

# Comparing the Media

## *Linear vs Nonlinear*

Category	Linear	Nonlinear
<b>Uses</b>		
<b>Variants</b>	Single (except for double entendre or cumbersome cross-references)	Multiple versions, levels, audiences
<b>Narrative</b>	Traditional narrative	Customized narrative / Adventure games
<b>Learning</b>	Text material / Reports	Dynamic research
<b>Cause/Effect</b>	Logical argument / Procedures	Brainstorming / "What if...?" modeling
<b>Audience</b>	Quiet active audience	Stimulate passive audience
<b>Control</b>	Author	Shared between author & consumer
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Print:</b> Author held to prior statements, logical progression; <b>Oral:</b> Author gets immediate feedback (which can be <i>ir</i> responsible).	Author's facts easily checked through data retrieval.

## *Print vs Online/Electronic vs Oral*

Category	Print	Online/Electronic	Oral (not recorded or amplified)
<b>Production</b>			
<b>Creation</b>	Creation slow, expensive	Creation slow, expensive	Reinvent/recreate/imitate, not revise
<b>Revision</b>	Revision often slow, expensive	Revision usually fast, cheap	Cannot revise
<b>Distribution</b>	Slow, but can be wide	Fast and normally wide	Fast but very limited range
<b>Presentation</b>			
<b>Quality</b>	Fine resolution / Wide field of view	Grainy / Narrow scope	Varies
<b>Equipment</b>	Requires only printed material	Extensive equipment requirements	None
<b>Education</b>	Requires literacy	Requires additional expertise	Requires minimum language skills
<b>Mediums</b>	Static visual	Multimedia	Multimedia
<b>Feedback</b>	Presenter gets minimum feedback	"Expert" system adapts like feedback	Presenter gets immediate feedback
<b>Comfort</b>			
<b>Emotional</b>	Considered "warm fuzzy" (decreasing)	Not considered "warm fuzzy" (increasing)	"Warm fuzzy" feeling varies
<b>Physical</b>	Fairly comfortable over long periods	Less comfortable over long periods	Fairly comfortable over long periods
<b>Record?</b>	Yes	Normally	No

(As you can see, Linear ≠ Print; Nonlinear ≠ Online/Electronic)

*See "Under-Recognized Aspects" on verso*

# Under-Recognized Aspects of Various Media

*(Most of these you already "know", but may not have internalized enough to apply instinctively.)*

## Linear / Print Dichotomy Can Confuse or Clarify

*(Use the simplification; just don't get boxed in)*

1. Minus links, hypertext topics are linear (procedures, *e.g.*).
2. Recordings, TV, movies are linear – but FastForward circumvents.
3. See-refs are attempt to circumvent linearity; annotations/corrections to printed copy circumvent author's linearity.
4. On/off switch makes everything nonlinear.
5. Acrobat is hybrid that defies classification.

## Decision Making

Online users decide fast (impact on Responsibility, below)

- Function/purpose of everything must be immediately clear
- Problem aggravated by tunnel vision limitations of online display, and persuasion of multimedia.

Nonlinear for "What if...?" modeling.

## Control vs Interaction

(Basically linear vs nonlinear – but from a slightly different perspective)

Linear normally has more author control than nonlinear. But inconvenience or peer pressure can increase author control in nonlinear situations.

Mix depends on audience as well as subject & purpose: active audiences often benefit from more control; passive audiences from more interaction.

## Recorded / Nonrecorded

Required for retention, distribution, or retrieval.

- Therefore, vital in Responsibility (below)

***Primary issue is 1:1 recording, or 1:many recording. Exponential orders of magnitude difference.***

Print 100% recorded; most electronic is recorded; oral may or may not be.

## Responsibility

Linear for logical responsibility

Recorded for long-term responsibility

Electronic for immediate consequences

Hypertext for search and retrieval.