Summary of Lisa Gitelman’s “Always, Already New”

Gitelman is known for her work with tracing patterns of new media that become meaningful within and against old media. She has a PhD from Columbia and now works at NYU’s department of English. She defines media as “socially realized structures of communication, where structures include both technological forms and their associated protocols, and where communication is a cultural practice.”

Gitelman details the complexity of media and how it is not simply an artifact or technology, but the systems, effects, and channels in which make the medium possibile. This includes the lineage of emerging media, and the historical developments that have lead to the form of the new medium.

Gitelman explains that media is a technology of representation, because the much of the entirety of “media” goes unnoticed. Like lore, the most fascinating and apparent pieces stand out causing a “culture,” while the protocols and mechanisms operate broadly unsuspecting. She states that media is not due to “isolated geniuses working their magic.” Media is the convergence of a chain reaction of voice, image, and ideas. By broadening our perspective on media as a whole, we can more tactfully understand how they are applied and impactful.

Gitelman describes how media influences how we think and how we see things within our culture. Being that media is between ourselves and the outside world, it shapes how we use language to communicate with others. The language we use to send messages to others relies on the impressions already made by the media itself.

*Summary by G. James Mitchell*

Gitelman, L. (2006). Introduction: media as historical subjects. In Always already new (pp. 1-22). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Retrieved from: http://composingdigitalmedia.org/f15\_mca/mca\_reads/Gitelman-Always-Already-New-Intro-excerpts.pdf