

Media theory lectures 2012

Media and truth

Lecture five, May 14, 2012
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HOT TOPICS

world-politics, unrest-conflict-and-war, federal-government, government-and-politics, law-crime-and-justice

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Sea Shepherd captain arrested in Germany

Posted May 14, 2012 06:12:53

Paul Watson, the founder of the anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd, has been arrested in Germany and will be extradited to Costa Rica.

The activist group has labelled the arrest as "nonsense" and called for the charges against him to be dropped.

Sea Shepherd says Watson, who is the captain of the Steve Irwin ship, has been arrested on a Costa Rican warrant over an incident which occurred in 2002.

"The specific 'violation of ships traffic' incident took place on the high seas in Guatemalan waters, when Sea Shepherd encountered an illegal shark finning operation, run by a Costa Rican ship called the Varadero," the group said in a statement.

"On order of the Guatemalan authorities, Sea Shepherd instructed the crew of the Varadero to cease their illegal shark finning activities and head back to port to be prosecuted."

Sea Shepherd claims that while it was taking the Varadero back to port, the tables were turned.

"A Guatemalan gunboat was dispatched to intercept the Sea Shepherd crew," the group said.

"The crew of the Varadero accused Sea Shepherd of trying to kill them, while the video evidence proves this to be a fallacy.

"To avoid the Guatemalan gunboat, Sea Shepherd then set sail for Costa Rica, where they uncovered even more illegal shark finning activities in the form of dried shark fins by the thousands on the roofs of industrial buildings."

Topics: activism-and-lobbying, law-crime-and-justice, conservation, whaling, environment, germany, costa-rica, guatemala, australia, wa



PHOTO: Arrested: Sea Shepherd's Paul Watson
(Mark Smith: ABC News)

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Blind mechanic Merv services thousands of cars for customers in the small southwest Qld town of Windorah.



At least 100,000 Spaniards take to the streets to protest against the country's dire economic situation.



Tony Abbott says Craig Thomson's denial of alleged misconduct is designed to protect Julia Gillard.

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If you have inside knowledge of a topic in the news, contact the **ABC News Online Investigative Unit**.



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The topic “media and truth” suggests that the relationship between these terms should never be assumed to be a natural one.

Media is about the carrier or vehicle, not about the quality of its content in the same way as any other container may contain the best or the worst type of content it is capable of containing (and everything in between).

Key themes:

- Introduction
- News
- Propaganda
- Public relations
- Morality and legality
- Media and conflict
- Where is the truth?

Media types which use “**Media Channels**” are (in order of seniority):

- Print (books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, etc) from the late 15th century
- Recordings (wax cylinders, gramophone records, magnetic tapes, cassettes, cartridges, CDs, DVDs) from the late 19th century
- Cinema from about 1900
- Radio from about 1910
- Television from about 1950
- Internet from about 1990
- Mobile phones from about 2000
- Tablets from about 2009

Mainstream media



History of Marketing Channels

1839
posters on private property banned in London

1867
earliest recorded billboard rentals

1905
The University of Pennsylvania offers a course in "The Marketing of Products"

1922
radio advertising commences

1941
first recorded use of television advertising

1970s
e-commerce invented

1984
introduction of guerrilla marketing

1990s
CRM and IMC gain dominance in promotions and marketing planning

1995
Alta Vista search launches
Yahoo search launches

1998
Google launched
MSN Search launched

2001
social bookmarking site stumbleupon is established

2003
MySpace founded

2005
Vimeo and YouTube launched

The Future
Marketing opportunities in new areas such as Second Life and video games

1880s
early examples of trademarks as branding

1864
earliest recorded use of the telegraph for mass unsolicited spam

1908
Harvard Business School opens

1940s
electronic computers developed

1950s
systematization of telemarketing

1985
desktop publishing democratizes the production of print-advertising

1980s
development of database marketing
emergence of relationship marketing
emergence of computer-oriented spam

1996
identification of viral marketing
ask.com founded

1991
Integrated marketing communications gains academic status

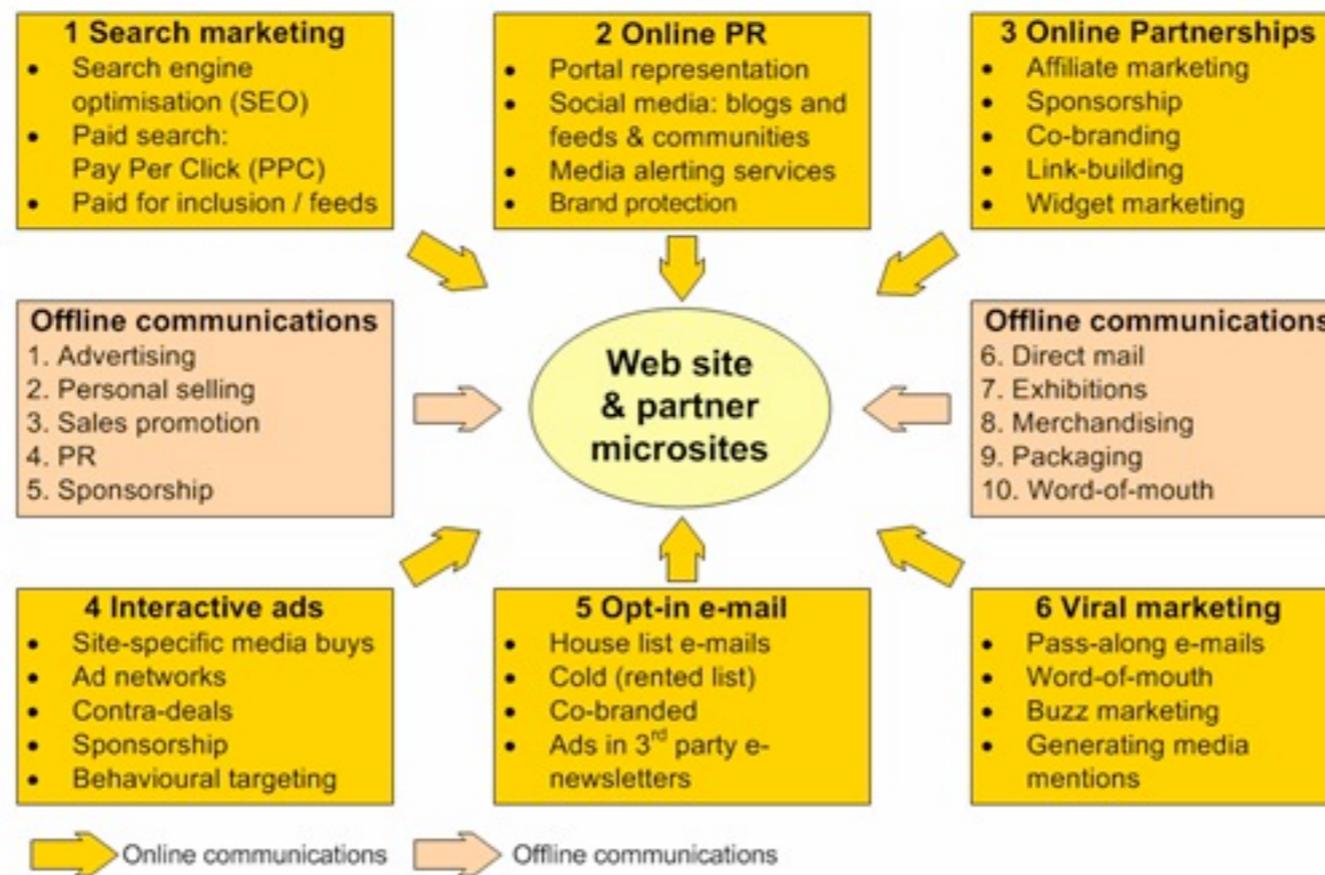
1999
opinion site epinions is established

2002
photo sharing site SmugMug sets the stage for sites like Flickr and Photobucket

2004
Facebook launched
Digg launched

2006
Twitter Founded

The digital media model



Alternative media

ProPublica

Independent news

As the name implies, Independent News organisations have a different financial model to mainstream news. Instead of ownership and control resting with a proprietor or representatives of one, Independent News organisations tend to use the “Not for profit” structure and are generally funded by donations from supporters / subscribers. This means the money has far less impact, if indeed any, on editorial decisions and Journalistic freedom.

ProPublica (an exclusively online publication) reporters Jesse Eisinger and Jake Bernstein have been awarded a 2011 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for their stories on how some Wall Street bankers, seeking to enrich themselves at the expense of their clients and sometimes even their own firms, at first delayed but then worsened the financial crisis. This was the first such award for an online publication.



A new model based on using academics to interpret and comment on current affairs

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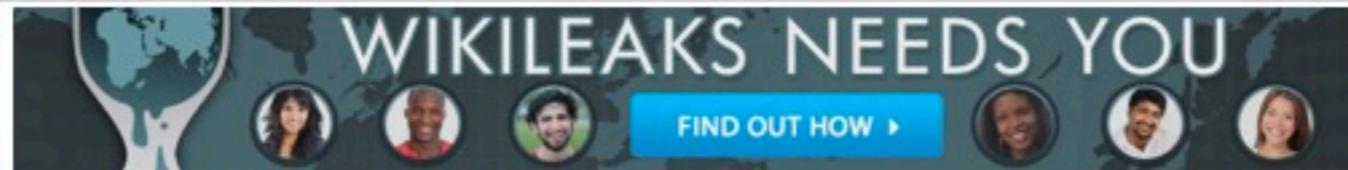
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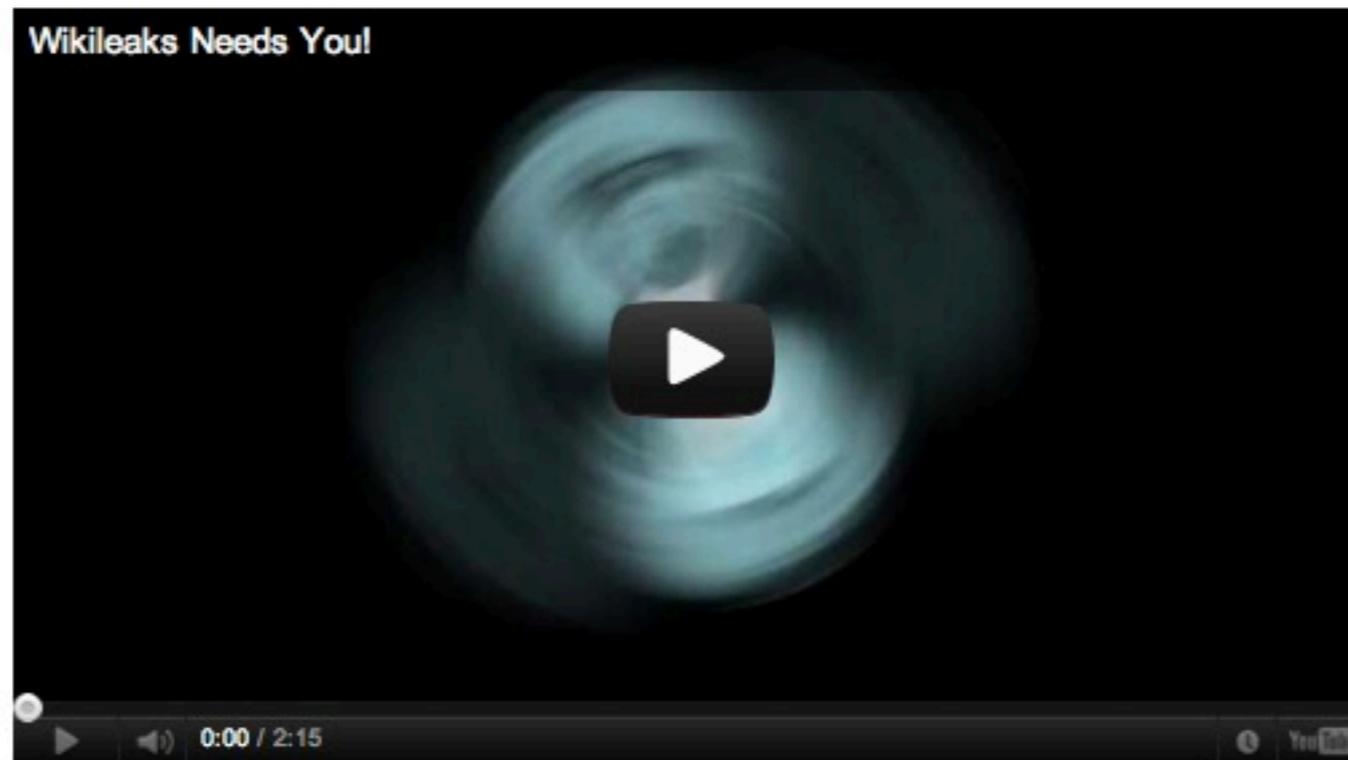
[Kristinn Hrafnsson: The](#)WikiLeaks: **526** days of banking blockade - no processAssange: **523** days detention - no chargeManning: **720** days in jail - no trialGrand Jury: **606** days US secret Grand Jury into WikiLeaks - no transparency

We are forced to put all our efforts into raising funds to ensure our economic survival. For almost a year we have been fighting an unlawful financial blockade. We cannot allow giant US finance companies to decide how the whole world votes with its pocket. Our battles are costly. We need your support to fight back. Please donate now.

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Propaganda

Propaganda has been in circulation as a term in English from the 18th century. Derived from the Latin *propagare* "to propagate" (as in propagate plants by planting cuttings). So in a sense Propaganda is a term loosely used to indicate the dissemination of ideas.

Wikipedia lists many [key techniques](#) used in Propaganda.

Propaganda

Key Propaganda models include the following:

Social Psychology

includes the study of persuasion. Social psychologists can be sociologists or psychologists. The field includes many theories and approaches to understanding persuasion. For example, communication theory points out that people can be persuaded by the communicator's credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.

Social cognitive theories suggest that people have inherent biases in the way they perceive the world and these biases can be used to manipulate them.

Role theory

is frequently used to identify an idea as appropriate because it is associated with a role. For example, the public relations firm Leo Burnett Worldwide used the Marlboro Man to persuade males that Marlboro cigarettes were a part of being a cool, risk-taking, cowboy rebel who was fearless in the face of threats of cancer.

Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model

The propaganda model is a theory advanced by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky that alleges systemic biases in the mass media and seeks to explain them in terms of structural economic causes.

The 20th century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy.

First presented in their 1988 book *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media*, the propaganda model views the private media as businesses selling a product — readers and audiences (rather than news) — to other businesses (advertisers) and relying primarily on government and corporate information and propaganda.

The Ross epistemic merit model

The epistemic merit model is a method for understanding propaganda conceived by **Sheryl Tuttle Ross** and detailed in her 2002 article for the entitled "Understanding Propaganda: The Epistemic Merit Model and Its Application to Art".[17] Ross developed the Epistemic merit model due to concern about narrow, misleading definitions of propaganda. She contrasted her model with the ideas of Pope Gregory XV, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, Alfred Lee, F.C. Bartlett, and Hans Speier. Insisting that each of their respective discussions of propaganda are too narrow, Ross proposed her own definition.

To appropriately discuss propaganda, Ross argues that one must consider a threefold communication model: that of Sender-Message-Receiver. "That is... propaganda involve[s]... the one who is persuading (Sender) [who is] doing so intentionally, [the] target for such persuasion (Receiver) and [the] means of reaching that target (Message)." There are four conditions for a message to be considered propaganda. Propaganda involves the intention to persuade. As well, propaganda is sent on behalf of a sociopolitical institution, organization, or cause. Next, the recipient of propaganda is a socially significant group of people. Finally, propaganda is an epistemic struggle to challenge others' thoughts.

Ross claims that it is misleading to say that propaganda is simply false, or that it is conditional to a lie, since often the propagandist believes in what he/she is propagandizing. In other words, it is not necessarily a lie if the person who creates the propaganda is trying to persuade you of a view that they actually hold. "The aim of the propagandist is to create the semblance of credibility." This means that they appeal to an epistemology ("knowledge, understanding") that is weak or defective.

Public relations

The engineering of consent is the very essence of the democratic process, the freedom to persuade and suggest.

(Edward L. Bernays, "The Engineering of Consent", 1947)



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It is impossible to fundamentally grasp the social, political, economic and cultural developments of the past 100 years without some understanding of Bernays and his professional heirs in the public relations industry. PR is a 20th century phenomenon, and Bernays -- widely eulogized as the "father of public relations" at the time of his death in 1995 -- played a major role in defining the industry's philosophy and methods.

Eddie Bernays himself desperately craved fame and a place in history. During his lifetime he worked and schemed to be remembered as the founder of his profession and sometimes drew ridicule from his industry colleagues for his incessant self-promotions. These schemes notwithstanding, Bernays richly deserves the title that Boston Globe reporter Larry Tye has

given him in his engaging
The Father of Spin.

“The important thing... is not so much to know how to please the public, but to know how to sway the public.... Good government can be sold to a community just as any other commodity can be sold.”

~Edward Bernays

Bernays had a real interesting take on democracy.

In 1939 he became the central advisor for the World’s Fair. His theme hinged on “the link between Democracy and American business.” It showcased a working model of America’s future, constructed by yours truly, the General Motors Corporation. The fair was considered an “extraordinary success” in capturing a new vision of democracy. The vision, however, depended on “treating people not as active citizens but as passive consumers,” which Bernays saw as the “key to control in a mass democracy.”

Passive consumers vs. active citizens.

- a) why is it key to have a passive public focused on consuming?
- b) what’s up with the control issue, pal?

What blows me away about Bernays was how darkly prescient he was.

You can’t say we’re super active today. Fewer than 50% of us show up to vote. And even when people do show interest in a candidate they seem to have a real hard time explaining what they’re voting for. (Case in point at the end of the post.*) So the reality of a “government of the people, by the people, for the people” has gone out the window, probably cause we’re too distracted passively consuming stuff.

And he thought the best way to mold public opinion was by manipulating circumstances which “set up trains of thought” and by “dramatizing personalities.” Though he was writing this stuff 82 years ago, you can see how those exact concepts play out in today’s politics in the videos below.

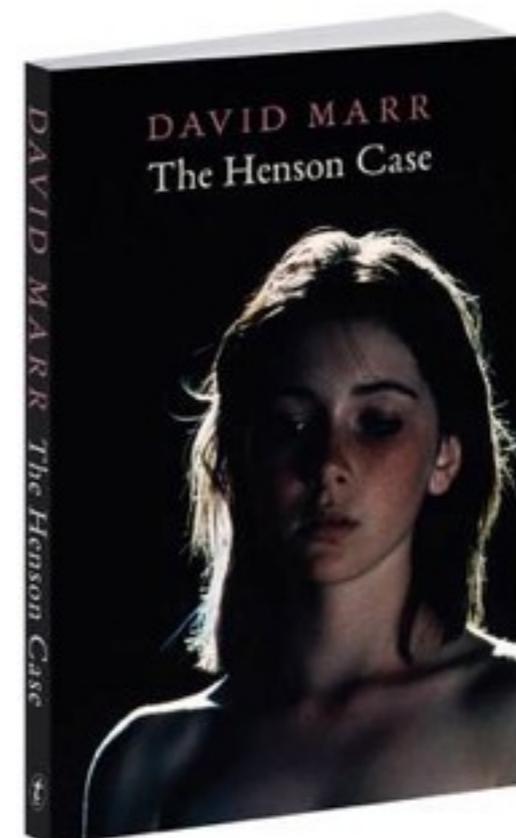
*Bear with 30 seconds of advertising in the 1st video [here](#) ... and before you get thinking it’s a conservative issue, check [this](#) out.

Spin

The techniques of spin include:

- ◆ Selectively presenting facts and quotes that support one's position ([cherry picking](#))
- ◆ [Non-denial denial](#)
- ◆ Phrasing in a way that [assumes unproven truths](#)
- ◆ [Euphemisms](#) to disguise or promote one's agenda
- ◆ "Burying bad news": announcing one popular thing at the same time as several unpopular things, hoping that the media will focus on the popular one.
- ◆ Timing (release bad news at the end of a news cycle i.e. late Friday afternoon)

If you want to read a case study on Spin at work, this book is in the Swinburne Library:



Free speech



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Blue Ribbon Campaign

*Display the Blue Ribbon to support the essential human right of free speech, a fundamental building block of free society, affirmed by the **U.S. Bill of Rights** in 1791 and by the **U.N. Declaration of Human Rights** in 1948.*

Here at EFF, we continue to fight for the right to free speech. Our latest campaign revolves around the legal rights of bloggers and citizen journalists.



EFF is a donor-funded nonprofit group of passionate people—lawyers, technologists, volunteers, and visionaries – who depend on your support to continue successfully defending your digital rights. Litigation is particularly expensive; because two-thirds of our budget comes from individual donors, every contribution is critical to helping EFF fight—and win—more cases.

You Have the Right to Blog Anonymously. EFF has fought for your right to speak anonymously on the Internet, establishing legal protections in several states and federal jurisdictions, and developing technologies to help you protect you identity. **With your support**, EFF can continue to defend this right, conducting impact litigation to establish strict standards to unmask an anonymous critic in more jurisdictions.

You Have the Right to Keep Sources Confidential. In **Apple v. Does**, EFF is fighting to

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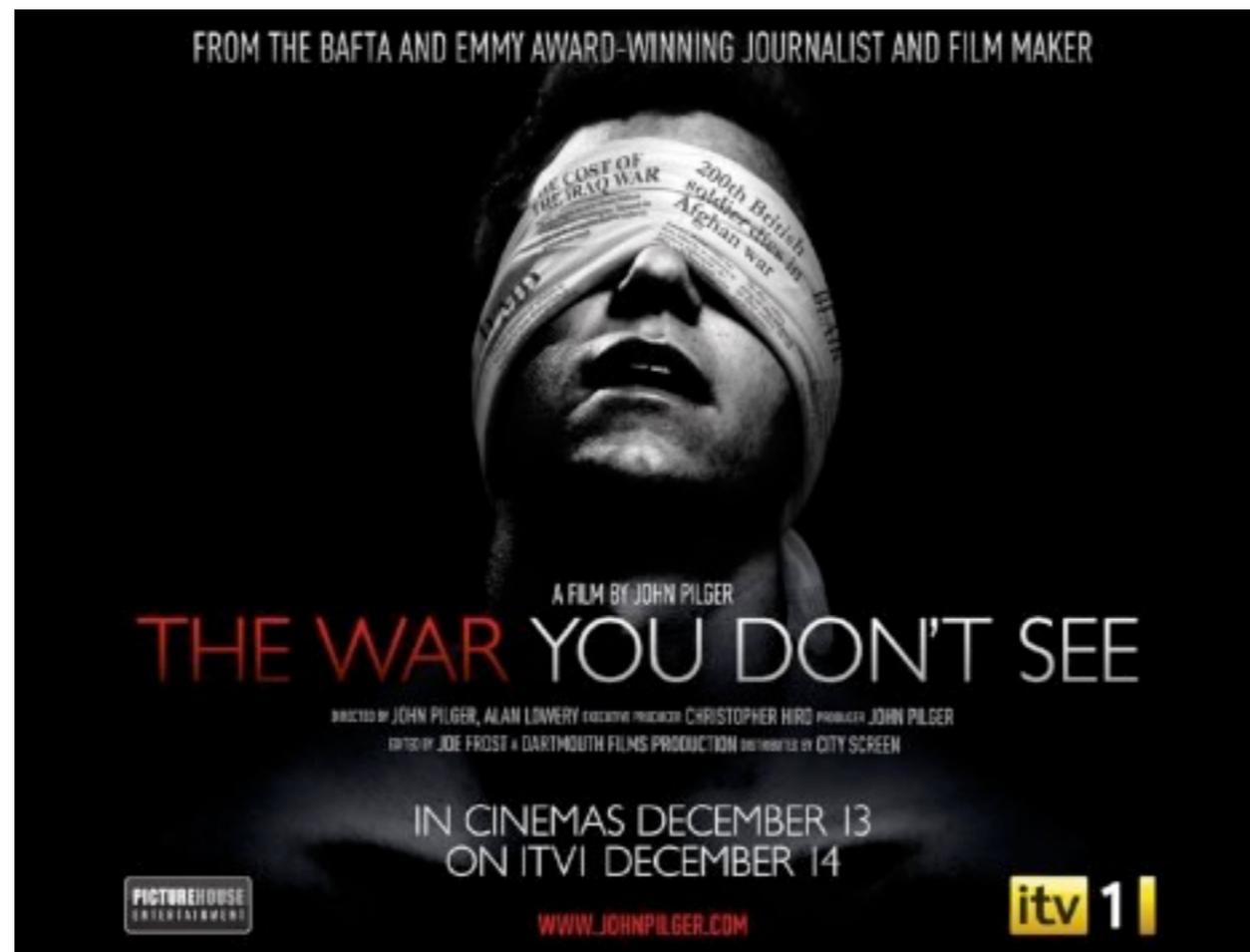
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Conflict and the media



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Links

- <http://www.about-face.org/r/facts/media.shtml>
- <http://batsinthebelfry.net/>
- <http://www.johnpilger.com>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda>
- <http://www.propagandacritic.com/>
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