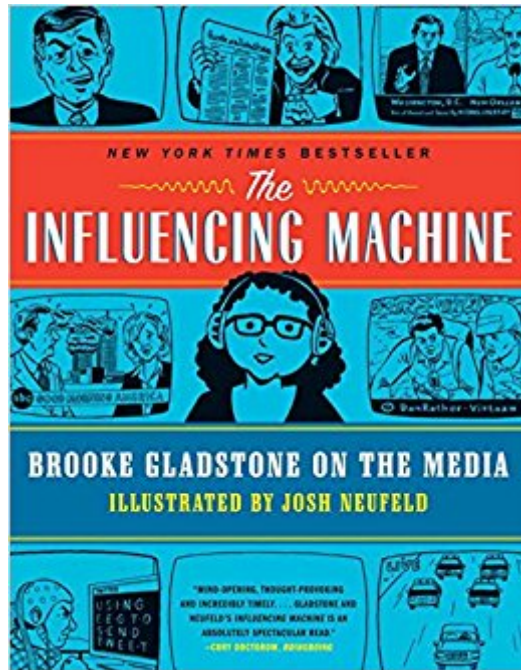




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# The Influencing Machine: Brooke Gladstone On The Media



## Synopsis

"Mind-opening, thought-provoking and incredibly timely" — An absolutely spectacular read." — Cory Doctorow, BoingBoing A million listeners trust NPR's Brooke Gladstone to guide them through the complexities of the modern media. Bursting onto the page in vivid comics by acclaimed artist Josh Neufeld, this brilliant radio personality guides us through two millennia of media history, debunking the notion that "The Media" is an external force beyond our control and equipping us to be savvy consumers and shapers of the news. two-color illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"It's easy to imagine The Influencing Machine becoming mandatory reading in journalism classes around the country." — Philadelphia Inquirer "One of the coolest and most charming book releases of this year." — The Atlantic "A comic book with zest and brains and it just might help a reader understand the brave new world." — The New Yorker "A great book." — Stephen Colbert

Brooke Gladstone is cohost of NPR's On the Media and former senior editor of All Things Considered. She lives in Brooklyn, New York. Josh Neufeld is the author of the New York Times bestseller A. D.: New Orleans After the Deluge and A Few Perfect Hours. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

"We get the media we deserve," declares NPR's Brooke Gladstone in her excellent The Influencing

Machine, an insightful graphic manifesto that sits comfortably alongside Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* and Jaron Lanier's *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto* (Vintage), both of whom make cameo appearances. Gladstone, aided by Josh Neufeld's seamless visuals, makes a compelling case that the ills that plague media today -- mass and social -- are nothing new, that "we've been here before: the incivility, the inanities, the obsessions, the broken business models. In fact, it's been far worse and the Republic survives." What follows is a broad, contextual overview of the history of media, recounted with a healthy sense of humor, and a refreshing undertone of optimism. eg: Near the end of the book, in two pages, she covers Ray Kurzweil and the Singularity, Lanier's skepticism, Planet of the Apes and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs... and it all makes sense! "Graphic non-fiction" is a tricky format to pull off and not to everyone's taste, but Neufeld does a great job complementing Gladstone without letting the medium overshadow her message, and any student of media, formally or arm-chair, should read *The Influencing Machine* without hesitation. Kudos to W.W. Norton for taking a chance on such an innovative book, though it's rather disappointing that the publisher of Frank Rose's excellent *The Art of Immersion: How the Digital Generation Is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and the Way We Tell Stories* has zero online presence for it. A missed opportunity, but one that should be easily (and quickly) rectified.

Do you wonder about the media? do you hate the new york times for being too liberal? Do you hate fox news for being right wing propaganda? As a moderate, Do you hate your coworkers lunchtime debates, arguing those two positions? then this book is absolutely a must read for you, and for them. Step back from the heat of the moment, and have some well presented, deep thoughts on the overall way we create our media. This book is a intelligent, understanding and deeply expressive look at all forms of media. This is a well written book, a fun and easy read for people of all ages and all walks of life, and I promise, will teach you something revealing about the media. I'd give it to 15 year olds, and I'd give it to college professors. that's a rare treat to have a book who's ideas are so well presented, yet so deep, that everyone would benefit from reading it. I feel like after reading this book I have a deeper tolerance for the "other side", and for people who hold different opinions than my own. And, most importantly, where I thought I was in the center, I see that I'm just a point on a perfectly valid series of spectrums. read this book, explore what bias really means, and start to awaken to one's own hidden beliefs. This book puts whole constellations of complex ideas into understandable stories, two to three pages at a time. The brilliance of this book is that it gives a rock solid view of our media, and as a reflection- of all of us. You will have wonderful jumps back in time,

to the history of media, how its shaped human culture, and how its shaping us- and how we shape it. You'll be presented with a real look at both sides of the debate, and then, suddenly, the lights come on about the mechanics of the debate itself, and what then is really the conflict. I learned more about republican media, liberal media, Freedom of media vs government suppression of media. I learned all the ways Bias shows up in the media, and in myself. I learned how media checks the government, and how media supports the government. I also learned how our government surpress the media, how other governments surpress the media. I love the part that talks about in the 1900's america developed the telephone as a mass means of communication. this is a "one to one" type of media. Russia on the other hand? They developed the loudspeaker instead. a "one way, one to many" communication. she shows us a story from our past- the New York Times publishing the pentagon papers. Its the age old debate "its treason to publish secret government workings, and can kill operatives in the field and give our enemies an advantage over us" versus "whistleblowers must be protected, because they are a check on government abuses" I was too young to see that one play out- Nixon orchestrating treason charges against new york times, in an attempt to stem the leaks about his lies. It is treason to spill state secrets. It is often the way too, that treason happening by government officials can come to light. Of course, that debate lives today with the Julian Assange issue- "Arrest that traitor!" vs "protect the whistleblower". Its not that one view is right or wrong always. Its just that, that argument has swung back and forth many, many times. and sometimes protecting the government wins- and rightly so- and sometimes its just the freedom of information that suffers, and protects the guilty. One of my favorite parts of the book was the 5 page tale of Social Drift- the idea that what is true, what is in debate, and what is completely taboo from debate in media, is constantly shifting. By looking at news from the 1900's, and pointing out what was "taboo" which today is now clearly discussed, helped me to see what we today consider taboo, and don't consider. We live in a time of great change. Technology is changing the media game for good. I strongly urge all walks of life to buy this book. its a fair, balanced, and overall positive view on the world we live in, and its rich and varied world views.

A wise person once said to me, "Tell me what you yearn for and I'll tell you who you are." Though I do not think that it's Ms. Gladstone's intent to add to our national alarm, she does hold the mirror up to the public, so that we can see more clearly what we yearn for and who we are. Looking at the Media as a mirror, in these times, is important. Brooke Gladstone invites us to understand that, "The fault, dear [Public], is not in our stars, But in ourselves." (Julius Caesar). The Influencing Machine: Brooke Gladstone on the Media is an invitation for us to make positive change. Because how

can we change what we loath, for the better, if we can not see that so much of what we see and hear in the Media is a reflection of ourselves, and thus, we have the power to change that which belongs to us. As long as we continue to think it's "them" and expect "them" to change, we are powerless. Ms. Gladstone makes a truly important and an awakening statement with her deep insights about our relationship with "our" media; about how what we engage with in our Media reflects who we are, and how our yearning for what we engage with tells us a great deal about who we are; about the how and what we live for. It forces the question: "Where must I be at, to be thinking, this, engaging with this?" In 1967, Marshall McLuhan opened our awareness to how "the medium is the message." Today, Brooke Gladstone extends McLuhan's and our vision further, by showing us how "the medium is the mirror." This is one of the most important, and fun (a rare combination) reads and messages that I have come across in a very long time. Fresh thought. Thank you, Brooke Gladstone for your wonderful insights in: *The Influencing Machine: Brooke Gladstone on the Media*. I love this book!

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