

Electronic Revolution: Revolutionary Effects of New Media (1959)

On March 3, 1959, Marshall McLuhan addressed a gathering of more than a thousand educators in Chicago sponsored by the American Association for Higher Education. The theme of the conference was "The Race Against Time: New Perspectives and Imperatives in Higher Education," and McLuhan's talk was titled "Electronic Revolution: Revolutionary Effects of New Media."

*The forty-seven-year-old McLuhan had already published *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man* (1951), his shrewd dissection of the manipulative techniques of the advertising industry. By 1959 he had become known in academic circles and beyond as a pioneering thinker on the mass media.*

In this address he speaks as an educator to an audience of educators: "So rapidly have we begun to feel the effects of the electronic revolution . . . that all of us today are displaced persons living in a world that has little to do with the one in which we grew up." The electronic revolution of television has made the teacher the provider no longer of information but of insight, and the student not the consumer but the co-teacher, since he has already amassed so much information outside the classroom.