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# Mapping the Ferment: Mass Communication Research in CIOS-Indexed Journals From 1970–2020

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## ABSTRACT

This study profiles scholarly publishing in the domain of mediated communication, based on an analysis of media-themed communication journals—as indexed in the CIOS’s ComAbstracts database—from 1970–2020. Analysis of 22,300 articles from media-themed scholarly journals paints a portrait of scholarly publishing configurations across the domains of Journalism and Communication. Criterion articles were subjected to cluster analysis that yielded a comprehensive *unified field* portrait of interlinkages among topical pairings encompassing 58 topical categories. Results suggest that just 7 of our 37 criterion journal outlets date to the 1970s, 6 additional titles were launched in the 1980s, 10 more in the 1990s, and 14 during the 1990s. As a consequence of this growth in outlets, the bulk of the literature in these journals appeared in the current century.

**KEYWORDS:** mediated communication, cluster analysis, scholarly publishing

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## Introduction

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Roughly a century after Lippmann (1922) helped usher in the study of modern mass communication, assessment of programmatic research continues to shape academic programming. Mirroring the larger media landscape, the study and pedagogy of mediated communication has been dramatically transformed by a rapidly changing digital environment. Digital media now account for a staggering 74.7% of advertising revenue in the U.S. (Yuen, 2023), contributing to displacement of legacy media like newspapers, which saw newsroom employment fall by 57% between 2008 and 2020 (Walker, 2021). Amidst this backdrop of technological change, college enrollments have declined 10% since 2010 (Georgetown, 2016; Hanson, 2024). Importantly, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2020) reports that enrollment in the Humanities declined by 30% between 2012–2020.

Communication was the only field classified among the Humanities to experience growth during that time period, having ranked among the 10 largest BA majors since the late 20th century (National Communication Association [NCA], 2017). This classification reflects one of the primary origins of Communication—focused on humanistic origins in Rhetoric—rooted in the ancient Greek arts (e.g., Rogers, 1997). The second major tradition—focused on social sciences—emerged alongside other disciplines that crystallized during the 20th century (e.g., economics, political science, and sociology). Communication was not seen as having crystallized in that way, however, owing to its highly variegated contexts, methods, and theories (e.g., Craig, 2007).

Given the pressure that structural realignments are placing on college programs, several institutions have restructured and/or eliminated professional media programs (e.g., Dutt-Ballerstedt, 2019). Even legacy programs in broadcasting/electronic/mass media communication now find themselves “grappling with the need to demonstrate their value to their home institutions” (Atkin et al., 2020, p. 453). Assessments of scholarly output arguably represent the most commonly used method to gauge scholarly trajectories (e.g., Griffin et al., 2018).

Further information on research trends can also help settle age-old debates about whether Communication is a field or a discipline. As Craig and Carlone (1998, p. 119) note, the field’s “amorphous contours”—involving a diverse set of methods and theories—can undermine the cohesiveness of Communication as a discipline. Is Communication a distinct intellectual discipline in its own right, or simply a loosely organized set of interdisciplinary domains, tenuously connected under the moniker of a field? Rogers (1997) traces the independent origins of different sub-elements of Communication during the 20th century (e.g., Journalism v. Speech/Rhetoric). These divisions are borne out by inconsistent organizational schemes under which Communication programs can be found, often paired with Journalism/Mass Communication units, occupying separate units within a Communication college (e.g., Radio-TV-Film), and/or spread across colleges ranging from Business, Education, or Arts and Sciences.

Although the professional missions in Journalism can differ from the emphasis on theory and methods underpinning broader definitions of Communication, both traditions acknowledge the importance of applied research and teaching (Zarefsky, 2012).<sup>1</sup> Systematic inquiry on research publication trends can thus help map the patterns of scholarly investigation that best exemplify the arc of media research in the field of mediated (i.e., electronic/mass/digital/tele-) communication. Such work could inform administrative responses to research profiles in a dynamically changing media

space, alongside strategic planning and curricular innovation. The present study profiles scholarly publishing to trace evolving interlinkages defining the larger domain of mediated communication, based on an analysis of media-themed journals—as indexed in CIOS’s ComAbstracts database—from 1970–2020.

## Literature Review

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Media research can be placed within a larger tradition of communication scholarship. Craig and Carlone (1998) outline the evolution of speech and journalism in the early 20th century, which was rooted in emerging land grant universities. Bibliometric work has documented scholarly publishing in domains ranging from (Speech) Communication (e.g., Edwards et al., 1988; Griffin et al., 2018; Hickson et al., 2004), Journalism (e.g., Cole & Bowers, 1973), Mass Communication (e.g., Greenberg & Schweitzer, 1989; Schweitzer, 1988), and Advertising (e.g., Zhou, 2005) to Broadcasting and Telecommunication (Vincent, 1984, 1991).

Emulating early work in Psychology, King and Baran (1981) were among the first to assess *mass communication* productivity, examining research output in five media-themed journals during the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Study results revealed that 6 of the original “Big 10” schools ranked among the 10 most prolific programs. These early profiles of scholarly publishing addressed domains ranging from Journalism to Radio/TV/Film and Educational Technology. Contributing authors tended to be male faculty affiliated with large Communication and Journalism programs based in the U.S.

Schweitzer (1988) extended this analysis to nine mass communication journals from 1980–1985. Vincent (1984) was the first to track scholarly productivity in broadcasting/electronic media, documenting the schools that produced the greatest number of research articles from 1976–1983. He noted a “wide difference” between the faculty productivity and larger reputations of a graduate school. A follow-up study extended this analysis from 1984–1989—encompassing a slightly larger cohort of 15 journals—to reflect changes in the field (Vincent, 1991); he found that roughly 83% of the subjects pertained to “. . . broadcasting and video . . . with cable and STV accounting for 7% of the article research. Articles on new technology amounted to just under 10% of telecommunication article totals” (p. 84).

When comparing quality metrics, Neuendorf et al. (2007) uncovered a high correspondence between subjective (e.g., peer surveys) and objective measures of scholarly standing in the field of Communication; their own national faculty survey found “the only specialty for which a majority of respondents reported there were ‘not enough’ is Media Information Technologies” (p. 24). Respondents indicated that there were “too many” programs in more traditional subdomains like rhetoric and interpersonal as well as mass communication. In addition to subjective peer evaluations, other prestige metrics have included citation rates, awards, grants, diversity of faculty/students and scholarly productivity (e.g., Lagoe et al., 2019; National Research Council, 2010).

Subsequent work on scholarly productivity has focused on broader measures of Journalism and Communication, extending the profile of research output concentrated in a handful of doctoral-degree granting institutions (e.g., Atkin et al., 2020; Griffin et al., 2018). Lagoe et al. (2019) found that the nature of a program can figure into unit productivity norms; that is, the average publication frequency for *journalism* programs was 12.56 ( $SD = 23.35$ ), roughly half that of *communication/*

*communication studies* programs (26.57;  $SD = 41.22$ ). They concluded that these numbers reflect the greater premium that journalism units place on practice (as opposed to theory and research).

## Mapping Trends in Media Scholarship

When profiling trends in media scholarship, it's useful to situate such work in the context of the larger Communication discipline. Scholars (e.g., Craig & Carlone, 1998) trace the origins of Communication as a discipline that experienced extensive growth and institutional consolidation after the 1950s.

Early on, communication programs emerged from and/or were administratively connected to various eclectic disciplines, including Literature, Journalism, and Speech. These varying intellectual frameworks contributed to the creation of a discipline that lacks the intellectual cohesion that other academic disciplines demonstrate (Park, 2020; Waisbord, 2019). For instance, the discipline of molecular biology intellectually cohered around a unique scientific breakthrough (namely, Watson & Crick's [1953] landmark publication detailing the double-helix molecular structure in *Nature*). Any given communication program may focus on varied areas of the field, including broadcasting, advertising, rhetoric, public relations, and speech communication. Waisbord (2019) characterizes the field as fragmented and bereft of a shared ontological center. Illustrating this, he notes that "communication studies has expanded in a disorganized fashion, with multiple research branches which belong to different intellectual trees" (p. 23).

Units devoted to media began to emerge in the late 20th century, which was a time of rapid growth in pedagogy and research devoted to mass communication (e.g., Eadie, 2022; Rogers, 1997). This coincided with shifts in the larger culture that were shaped (and informed) by the proliferation of mass media. Schulman (2001) argues that the 1970s ushered in a transformation in multiple facets of America's culture and character that reverberated into the new millennium (e.g., social movements like gay liberation and feminism helping popularize the notion of diversity as a strength). Within the larger communication discipline, as well, the 1970s represented a key demarcation point that can help inform the current inquiry (e.g., the Speech Association of America became the Speech Communication Association in 1970).

Craig (1999) identifies seven main themes of Communication research based on underlying practical concepts; they include: critical theory, cultural theory, social psychology, phenomenology, cybernetics, semiotics, and rhetoric. When chronicling the rise of Communication as a discipline, Eadie (2022) saw the 1970s as characterized by a "new dynamism" in existing journals and the inauguration of new journals. He further elucidated five "strands" of communication scholarship—spurred by the proliferation of journals after 1970—which crystallized during that time period; they include:

1. **Communication as Shaper of Individual and Public Opinion**, including work on persuasion and attitude change, credibility, strategic message and campaign construction, and media influences in shaping public opinion and individual perceptions of political and social issues.
2. **Communication as Language Use**, including rhetorical theory, analysis and criticism, discourse and conversation analysis, scholarship on the impact of language in message construction, and analysis of language use, by linguistic and ethnographic means.

3. **Communication as Information Transmission**, including analyses of cognitive and affective changes related to messages presented via face-to-face and media means, as well as the relationship between information and uncertainty in communication systems.
4. **Communication as Developer of Relationships**, including processes by which relationships are formed, maintained, and decayed in face-to-face and mediated environments.
5. **Communication as Definer, Interpreter, and Critics of Culture**, including analysis of media representations, cultural influences on language use and individual interactions, and critical perspectives of underrepresented areas of society (Eadie, 2022, p. 15).

Eadie notes, in particular, that extensive work in media studies began to be produced in the 1970s under the rubric of “cultural studies,” focusing on “the interactions between media and society, particularly regarding perspectives from feminist theory and critical race theory . . . (which) would eventually come to rival hypothesis testing as a means for explaining media effects” (2022, p. 14).

These dramatic shifts in the structure and influence of mass/mediated communication have, over time, influenced the literature designed to chronicle them. As Gerbner (1983, p. 4) notes, the 1970s ushered in a “ferment in the field” that asked “questions about the role of communications scholars and researchers, and of the discipline as a whole, in society.” He was focused on the “ferment” posed by the potentially subversive influence that political economy and critical cultural studies could wield on the dominant paradigm of functionalist mass communication research (Fuchs & Liu, 2018). Many academic disciplines and subdisciplines first crystallize through varying collections of authors that are connected by some kind of epistemological thread (Spence, 2019), then further develop into cogent and identifiable programs of study. Huber and Morreale (2002) add that in this crystallization, disciplines emerge that share common intellectual histories, research topics, methodologies, and even disputes. Disciplines and subdisciplines thus exist as organic, developing entities, and that the continual process of alignment and realignment may be borne out in their key journals.

Updating Gerbner’s (1983) assessment, Fuchs and Liu argue that “Communication Studies” has since been advanced by primary thrusts in the following domains:

- (a) communication studies on a global scale, (b) researching communication in the fast-changing digital media environment, (c) the importance of critical communication studies, (d) the new critical and materialist turn, and (e) praxis communication and ways to address power imbalance in knowledge production. (2018, p. 218)

One obvious example of this media realignment can be found when the *Journal of Broadcasting* changed its name to *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media [JBEM]*. The new millennium was marked by the addition of new outlets like *Electronic News*, sponsored by the Broadcast and Mobile News Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. It’s useful, then, to explore the influence of this larger research *ferment* on scholarly research addressing their influence on mass/mediated communication over the past half century. In particular, we offer the following research question to help guide the present analysis:

Research Question: What are the (a) primary topics and (b) subject groupings that have emerged in mediated communication research from 1970–2020?



## Method

Data analysis was completed in Spring of 2023 using the Communication Institute for Online Scholarship's (CIOS) ComAbstracts bibliographic database. The ComAbstracts database covers approximately 125,000 articles from 150 communication journals with depth to 1915. Our study extracted articles that appeared in criterion mass communication journals after 1969. The present study focuses on peer-reviewed scholarly articles appearing in media-themed outlets indexed in the CIOS database. Each individual article served as the unit of analysis. Per King and Baran (1981), the criteria for including a given article are (1) that it be listed in the table of contents, and (2) exclude book reviews, special reports, notes, addendums, rejoinders, speeches, and the like.

Where past scholarship profiles focused on 5–15 mass communication journals, the current study frame expands that scope to include all CIOS-indexed outlets that address a mass/mediated communication modality in their name (e.g., *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly [JMCQ]*). This list also includes journals referencing processes that necessarily involve the media (e.g., “Press” or “Journalism”). Since we cannot make that assumption of public-relations processes, titles related to that subdiscipline were not included here; similarly, advertising journals are not indexed by CIOS. The list of 38 criterion journals—consolidating a handful of outlets that changed their name during that time frame (e.g., *JBEM*)—appears in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1** *Mediated Communication-Focused Journals Indexed in the ComAbstracts Database*

<i>Advances in Telematics</i>	<i>Journal of Popular Film and Television</i>
<i>American Journalism</i>	<i>Journal of Radio and Audio Media</i>
<i>Australian Stud in Journalism</i>	<i>Journal of Radio Studies</i>
<i>British Journalism Review</i>	<i>Journalism History</i>
<i>Convergence</i>	<i>Journalism Practice</i>
<i>Critical Studies in Media Communication</i>	<i>Journalism Studies</i>
<i>Global Media and Communication</i>	<i>Journalism and Communication Monographs</i>
<i>Harvard Int J of Press/Pol</i>	<i>Mass Comm Research</i>
<i>Hist J of Film, Radio and Tel</i>	<i>Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly</i>
<i>International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics</i>	<i>Mass Communication &amp; Society</i>
<i>International Journal on Media Management</i>	<i>Media Culture and Society</i>
<i>Journal of Broad and Elec Media</i>	<i>Media History</i>
<i>Journal of Children and Media</i>	<i>Media Psychology</i>
<i>Journal of Comm in Healthcare</i>	<i>Mobile Media &amp; Communication</i>
<i>Journal of Comp Mediated Com</i>	<i>New Media and Society</i>
<i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i>	<i>Newspaper Research Journal</i>
<i>The Journal of Media Economics</i>	<i>Psychology of Popular Media</i>
<i>Journal of Media and Religion</i>	<i>Television and New Media</i>

After data screening was completed, the number of research articles included in our sample totaled 22,300. All qualifying articles appearing in the current study frame were included, regardless of the author's rank or affiliation. No attempt was made in this study to evaluate the quality of the articles published. Articles in ComAbstracts are classified by CIOS staff using a closed-book coding dictionary of 104 terms, one subset of which represent major areas of focus in communication

scholarship (e.g., terms include Television, Conflict, Organizational, Interpersonal, Race and Ethnicity, Political, Radio, Prestige Press, etc.) and the other subset are used to identify papers for which geographic location is relevant (e.g., terms include Asia, Central America, Middle East, Europe, North America, Pacific Rim, Indian Subcontinent, etc.). Functionally equivalent to the National Library of Medicine's "MESHterms," the CIOS's set of classification labels are referred to as "metaterms." CIOS coders apply as many metaterms as appropriate to each article included in the ComAbstracts database. The metaterms function as a standardized keyword set. The set of metaterms associated with the sampled articles were subjected to cluster analysis, an unsupervised learning algorithm, wherein the number clusters existing in the data are not known before running the model (e.g., Forino et al., 2002).

## Results

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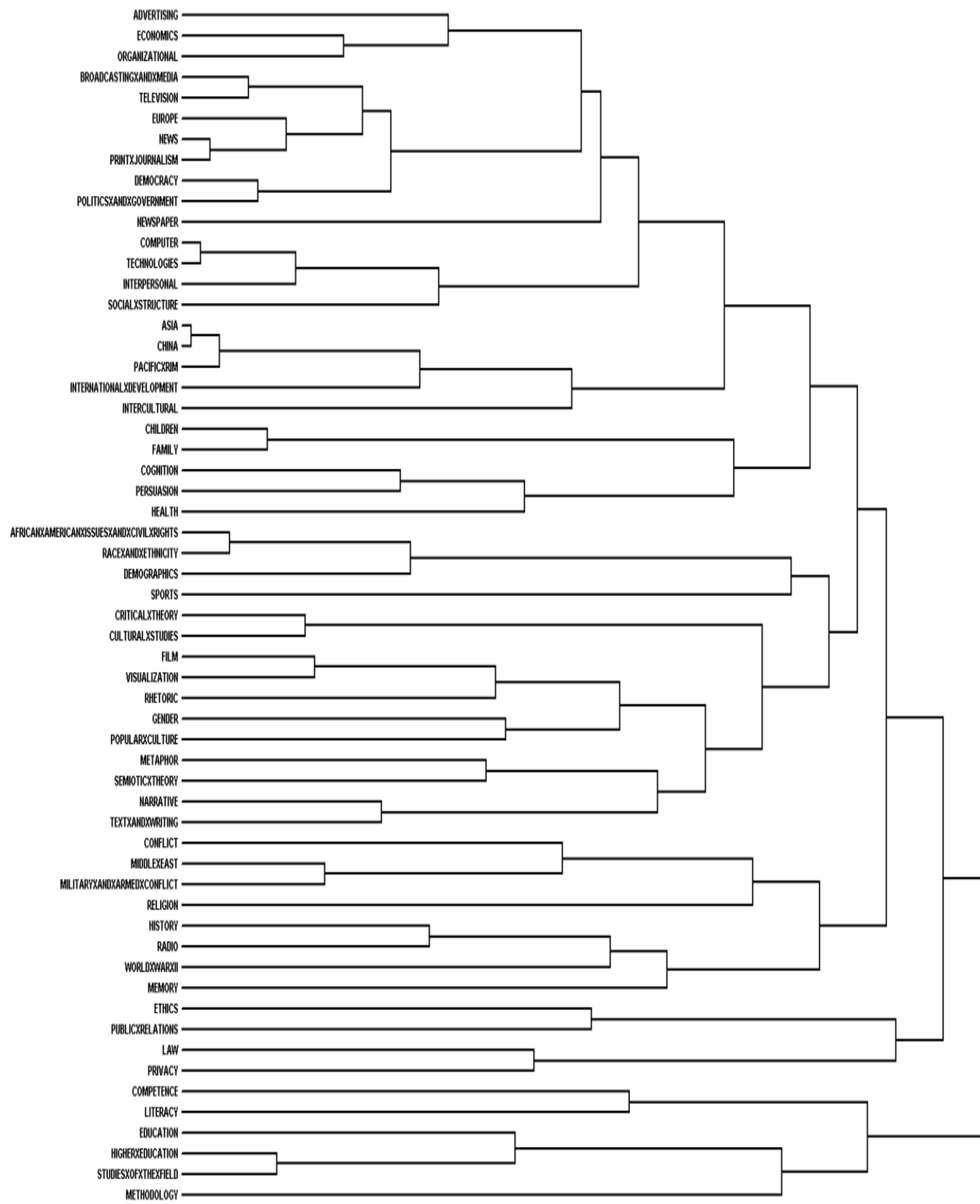
The research subject groupings queried in the Research Question entails a rather more complex analysis of criterion articles derived from journals included in our list, based on 58 metaterm categories that appeared in the sampled articles. Results of the cluster analysis appear in Table 2 on the following page.

Inspection of the dendrogram, a tree diagram illustrating relationships among research topics, depicted one major cluster whose structure indicates the finer divisions within the sampled literature. Since cluster analysis represents a rather novel approach to this literature, it's useful to elucidate the analytical approach employed here. Generally, these trends are interpreted by starting from the right, where all the lines are joined and then following branches to the left to see which cases (in this case, metaterms) are grouped by topic. This information helps render a sensible range of "solutions" between having all the cases in one group (the situation at the extreme right), versus having each case in a group by itself (the situation involving 58 topical categories detailed at the extreme left).

Similar to using a scree plot to guide interpretation of factors in a factor analysis, the determination of clusters from the dendrogram can then proceed. In cluster analysis there is no equivalent to the eigenvalue-greater-than-1 guide commonly applied in exploratory factor analysis; thus, a more conservative approach to interpretation—involving a smaller rather than a larger number of clusters—is in order (see Forino et al., 2002). Here, we examine the content of the various possible groupings to determine where to stop making smaller distinctions (i.e., dividing topical domains into smaller groups).

Inspection of the clusters yields results ranging from pairings involving Advertising/Economics/Organizational Communication (top), to methodological and educational contexts (bottom). The present configuration is by no means definitive. Clustering on the basis of metaterms is advantageous because there are just 100 of them. This obviates the need, as with free text (like keywords, abstracts, or titles), to pass the text through iterations of filters (e.g., to remove common words such as *study*, *and*, *have*, *that*, *not*, *research*, *analysis*, *communication*, etc.). The approach could entail equivalence words involving different grammatical forms that nevertheless express similar ideas (e.g., organizational, organizing, organization, etc.).

**TABLE 2** Cluster Analysis of Research in Mediated/Mass Communication Journals, 1970–2020





However, in general, metaterms from earlier years are not available, which mitigates against comparisons involving cluster analyzed material involving different decades (e.g., 1970–1990 v. 1991–2020). Further clusters on the basis of titles could proceed, but article titles are free language and have to contend with cases where titles are indeterminate (e.g., Benson’s [1981] *Another Shooting in Cowtown*). The procedure thus produced some poorly linked minor clusters, which have been omitted here.

As for the evolution of media scholarship over time, the proliferation of journal outlets complicates standardized comparisons across the various decades of scholarship, including the difficulty with mainly citation data (no metaterms, keywords, or abstracts) for earlier work. Taking that into account, inspection reveals a huge difference in the volume of output across our criterion time frame. Analysis of criterion journals suggests that just 7 of our 37 journal titles date back to the 1970s, 6 additional titles were launched in the 1980s, 10 more titles in the 1990s, and 14 afterward. As a consequence of this rapid proliferation in outlets, the bulk of the literature in these journals was produced during the current century.

## Discussion

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Using a research design first utilized by King and Baran (1981) to study mass communication scholarship, the present study undertakes a review of research output and trends appearing in several dozen electronic/mass-mediated communication journals between 1970 and 2020. Study results enable us to empirically map out research output during a formative half-century for study in the larger communication field (e.g., Eadie, 2022; Rogers, 1997). The ways in which different research subareas are situated in the cluster analysis, in particular, help document how these diverse traditions are converging in the era of digital media.

Broadly, study results paint a picture of a diverse field that interfaces with disciplines ranging from law and economics to religion and history. Common subdisciplines are often incorporated into unit names reflected in the data—including the pairings of “broadcasting/media” with “television,” or “computer” with “technologies”—which share common roots as media modalities. Other configurations (e.g., “radio” and “history”) reflect a linkage to a moment in history when a pioneering electronic medium was at its zenith. Similarly, the fact that cognition and persuasion form a primary pairing—which in turn merges with health—makes sense; this can be explained by the important role played by Theory of Reasoned Action/Theory of Planned Behavior, for instance, in explicating the influence of behavioral intentions on actual behavior (e.g., Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). These domains impinge upon a diverse range of domestic and international or intercultural contexts that also share common roots.

This larger distribution of topics is also influenced by the rapid proliferation of journals during the criterion time frame. Interestingly, the rich diversity of subjects noted here roughly mirrors the dynamically changing media environment since 1970, which in turn prompted the growth of specialized journals designed to chronicle them. The proliferation of journal titles (e.g., *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*) can be explained by Anderson’s (2004) Theory of the Long Tail. That perspective links an ever-fragmenting media environment to the stimulation of tastes of ever more obscure fare, which align more closely with consumer interests once scarcity constraints

are removed (e.g., relaxation of page limits when a journal moves online). The landscape for media journals has thus emulated the media “marketplace” that they chronicle, which has shifted—“from a relatively small number of universally appealing options (i.e., “hits”), to include more individually appealing options (i.e., ‘niche’ fare) as well” (Jeffres et al., 2023, p. 9). This finding is consistent with bibliometric analyses in outlets like *JMCQ*, which have seen declines in cognate areas like “law and policy” over the past century, as authors increasingly place such work in niche outlets like *Communication Law & Policy* (Kerr et al., 2023).

Over time, the ebb and tide of Communication departments and schools focusing in each area, along with the most prolific scholars themselves, can be mapped and would make for a useful analysis. We hope to extract this information and integrate it into the project in later work.

Broadly, the breadth of scholarship mapped out here stands testament to the diversity of Communication studies, represents a dynamic entity in the digital age; Craig characterized these amorphous contours simultaneously as a problem and a strength:

Communication still lacks an established disciplinary core of classic theories and research exemplars. The field comprises diverse academic traditions, each having produced or appropriated its own, more or less coherent intellectual resources, which have converged institutionally under the culturally resonant symbolic banner of “communication” and are only now just beginning to overcome their mutual ignorance. Journalism and media scholars have their reasons for migrating to that banner, as do scholars in cultural studies, conversation analysis, and rhetoric, but they are not the same reasons, and the differences among them and the implications they hold for one another have not yet been much explored. (2008, p.17–18)

One of the challenges for Communication scholars—and indeed, any academic working in a discipline that is driven by rapidly changing technology—is the ability to develop programmatic research and theoretical propositions that have some degree of staying power. Advances in technological attributes, available content, and internationalization make theorizing about mediated communication especially challenging; these challenges bleed into interpersonal and organizational communication as the conceptual distinctions between these arms of the field blur. Having said this, we argue that the links between media modality-based research and more traditional speech/rhetoric domains uncovered here reinforce some degree of coherence in Communication as a field.

Study results can also begin to supplement evaluative information that’s helpful for administrators, students, and scholars. For example, from a prospective graduate student’s perspective, publishing trends across the domains uncovered here can be analyzed to assess key indicators such as graduate program focus, research interests of faculty, and potential fit with one’s interests and expertise. Metrics such as these can be used as one additional indicator to assess whether a particular program will meet a particular student’s research interests and needs. Similarly, department heads and deans may be able to use this information to situate their unit’s scholarship relative to other units at their institution and across the field. Insights derived from the present study can be

used to promote graduate enrollment, promote department visibility (internally and externally), and identify opportunities for collaboration across academic institutions.

Greenberg and Schweitzer (1989) echo these sentiments when recounting how this kind of information is widely used by institutions “. . . to recruit students and faculty, to impress central administration, and to seek external funding” (p. 473). The other key selling point for Communication lies in its centrality to emerging digital economies (e.g., Donsbach, 2006), the presence of which can be seen in prominent topical roots profiled here (e.g., “computer,” “technologies”). In this way, media/digital communication can continue to reinvent itself as a popular field—preparing students to work in emerging knowledge economy—alongside traditional domains like public relations and technical writing (Department of Labor, 2019). Interestingly, “social media” did not emerge as a primary term in our analysis. This may reflect a certain “diffusion lag” in the present database (and literature generally), which is now being addressed by newer outlets designed to chronicle the emergent medium (see, e.g., Borah, 2017).

The current study is thus limited in this respect, as several emerging outlets devoted to digital media (e.g., *Social Media + Society*) have yet to be added to the CIOS database. The present panoramic study frame also fails to provide the kind of granular detail that could enable us to see how certain topical domains have evolved across particular decades. In addition, several outlets have recently supplemented their research presence via social media, podcasts, online appendices, and the like, adopting the very kinds of scarcity-reduction techniques (vis page limits) that Anderson (2004) saw characterizing the larger media landscape. Later bibliometric work could proceed on this point; that is, the mediated Communication research traditions documented here which—like the legacy media they’ve documented—must reinvent themselves in order to survive the disruptions posed by emerging digital media.

Turning to the broader relevance for the field of communication, study findings provide a distilled and succinct overview of publishing trends in a relevant area of the discipline while allowing for a unique glimpse into how publication patterns and key specialties evolve over time. The research configurations mapped out here can help scholars and administrators gain a more panoramic view of trends shaping research and pedagogy in the dynamic realm of mediated communication. General trends and patterns in publication are defining features of any academic field. Such patterns can be used by scholars to define, set parameters around, and establish distinctions between mass/mediated communication and other academic disciplines. The evaluation in what criteria or benchmarks are considered constitutive of “prolific,” is worthy of further examination, including the ways in which these benchmarks have changed since the 1970s.

Of course, as Barnett and Feeley (2011) observe, no similar index of scholarly output or quality is complete. Current results are limited by the fact that only mediated/mass communication titles were included in the study frame, which overlooks media-themed articles appearing in more broadly-themed communication outlets (e.g., *Communication Monographs*). Later work could also profitably address citations to research (e.g., Allen, et al., 2013; Lagoe et al., 2012), total number of article pages published, subjective ratings (e.g., Neuendorf et al., 2007; NRC, 2010), placement of doctoral graduates (Feeley et al., 2011), external grants received, and the like.

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## Notes

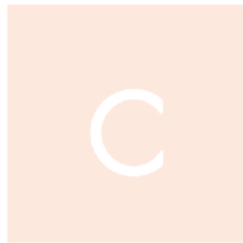
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1. More broadly, as Zarefsky (2012, para 1) notes, scholarly research can help inform one's teaching (and vice versa):

Research topics often emerge from problems encountered in teaching—explanations that do not make sense, paradoxes I cannot resolve, and so on. Research projects are sharpened by considering how the results affect what or how I teach. Needs to cover broad topics in teaching have motivated research to fill holes in my knowledge. And teaching is improved by asking periodically whether research continues to support conclusions that make sense pedagogically.

2. Interestingly, King and Baran (1981, p. 41) found that schools hosting journal editors had more of their faculty appear in the journals that they housed:

“The editorship of the *Journal of Broadcasting* was at Temple University for six years in the 1970's, and 23% of Temple's total publication points came from JOB. This might be expected, because that is roughly one fifth of their total, and JOB was one of five journals examined. But the editorship of the *Journal of Communication* was at the University of Pennsylvania for six years in the 1970's and 62% of that institution's publication points came from JOC.”



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