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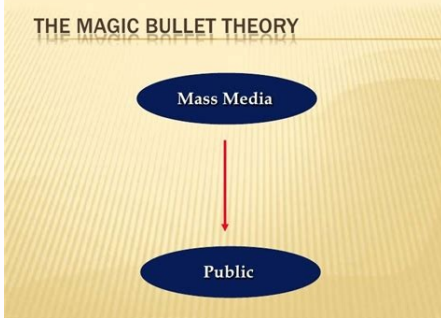

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What is the magic bullet theory in media

What is magic bullet theory. Magic bullet theory media examples.

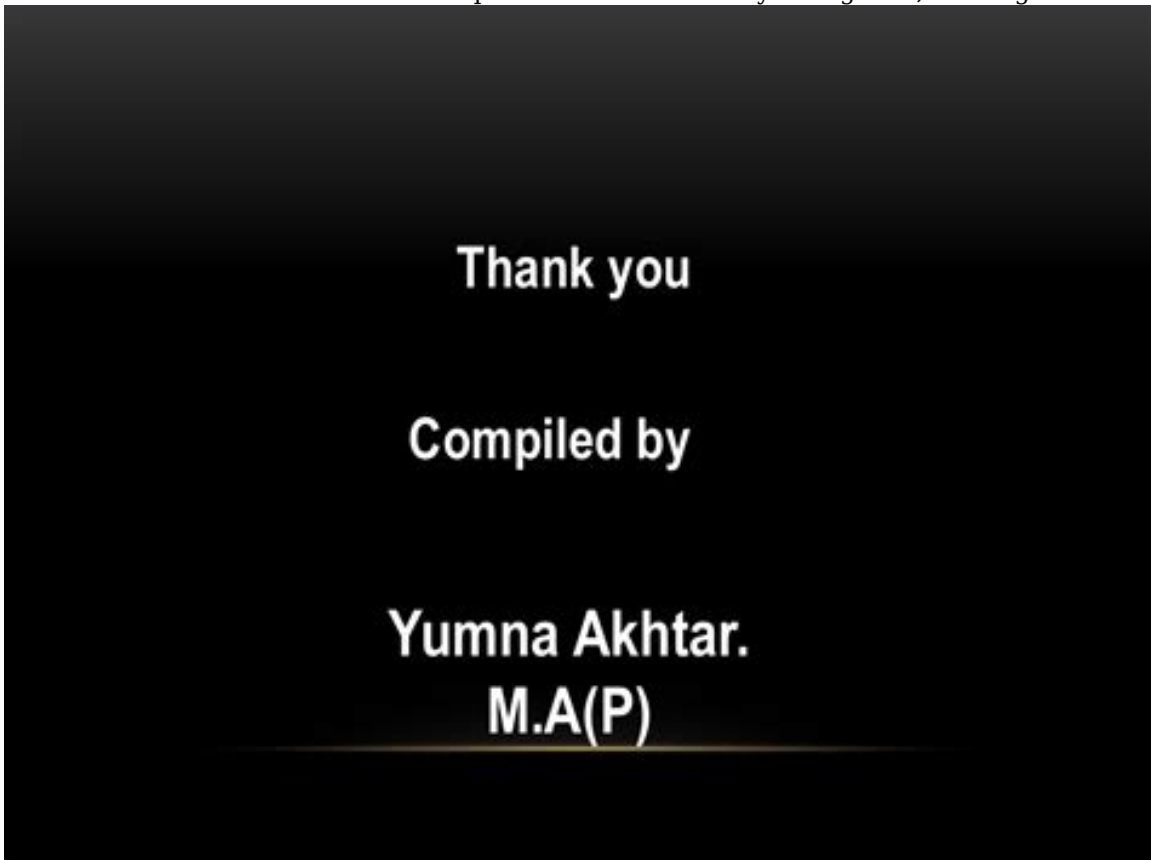
The Magic Bullet Theory, or Hypodermic Needle Theory, is a well-known theory beginning in the 1930s that describes media as having nearly complete control over what audiences see, hear, and believe. The Magic Bullet Theory claims that the media's messages are "injected" directly into the minds of the audience who immediately and completely take hold of the information as true fact. While this was one of the earliest mass communication theories studied, there have been several changes in the ways we communicate and think about communication. This theory states that the receiver of the message full heartedly believes and adheres to the message provided to them. However, today there are so many different forms of media and points of view from the same story that it is hard to imagine believing one statement or message fully and with complete certainty. The intent, context, and presentation behind the message play a large part in the acceptance and understanding of the message, none of which the hypodermic needle theory necessarily considers. With today's advances in technology and media – both greatly influenced and perpetuated by the Internet – people have more options in their sources of media and messages. The modern digital age allows for anyone and everyone to create content that can be shared on a mass scale. Additionally, communication can flow between from one individual to another, as opposed to one entity speaking to the masses. However, depending on the individual, they may choose to gain any and all information from one particular source without influence from anywhere else. While I like to think that I am not as likely to be affected by the media's influence the way the bullet theory suggests, I do rely heavily on social media, especially posts by known and trusted sources, for news and messages. This reliance on just a few sources for the majority of information I receive may skew my viewpoints to align more with that of the source itself. I am not alone in this near dependency on social media news sources, either. Pew Research reports that adults 18 to 29 receive most of their information on digital devices and from social media. This digital form of communication that is so widely used opens up a world of content and messaging available in the palm of one's hand. Photo by dole777 on UnsplashIn a time of fake news, social media influencers, and multiple forms of communication, it is hard to not be influenced by the world around us. It is ultimately up to the receiver of the message to decipher a message as fact or fiction and think wisely about the media they consume, regardless of where it comes from.



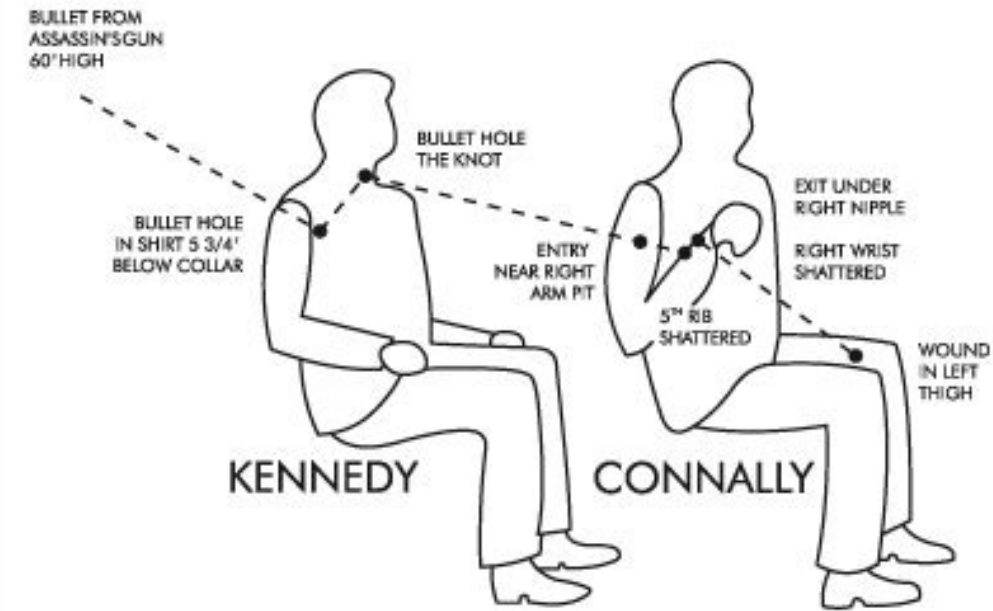
Whether we are aware of it or not, we make a decision on the validity of the message every time we consume media.

The Bullet Theory may seem outdated, but in a giant digital world of information, a few loud and widely accessible messages may be accepted by the masses. We've detected that JavaScript is disabled in this browser.

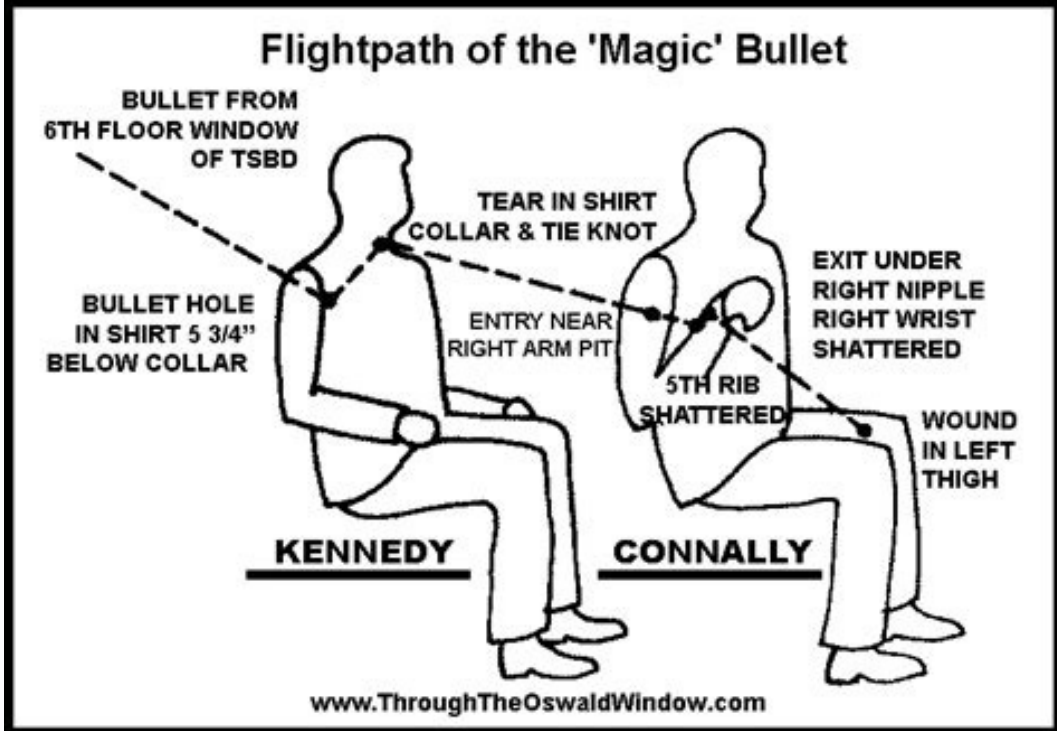
Please enable JavaScript or switch to a supported browser to continue using twitter.com. You can see a list of supported browsers in our Help Center. Help Center You don't have to be the one to break the news to the millennials on your staff. It will only make them grumpy. They may think that they invented the field of mass communication through their love of social media platforms. After all, how did the world exist and how did people communicate before social media? As a small-business owner who is probably coming to terms with the convergence of marketing, advertising and journalism in your daily business life, it might be time to call a staff meeting to review three of the most prevalent theories of mass communication that predate social media by a long shot, starting with the "mother" of all theories: the magic bullet theory of mass communication. Yes, it has its roots in the 1930s.



And yes, the millennials on your staff might need a reminder that people of this era traveled by car - just as millennials do - and not on the backs of dinosaurs. Some of the underlying assumptions of these theories are as relevant today as they were when they were introduced. And they just may give you fascinating insights about the customers you serve today. When it was introduced: Late 1930s What it says: Armed to the gills, the mighty mass media takes aim and "shoots" messages at a passive and impressionable audience. The synopsis may sound sarcastic, but it's really not. In the earliest days of mass communication theory - when World War II was just beginning - people really did believe that they were largely defenseless in the face of regular media messages. This theory is also known as the hypodermic needle theory of communication for essentially capturing a similar dynamic: that the media injects messages into a mass audience. The hypodermic needle model gained significant traction after a radio broadcast in October, 1938. Listeners who tuned into a "War of the Worlds" program about Martians landing in New Jersey and attacking people mistakenly thought the program was real. Hundreds of people called police and fire departments for updates, and just as many rushed to the store to purchase emergency supplies to protect themselves. The incident became known as "the panic broadcast," and it promoted a basic hypodermic needle theory: that when people have only one source of information, they have no choice but to act on it. The magic bullet/ hypodermic needle theory also assumes that: The media create messages with a specific purpose - that is, to elicit a specific response. People react in the same manner to a message. The effects of the media's "bullets" or "syringes" are immediate and powerful, often resulting in swift behavioral changes.* It is useless for people to try to resist the influence of the media. As you think about the media today, you may be smiling in spite of yourself.



But academics have largely dismissed the magic bullet theory of mass communication, saying that it discounts critical thinking skills and fails to take into account demographic variables - especially education - that cause people to think and behave independently. The focus turned to a more plausible theory of mass communication, and particularly the agenda-setting theory. When it was introduced: 1972 What it basically says: The media determine which issues people focus on through their mission of setting an agenda. A protagonist might state that someone has to set the agenda, or decide which issues are worth talking about. And the agenda-setting theory asserts that this role belongs to the media, not the public. When the media set the agenda, the public responds in kind, discussing, debating and possibly advocating for change, based on what they read and hear.



The theory works in reverse, too: When the media ignores or fails to address an issue - when they fail to advance an agenda - it becomes marginalized and even ignored.



Like the magic bullet theory of mass communication, the agenda-setting theory rests on some basic assumptions: The media shape reality instead of reflecting it.* The more attention that the media pay to an issue, the more likely the public will agree that it is important - an echo of the magic bullet theory of communication. The agenda-setting theory of mass communication was embraced by a full generation of journalists, and especially print journalists, who pointed to the news pages as living proof of the theory's existence every single day. The day's most important stories appeared on page one, under the biggest and boldest headlines. Less important news appeared on inside pages. Newspaper readers understood if not embraced this function, often snatching up newspapers on street corners based on the top headline of the day. The agenda-setting function of the media was often regarded as a force for good, and media theorists point to thousands of examples as proof, especially in the arena of life sciences. Stop-smoking, healthy eating and driver safety movements, they say, largely owe their success to the media's agenda-setting role. (Some people might even call it advocacy.) The success of these movements is partly due to a consequence of the agenda-setting theory: that one media outlet is likely to parrot the agenda of another. Before you know it, a media "echo chamber ensues," with multiple media outlets focusing on the same issue. Even before the advent of the internet, people wondered how they could avoid such steady media bombardments. Ironically, mass media researchers have noted that the prevalence of the internet may have reversed the agenda-setting paradigm. In other words, who is setting the agenda today? With the popularity of blogs and social media platforms, many people would say that people set the agenda for the media, making it clear what they want to read and talk about by texting and tweeting for large portions of the day. The millennials on your marketing team just might agree. When it was introduced: 1970s What it basically says: People seek out media content to satisfy their needs and desires. The uses and gratifications theory stands in stark contrast to the magic bullet theory of mass communication. Rather than the media infusing people's minds with ideas, this theory says that people are quite particular about choosing media content that suits their needs. And these needs can run the gamut, from the need for information, entertainment and social interaction to the need for relaxation, escape or arousal. Like the magic bullet and agenda-setting theories of mass communication, the uses and gratifications theory makes some basic assumptions: That audience members take an active and discerning role in selecting media outlets to satisfy their needs. That they will quickly discard those outlets that contradict their ideas, beliefs and values. That the mediums that offer the most satisfaction will be the ones that people return to again and again for gratification. Media outlets have taken note of this phenomenon and are "game" to compete with one another for people's time and attention. The uses and gratifications theory wouldn't be a bona fide theory of mass communication without critics. In this case, some critics say the theory gives people too much credit for being selective about their media choices - almost suggesting that they behave according to the magic bullet theory of mass communication, instead. This point alone might make for a lively topic of conversation with your staff. After all, isn't it the millennials who are championing "cord cutting," or breaking away from cable services that tether them to streams of commercials? And isn't the the millennials who are credited with transforming mass communication into a portable indulgence, capable of being watched and listened to from a device that fills only the palm of their hand? In other words, from all appearances, they do seem to subscribe to the uses and gratifications theory of mass communication - and in a clear-headed, discerning and decidedly un-grumpy fashion. Academia.edu uses cookies to personalize content, tailor ads and improve the user experience. By using our site, you agree to our collection of information through the use of cookies. To learn more, view our Privacy Policy.