational benefits which they provide.

Several factors account for the television ng a powerful medium of communication. The

encourage anti-social behaviour, esp
young people. Concerned parents sh
monitor the programmes viewed by t
Serious consideration should also be
content matter in programmes where
sexual activity are projected. Failure
lead children to reject the traditional
spiritual values of Caribbean families
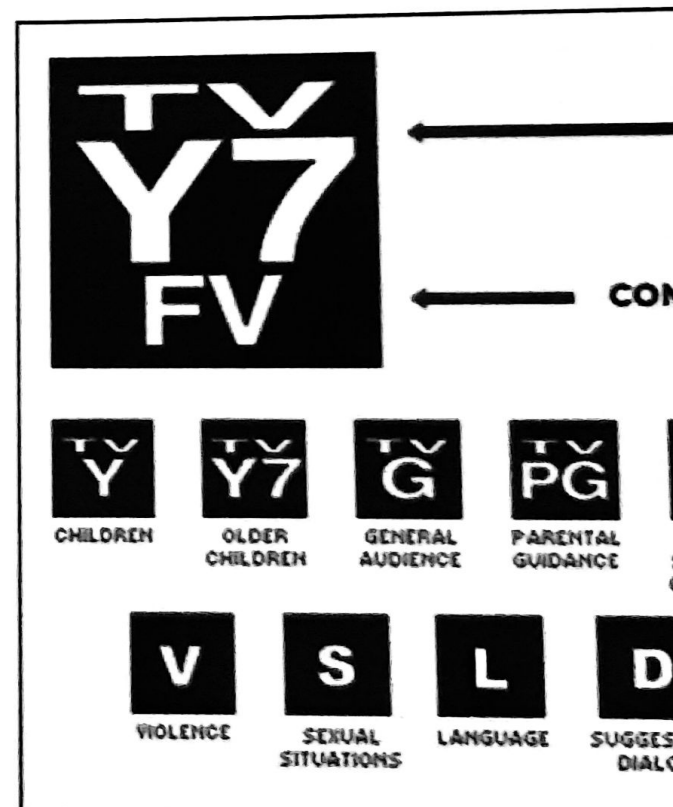
Ratings for the content of TV sho

LATEST INVENTIONS IN COMMUNICATION
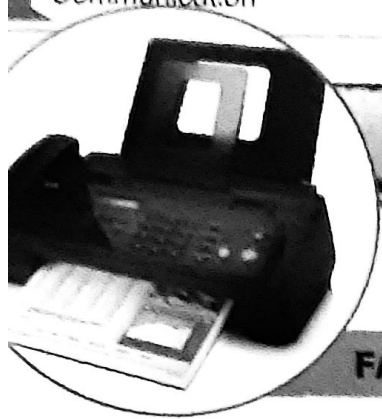
FACSIMILE

A facsimile is an exact copy of a written or printed document. It is called a fax and can be sent from one location to another using a fax machine. A fax machine has a number similar to a telephone number. When a document is sent through a fax machine, a copy is made by the sending fax machine which is transmitted over the telephone network. On the other end, the message is printed by the receiving fax machine.

Advantages

- Speed – messages are delivered almost immediately.
- Convenience – messages are printed on the receiving end whether the person to receive it is present or not.
- Efficiency – probability of mail being lost is minimal.

Disadvantages

- Cost – fax machines work in conjunction with a telephone, thus additional cost is incurred to purchase and install a fax machine.
- Verification – since fax machines transmit a photocopy of original documents, legal documents will need to be verified as a true copy of the original.

INTERNET

The Internet, referred to as the 'information superhighway', has served to link millions of people around the world in business, science and education to exchange information. This modern technology has resulted in transforming the world to a 'global village'.

Services available through the Internet include electronic mail (email) and the World Wide Web (www).

The Internet links millions of people around the world.

Electronic Mail

Electronic mail (email) refers to the communication sent from one computer to another through the Internet.

Email communication is similar to postal communication in that each user has an email address instead of a postal address.

Example:

brooks.international@tstt.net.tt

Name of individual or business

Internet Serivce Provider

Country of Indentification
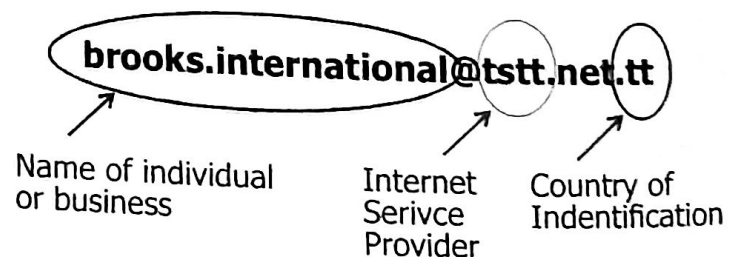
A message sent to an email address leaves the sender's computer and is transported over the telephone network. When the receiver logs on to his Internet service and accesses his 'mailbox', the message is transferred to the receiver's computer.

Advantages

- Speed - messages are delivered almost immediately.
- Convenience – messages are sent from or received at home or workplace.
- Efficiency – probability of mail being lost is minimal.
- Cost effectiveness – less costly to send a message through email than the post.

Disadvantages

- Both sender and receiver must possess a computer linked to the telephone.
- Risk of computer viruses.
- Mail may be intercepted by 'computer hacking'.
- Breakdown in electricity/telephone services can disrupt communication.

The World Wide Web

Business organizations, individuals and institutions create web pages (called websites) on which information is stored. This information can be accessed and retrieved by anyone in any part of the world with just the click of a mouse on the computer. Firms market their products throughout the world using this medium. Trading which takes place through this medium of the Internet is referred to as electronic commerce (e-commerce). This type of trade not only links business organizations, but also individuals to business organizations. Thus, for example, an individual anywhere in the Caribbean can stay at home and purchase a used car directly from a dealer in Japan.

EFFECTS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY (EMAIL, WWW) ON COMMUNICATION

- facilitate access to goods, services and information locally, regionally and internationally;
- widespread knowledge of goods and services allows consumers to purchase from the cheapest source;
- payment for purchases can be done through email by using a credit card number;
- consumers may have the propensity to over-spend;
- paedophiles and others prey on vulnerable individuals;
- pornography may be illegally transmitted throught these media.

Some search engines for navigating the World Wide Web

1. Identify three major technological developments which have facilitated various systems of communication.
2. Compare the post and the telephone as systems of communication.
3. Compare the radio and the television as communication media.
4. List three of the latest inventions in communication.
5. Identify the forms of modern communication which facilitate consumer transactions.
6. Explain how the Internet has led to the world being described as a 'global village'.

SYSTEMS USED TO PREVENT 'COMPUTER HACKING'

In this electronic age, a wealth of information can be stored in and accessed through computers. Computers improve the availability of information, but the concern which arises is how to protect the information from being retrieved by unauthorized individuals.

A technique known as 'encryption' has been introduced. This technique is used to convert data into a form which cannot be understood or recognized. In order to access this encrypted information, it must first be translated or converted to its original form. This process is called 'decryption'.

Many encryption and decryption methods are available today. This involves the use of simple formulae, complex programs or secret keys which must be known by an individual to access information.

- Doctors use encryption to preserve the confidentiality of patients' records.
- Encryption ensures that emails that are intercepted cannot be interpreted.
- Banks also use it to prevent tampering wit and 'computer hacking' of financial recorc

USES OF ENCRYPTION

Encryption is utilized today in the following areas:

- Businesses use it to prevent industrial espionage by their competitors.
- Governments use it to prevent espionage of policies relating to national defence.
- The police service uses it to prevent access to and tampering of criminal records of convicts.
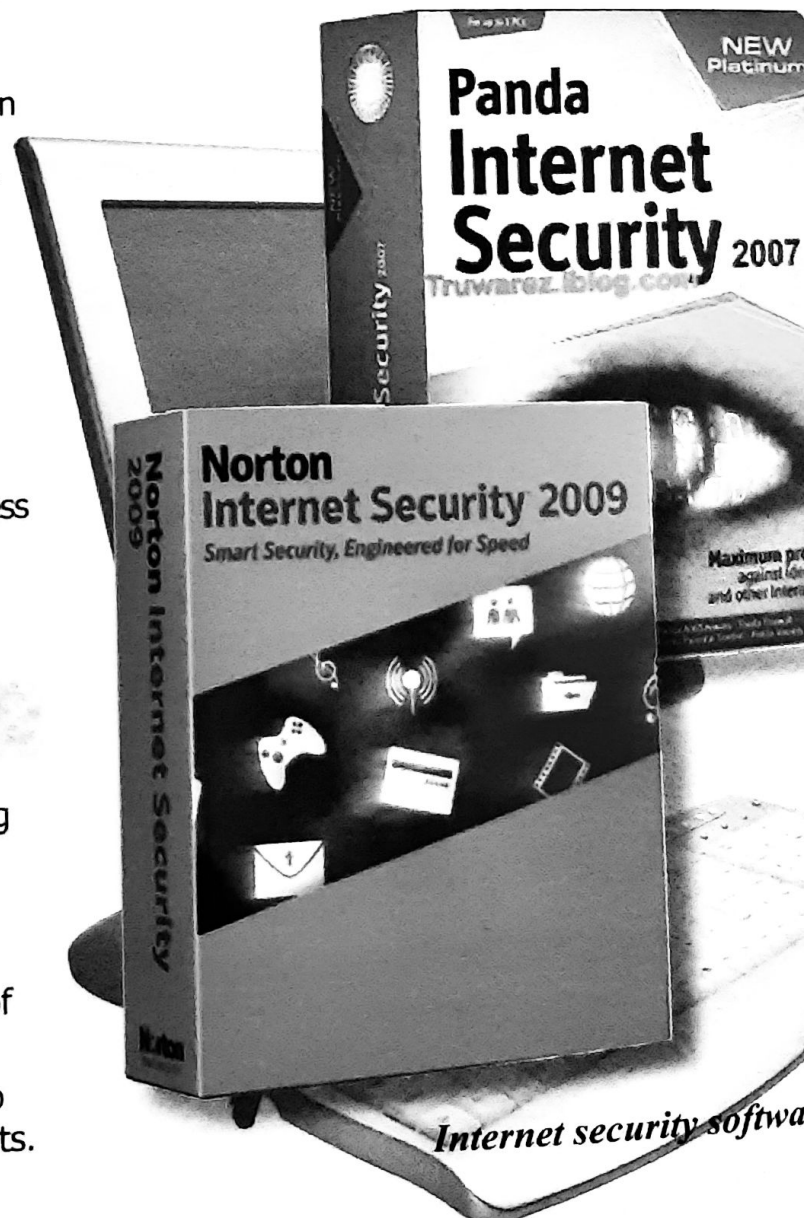
Internet security softwa

CELL PHONES

A cellular phone is a mobile, electronic, wireless device which allows two-way communication between individuals. It facilitates the transfer of voice or written data, as well as pictures, through radio signals.

Mobile phones transmit and receive radio signals from cell sites which are equipped with microwave antennas. When a cell phone is used, the data is relayed to the radio transmitters of cell sites which transfer the message to the receiver. The wireless and landline telephone networks are usually connected so that communication between users of any system is facilitated.

Advantages of the cell phone
Cell phones:
- Are small and light in weight and can therefore be carried on the person which facilitates communication from anywhere at anytime

- Allow for not only voice function, but text messaging, email, Internet access, playing of games, video recording and taking of photographs

- Provide consumers with a choice of features to suit their peculiar needs

- Are relatively cheap

- Allow for the delivery (recording) of message through text messaging and voice mail functions even if the receiver's cell phone is switched off.

Disadvantages of the cell phone.
- Exposure to electromagnetic waves given of by cell sites and cell phone usage can be harmful to humans.

- Cell phone use while driving interferes with the driver's concentration, thereby increasing the probability of accidents. A law has been enacted to deal with this.

- Some people misuse the technology by relaying pornographic materials.

Texting on a cell phone

1. Research the health hazards of cell phone use.
2. Give reasons for and against students being allowed to have cell phones at schools.
3. What rules should be instituted in schools where students are allowed entry with cell phones?
4. Should a ban be placed on the use of cell phones while driving?
5. Provide guidelines for the use of cell phones while driving.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE FORMS AND MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

The reasons why people communicate with each other are numerous. These include:
- To convey feelings (love, happiness, sadness, anger etc.)

- To transfer information (news, births, deaths sales etc.)
- To explain experiences (how the day was spent etc.)

THE MASS MEDIA

Most Caribbean countries have enshrined in their constitutions certain freedoms – freedom of the press, freedom of speech and expression. These rights and freedoms have resulted in the existence of a vibrant and effective mass media.

The mass media functions as agents of:

- **INFORMATION** (news, weather, disaster warnings, advertisements etc.)
- **EDUCATION** on a variety of topics
- **ENTERTAINMENT** (films, songs, comic strips etc.)
- **INFLUENCE** (shaping of attitudes, values and behaviour patterns).

Examine the following article which appeared in the Trinidad Guardian of 28th February 2001. Various functions of the mass media are brought out in this extract.
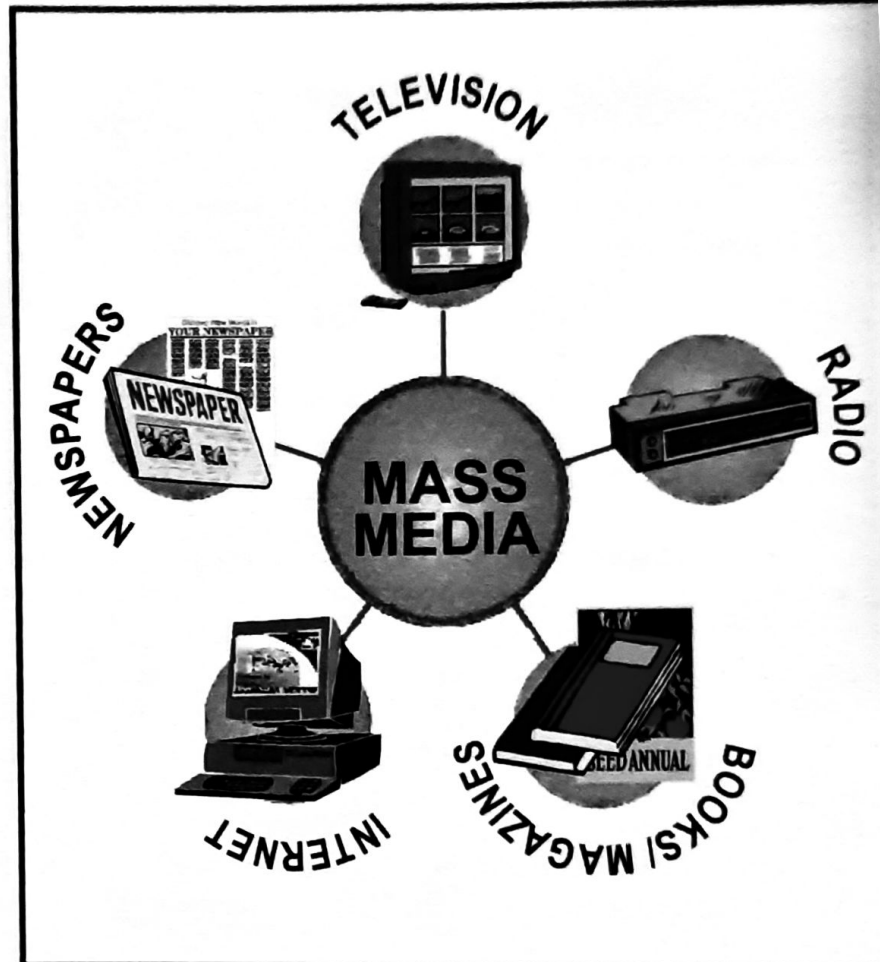
Globalisation can produce negative or positve effects

GLOBALIZATION is the process that:
- Facilitates interdependence of nations
- Removes trade barriers among states .
- Connects the markets across the world into one large borderless zone.
- Represents the free trade of goods among countries.

To many, the effects of globalization can be either negative or positive, both for the economy and the country as a whole.

The youths in our country are influenced by globalization in a number of ways, via:
- Music
- Television and cable/ Direct TV
- Fads and fashion
- Food, including snacks
- Using the Internet

In order for the youth of this nation to reap the full benefits of globalization, they must:
- Seek information on globalization
- Be educated about responsible consumerism.
- Preserve the consumer's right of choice.
- Consume in a sustainable manner, i.e., ensure that what and how they consume do not negatively affect the lives of generations to come.
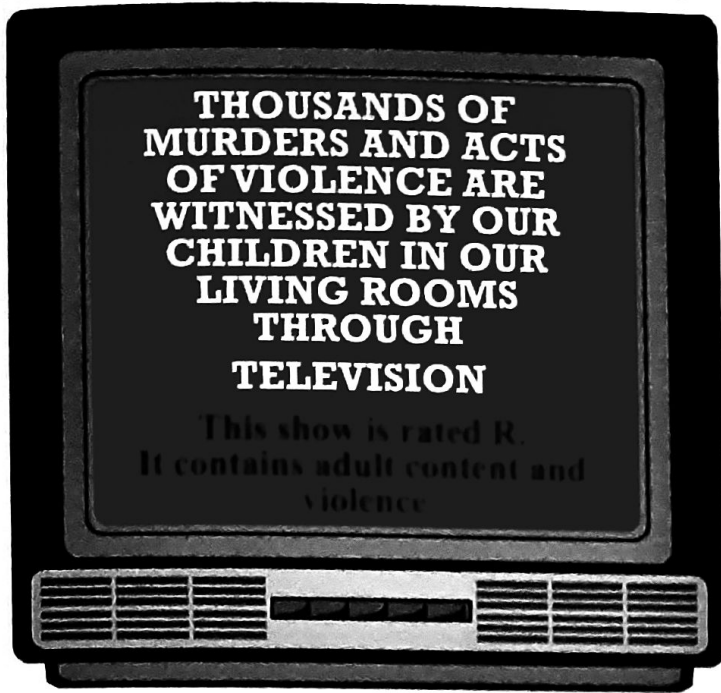- Be aware of powerful advertising campaigns.
- Examine dominant foreign cultures and traditions and strive to preserve and maintain certain aspects of their own.

Globalization has thus far provided many career opportunities for the youth population in Trinidad and Tobago. Some of these areas include:
- Computer and technology
- Sports

THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCES OF TELEVISION

THOUSANDS OF MURDERS AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE ARE WITNESSED BY OUR CHILDREN IN OUR LIVING ROOMS THROUGH TELEVISION

This show is rated R. It contains adult content and violence

Research has revealed that there are negative influences which television has brought into our homes. These include:

- acts of violence, crime and murder which encourage anti-social behaviour especially among young impressionable minds;
- verbal communication among family members which has dwindled since the advent of TV;
- critical thinking skills are sublimated since many TV shows do not entertain questions;
- television viewing is addictive;
- children who view little television make better readers than those addicted to TV;
- persuasive advertising on television creates a desire for goods and services that are not necessarily important.

NEWSPAPERS

With respect to newspapers, there are also issues which have been raised. These are summarized as follows:

1. "........does freedom of the press include the right to publish lies, half-truths and innuedos?" Prime Minister of T & T – March 1996.

2. "Freedom of the press is not freedom to offend. The press at times infringes the rights of citizens."

3. "The pen is mightier than the sword." Public information can therefore tear at the heart of democracy and incite citizens to rebel against the established order.

Examine the following article, then answer the questions which follow.

MAGISTRATE SUES NEWSPAPE[R] FOR LIBEL

A Magistrate has sued a daily newspaper for libel. The Magistrate is claiming damages and costs for libel as allegedly contained in an article published by the newspaper which accused him of bias and inequality of treatment against a certain ethnic group who appeared before him as defendants.

In the writ filed, t[he] Magistrate is claimi[ng] that the article inju[red] his reputation, expo[sed] him to public scan[dal] caused him embarr[ass]ment and will affec[t] chances for promot[ion]

The newspaper since published a p[ublic] apology to the m[agis]trate on its front p[age]

1. What is libel?
2. Do you think that newspapers are guilty of that offence? Justify your answer.
3. Offer suggestions to the editor of a newspaper concerning guidelines to be followed by journalist[s] when reporting.
4. Examine the effectiveness of the efforts of newspapers to settle disputes.
5. Identify the contributions of the press in your country.
6. Describe the positive and negative effects of television on society.
7. What suggestions would you offer to parents with regard to television viewing by their children?

EFFECTS OF THE GLOBAL MEDIA

The global media include the Internet, television, books, magazines and newspapers. The Internet, referred to as the 'information superhighway', has served to connect millions of people around the world to exchange information along the lines of business, science and education. The cable networks and satellite technology have facilitated the transmission of television programmes with a heavy foreign content into our very homes. Local artistes suffer at the hands of the foreign competitors whose programmes command a wider viewership. This puts a damper on the creativity of local artistes. Most of the books used at all levels of the education system in the Caribbean have been written and published by foreigners. Our local newspapers carry daily reports of developments and incidences on all aspects of life in foreign countries.

There are many who share the view that the negative influences of the global media have penetrated all aspects of Caribbean culture to an alarming degree.

1. Indicate with a tick, your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
a.	Locals prefer to live, study and work abroad.				
b.	Foreign goods are superior to local goods				
c.	Foreign schools have better facilities to cater for the all-round development of students.				
d.	Foreign music is much more varied and attractive than local music.				
e.	Locals are more courteous to foreign tourists than to regional tourists.				
f.	Foreign television programmes are more varied and entertaining than local programmes.				
g.	Locals are more knowledgeable about foreign celebrities than about local ones.				
h.	Locals who have migrated pick up a foreign accent within a short period of time.				

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
i. Foreigners have surpassed locals in the development of modern technology.				
j. Foreign television programming is attractive because of the interest generated by violent content.				
k. Video games originate mainly from abroad.				
l. Foreign athletes are superior to local athletes				
m. Foreign movies use Black actors mainly in secondary roles.				
n. Sexual licence and freedom is projected in many foreign TV programmes.				

Having completed the exercise, tally your ticks for each column. Discuss your findings with respect to the impact of the global media on all aspects of Caribbean culture.

2. Debate the following topic:
The prevalence of programmes originating from abroad on the local television network has contributed to violence and promiscuity in the Caribbean."
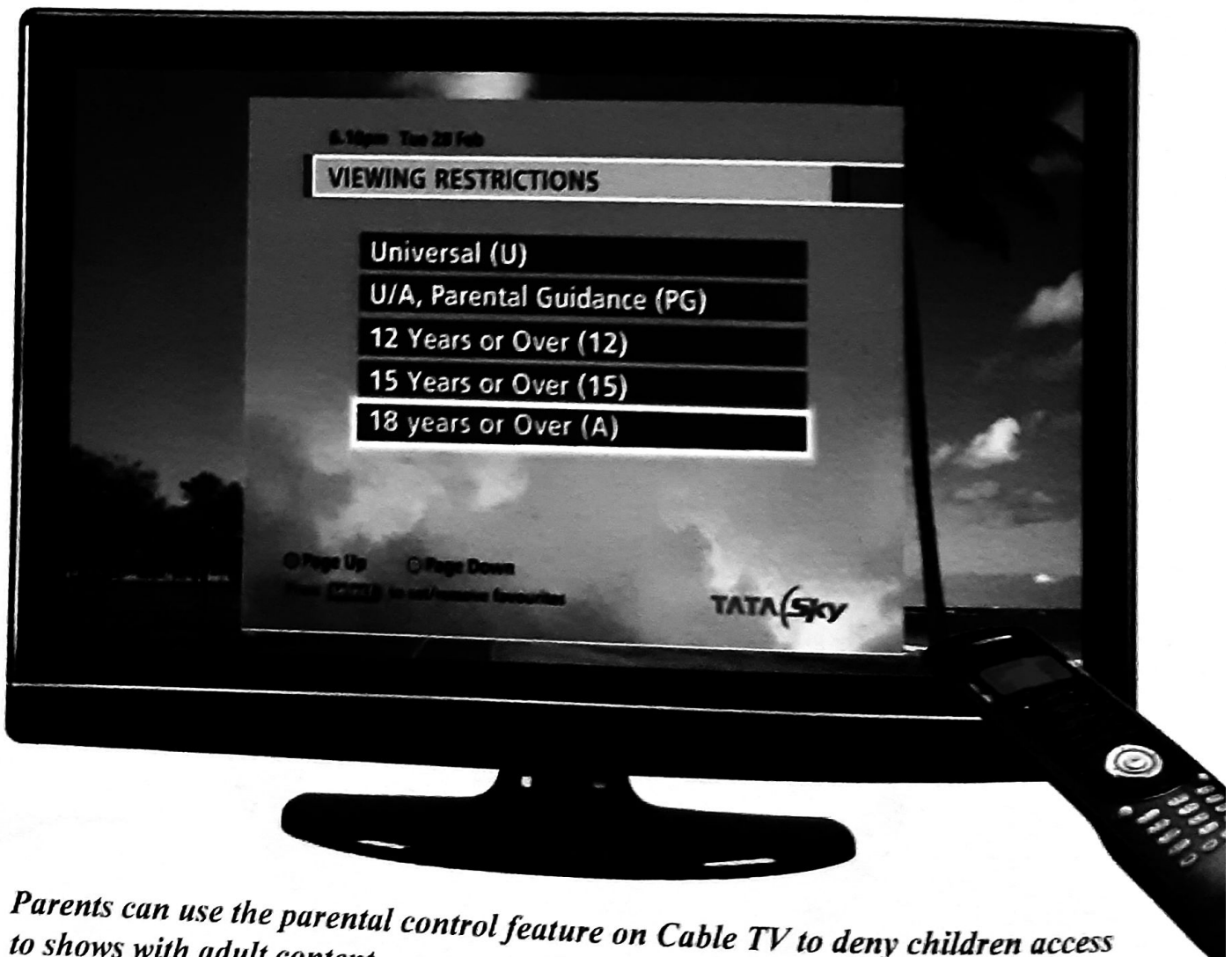
Parental control

- Parents can set rules in the house for television viewing by their children. This may include specific times for viewing when appropriate shows for children are aired. Secondly, children can be encouraged to desist from looking at movies where advice about 'violence', 'nudity', 'sexual content', 'adult language', or 'parental guidance' precede the start of the shows. Thirdly, parents can lock questionable channels so that children are denied access to them.

- Parents can get children involved in entertaining hobbies such as dance, music, drama and sports.

- Getting children involved in religion and spirituality from an early age will give them the strength to be good, do good and see good at all times.

Government controls

Governments can:

- Educate citizens on the negative influences of violence and sexual content on attitudes and values of young impressionable minds.

- Dictate that shows with adult content be aired only late at nights

- Limit the number of channels providing programmes with violence and sexual contents

- Pass legislation requiring that specific hours be dedicated to programmes of an educational nature

- Impose high licensing fees for foreign providers of television services (telecommunication).

Parents can use the parental control feature on Cable TV to deny children access to shows with adult content.

REGULATORY PRACTICES

The power of the press was identified earlier. In order to guarantee freedom of the press and at the same time preserve the rights of citizens, a number of regulatory practices are imposed. These include:

(1) Licensing
Radio and television broadcasting is prohibited unless a licence is obtained from the telecommunications authority in a country.

(2) Editing
Newspaper, television and radio releases are first edited to ensure true, honest and unbiased reporting. This is referred to as 'self-censorship'.

(3) Code of ethics
Media organizations such as the Press Association of Jamaica have established a Code of Ethics which governs the duties and functions of the media. Such a Code of Ethics states that journalists and newspapers shall in the discharge of their duties:

- respect the fundamental human and social rights of members of society
- act in good faith and fairness in news reports
- report and promote activities which foster national unity, harmony and economic and social progress of the society

- avoid publication of issues which are likely to promote riots and civil disorder
- ensure that information published is based on facts.
- rectify any inaccurate reporting by prominent publication
- refrain from publishing materials which are obscene.
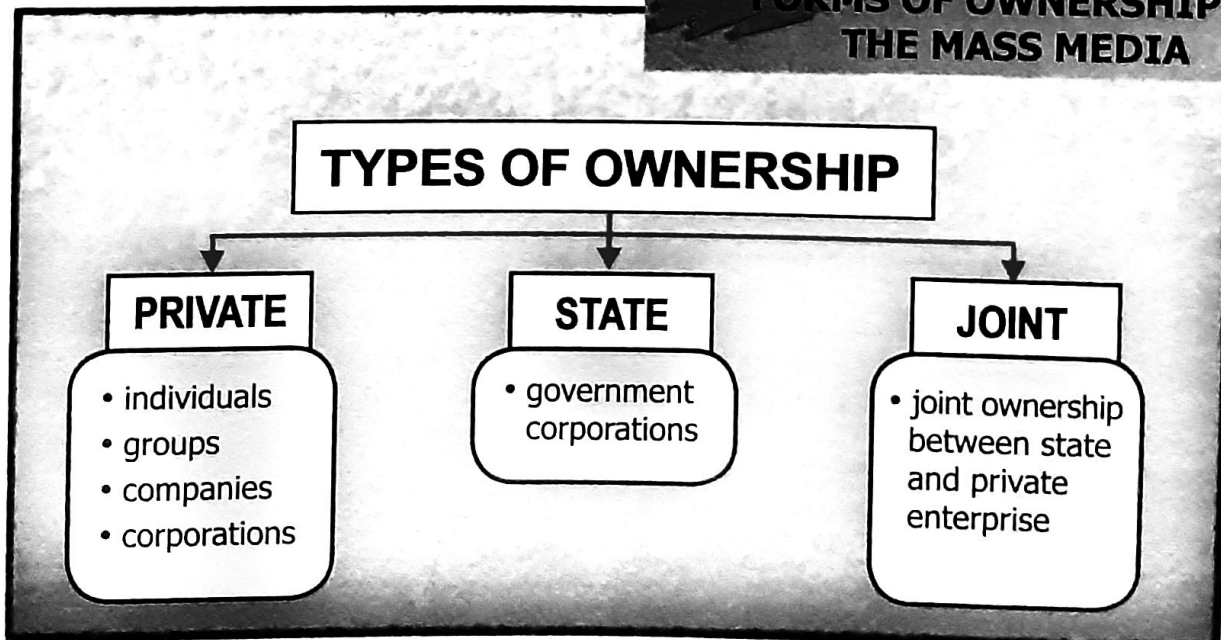
(4) Censorship
Censorship refers to the deletion of whole or parts of a report, play, film, book, letter or news on grounds of immorality or threat to security.

Most Caribbean governments allow for the operation of Censorship Boards. These Boards comprise members representing different occupations and interests – film-makers, journalists, psychologists, and individuals representing religious and educational interests, among others.

With respect to the censorship of films, the criteria used are: language, violence, nudity, sexual activity, horror and treatment of subject matter. After viewing a film, the censors determine a rating indicating the appropriate viewing audience. For example:

- parental guidance (PG)
- restricted (R)
- family
- adult accompaniment

FORMS OF OWNERSHIP OF THE MASS MEDIA

TYPES OF OWNERSHIP

PRIVATE
- individuals
- groups
- companies
- corporations

STATE
- government corporations

JOINT
- joint ownership between state and private enterprise

In the Caribbean, as elsewhere, the mass media is very influential in shaping attitudes, behaviour and perceptions, as well as a sense of patriotism. The form of ownership determines the types of attitudes, behaviour and perceptions which are projected based on:

- choice of programmes
- variety of programmes
- quality of reporting/presentation
- access of the voice of the public to the media.

Thus, the media owned by the government or state will portray a different vision from one owned and operated by private individuals.

Trinidad Guardian, a newspaper publishing house, is a private company.

CBC in Barbados is state owned

C Television, in Trinidad and Tobago is state owned

FACTORS IN SUPPORT OF STATE OWNERSHIP

Governments may be more inclined to:

- favour local programmes, thus promoting local culture;

- include mostly positive news, thereby promoting positive behaviour;

- promote shows/programmes of an educational nature including distance education;

- promote patriotism and nation building through their choice of programmes;

- give sufficient coverage to economic and social policies so that they will be easily understood and accepted by the population.

FACTORS AGAINST STATE OWNERSHIP

- Shortcomings and inefficiencies of the government may not be given prominence.

- State control could be used for political propaganda by the government of the day.

- Selective publication and censorship of letters to the editor; a balanced picture of the views of the population on economic, social and political issues may not be presented.

- Victimization of employees of the media who refuse to tow the line of the government.

- It may be argued that state enterprises have a history of bureaucracy, inefficiency and unprofitability.