

The Invention of Movable Type Printing and Religious Reform as A Example of New Medium Emergence and Social Destabilization

Eiichiro Kabashima

ABSTRACTS

Various changes in many societies after around 2010 like Arab Spring had been often explained from the influence of the Internet. However, it is not the first time that new medium emergence brings change and destabilization to societies. One clear example is the invention of movable type printing and religious reform in Germany. Rapid spread of movable type printing technology increased amount of information revolutionarily. Also this new technology promoted the standardization and simplification of texts, expanded the readers, and allowed many people to receive the same information. Luther did not intend to reform the religion, but his idea widely spread to society as printed texts. Due to public enthusiasm for the new medium and the new ideas that medium conveyed, the German peasants' war that demanded the liberation of peasants occurred in 1525. Luther felt a strong threat because he utterly unexpected the enthusiasm of public and the war as the result of his argument. After peasants' war he insisted that the people should not read the Bible themselves, but should contact with the Bible under the control of church specialists. More research needed on the social divide between Catholic who emphasized oral media and Protestant who mainly used typographic media.