

What is Propaganda?

Neil Postman once wrote that of all the words we use to talk about talk, the word “propaganda” is the most mischievous. That’s because the word has a wide variety of definitions:

1. **Propaganda** is a form of communication aimed towards influencing the attitude of a population toward some cause or position.

-Wikipedia

2. **Propaganda** is a form of information that panders to our insecurities and anxieties.

-Jacques Ellul

3. **Propaganda** is indifferent to truth and truthfulness, knowledge and understanding; it is a form of strategic communication that uses any means to accomplish its ends.

-Walter Cunningham

4. **Propaganda** is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.

-Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell

5. **Propaganda** is a form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels.

-Richard Alan Nelson

6. **Propaganda** is intentionally-designed communication that invites us to respond emotionally, immediately, and in an either-or manner.

-Neil Postman

However it is defined, one thing is clear: contemporary propaganda is everywhere - in news, information, advertising and entertainment. In a Web 2.0 world, propaganda is impossible to avoid.

