

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-84392-8 - A History of the Media in Ireland
Christopher Morash
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

A HISTORY OF THE MEDIA IN IRELAND

From the first book printed in Ireland in the sixteenth century, to the globalised digital media culture of today, Christopher Morash traces the history of forms of communication in Ireland over the past four centuries: the vigorous newspaper and pamphlet culture of the eighteenth century, the spread of popular literacy in the nineteenth century, and the impact of the telegraph, telephone, phonograph, cinema and radio, which arrived in Ireland just as the Irish Free State came into being. Morash picks out specific events for detailed analysis, such as the first radio broadcast, during the 1916 Rising, or the Live Aid concert in 1985. Outlining new ways to think about Irish culture, this important book breaks new ground within Irish studies. Its accessible narrative explains how Ireland developed into the modern, globally interconnected economy of today. This is an essential and hugely informative read for anyone interested in Irish cultural history.

CHRISTOPHER MORASH is Professor of English at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He is the author of *A History of Irish Theatre 1601–2000* (Cambridge, 2002; paperback edition, 2004).

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-84392-8 - A History of the Media in Ireland
Christopher Morash
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

A HISTORY OF THE MEDIA IN IRELAND

CHRISTOPHER MORASH



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-84392-8 - A History of the Media in Ireland
 Christopher Morash
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
 São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521843928

© Christopher Morash 2010

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
 no reproduction of any part may take place without
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2010

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Morash, Chris, 1963–
 A history of the media in Ireland / Christopher Morash.
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-84392-8 (hardback)

I. Mass media—Ireland—History. I. Title.

P92.I76M67 2009

302.2309417—dc22

2009035297

ISBN 978-0-521-84392-8 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
 accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to
 in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such
 websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page vi
<i>List of figures</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Chronology</i>	xii
Introduction: Ireland and the world	1
CHAPTER 1: 'Stumpeworne letters': 1551–1660	5
MEDIA EVENT 1: 'Bloody newes from Ireland', October 23, 1641	24
CHAPTER 2: Public spirits: 1660–1800	30
MEDIA EVENT 2: Postroads to liberty: January 22, 1793	55
CHAPTER 3: Acts of Union: 1800–1890	60
MEDIA EVENT 3: Parnellism and crime: April 18, 1887	91
CHAPTER 4: Casual miracles: 1890–1920	97
MEDIA EVENT 4: Broadcasting the Rising: April 24, 1916	125
CHAPTER 5: Listening in: 1921–1960	131
MEDIA EVENT 5: Helpless before the camera's eye: October 5, 1968	160
CHAPTER 6: Windows on the world: 1961–1990	166
MEDIA EVENT 6: With satellite television you can go anywhere: July 13, 1985	197
CHAPTER 7: Since 1990: digitised	201
<i>Conclusion: imagining a mediated Ireland</i>	226
<i>Bibliographic essay</i>	231
<i>Index</i>	236

Illustrations

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. <i>Aibidil Gaoidheilge agus Caiticiosma</i> , the first book printed in Irish in Ireland, was produced with specially cut type in 1571. It would be the first of many attempts to provide an Irish-language readership with a reformed catechism. Courtesy of the Library, Trinity College Dublin. | <i>page 7</i> |
| 2. John Temple's account of the massacres of 1641, <i>The Irish Rebellion</i> , originally published in 1646, would be republished at moments of sectarian tensions for the next three centuries. This edition, produced by the Dublin printer Aaron Rhames in 1724, contains some impressively grisly woodcuts. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland. | 27 |
| 3. <i>The Young Gentleman Volunteer's Universal Spelling Book</i> , printed in Dublin by Patrick Wogan in the 1780s, contained instructions for the two essential skills needed by a 'Young Gentleman Volunteer': literacy, and the ability to handle a gun. Courtesy of the British Library. | 53 |
| 4. 'To create and foster public opinion in Ireland and to make it racy of the soil.' The slogan adopted by <i>The Nation</i> found an iconic image in Henry McManus's painting, <i>Reading 'The Nation'</i> . Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland. | 81 |
| 5. The first successful trans-Atlantic telegraph lines, laid in 1866, ran from the west coast of Ireland to Newfoundland, in the process drawing a new informational map, with Ireland at its centre. | 85 |
| 6. On April 18, 1887, <i>The Times</i> published a facsimile of a letter in which Charles Stewart Parnell appeared to condone the Phoenix Park murders five years earlier. | |

List of illustrations

vii

- Apart from the political storm that it provoked, the visual nature of the facsimile caused consternation in media circles in an age when news circulated by telegraph. Courtesy of the Library, Trinity College Dublin. 93
7. One of the earliest practical processes for producing colour photographs was developed in Dublin in 1892 by Professor John Joly of Trinity College. Interestingly, he chose an image that was iconic of tradition – an Irish peasant girl – to demonstrate the process in the pages of the *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*. Courtesy of the Royal Irish Academy. 105
8. In September 1897 the Lumière cameraman Jean Alexandre Louis Promio, shot the first moving images of Ireland including this footage of a very empty Sackville Street taken from O’Connell Bridge in Dublin. Courtesy of Association Frères Lumière and Irish Film Institute. 110
9. O’Connell Street, immediately after the 1916 Rising. The Irish School of Wireless Telegraphy, from which the world’s first radio broadcast was attempted, is the pile of rubble in the foreground on the right. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland. 126
10. ‘Worst of all was the gloating hatred in some of the faces of these policemen.’ Television footage of the civil-rights march in Derry on October 5, 1968, shot by RTE’s Gay O’Brien, which brought the reality of police violence into homes outside of Ulster, is seen by many as a turning point in the Northern Ireland conflict. Courtesy of RTÉ Archives. 163
11. In the mid-1920s, Ireland had a number of magazines dedicated to the new medium of radio. However, radio had barely become a reality when new media technologies beckoned. This 1926 edition of the *Irish Radio and Musical Review* reports on John Logie Baird’s latest invention, the ‘televisor’. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland. 167
12. ‘I must admit that sometimes when I think of television and radio, and their immense power, I feel somewhat afraid.’ President of Ireland, Eamon de Valera, on the opening broadcast of Telefís Éireann, December 31, 1961. Courtesy of RTÉ Archives. 172

13. This internet visualisation suggests a way of picturing the results when searching for the word 'Ireland' using the internet search engine Google. The programme that produced it allows the viewer to visualise the links from one page to the next; the balls on the horizon break down into individual pages as the viewer moves towards them. Courtesy of Diarmuid O'Donoghue, Department of Computer Science, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

Figures

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Irish imprints by decade, 1700–1800 | <i>page</i> 48 |
| 2. Irish imprints by decade, 1800–1900 | 62 |
| 3. The number of books and periodicals banned in the first fifteen years of censorship ranged from 47 to 171 per annum | 142 |
| 4. Television and radio licences in the Irish Republic, 1963–71 | 182 |

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-84392-8 - A History of the Media in Ireland
Christopher Morash
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

This book makes forays into so many discrete disciplines that I wrote it with an acute sense of standing on the shoulders of a great many diverse scholars, from early print specialists, to railway and postal historians, to commentators on contemporary broadcasting legislation. In recompense, I hope that these scholars in turn will find here, at the very least, something that will connect their own fields to others in ways that might be new or unexpected. More specifically, I would like to thank the numerous librarians and archivists who were so generous with their time, with particular thanks to the staff of the National Library of Ireland, the Royal Irish Academy, the British Library, RTÉ, the Linenhall Library and the National Archives of Ireland (who are owed particular thanks for permission to quote from unpublished materials contained here). Charles Benson of Early Printed Books in Trinity College Dublin, was a particular source of wisdom, as were Nicholas Carolan in the Irish Traditional Music Archive and the staff of the library at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (especially Penny Woods in the Russell Library). I also found (perhaps ironically for a book that is about everything other than face-to-face conversation) that ideas for the project as often as not arose from talking with colleagues too numerous to name in the NUI Maynooth, where a genuine collegiality makes it possible to have enthusiastic discussions with friends in many fields, including Diarmuid O'Donoghue in the Department of Computer Science, who generously provided me with his work on internet visualisation. I owe particular thanks to colleagues in the School of English, Media and Theatre Studies, for their conversation, ideas and friendship. Three former students, Denis Condon, Deirdre Quinn and Tom Richards, particularly helped me to shape my ideas. Further afield, Peter Hart was especially helpful. The nature of this project was such that I picked up ideas from good friends outside of academia, especially Dave Selkirk and Woytek Kosinski, an engineer and an internet entrepreneur respectively. The organisers of the

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-84392-8 - A History of the Media in Ireland
Christopher Morash
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

xi

2008 International Association for the Study of Irish Literature (IASIL) conference in Porto gave me the opportunity to give some of the work here a public airing at a crucial stage, in a way that valuably sharpened the argument for me. I was also fortunate in the final stages in having a keen research assistant, Shane Creevy, funded under NUI Maynooth's SPUR initiative to encourage young researchers.

From the beginning, my editor at Cambridge, Ray Ryan, believed in this project; for bringing into the medium of print so many important contributions to Irish studies he has earned his own place in this history. Throughout the writing of this book, I have had a sense that it has all really been an attempt to explain the intensely mediated world of my children, Christopher, Dara and Aoife, who will know better than most why I dedicate it to the person to whom we all owe most, my wife Ann.

Chronology

- ca 1456 Johann Gutenberg prints first Bible
 1551 First Irish printed book: *The Boke of Common Praier*
 1571 First printed book in Irish in Ireland: *Aibidil Gaoidheilge agus Caiticiosma*
 1572 First Deputy Postmaster appointed; first mailboat
 1601 Battle of Kinsale
 1604 John Franckton granted patent as King's Printer
 1618 Stationers' Company take over patent
 1641 Outbreak of Ulster Rebellion
 First English newsbook: *Heads of Several Proceedings*
 1651 First Irish newsbook: *Irish Monthly Mercury* (Cork)
 1660 *An Account of the Chief Occurrences in Ireland* (Dublin)
 1685 *The News-Letter* (Dublin)
 1690 Battle of the Boyne
Dublin Intelligence (Dublin)
 1709 Copyright Act (8 Anne cap. 19)
 1716 *Limrick [sic] News-Letter*
 1720 Declaratory Act (6 Geo. I, cap. 5)
Dublin Weekly Journal
 1737 *Belfast Newsletter*
 1752 *Sligo Journal*
 1755 *Cork Evening Post*
 1763 *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin)
 1779 Volunteers demonstrate for Free Trade
 1782 *Volunteer Post* (Cork)
 Declaratory Act repealed; Irish Parliament in College Green
 1792 *Northern Star* (Belfast; suppressed 1797)
 1795 First Irish-language periodical: *Bolg an tSolair* (Belfast)
 1797 *The Press* (Dublin; suppressed 1798)
 1798 Rebellion in Ulster and Leinster; French forces land in Killala

Chronology

xiii

- 1800 Act of Union
 1801 Copyright Act (41 Geo. III cap. 107)
 1803 Abortive rising led by Robert Emmet
 1813 Irish Endowed Schools Act (53 Geo. III, cap. 107)
 Paddle steamer *Thames* makes first crossing from Dublin to London
 Bianconi cars begin running from Clonmel to Cahir
 1818 *Rob Roy* makes first steam crossing between Clyde and Belfast
 1824 *Morning Register* (Dublin)
 1828 *Pilot* (Dublin)
 1829 Catholic Emancipation
 1831 Postmaster General Act (1 Will. IV, cap. 8)
 Act Authorising Dublin–Kingstown Railway (1 and 2 Will. IV, cap. 69)
 1832 *Dublin Penny Journal*
 1833 *Dublin University Magazine*
 First steam-powered press in Ireland
 1834 Dublin–Kingstown Railway; first in Ireland
 1837 First commercial telegraph line, London
 1838 Steamer *Sirius* makes first trans-Atlantic crossing without sail, Cork to New York
 1839 Daguerre makes public technique for daguerrotypes
 1841 *Cork Examiner*
 First photographic studio opens in Dublin
 1842 *The Nation* (Dublin; suppressed 1848)
 1844 Samuel Morse invents Morse Code
 First Irish telegraph line, Dalkey
 1845 Great telescope at Birr Castle completed
 Potato crop fails; first year of Famine
 1848 *United Irishman* (suppressed May, 1848)
 Abortive Young Ireland rebellion
 Regular mail service by rail between London and Dublin
 1851 Julius Reuter founds telegraph news agency
 1852 Submarine telegraph cable, Holyhead to Howth
 1853 Dublin–Belfast rail line
 1858 First trans-Atlantic telegraph cable
 1859 *Irish Times* (Dublin)
 1863 *The Irish People* (Dublin; suppressed 1865)
 1866 First regular trans-Atlantic telegraph service

- 1867 Fenian disturbances in England and Ireland
 Clan na Gael founded in New York
- 1870 *Irish World* (New York)
Belfast Telegraph
- 1873 *Irish Monthly Magazine*
- 1874 650,000 miles of telegraph cable worldwide
- 1875 *Southern Cross* (Buenos Aires)
- 1876 Alexander Graham Bell patents telephone
- 1878 Thomas Edison patents phonograph
- 1879 University Education (Ireland) Act (42 & 43 Vict. cap. 65)
- 1880 First Irish telephone exchange opens, Dublin
- 1881 *United Ireland* (Dublin)
- 1882 *Irisleabhar na Gaedhilge: the Gaelic Journal*
- 1884 Gaelic Athletic Association formed
- 1890 Eaward Muybridge displays zoopraxiscope, Dublin
- 1891 *Irish Daily Independent* (Dublin)
 Death of Parnell
- 1892 Irish Education Act (55 and 56 Vict. cap. 42); compulsory
 education
- 1893 Electric railways from Haddington Road to Dalkey
 Gaelic League founded
- 1895 *Irish Homestead*
 Edison kinoscope on display in Dublin
- 1896 First Irish cinematograph show, at Olympia Theatre
 First phonographs for home use
- 1897 First Lumière films made in Ireland
 Marconi patents wireless telegraphy
- 1898 First use of wireless telegraph for news reporting, Dublin
- 1899 First production of Irish Literary Theatre
- 1903 John McCormack; first recording
 Wyndham Land Act, allows tenants to buy land
- 1905 *Sunday Independent* (Dublin)
- 1907 Wireless trans-Atlantic telegraph begins
- 1910 *The Lad from Old Ireland* (dir. Sidney Olcott); first feature
 film shot in Ireland
- 1913 Irish Transport and General Workers' Strike
- 1916 Easter Rising; rebels attempt radio transmission
- 1919 First meeting of Dáil Éireann
- 1920 KDKA begins broadcasting in Philadelphia

Chronology

xv

- 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty ends War of Independence
- 1922 Beginning of Civil War
 Marconi Company makes first English radio broadcast
 BBC begins broadcasting
- 1923 White Paper on Wireless Broadcasting
 De Valera orders suspension of Anti-Treaty Campaign
Irish Statesman (Dublin)
Dublin Magazine
 Censorship of Films Act
- 1924 BBC Belfast first broadcast as 2BE
- 1925 Boundary Commission defines border between Free State
 and Northern Ireland
- 1926 First broadcast of 2RN
 John Logie Baird demonstrates 'televisor' in Dublin
- 1929 Censorship of Publications Act
- 1931 *Irish Press* (Dublin)
- 1934 *Man of Aran* (dir. Robert Flaherty)
- 1936 *Vigilanti Cura*; Papal Encyclical on cinema
 BBC begin first regular television broadcasts
- 1937 EMI open first Dublin recording studio
 Irish Constitution
- 1940 *The Bell* (Dublin)
- 1948 33 rpm LP and 45 rpm single replace 78 rpm disc
- 1949 Republic of Ireland Act
- 1952 BBC television begins broadcasting from Belfast
- 1954 Television Act lays basis for commercial television in UK
- 1958 Ardmore Studios (cinema) opens, Bray
- 1959 UTV begins broadcasting, Belfast
- 1960 Broadcasting Authority Act
- 1961 Telefís Éireann; first broadcast (New Year's Eve)
- 1962 First broadcast of *The Late Late Show*
 Telstar satellite launched
- 1964 Radio Caroline begins broadcasting in North Sea
- 1968 Television coverage of disturbances in Northern Ireland
 Satellite coverage of Mexico City Olympics; first major live
 global television event
- 1969 First email sent; UCLA to Stanford University
 Riots in Derry and Belfast; British troops enter Northern
 Ireland

- 1970 *Fortnight* (Belfast)
- 1971 First colour broadcast by RTÉ
 Directive under Section 31 of Broadcasting Act bans inter-views with members of organisations linked to political violence
- 1972 'Bloody Sunday'; British Army kill thirteen people in Derry
- 1973 *Sunday World* (Dublin)
- 1974 First use of word 'internet' to describe linked computers
- 1976 *In Dublin* (Dublin)
- 1977 *Hot Press* (Dublin)
Magill (Dublin)
- 1978 RTÉ2 (television)
- 1979 RTÉ launches Radio 2
- 1980 *Sunday Tribune* (Dublin)
- 1982 *Angel* (dir. Neil Jordan); first film funded by Irish Film Board
- 1986 Anglo-Irish Agreement
- 1988 Broadcasting and Wireless Telegraphy Act
 Section 35 of Finance Bill facilitates film production
 Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC)
- 1989 First licensed commercial station in Republic: Capital Radio
 Sky begins satellite broadcasting
 EU Television without Frontiers Directive
My Left Foot (dir. Jim Sheridan) wins two Oscars, 1990
- 1990 Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau develop World Wide Web
- 1994 IRA announces ceasefire; Loyalist paramilitaries follow
 Netscape Navigator launched
Irish Times launches online edition: Ireland.com
- 1995 First computer operating system with web browser:
 Windows 95
 Green Paper on Broadcasting
 Referendum legalises divorce in Republic
- 1996 Telefís na Gaeilge begins broadcasting (TG4 as of 1999)
- 1998 First commercial broadcaster in Republic: TV3
Michael Collins (dir. Neil Jordan)
 Good Friday Agreement
- 1999 Exchequer surplus in Republic exceeds €1 billion
- 2000 *Metro Éireann*, multi-ethnic newspaper (Dublin)
- 2002 *Foreign Policy* ranks Ireland as world's most globalised society

Chronology

xvii

- 2003 BBC begins Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) in Northern
 Ireland
- 2008 Broadcasting Bill
 RTÉ begins DAB broadcasting; announces Digital Terrestrial
 Television (DTT) for 2009
 Economy enters recession

The latest Tweets from Irish Media History (@media_history). Irish media history blog, by Stephanie Rains, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Ireland. A blog post about the cost of reading in Ireland a century ago " Irish Media History <https://irishmediahistory.com/2016/10/04/money-matters-the-cost-of-books-newspapers-and-magazines-in-early-20thc-ireland/> 0 replies 5 retweets 1 like. Reply.