



The Future of the Library (Understanding Media Ecology)

Robert K. Logan, Marshall McLuhan

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Originally written in the late 1970s, this book was untouched for more than 35 years. McLuhan passed away before it went to press, but Logan always intended to finish it. Even though much has changed in the three decades since work on the project was halted, many of the points that McLuhan and Logan made in the era of ‘electric media’ are highly cogent in the era of ‘digital media.’

Looking at the future of the library from the perspective of McLuhan’s original vision, Logan has carefully updated the text to address the impact of the Internet and other digital technologies on the library. McLuhan prophetically foreshadowed the transformative effect that computing would have on «mass library organization,» saying it would become obsolescent. It is perhaps no coincidence that a key theme of the book is that libraries must strive to create context given today’s hyper information overload. The authors believe this task can be achieved by putting together a compact library of books providing an overview of human culture and scholarship.

This book is based on the original text that McLuhan and Logan wrote. Logan’s updates are integrated in the main text and clearly identified by markers. This preserves the flow of the original text and at the same time provides updates in the context of the original study. Other significant updates include two new chapters: Chapter 6 provides a LOM (Laws of the Media) treatment of the new post-McLuhan digital media, and Chapter 7 discusses the impact of these media on today’s library. A second part to the concluding Chapter has been added to update some of the conclusions reached in 1979, and there is also a new preface.

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