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Between Sting and the Challenge of the
Digital Ecosystem**

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Diseño: Mario Modugno

CARI Consejo Argentino para las Relaciones Internacionales
Uruguay 1037, piso 1º, C1016ACA Buenos Aires, República Argentina
Teléfono: (+5411) 4811-0071 al 74 / Fax: (+5411) 4815-4742
Correo electrónico: direccioneditorial@cari.org.ar / Sitio web: www.cari.org.ar

Too Much Information in the Global Order Between Sting and the Challenge of the Digital Ecosystem

Guillermo J. García*

The digital ecosystem has blurred the global boundaries between social media, traditional journalism, and online platforms, creating an environment where the sheer volume of information challenges our ability to make sense of it. In this landscape of relentless data flows, Sting's *Too Much Information* serves as a fitting metaphor for the struggle to filter, interpret, and prioritize in an era defined by excess.

In this sense, Marshall McLuhan, the visionary thinker on media, left behind an assertion that continues echoing worldwide in the 21st century: "The medium is the message." In an era where social media, legacy media, and digital platforms have merged into a single information ecosystem, this idea takes on new complexity. Technology alone does not determine meaning. Rather, cultural structures, social dynamics, and the values we embed within these technologies shape their impact on how we interpret and construct collective narratives.

Each technology extends a human faculty. Radio amplified emotion, the printing press expanded rational thought, and

* Media Secretary at Argentine Council for International Relations (CARI).

social media accelerated immediacy. Yet, as Nicholas Carr warns in *The Shallows*, these tools not only enhance our abilities but also rewire how we think. Instant connectivity and the relentless flow of information have diminished our capacity for deep reflection, elevating virality over significance.

A paradigm of this phenomenon can be seen in the role of social media in the Color Revolutions of Eastern Europe and the Arab Spring. These platforms enabled the organization of democratic movements, positioning themselves as tools for challenging entrenched power structures. Yet, the same algorithms that amplified these voices also fueled polarization, conspiracy theories, and the concentration of information power. These examples underscore the ambiguity of the digital ecosystem—a space where information is simultaneously constructed and contested.

Social media and traditional journalism no longer exist as separate realms. They are part of a singular system that, as Henry Jenkins, a communications theorist and author of *Convergence Culture*, explains, allows narratives to expand across multiple formats and platforms. This convergence has transformed how news is produced and consumed, erasing the distinctions between what was once considered “old” and “new” media.

However, this hyperconnectivity has also eroded the depth of our conversations. In *Reclaiming Conversation*, sociologist Sherry Turkle argues that the constant exposure to fragmented data flows has displaced meaningful interactions and weakened our ability to engage in critical thinking amid an unceasing flood of information.

Classical semiotics offers essential tools for understanding this shift. Ferdinand de Saussure defined the sign as a cultural construction, while Roland Barthes demonstrated how messages, far from being neutral, are steeped in ideology. In the digital ecosystem, every news story, X post, or viral video is not an isolated unit but part of a continuous flow where meanings are negotiated, reinterpreted, and redefined, shaping collective perception.

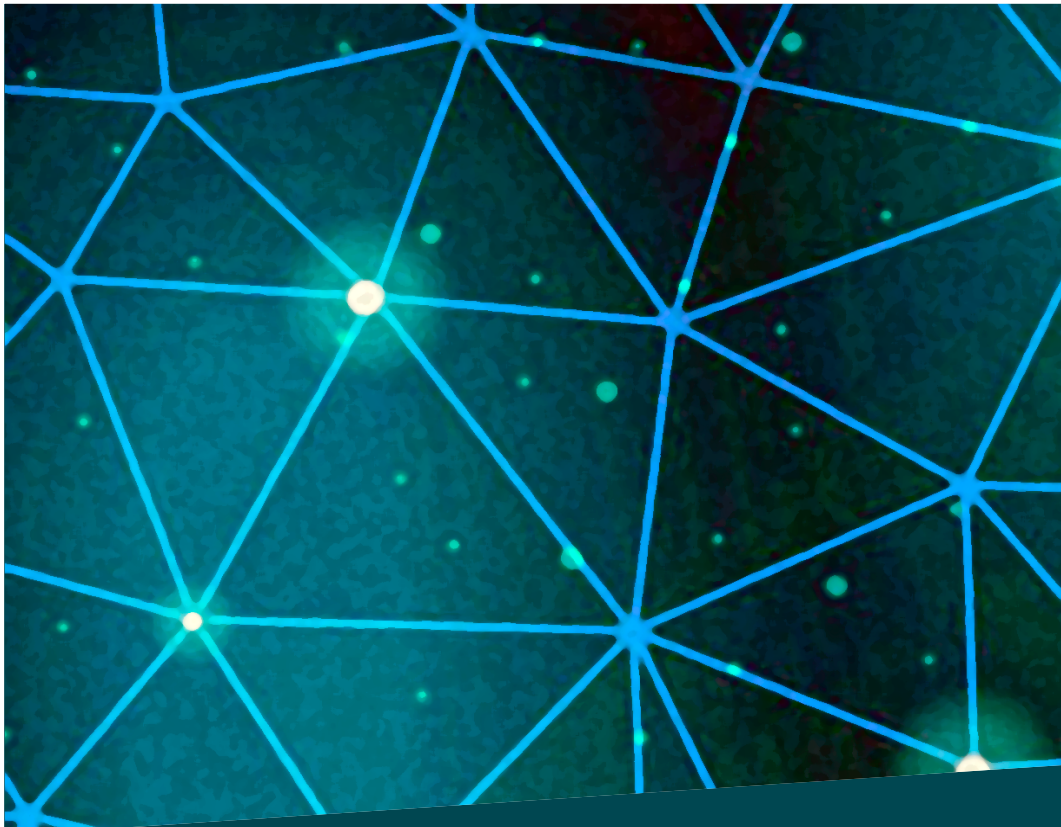
This dilemma is not new. Every technological advance has triggered both hope and fear. Radio was once celebrated as an educational vehicle before becoming a propaganda tool. Television, initially hailed as a unifying force, ultimately devolved into a sea of triviality. Social media, initially seen as a democratizing force, has also become a space of disinformation and fragmented discourse. What distinguishes the current ecosystem is its total integration: social media, traditional journalism, and digital platforms now function as interlocking gears of the same system, collectively shaping our understanding of the world.

Despite its risks, the digital ecosystem still holds promise. Jenkins argues that transmedia storytelling offers a way to reassemble fragmented narratives into a broader, more meaningful whole. But this requires deliberate effort: recognizing that technology is neutral and that its impact depends on how we design, use, and integrate it into our social structures.

As Sting sings in *Too Much Information*, the overwhelming flood of data and stimuli threatens to overload us, “running through my brain,” pushing us toward saturation. Yet, as in music, where each note must find its place in the melody, our

task is to discern, filter, and construct meaning beyond the immediacy of the digital noise.

In conclusion, the challenge is not technological. Technology is neither inherently good nor bad. Its impact depends on the choices we make about its use. In this evolving information ecosystem, meaning is not preordained—it is built, contested, and reshaped constantly. The medium may still be the message, but the meaning we extract from it will always remain our responsibility.



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