

History of Global Communication

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Key developments, turning points, and their impact on societies

1. Early Foundations (Pre-Modern Era)

Period	Milestone	Significance
Ancient Civilizations (c. 3000 BC – 500 BC)	Development of writing systems (cuneiform, hieroglyphs, Chinese characters)	Enabled the recording and transmission of information across distances and generations.
Silk Road (c. 2nd century BC – 14th century AD)	Network of overland trade routes linking China, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa.	Facilitated exchange of goods, ideas, religions (Buddhism, Islam, Christianity) and diplomatic messages.
Maritime Trade Routes (c. 1st century AD – 1500 AD)	Spice Route, Indian Ocean trade, Atlantic voyages.	Expanded contact between continents; introduced new languages, maps, and navigational knowledge.
Postal Systems	Imperial Chinese “courier” (c. 206 BC), Roman <i>cursus publicus</i> (1st century AD), Islamic <i>barid</i> (7th century).	First organized state-run message delivery, laying groundwork for later postal networks.

2. The Age of Print (15th – 18th Century)

Development	Date	Impact
Invention of Movable-type Printing	1440 – Johannes Gutenberg (Europe)	Mass-produced books, pamphlets, and newspapers; accelerated literacy and the spread of scientific, religious, and political ideas.
First Newspapers	1605 – <i>Relation</i> (Germany); 1621 – <i>Weekly News</i> (England)	Created a regular, public channel for news, fostering a shared public sphere across regions.

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Global Trade of Printed Materials	16th–18th centuries	Books and maps circulated via ships, linking Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

3. Electrical Revolution (19th Century)

Technology	Year	Core Feature	Global Effect
Electric Telegraph	1830s (Morse code, 1844)	Binary signaling over wires	Cut message transmission time from weeks/months to minutes; enabled rapid diplomatic, commercial, and news exchanges worldwide.
Submarine Telegraph Cables	1858 (first Atlantic cable)	Undersea copper wire	First true intercontinental communication line; spurred the growth of international news agencies (e.g., Reuters, AP).
Telephone	1876 (Bell)	Voice transmission over wires	Added real-time spoken conversation to long-distance communication; eventually linked continents via undersea telephone cables.
Radio (Wireless Telegraphy)	1895 (Marconi)	Electromagnetic waves, no physical conduit	Reached remote regions without cables; enabled ship-to-shore communication, early broadcast news, and later global broadcasting networks.

4. The Broadcast Era (20th Century)

Medium	Decade	Milestones	Global Reach
Radio Broadcasting	1920s	First commercial stations (e.g., KDKA, BBC)	Immediate audio news, music, and cultural programming across continents.
Television	1930s–1950s	First regular TV service (BBC 1936)	