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Media Ecology: Exploring the Metaphor to Expand the Theory

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Abstract

This article introduces media ecology and reflects on its potential usefulness for gaining an understanding of the contemporary mutations of the media system. The first section maps the origins of the field, specifically the development of the ecological metaphor. The second section explores the metaphor by including the concepts of evolution, interface, and hybridization in the media ecology discourse. The concept of evolution creates a theoretical framework for studying the history of media and suggests new concepts and questions about media extinction, survival, and coevolution. The concept of interface focuses on the media, subject, and social interactions. Finally, the analysis of media hybridizations is basic for understanding the appearance of new media that combine different devices, languages, and functions.

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