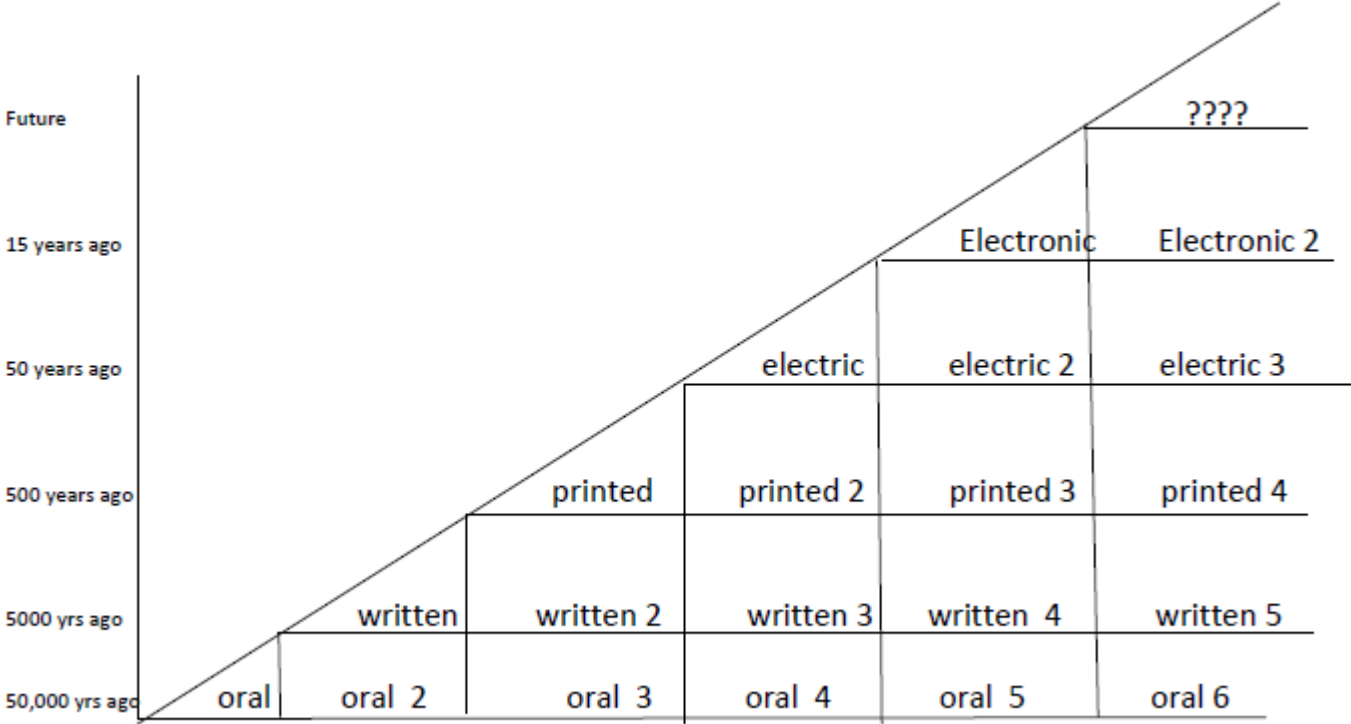


Rozhdestvensky's
theory of culture
and Media Ecology

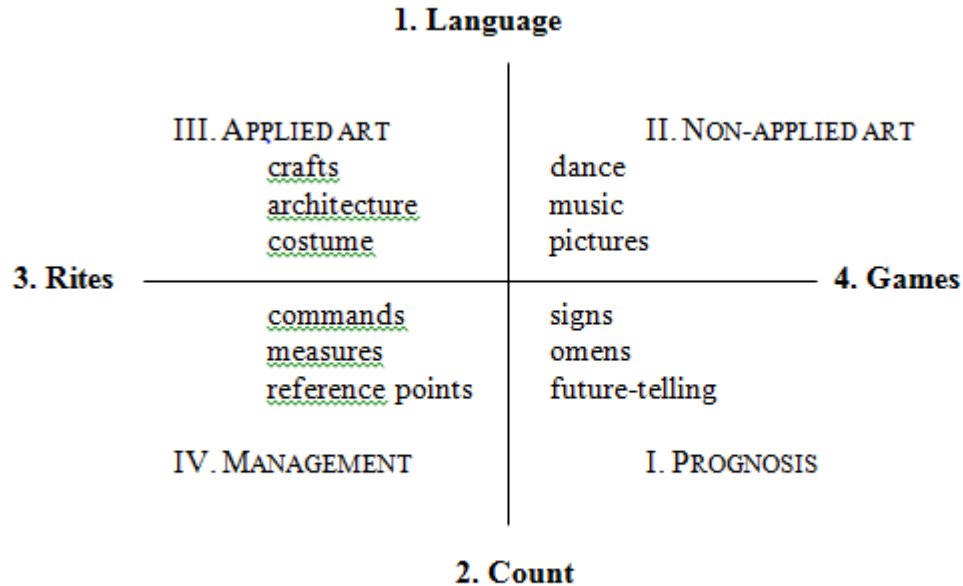
Presentation for the 'Russian Evolution:
Russian Reflections' Conference on the
work of Professor Yuri Rozhdestvensky
21st October 2017

Maria Polski, East-West University, Chicago, IL

Rozhdestvensky, layers of communication media

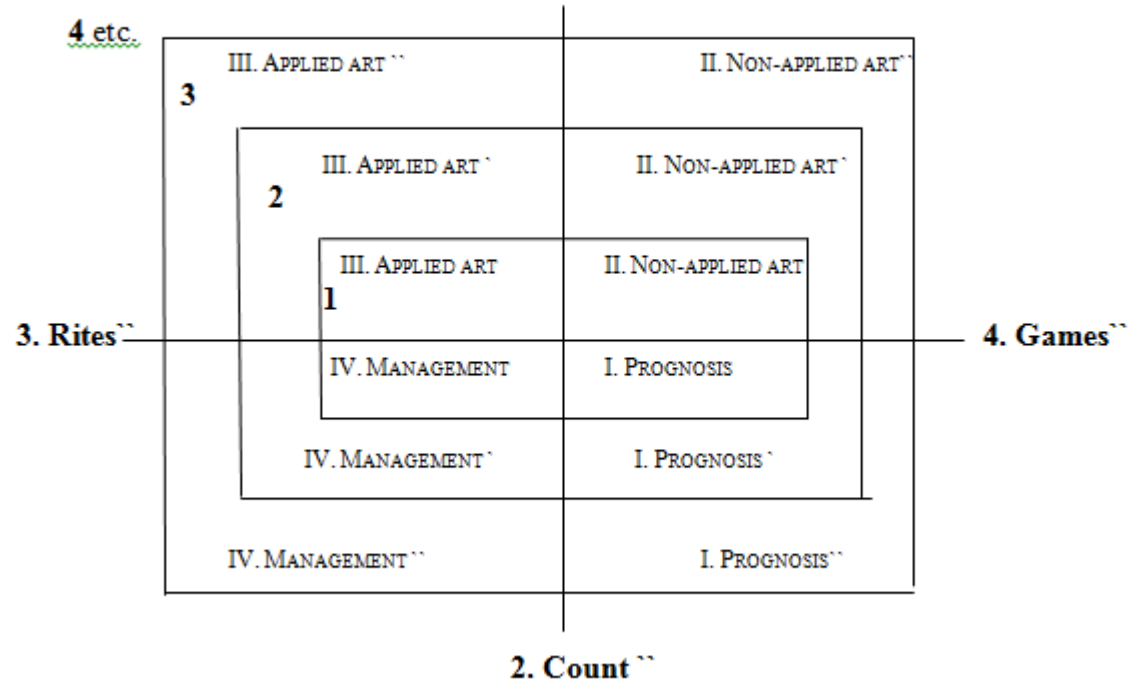


Rozhdestvensky, Semiotic systems in all human societies

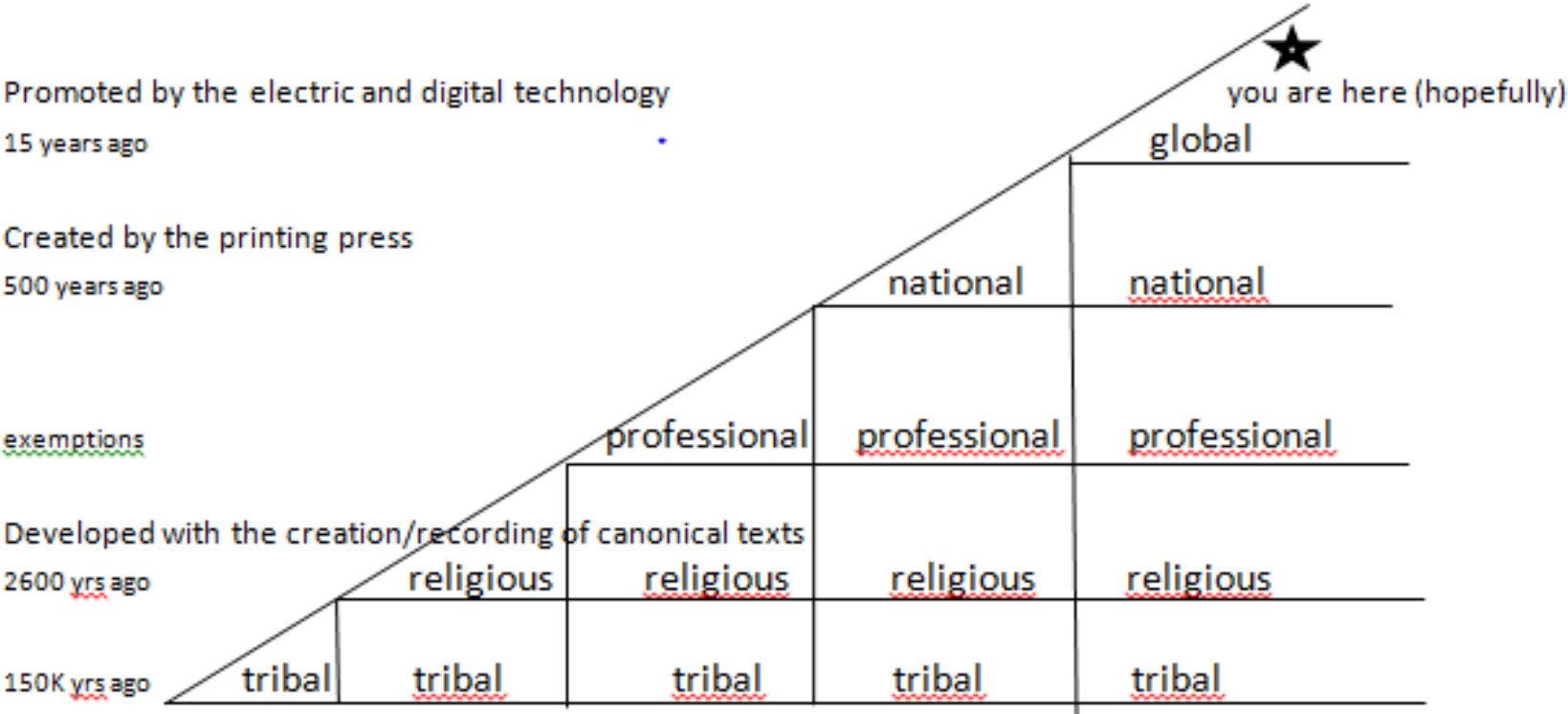


Rozhdestvensky, Semiotic systems growth with technologies

| 1. Language ``

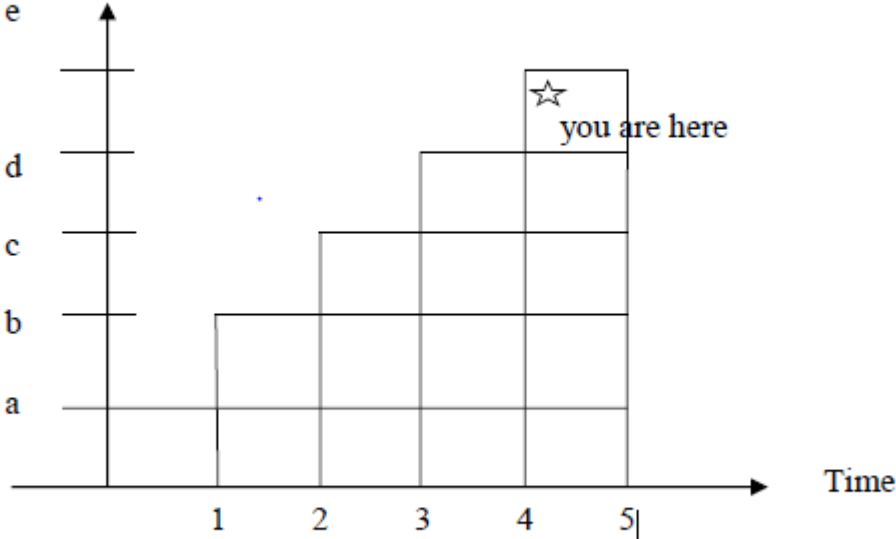


Rozhdestvensky, levels of morality



Rozhdestvensky, the Law of Accumulation and Non-Destruction of Culture

New layers of cultural development do not destroy previous layers



Media Ecology

Harold Innis

Marshall McLuhan

Walter Ong

Jacques Ellul

Neil Postman

It is the study of media environments, the idea that technology and techniques, modes of information and codes of communication play a leading role in human affairs. Media ecology is the Toronto School, and the New York School. It is technological determinism, hard and soft, and technological evolution. It is media logic, medium theory, mediology. It is McLuhan Studies, orality–literacy studies, American cultural studies. It is grammar and rhetoric, semiotics and systems theory, the history and the philosophy of technology. It is the postindustrial and the postmodern, and the preliterate and prehistoric.

—**Lance Strate**, “Understanding MEA,” *In Medias Res* 1 (1), Fall 1999

<http://www.media-ecology.org/>

Jacque Ellul, three milieus

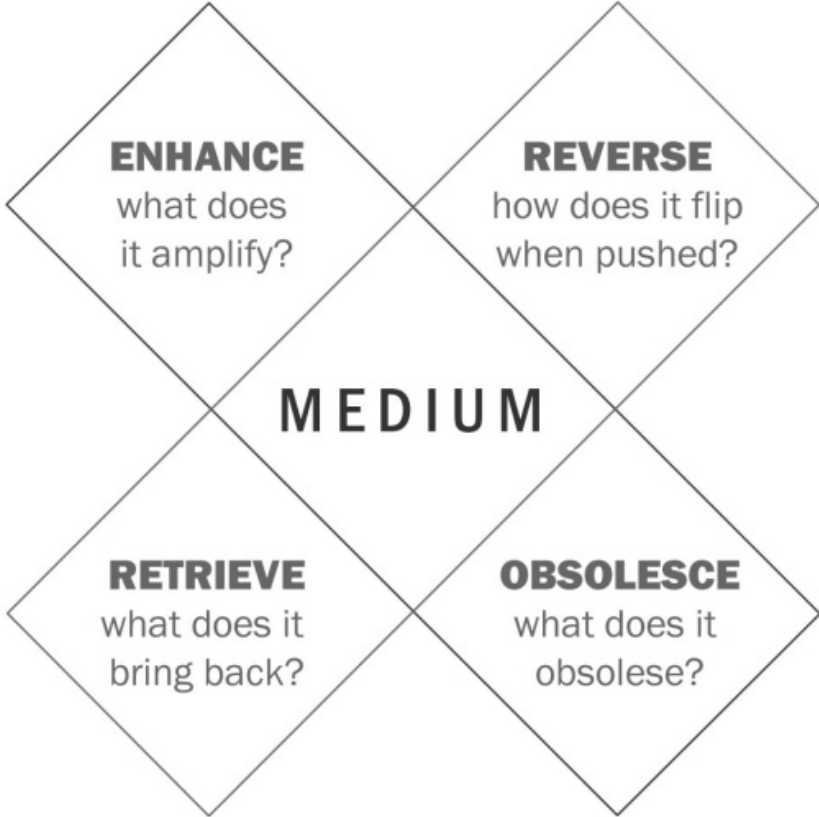
	Milieu 1	Milieu 2	Milieu 3	Milieu 4
External environment (exogenous – adapting the environment to the person)	Nature	Society	Technology	<u>Virtuality</u>
Internal environment – adapting the person to the environment	Ritual and storytelling	Politics and religion	Psychological	Transhumanism
Discourse	Orality	Writing	Print literacy	Electronic
Efficiency dichotomy	Life/death	Good/evil	Rationality/ irrationality	<u>Posthuman/ human</u>
Approximate dates	~11,000- 3000 BCE	~3000BCE -1500 AD	~1500 AD – 2000 AD	~ 2000 AD – present
Transitory moment	Language	Agriculture	Enlightenment	Postmodernism

(Garrison, 2013:67)

Marshall McLuhan



Timothy Kraft, <https://mindbeforeyoumine.com/2010/07/12/mcluhans-tetrad-applied-to-internet/>



Tetrad of Media Effects

McLuhan (1988)

Neil Postman

“Every medium has its bias”

1. What is the problem to which [this technology] is a solution?
2. Whose problem is it?
3. What new problems will be created if this technology is adopted?
4. Who will be the losers? (i.e. who will be harmed by this technology?)
5. What institutions will gain power?
6. What changes in language will this technology bring?
7. What alternative uses of the technology are possible?

Neil Postman, Technopoly

Is a society which believes that "the primary, if not the only, goal of human labor and thought is efficiency, that technical calculation is in all respects superior to human judgment ... and that the affairs of citizens are best guided and conducted by experts."

"The milieu in which Technopoly flourishes is one in which the tie between information and human purpose has been severed, i.e., information appears indiscriminately, directed at no one in particular, in enormous volume and at high speeds, and disconnected from theory, meaning, or purpose."

"to a man with a computer, everything looks like data."

THE SIMPLE ANSWERS

TO THE QUESTIONS THAT GET ASKED
ABOUT EVERY NEW TECHNOLOGY:

WILL <input type="checkbox"/> MAKE US ALL GENIUSES?	NO
WILL <input type="checkbox"/> MAKE US ALL MORONS?	NO
WILL <input type="checkbox"/> DESTROY WHOLE INDUSTRIES?	YES
WILL <input type="checkbox"/> MAKE US MORE EMPATHETIC?	NO
WILL <input type="checkbox"/> MAKE US LESS CARING?	NO
WILL TEENS USE <input type="checkbox"/> FOR SEX?	YES
WERE THEY GOING TO HAVE SEX ANYWAY?	YES
WILL <input type="checkbox"/> DESTROY MUSIC?	NO
WILL <input type="checkbox"/> DESTROY ART?	NO
BUT CAN'T WE GO BACK TO A TIME WHEN—	NO
WILL <input type="checkbox"/> BRING ABOUT WORLD PEACE?	NO
WILL <input type="checkbox"/> CAUSE WIDESPREAD ALIENATION BY CREATING A WORLD OF EMPTY EXPERIENCES?	WE WERE ALREADY ALIENATED

Comparison and Contrast

Similarities

Bird's eye view of human development

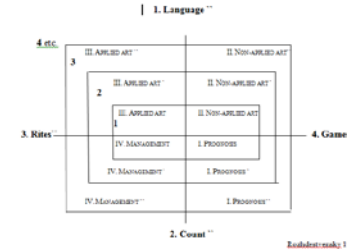
Understanding that communication technologies have an ecological effect

Division of history into periods according to available communication technologies

Differences

Enhancement vs. Death

Accumulation vs. Replacement



	Milieu 1	Milieu 2	Milieu 3	Milieu 4
External environment (exogenous – adapting the environment to the person)	Nature	Society	Technology	Virtuality
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Specifics vs. open-ended questions

Next steps?

Yuri Rozhdestvensky believed that the most important figures in history are teachers. Neil Postman would agree.

Through education humans may become more aware of the pressures of new technologies, and learn to make better choices.

Accumulative approach to culture and communication may be a better pedagogical tool than “death and replacement” approach.