



## We are the media

In his book [Mediactive](#) (available online because of its [Creative Commons](#) licensing) participatory media expert [Dan Gillmor](#) makes this argument: “We’re in an age of information overload, and too much of what we watch, hear and read is mistaken, deceitful or even dangerous. Yet you and I can take control and make media serve us – all of us – by being active consumers and participants.”

### Class discussions at three levels:

**Flashlight:** 1) Are people the media now? 2) If you think this is true, what impact does this have on the kind of media that is being produced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? 3) Does it have a negative or a positive effect? Explain your answers.

**Spotlight:** Go over these questions one by one. Ask how many students agree, then discuss with each group why they feel that way:

- I am misinformed by the news media, even though I know my own behavior determines how I learn credible information.
- When I am misinformed, the primary blame falls upon the media, not me.
- Computers put the “me” in media; I often can match news to my interests.
- I am in control of the information I get from the news media.

**Searchlight:** Some say young people do not care about news or community engagement; others argue exactly the opposite. [Participant Media](#) thinks younger people are ready for their own [serious cable channel, Pivot](#). Participant’s media work includes social change campaigns, [such as this one on news literacy](#). At the Missouri School of Journalism, a class specializes in the 18-24-year-old demographic it calls [YAYAs \(Youth and Young adults\)](#). Assignment for students: Can you find academic research showing whether young people today are more or less informed and engaged than previous generations?