

Course: Graphic Arts
Group: Paper Pushers
Papyrus to PDA: Visual Communication Through the Ages
Summary of Notes for Oral Presentation

Here is an outline of our presentation. We will be using a slideshow to support our presentation.

Introduction

The debate is about the history of visual communication, and deciding which invention had the greatest social, political, and economical impact.

Taking a Stand for Paper (our choice)

After research and investigation, we think paper had the greatest impact on social, political, and economic change, because even today, it is the medium on which most text is conveyed, whether it's stamped, impressed with hot lead, handwritten or laser printed.

History of Paper

Who invented: Ts'ai Lun, an official in the Chinese Royal Court

Where invented: in the Chinese Royal Court

When invented: in A.D. 105

Before there was "paper," Egyptians made papyrus from pounded reeds around 4000 B.C. Greeks developed heavier-duty parchment from dried animal skin (especially sheep) later on.

Background Info

How it was made and distributed: Ts'ai Lun's paper was made from rags, used fishing nets, hemp, and China grass. Paper makers mixed mulberry bark, hemp, and rags with water, mashed it to a pulp, pressed out the liquid, and hung the thin mat to dry in the sun. BONUS: MB is working on "paper through the ages" and will have samples of papers made of linen, wood pulp, parchment, and synthetic materials.

Introduce and Walk through Causal Map

Our map shows:

Social Impact

- Lower cost and increased availability stimulated foundation of new schools and universities
- Led to increase in levels of literacy and education
- Cheap paper production made written word available to new classes in society
- Changed fundamental process of thinking; changed from an oral to a literate culture when started to think in a more linear fashion, because one can work out on paper more complicated thought processes, and memorization no longer required

Economic Impact

- Paper industry started: mills founded: jobs produced
- Wood pulp process perfected
- When paper became cheaper, newspaper industry was founded (first with block print, then moveable type, now digital silk-screening)

- Drop in newsprint prices due to papermaking technology changed price from 28 cents per pound in 1864 to two cents a pound in 1897

Political Impact

- Words on paper helped governments with organization and control (example: tax bills and edicts)
- Early practices (and even laws passed) to control exchange of ideas, example: disallowing “rags” or treatises to be taken out of the country
- Until the printing press was developed, written word was in the hands of educated elite, religious groups (monks were often scribes)
- Newspapers spread news and political information much faster than oral transmission

Conclusion

Our conclusion is that paper had the greatest impact on political, economical, and social change, because it allowed all printing-related industry to develop. Without paper, words would not have become portable. Without paper, a person’s words could not have been distributed as far and wide.

Work Cited

TAPPI University’s History of Paper:

http://www.tappi.org/paperu/all_about_paper/paperHistory.htm*

History of Paper by Conservatree:

www.conservatree.com/learn/Papermaking/History.shtml*

Paper Through the Ages: www.hqpapermaker.com/paper.htm*

Wisconsin Paper Council: www.wipapercouncil.org/invention.htm*

Paper University: www.tappi.org/paperu/all_about_paper/paperHistory.htm*