

“How social media can make history” presented by Clay Shirky 15 minutes
<http://designative.info/2009/08/29/watch-clay-shirkys-how-social-media-can-make-history-talk-at-ted/>

Until social media, there have only been four periods where media has changed enough to be truly “revolutionary”

1. The printing press (not real-time)
 2. 2-way communication, conversational media: telegraph (nearly real-time) & telephone (real-time)
 3. Recorded media other than print: photographs, recorded sound/record, movies
 4. Sending media over the air: radio & television
 5. Social media. This period is the largest increase in expressive capability in human history
- Media that has been good at creating conversations (phone) is no good at creating groups.
Media that has been good at creating groups (radio & TV) is not good at creating conversation.
 - In the old days: if you wanted a conversation you grab 1 person, if the authority figure created a group they could give out the same message
 - The phone is 1:1. Books, radio, TV are 1:many.
The internet is the first media that does both well. The internet is **many:many**.
 - All other types of media are migrating to the internet so they are close to each other
 - Every person on the internet is a user AND A PRODUCER (citizen journalists)

In May 2009 there was a big earthquake in China. Citizens reported it on Twitter and other social media within seconds, minutes before the government knew about the earthquake. In contrast, the last time there was a similar big earthquake in China, it took the Chinese government 3 months to admit it had happened.

The “Great Firewall of China” (for censorship) assumes: 1) media is produced by professionals, 2) it mostly comes from the outside world, 3) it comes in relatively spares chunks, 4) it come in relatively slowly. But with social media none of those four are true so China can’t control/monitor these situations, at some times the government’s only option is to totally close down all of Twitter-like social media tools.

Classic media for governments was one message to the many (press release, televised speech/interview). These days most governments are used citizens being able to “talk back”. But now it is so much easier for networks of citizens to talk to each other

MyBarackObama: the campaign built it to convene supporters. But at one point Obama changed his position and followers went berserk on MyBarackObama. Obama when on the site to explain why he was changing his position but Shirky says what was impressive was that Obama and the site had never shut down the complainers. The campaign understood that their role was to CONVENE but not CONTROL

Footnote ^sws: In late Jan 2011 massive street protests in Egypt spread virally as tech-savvy demonstrators used Twitter, Facebook, Twitpic, and YouTube to disseminate messages, videos, and photographs.