



THE PEBBLE

Official Occasional Newsletter

of

*The Marshall McLuhan
Initiative Inc.*

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Esther Juce, Editor

**Breaking News: We Are Hosting Our Inaugural Fall Programing:
Come and See What's Going on at McLuhan's Salon!**



The Marshall McLuhan Initiative Inc. will be hosting our first-ever series of evenings of conversation and conviviality at The Marshall McLuhan Centre, 507 Gertrude Avenue, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. CT every 3rd Wednesday from September to December 2026. The events are geared towards those who are just “learning the probes”, so-to-speak, with a view to describe McLuhan’s meteoric rise to fame in the 60s and 70s. More importantly is that The Initiative hopes to impart to the audience Marshall’s prescience and wisdom to learn as much as one can about any technology, so that one can “find the off button”. (This is how McLuhan put it in the May 8, 1966 CBC interview with Robert Fulford during the 50th and last

episode of *This Hour Has Seven Days*!) In this digital age of certain ambiguity concerning fact versus fiction, and the obsession with the ridiculous, the average citizen is struggling for meaning and clarity. Enter Marshall McLuhan. With the letter “M” emblazoned on his chest, Marshall delivers both on the medium and the message, and with his classic “probes”, he helps us to navigate through the maelstrom of AI and social media. But don’t be fooled: These evenings are open both to the learner and the learned, such that each can benefit from the other’s experience. Also, while the intimate setting can seat only 12 people comfortably, virtual participation is possible with the links below. (Isaac Klisch is a member of the Board of The Initiative.)

Isaac Klisch is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: McLuhan's Salon - [September 2026](#)

Time: [Sep 16](#), 2026 07:00 PM CST Winnipeg

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85668518631?pwd=4oFEi5zv9ZUp0ivCBLEwyoxCTk8pbx.1>

Meeting chat link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/jc/85668518631>

View meeting insights

<https://us06web.zoom.us/jc/85668518631?muid=02c51058-ea4f-49a9-b24a-83e541ca8af1>

Meeting ID: 856 6851 8631

Passcode: 262763

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,85668518631#,,,*262763# US (New York)

+16469313860,,85668518631#,,,*262763# US

Join by SIP

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85668518631@zoomcrc.com

Join instructions

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85668518631/invitations?signature=AnfkP7qFocoaRKXc4LQe8sdSjHCkVn9c3_D43dWXEqc

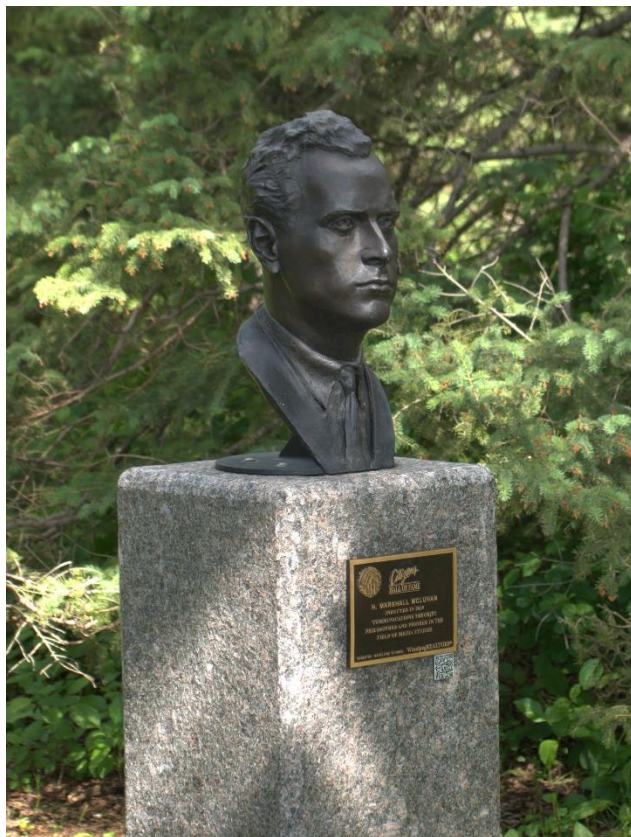
For security reasons, all virtual attendees are asked to register for the salon with their first and last names. Participation is purely voluntary. Participants are invited,

if they so desire, to submit any specific ideas that could be brought up after the video presentation has been discussed, time permitting. *These sessions will be recorded*, and will eventually be available through The Initiative's

Website: <https://mmi-winnipeg.ca/>.

The 2026 Fall Schedule is as follows:

September 16, 2026 –Used with the permission of the Estate of Corinne and Marshall McLuhan, we will be showing the experimental documentary *This is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium is the Massage* (1967), directed and produced by Ernest Pintoff and Guy Fraumeni. McLuhan himself did not like the film, citing reductionism and a flashy medium that diluted his message. However, we chose this work primarily for Marshall's uncanny prescience and the urgency of his words. For those keeners desiring a head start, here's the link to the video: [The Medium Is The Massage \(1967\)](#). In fact, given McLuhan's rapid-fire stream of ideas throughout, we'd recommend participants to review the video ideally at least once in advance!



October 21, 2026 – We will be delivering the PowerPoint presentation with which we secured the nomination of Marshall McLuhan as the 2019 inductee into the Winnipeg Citizens Hall of Fame, located in Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park. We will also be relating the saga of how it took three attempts to finally secure the rightful place for the bronze bust of the young Marshall in the Hall of Fame.

Photo by Sam of Point Row Records, June 24, 2026

November 18, 2026 – Speaker (TBA). Since this is a virtual event, the speaker could be from anywhere in the world. Any volunteers?

December 16, 2026 – Game Night with a card game, The DEW Line, designed by Marshall himself! At first blush,

the game would seem to be a "Royal Farce". However, upon further examination, it appears to be a legitimate card game, where this is an aphorism unique to each playing card, and the player must solve his/her problem with the use of the aphorisms that they have drawn. What a refreshing idea that McLuhan should be remembered for his humour and playfulness as much as for his intellect!

Each session will include ample time for questions and answers.
RSVP to themarshallmcluhaninitiative@gmail.com to attend in person.

Admission is free. Refreshments will be available but, alas, not for the "discarnate".

~ Esther G. Juce

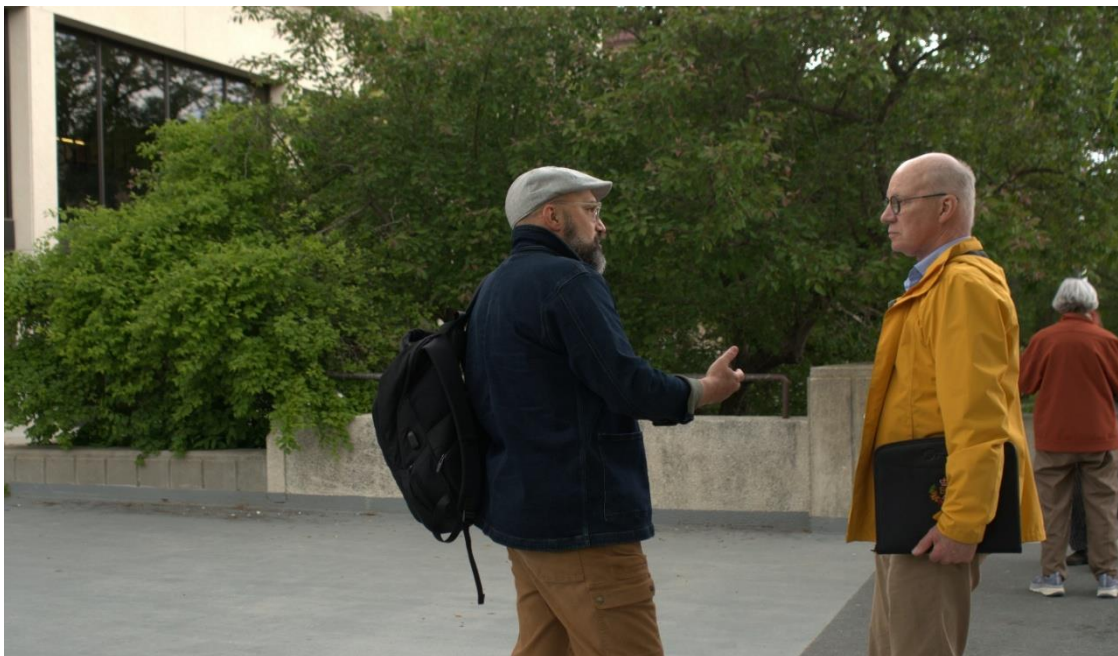
Aftermath of the Media Ecology Association's 27th Annual Convention, Held for the First Time in *Winnipeg!*

Under the baton of Dr. Jaqueline McLeod Rogers, along with her team at the University of Winnipeg, the 2026 MEA's 27th Annual Convention, "Crossing ~~{Out}~~ Borders in Our Global Village", was well-conducted and a great success. There were about 150 attendees from some 19 countries and, of these around 110 were presenters. Many of the presentations and panels were on the potential dangers of unbridled AI, or "Systematic Parroting" if you will, and "anti-social" media. A bone-chilling part of the Convention was Fred Peabody and Peter Raymont's dystopic and apocalyptic film, *Digital Tsunami*. The work features prominent media ecologists relating the horrors of social media and AI that have "gone viral", the ensuing dire consequences, and the need for "strategies for survival". It's not a coincidence that Peabody and Raymont illustrate how the hyper-digital age benefits capitalism and multi-nationals. Interestingly, this link between the information explosion and big business was articulated by Marshall McLuhan, and can be seen in the 1967 film, *This is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium is the Massage*. (See above on page 3.)

Indeed, McLuhan's words are far from having gone "out of style" in the media ecology community. For example, of the 40 sessions during the Convention, six were dedicated entirely to his legacy, with at least four additional individual

presentations in other sessions. The number of allusions to other media-ecological thinkers pales in comparison.

It's therefore most fitting that during a media ecology convention taking place in Winnipeg, the city of McLuhan's formation, The Marshall McLuhan Initiative Inc. could be a significant contributor to the proceedings. The Initiative was invited to create a tour of McLuhan-related sites in Winnipeg, concluding with a reception at 507 Gertrude Avenue, Marshall's most significant childhood home. This is exactly what came to pass. The "Welcome Home, Marshall" Bus Tour began at the University of Manitoba, McLuhan's first post-secondary alma mater, with viewing a painting by McLuhan's friend, René Cera; and then visiting Marshall McLuhan Hall at the U of M Student's Union Building in the heart of the Campus. This was followed by seeing the bronze bust of Marshall McLuhan as member of the Winnipeg Citizen's Hall of Fame in our city's largest park, the Assiniboine. Subsequently, the tourists viewed two stunning murals created by then-students at Red River College in 2004 and Kelvin High School in 2012. On the tour bus, Lawrence Prout, The Initiative's fundraising consultant, spontaneously provided informative descriptions of the historical background of many of the sites, as well as the importance of Winnipeg, and how the city shaped some aspects of Marshall McLuhan's thought.



Lawrence Prout (right) listens to Dr. Andrey Mir, media ecologist, author & professor with Toronto Metropolitan University, while the tour stopped at University Centre, U. of M. (left background) to see Marshall McLuhan Hall. Photo credit: Sam of Point Row Records

Then, finally reaching 507 Gertrude Avenue, the weary travellers were treated to Indigenous gourmet delicacies created by Feast Café Bistro with an opportunity to imbibe in a shot of Jack Daniels Red Label, evidently one of Marshall’s favourites.

Here’s a gallery of photos of the “Marshall McLuhan Magical Mystery Bus Tour”, thanks to photographer Sam of Point Row Records, Winnipeg:



The contributions did not end there. Three of The Initiative's Board members, Ruthanne Wrobel, Dr. Jonathan Slater, and William E. Jefferson, gave individual presentations, all referencing McLuhan. In addition, Slater conceived of a panel discussion entitled "Marshall McLuhan at Home in Winnipeg", featuring himself as well as two other Board members, Howard R. (J.) Engel and Esther Juce. The session focussed on "the long and winding road" that led to the door of 507 Gertrude, how The Initiative acquired it, and our plans to transform it into The Marshall McLuhan Centre. From the beginning, the Board has envisioned the building to become a hybrid of a museum and a living communications centre. To paraphrase a saying by The Centre's first Scholar-in-Residence, Fr. Krzysztof (Fr. Chris) Marcyński, "We are not honouring ashes of McLuhan's legacy, but rather the fire that burned within him." Fr. Chris also gave an inspiring presentation at the Convention entitled, "Crossing Sacred Borders: McLuhan Catholic Conversion and the Transformation for Religious Communication." Another friend of The Initiative, Dr. Constance Macrae-Buchanan, a U of M political science professor, applied McLuhan percepts in her engrossing talk called, "Figure/ground in Manitoba: A nineteenth-century Métis nation brought under federal control". Finally, the contributions of The Initiative extended even beyond the Convention: Wrobel was the guest speaker at the Manitoba Historical Society's AGM, (held at the U of Winnipeg, thanks to Jaque), giving a most informative outline of McLuhan's thought and influence.

Here's a selection of photos taken by Fern and Sam of Point Row Records of the panel event:



As our own Jonathan Slater put it, The Initiative's work, coupled with that of the organizers of the Convention, has served to "put Winnipeg on the map" for the rest of the Media Ecology community. In a word, there wouldn't be Winnipeg without Marshall McLuhan, and there certainly wouldn't be Marshall McLuhan without Winnipeg!

As a sign of appreciation for The Initiative's contributions to the Convention, immediately following the Media Ecology Association's Annual General Meeting on Sunday, June 28, Dr. McLeod Rogers presented The Initiative with a lush, potted Coleus plant (actually three separate plants in the same large pot!) to place and enjoy at 507 Gertrude Avenue, where it continues to flourish.



Front row: Howard R. (J.) Engel, President; Esther Juce, Co-Treasurer of The Initiative; Dr. Jaqueline McLeod Rogers, VP MEA & Prof. Dept. of Writing, Rhetoric & Communications at the U. of W.

Back row, left and right: Initiative Board members William E. Jefferson and Jonathan Slater; middle: Rev. Dr. Krzysztof (a.k.a. "Fr. Chris") Marcyński, SAC, the first Scholar-in-Residence of The Marshall McLuhan Initiative Inc.; photo credit: Jarrett Cole

“Welcome home, Marshall!”

~ Esther G. Juce

The Winner of the Media and the Write Competition, 2026

The successful candidate in our first run of The Media and the Write Competition for 2026, chosen by merit, is **Danica Andrew**, a student in her final year of her undergraduate degree in the Department of Religion and Culture at the University of Manitoba. Here is how she was inspired to write her award-winning paper:



Danica Andrew (supplied photo)

As a student in my department, I am particularly interested in how religion intersects with professional and academic work. Writing about Marshall McLuhan presented an opportunity for me to examine an important academic figure who valued his religion and assess his ideas through a modern lens while remaining attentive to his religious ideals. I chose to explore this through examining Generative AI as it is currently a major topic (and obstacle) in the field of humanities.

The award consists of C\$1,000, a book by or about Marshall McLuhan, plus two tickets to the event where the award will be presented (TBA). On this occasion, Danica will be invited to address those present about her paper.

Ms. Andrew has graciously given us the permission to publish her article in this issue of *The Pebble*. Enjoy!

“The Medium is the Message”: Understanding Marshall McLuhan in the Face of AI

By Danica Andrew

For The Marshall McLuhan Centre, May 31, 2026

Introduction

Herbert Marshall McLuhan's influential declaration "the Medium is the Message" has gone on to shape the modern method of relaying information to both young and adult students alike, as well as continue to encourage interpretative and boundary-pushing thought in upcoming thinkers in the age of technology. More interestingly, McLuhan's interest in how media is relayed and the effects it presents on the people absorbing it as well as the content it is sending came before the modern adaptation and significant advances in the work of Generative AI. When examining the modern use of AI and applying it to the values found in *Understanding Media*, then assessing it under the Catholic lens of McLuhan's faith, it becomes apparent that not only are Generative AI "Chatbots" detrimental themselves on the outcome of learning, but the bots themselves act as a medium contributing to the Educational and Informational Overload on society proposed by McLuhan.

McLuhan graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1934, then pursued a Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge in 1942.¹ His academic contributions did not become widespread until the 60s, when McLuhan would publish *Understanding Media* in 1964, a book embracing technological advancements and a further understanding of the topic of rhetoric and symbolism that he spent much of his academic career studying through great writers like Hopkins and Joyce.² It is within *Understanding Media* that McLuhan describes his idea of the message of media being absorbed through the means of which it is delivered. He describes the message of a medium to be the scale or pace or pattern of which it is introduced whereas the content of the medium is, in itself, another medium.³ McLuhan specifies, in the

¹ Sanderson, George, and Frank Macdonald. *Marshall McLuhan: The Man and His Message* (Colorado: Fulcrum INC. 1989), 5.

² Sanderson, Macdonald, 5; Sanderson, Macdonald, 8.

³ McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1964), 1.

opening of his book, that part of this exchange is how the message is relayed into *human affairs*.⁴ This careful distinction is small but important, as it allows to assess not only the message and the medium in which it is delivered, but the context in which it is understood as well as the results of its understanding of the medium and message as they coexist with one another. McLuhan uses the example of the electric light to best understand this concept.⁵ In a situation where an electric light is being used for brain surgery, or where it may be used for “night baseball”, the actual action the light is illuminating is irrelevant as the actions themselves are the content of the light where their existence is tied to its function, and the light itself shapes the abilities of the activities.⁶ Therefore, it is the light itself that allows these activities to exist and be understood, as without the light these activities, such as performing brain surgery or catching a ball in the dark, could not be performed.⁷ The light, then, is a form of message.⁸

Information and Education Overload

An integral part to McLuhan’s scope of mediums, messages, and the availability of knowledge is the idea that media may hit a boundary at any given point.⁹ If there is an increase in access to information, such as through electronic media, this can result in an overload of information.¹⁰ Harold Innis proposes that this is a concept of “reversal” and occurs in order to restore cultural balance following a disrupting event, such as the introduction of information through technological advancement.¹¹ Therefore, media evolves to solve the issues of existing media,¹² and, within time, a new medium will introduce new problems that will require an even newer medium to fix those problems and then introduce their own.¹³

⁴ McLuhan, 1.

⁵ McLuhan, 1.

⁶ McLuhan, 1.

⁷ McLuhan, 2.

⁸ McLuhan, 2.

⁹ Strate, Lance. *Understanding the Message of Understanding Media* (Atlantic Journal of Communication, 2017), 248.

¹⁰ Strate, 248.

¹¹ Innis, Harold. *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto-Buffalo: Univeristy of Toronto Press, 1951).

¹² Strate, Lance. *Understanding the Message of Understanding Media* (Atlantic Journal of Communication, 2017), 248.

¹³ Strate, 248.

Lance Strate gives the example of the invention of writing eventually resulting in the need to quicken the process of copying books and documents by hand, thus resulting in the printing press.¹⁴ In the case of other technological advancements, their progression is clear. The need to collect oral ideas so they are not forgotten introduces the creation of a writing system.¹⁵ The need to write things down at all pushes for the need of tools to write with.¹⁶ These things are therefore all dependent on each other and occur as a result of each one prior. Education Overload, in a similar stream, implies that the environment outside of schools becomes more influential and richer than the environment within schools due to the means of students to leave and share the information they have learned.¹⁷ If the access of information is no longer limited to a classroom setting or an academic environment (academic bookstores, for one, or symposiums), then, society itself has achieved Education Overload in the process of reversal: so much information is available at once that it is negative.¹⁸ It is then necessary to consider how Information and Education Overload can be avoided with the introduction of advanced Generative AI to the public, and what occurred that pushed for the creation of this new medium of information retrieval. Furthermore, can the principal of the medium being the message still be applied to something as ever-changing and adaptable as Generative AI?

McLuhan stated “the medium, or process, of our time, electric technology, is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life. It is forcing us to reconsider and re-evaluate practically every thought, every action, and every institution formerly taken for granted.”¹⁹ Electric media and its accessibility allows for easy change, and, additionally, electric media allows us to absorb knowledge for ourselves by ourselves without the aid of a third party such as a

¹⁴ Strate, 248.

¹⁵ Strate, 248.

¹⁶ Strate, 249.

¹⁷ Ciastellardi, Matteo. *Education Overload: From Total Surround to Pattern Recognition* (Barcelona: Editorial UOC, 2013), 20.

¹⁸ Innis, Harold. *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto-Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1951); Strate, 248.

¹⁹ Ciastellardi, Matteo. *Education Overload: From Total Surround to Pattern Recognition* (Barcelona: Editorial UOC, 2013), 21.

specialist or an expert in any given field. Easy-access information, therefore, encourages people to question and research for themselves, disallowing education to be limited to classrooms in traditional professor-textbook formats. This then, by extension, inherently fulfills the concept of Educational Overload without the schools being sequenced into the equation at all—with the internet and so much information readily available, students are not needed to disperse the information themselves. This facilitates an ideal recreation of the pillar of McLuhan's thought: The information the AI is delivering means little, but the deliverance of it in a format that allows a user to question practically anything, is the message itself. It shows, almost, a natural peak of the problem proposed earlier of societies creating continuously causing a forward-moving effect where inventions are spurred as a result of prior inventions (new mediums being created because of old mediums).²⁰ It is then safe to assume that a medium in which one person can interact with and ask any question (barring terms and conditions, of course, however this is not due to a lack of the AI's ability to answer) stands for the exact representation of a boundary-hitting backwards movement where the message is not the answer or the correctness of said answer, but instead the idea itself that such a device could exist where any question can be not only reasonably answered but also extrapolated on.

Generative AI as a Medium and the Christian Application

If Generative AI functions as the medium and the information it gives is only the message, it is then necessary to examine the medium itself, if one is utilizing McLuhan's idea that the medium is the message. In the case of Generative AI in academia, there has been significant effects on students, representing the boundary McLuhan discussed being crossed. Research done by the University of Ruse yielded results of students being unable to acquire and therefore utilize the habit of expressing and writing their thoughts after consistently using ChatGPT.²¹ They lose their ability to reason and look for

²⁰ Strate, Lance. *Understanding the Message of Understanding Media* (Atlantic Journal of Communication, 2017), 248.

²¹ Valova, et al. *Students' Perception of CHATGPT Usage in Education* (International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications, 2024), 468.

explanations to problems, and they severely lack the ability to put any thoughts into their work.²² Bauer, Greiff, Graesser, Scheiter, and Sailer contributed on a discussion for Educational Psychology Review about the effects of AI on learning, and, similarly, found that AI promoted “shallow learning” that is memorization-focussed without an emphasis on long-term retention.²³ AI undermines the development of critical thinking skills in students, and classrooms that integrate the use of AI tools limits student engagement in key learning activities.²⁴ In studies done regarding ChatGPT, there was a discovery of reduced cognitive processing.²⁵ Overall, there is weaker decision-making and weaker judgement skills, thus resulting in poorer choices when AI is no longer available.²⁶ It becomes clear, then, that the actual information AI provides matters little when the accessibility of it, or “the medium”, is the detrimental component; essentially, the AI device itself, most commonly a chatbot, is the electronic light, and the information it provides is the brain surgery or nighttime baseball.²⁷

Generative AI viewed through a McLuhanian lens based only on his proposal of mediums and messages will yield a less thorough and in-depth response as it relates to McLuhan’s life, however. Marshall McLuhan was a devout Catholic convert and member of the Church.²⁸ Having grown up in a family consisting of Baptist and Methodist background,²⁹ McLuhan found Catholic dogma incredibly captivating, particularly through the impact it had on Catholic scholars during his time at Cambridge.³⁰ It is necessary, then, to consider Generative AI through a specifically God-oriented philosophy, albeit Christian or specific Catholic streams. Redeemer’s University, in the *Afropolitan Journals*, released a

²² Volova, et al. 468.

²³ Bauer, et al. *Looking Beyond the Hype: Understanding the Effects of AI on Learning* (Educational Psychology Review, 2025), 5.

²⁴ Bauer, et al. 10.

²⁵ Bauer, et al. 9.

²⁶ Bauer, et al. 10.

²⁷ McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1964), 1.

²⁸ Sanderson, George, and Frank Macdonald. *Marshall McLuhan: The Man and His Message* (Colorado: Fulcrum INC. 1989), 5.

²⁹ Cooper, Thomas. *The Medium is the Mass: Marshall McLuhan’s Catholicism and Catholicism* (Journal of Media and Religion, 2006), 163.

³⁰ Cooper, 164.

study discussing the effects of AI on the spirituality of Christian Youth, and found a multitude of issues.³¹ Youth that rely on AI for spiritual guidance grow a superficial understanding of religious teachings,³² and its immediacy of responses dilutes the traditional aspects of a community-based faith practice.³³ Similarly to the information found in non-Christian youth studies, youth who interact with AI for spiritual means find themselves relying on digital interactions more than they do for actual communal interactions, and this lack of human connection hinders the development of deep and meaningful connections in their faith communities.³⁴ Furthermore, the study found that the algorithms that often power AI chatbots prioritize provocative or sensational answers over correctness, and content that may not align with Christian values may be presented to youth in a factual way.³⁵ Similarly, in an article for *Religions*, J. Loewen-Colón and Sharday Mosurinjohn conducted a case study on spiritual users interacting with a chatbot.³⁶ In this case study, users indicated “their desire for a spiritually authorizing encounter could be satisfied through the AI’s language”,³⁷ therefore finding that an encounter with an AI chatbot was, to youth, considered spiritually profound enough to consider it as a means to aid their desires for spiritual content. The study found that the personhood of an AI chatbot is less important than its behaviour.³⁸ Through these studies it then becomes clear that a medium like a chatbot yields an overall negative impact to Christian youth who use AI for spiritual purposes. However, a McLuhanian may read the results of such experiments and find it no fault of the AI, as the youth may only be experiencing negative outcomes due to the spiritually inept information, perhaps, but not because of the medium itself. It then becomes necessary to address the creation of the medium at its very core.

³¹ Overbanji, et al. *Artificial Intelligence and its Effects on Christian Youths’ Spirituality* (African Journal of Religious and Theological Studies, 2025).

³² Overbanji, et al. 42.

³³ Overbanji, et al. 47.

³⁴ Overbanji, et al. 43.

³⁵ Overbanji, et al. 43.

³⁶ Loewen-Colón, J, Sharday, Mosurinjohn. *Fabulation, Machine Agents, and Spiritually Authorizing Encounters* (Religions, 2022), 36.

³⁷ Loewen-Colón, J, Sharday, Mosurinjohn, 36, 37.

³⁸ Lowen-Colón, J, Shardady, Mosurinjohn, 37.

For *Religions*, Cory Labrecque links Catholic teaching on technology and AI to the environment, but includes some incredibly in-depth talks from religious figures.³⁹ Labrecque cites Benedict XVI's letter, *Caritas in Veritate*, discussing the idea that technology is not merely technology, but instead expresses inner tension. Technology, therefore, is a response to God's command to "till and keep the land: that He has entrusted humanity and it must serve to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment."⁴⁰ Therefore, technology must be of benefit to humans in a progressive way to rid inequalities in human life.⁴¹ These progressive developments must be rooted in respect and dignity, and must service humans.⁴² The concept of "servicing humans" is the emphasis in this discussion—it is a specific focus on the Care of Creation, a principal of the Church's social doctrine.⁴³ Technology, regardless of form or development, must be at the service of human beings.⁴⁴ Labrecque cites *Laudato Si'*, where Pope Francis discerns that man must "never forget that his capacity to transform and in a certain sense create the world through his own work [...] is always based on God's prior and original gift of things that are."⁴⁵ Francis also writes, "he must not make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will, as though it did not have its own requisites and God-given purpose, which man can indeed develop but not betray. Instead of carrying out his role as a co-operate with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannized than governed by him."⁴⁶ This lengthy but necessary draw from Pope Francis can be directly tied to the act of manhood creating AI and forcing it to do as they wish. The medium itself, then, in McLuhanian terms, is anti-Christian when considered with the Care of Creation in mind. If man is creating something that is not based on prior works by God, such as AI, and, furthermore, encounters

³⁹ Labrecque, Cory Andrew. *To Tend or to Subdue? Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and the Catholic Ecotheological Tradition* (Reliigons, 2022), 77.

⁴⁰ Labrecque, Cory Andrew. *To Tend or to Subdue? Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and the Catholic Ecotheological Tradition* (Reliigons, 2022), 77.

⁴¹ Labrecque, 77.

⁴² Labrecque, 77.

⁴³ Labrecque, 78.

⁴⁴ Labrecque, 78.

⁴⁵ Labrecque, 79.

⁴⁶ Labrecque, 79.

any sort of issue that may cause humans to abandon or alter the purpose of AI, man is making arbitrary use of the earth and rejecting its God-given purpose.⁴⁷

Conclusion

McLuhan's concept of "Medium is the Message" is an extremely powerful one that forces humans to examine the means in which all information is relayed, and, furthermore, his introduction of the concept of Educational and Informational Overload further allows humans to dissect how not only information is accessed and relayed to them as well as analyze the forms in which it is given, but also forces humans to enact discretion on accessibility of it and debate whether or not some mediums are inherently more positive or influential than other mediums, such as electronic media. When applied to the modern development of Generative AI, McLuhanian thought analyzes not the "message" of the AI, that is, the information it is feeding to its users, but instead the quality of the "medium" itself, and finds that the very concept of a technological device being able to produce colossal amounts of in-depth information directly feeds into a society's Information Overload boundary-zone. When a second consideration of Generative AI as it applies to McLuhan's religious identity, scholarly research affirms that the "medium" of Generative AI is harmful to young, spiritual youth and the very act of creating the device, again, is inherently anti-scriptural and is found to be innately in contention with the covenant between God and mankind.

⁴⁷ Labrecque, Cory Andrew. *To Tend or to Subdue? Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and the Catholic Ecotheological Tradition* (Reliigons, 2022), 79.

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Update on the State of 507 Gertrude Avenue, The Nascent Marshall McLuhan Centre

After some expert advice and encouragement, The Marshall McLuhan Initiative Inc will be issuing a Request for Proposals to various heritage architects in Winnipeg. Although 507 Gertrude Avenue does not have architectural significance (there is not even any record of the architect's name), it is nonetheless of prime importance because Marshall McLuhan grew up there. From the beginning, The Initiative has resisted the idea of considering the MM Centre purely as a museum. Rather, while some aspects will definitely involve maximum restoration to the period that Marshall lived there, 1920 to 1934, in many other ways the Centre will serve to be a living nexus of communication and study.

Here is a sampling of how we decorated the walls of the living/dining area of 507 and our display room for Doors Open Winnipeg, May 30–31, 2026. That means that we were and are ready for subsequent events, such as the “Welcome Home, Marshall” Bus Tour on June 24/26 and for this fall’s McLuhan’s Salon Sessions!



And In other News...

Due to various circumstances, **we've had to postpone our inaugural Winnipigeon Gala Fundraiser to a later date**, possibly Spring or Fall 2028. We'll keep you posted! Honest!

Our first scholar-in-residence, Fr. Krzysztof (Fr. Chris) Marcyński, has made his way back to Warsaw, Poland, after having completed a rigorous month of



research in Winnipeg by the end of July. He will now be focussing on the character of the hypothetical “Winnipeg School of Communication”, a name which may eventually be applied to a group to which Marshall and some students and profs belonged as U. of M. Broadway Campus. In addition, Fr. Chris will also be examining McLuhan’s Faith journey. To this end, Fr. Chris will be producing a peer-reviewed journal article, as well as a paper to be presented at a conference, possibly The Initiative’s Conference in 2027. Thank you, Fr. Chris!

*Fr. Chris, our Scholar-in-Residence, in McLuhan’s Salon at 507 Gertrude.
Photo: Howard R. (J.) Engel*



Howard & Esther holding the Byzantine-style icon called The Black Madonna of Częstochowa, an image of the Virgin Mary and child. It is a national symbol of Poland and motherhood. It is also a miracle-working icon and protector of the Polish people. This icon is yet another gift from Fr. Chris to adorn the walls of 507. (Photo credit: Fr. Chris.)

However, we did not allow Fr. Chris to sit idle while he was in Winnipeg! His presence was put to good use through another medium: The radio! Keep reading...

Thanks to an idea of **Lawrence Prout, our professional fund-raiser**, and a media release penned by our own **Jonathan Slater** about McLuhan's 115th Birthday being July 21, The Initiative was granted two radio interviews.

The first was recorded on July 20 by **Adam Glynn, Station Manager of CJNU 93.7 FM**. CJNU is "Winnipeg's community radio station, owned and operated by listeners, the members of Nostalgia Broadcasting Cooperative" (<https://www.cjnu.ca/>). This recording was broadcast on the eve of July 20. It was Lawrence Prout, who serves as the Board Chair of CNJU, that originally connected The Initiative to Adam.



Two more whimsical selfies by Fr. Chris!

From left to right: Fr. Chris, Howard, Esther, & CNJU Station Manager, Adam Glynn

Here's the link to the recording of this interview for your listening pleasure: [CNJU 93.7 FM Adam Glynn interview with Fr. Chris, Esther and Howard to mark Marshall McLuhan's 115th Birthday, July 21, 2026](#)

The second interview, opened to us purely thanks to the media release, was live with **Greg Mackling and Brett Megarry of CJOB** on McLuhan's actual birthday of July 21. [CJOB 68 AM: Mackling & Megarry "The Start" for July 21, 2026, Marshall McLuhan's 115th Birthday from 0:01:02 to 0:01:33 and 1:09:00 to end.](#)



At CJOB Studio, l to r: Brett Megarry, Fr. Chris, Howard, Esther, and Greg Mackling

All interviewers were well-versed about McLuhan and pursued rather vigorously the topic of his Faith. It was providential that Fr. Chris was still in Winnipeg. His contributions to the radio interviews were invaluable, since he studied media ecology under Neil Postman at New York University, in addition to Catholic theology in Europe. One comment that Fr. Chris made was that in the Christian life, sometimes one must be silent. However, this is not that compatible with the radio, since “the radio abhors a vacuum”. We wisely decided not to pursue the discipline of silent meditation during the broadcasts!

The trio in front of 201 Portage Avenue, 30 storeys below the CJOB studio!



Lawrence had another suggestion to **write a Letter to the Editor in the *Winnipeg Free Press*** on the occasion of Marshall's 115th. The letter was the combined effort of Fr. Chris, Esther, and Howard, and was indeed printed on July 22 in the "Letters to the Editor" section, p. A6 of the *Winnipeg Free Press*. (See below, left.) The very next day, the newspaper published a most heartfelt response from a former University of Toronto library worker now residing in Winnipeg. Her moving account of her ongoing contact with Dr. McLuhan over those years demonstrates, among many other things, his true humility and openness to others' points of view,

Remembering McLuhan

July 21 marked the 115th birthday of Marshall McLuhan. Who was he? He was one of the most quoted Canadians in history.

"The medium is the message" and "the global village" are household expressions, but what do they mean?

Marshall grew up here in Winnipeg at the house at 507 Gertrude Ave. in Osborne Village, and became one of Canada's most renowned public intellectuals and media visionaries. He lived on Gertrude from 1920 to 1934, during his formative years. All of his education, up to and including his first master's degree, took place in Winnipeg and gave him the foundation to pose such crucial questions that are even more relevant today than ever.

Such questions are: In what way do technologies change our perception of the world? How do they change the way we communicate? And how do they affect social relations?

In the age of artificial intelligence and social media, McLuhan's insights provide us with antidotes to the breakdown of communication, loss of identity and drowning in an overabundance of data. *Understanding Media*, his seminal 1964 work, guides us to critical thinking and to affirming our humanity.

Thank you for these gifts, Marshall.

HOWARD R. ENGEL
Winnipeg

McLuhan's life lesson

Re: "Remembering McLuhan" (Letters, July 22)

I would like to thank Howard Engel for his letter about Marshall McLuhan. His words took me back to a time in the early 1970s, when I was an assistant at the University of St. Michael's College library.

At that time, users still had to have their books checked out by staff. I would often look up and see Dr. McLuhan in line, patiently waiting his turn behind other professors and students. He never once demanded or even quietly asked for a privilege and would chat amiably and ask my opinion about different matters.

One day, I shyly brought in books owned by different family members, and he signed each of them, making sure that he had the correct name. I treasure those memories and the valuable life lesson that they taught a young person — if you are secure and know who you are, you do not have to put yourself forward forcefully or in any other way.

Thank you, Dr. McLuhan.

BETTE JAYNE TAYLOR
Winnipeg

despite his celebrity during that time. One facet of humility is, in Ms. Taylor's words, precisely "knowing who you are", so you don't have to push your way around!

Thank you, Marshall McLuhan!

And happy birthday!

Howard's question all is: How did *you* mark Marshall's 115th birthday?

Here's one response:



Gregory Sandstrom PhD at McLuhan House in Edmonton, Alberta; taken from <https://independent.academia.edu/GregorySandstrom>, accessed Sept. 10/26

One of our regular readers, Gregory Sandstrom of Ottawa, was inspired on the occasion of MM's birthday to create and then graciously share the following tetrad. Thanks to his generous permission, we are delighted that we are able to now, in turn, share it with our readers.

Gregory Sandstrom is the CEO of CanUBlockchain, former Managing Editor of the TIM Review, former Associate Professor at the European Humanities University in Vilnius, Lithuania, and an appreciator of Marshall McLuhan's writings and recordings since the late 1990s. Sandstrom is currently in Ottawa, working on a Web3 consensus intelligence platform for exploration, education, and small group challenge, driven by gamification where "the user is the content," thus revealing the "extensions of man(kind)."

