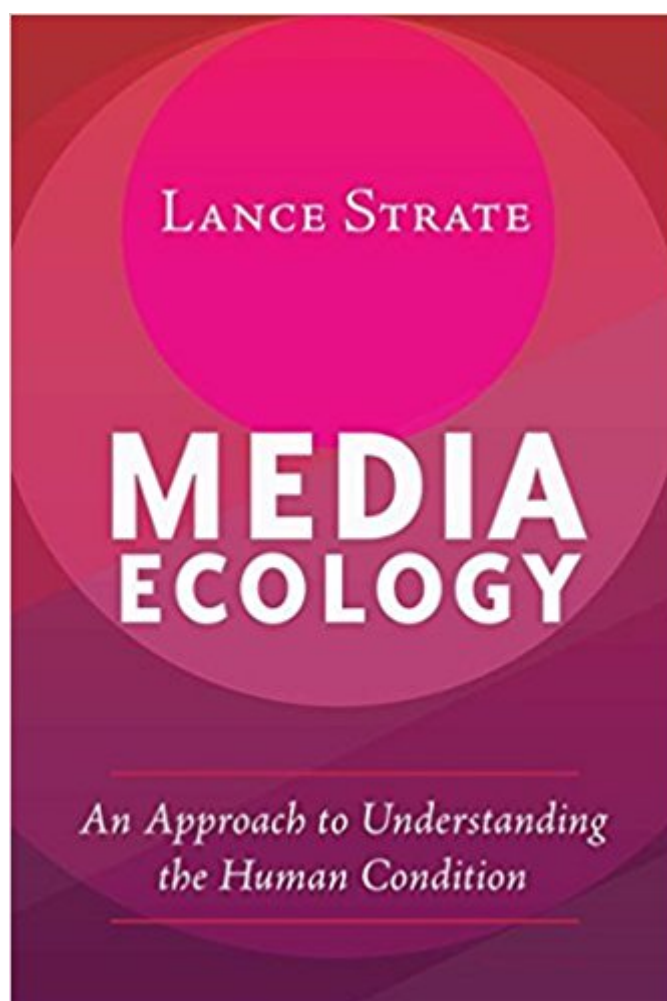


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# Media Ecology: An Approach To Understanding The Human Condition (Understanding Media Ecology)



## Synopsis

**Media Ecology: An Approach to Understanding the Human Condition** provides a long-awaited and much anticipated introduction to media ecology, a field of inquiry defined as the study of media as environments. Lance Strate presents a clear and concise explanation of an intellectual tradition concerned with much more than understanding media, but rather with understanding the conditions that shape us as human beings, drive human history, and determine the prospects for our survival as a species. Much more than a summary, this book represents a new synthesis that moves the field forward in a manner that is both unique and unprecedented, and simultaneously grounded in an unparalleled grasp of media ecology's intellectual foundations and its relation to other disciplines. Taking as its subject matter "life, the universe, and everything," Strate describes the field as interdisciplinary and communication-centered, provides a detailed explication of McLuhan's famous aphorism, "the medium is the message," and explains that the human condition can only be understood in the context of our biophysical, technological, and symbolic environments. Strate provides an in-depth examination of media ecology's four key terms: medium, which is defined in much broader terms than in other fields; bias, which refers to tendencies inherent in materials and methods; effects, which are best understood via the Aristotelian notion of formal causality and contemporary systems theory; and environment, which includes the distinctions between the oral, chirographic, typographic, and electronic media environments. A chapter on tools serves as a guide to further media ecological research and scholarship. This book is well suited for graduate and undergraduate courses on communication theory and philosophy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Lance Strate asks big questions and provides a myriad of perceptive answers. This book is at once playful, poetic, and precise. The clear writing about complex ideas is a pleasure to read and offers many gifts of understanding.”  
—Joshua Meyrowitz, University of New Hampshire  
“Lance Strate’s synthetic thinking in *Media Ecology: An Approach to Understanding the Human Condition* opens up media ecology, allowing the reader to see how, as a field of inquiry, it applies to everything from language, media, and philosophy to our very understanding of what it means to be human living in a dynamic environment. Along the way Strate shows how media ecology connects with all the major approaches to communication study.”  
—Paul Soukup, Professor and Chair, Department of Communication, Santa Clara University  
“With characteristic passion and soulfulness, Lance Strate embarks on a metatask: to synthesize thinking about life, the universe and everything through the lens of media ecology. In the process, he locates media ecology as the dynamic shift between figure and ground and as the basis for understanding the human condition. Writing with an almost disarming ease that belies the complexity of the ideas he communicates, Strate brilliantly and reflexively mediates media ecology itself, bringing clarity to the *Kekulé*-like conundrums of an immense and increasingly relevant field. Anyone who thoughtfully enters and engages the environment of Strate’s book will be rewarded with moments of profound clarity, connecting ideas typically viewed as disparate or oppositional into patterns of deep understanding about media ecology and about the process of living.”  
—Julianne H. Newton, Professor of Visual Communication, University of Oregon

Lance Strate is Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Fordham University and Villanova University’s 2015 Harron Family Chair in Communication. He is President of the New York Society for General Semantics, Trustee and former Executive Director of the Institute of General Semantics, Past President of the New York State Communication Association, and a founder and Past President of the Media Ecology Association. Dr. Strate is the author of *Echoes and Reflections*, *On the Binding Biases of Time*, *Amazing Ourselves to Death: Neil Postman’s Brave New World Revisited*, and *Thunder at Darwin Station*. He is a recipient of the MEA’s Walter Ong Award for

Career Achievement in Scholarship.

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