

THE RADIO AS NEW TECHNOLOGY: BLESSING OR CURSE? A 1929 DEBATE

FOLLOW-UP ASSIGNMENT

Compare the opposing positions on the radio presented by Jack Woodford and James Harbord in the *Forum* (March & April 1929) with earlier commentary by Waldemar Kaempffert, an American science writer, former editor of *Popular Science*, and future long-time science editor of the *New York Times*. Cite evidence from the texts.

1924	1929	Today
<p>Commentary by Waldemar Kaempffert "The Social Destiny of Radio" <i>Forum</i>, June 1924</p>	<p>How would Jack Woodford or James Harbord have responded?</p>	<p>How does the statement resemble today's commentary about the Internet and social media?</p>
<p>Who can help conjuring up a vision of a super radio university educating the world . . . or a super newspaper reaching whole continents not by the printed word but by the living voice? Every home has the potentiality of becoming an extension of Carnegie Hall or Harvard University.</p>		
<p>The telegraph and the telephone did much to weave us into a political and economic fabric, but a coarse fabric with wide meshes. How fine is the texture of the web that radio is even now spinning! It is achieving the task of making us feel together, think together, live together.</p>		
<p>There still remains the problem of making broadcasting a profitable enterprise. The American Telegraph and Telephone Company [AT&T] believes that broadcasting can be made to pay for itself as popular magazines and newspapers pay for themselves—by advertising.</p>		
<p>No longer do we hear the criticism that radio can never become a useful instrumentality of communication because secrecy is impossible. We have thrown secrecy to the winds. Broadcasting thrives because it is so dazzlingly public.</p>		