



Haym Salomon @SalomonCrypto

Sep 1 · 15 tweets · [SalomonCrypto/status/1565465541262815233](https://twitter.com/SalomonCrypto/status/1565465541262815233)

(1/14) How Mass Communication Reformed Europe

How did the printing press change Medieval European society?
How did one unknown professor use it to become the most famous man in Europe? What horrors did it unleash?

What does it imply for the world's next mass comms platform?

(2/14) Before 1440, mass communication did not exist. Few people could read or write, and while written works did exist, the process and materials were outrageously expensive.

The most effective way to spread a message was to spread it yourself. Or maybe rely on a few apostles.

(3/14) In (approx) 1440, German Johannes Gutenberg created a machine that drastically reduced the cost of printing books and other documents.

Those of us in 2022 know that this invention would go on to shape the world, up until and including today.



Printing press - Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing_press

(4/14) Gutenberg's life would take a turn, ending bankruptcy and poverty, but the printing press was an instant success.

By 1500, >1,000 printing presses were in operation throughout Western Europe and had produced >8MM books.

Society was changing, from the ground up.

(5/14) The major cities of Europe had a vibrant literary culture and a new intellectual class empowered by the rapid exchange of ideas.

The printing press is largely responsible for Desiderius Erasmus, Thomas Moore and many of the other creators of the Renaissance.

(6/14) For ~75 years affordable content proliferated, minds became more receptive, and ideas spread; always accelerating over time.

As the people changed, society changed. Eventually, the stress of this change became so strong that we can see it from 2022.

(7/14) In 1517, Martin Luther entered the stage; his presence would change the world forever.

Since 1440, the printing press had been slowly changing society, one person at a time. But Luther would unleash the true power of mass communication.

He would launch the Reformation.



A screenshot of a Twitter post. The user is Haym Salomon (@SalomonCrypto), with a 'Follow' button. The tweet is the first in a thread, labeled '(1/28) Martin Luther, the Printing Press and the Reformation'. The text of the tweet reads: 'The first mass communication technology was invented in 1440. 75 years later, an unknown friar would use the tech to plunge Europe into chaos and reshape the world. The story of technology, capitalism and revolution.' The tweet is timestamped '3:09 PM · Sep 1, 2022' and has 22 likes. Below the tweet are icons for 'Reply' and 'Copy link', and a button that says 'Read 1 reply'.

(8/14) To understand how an unknown professor in a backwater university town could have such an impact, you must understand his relationship to the printing industry.

Luther was low risk: he wrote briefly and the public couldn't get enough of him.



A screenshot of a Twitter post by Haym Salomon (@SalomonCrypto). The post is a reply to @SalomonCrypto and contains the following text: "(17/28) Luther had exactly the right combination of ideas and writing skills to convey them to mass audiences. Printers had the economic incentives to identify and meet demand. And so, they worked together to create a brand new market: a reading public." The post is dated 3:10 PM · Sep 1, 2022 and has 1 reply.

Haym Salomon
@SalomonCrypto · Follow

Replying to @SalomonCrypto

(17/28) Luther had exactly the right combination of ideas and writing skills to convey them to mass audiences. Printers had the economic incentives to identify and meet demand.

And so, they worked together to create a brand new market: a reading public.

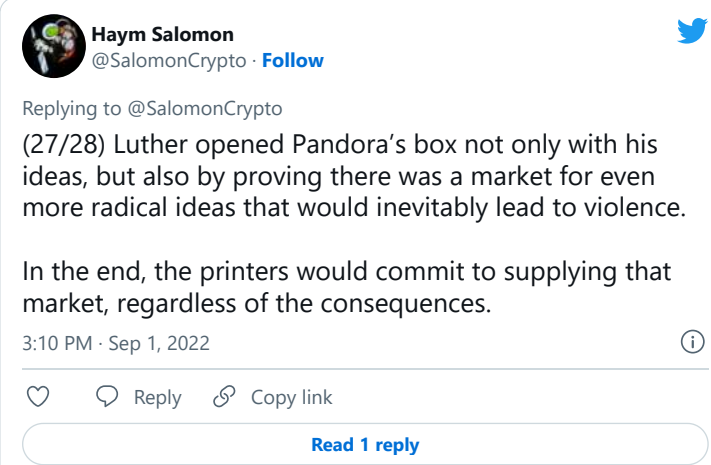
3:10 PM · Sep 1, 2022

♡ Reply 🔗 Copy link

Read 1 reply

(9/14) By 1520, 2 years after his debut, Luther was the best selling author since the invention of the printing press.

The people couldn't get enough of his increasingly extreme and vitriolic content. Eventually, the rhetoric would escape Luthers control and understanding.



A screenshot of a Twitter post by Haym Salomon (@SalomonCrypto). The post is a reply to @SalomonCrypto and contains the following text: "(27/28) Luther opened Pandora's box not only with his ideas, but also by proving there was a market for even more radical ideas that would inevitably lead to violence. In the end, the printers would commit to supplying that market, regardless of the consequences." The post is dated 3:10 PM · Sep 1, 2022 and has 1 reply.

Haym Salomon
@SalomonCrypto · Follow

Replying to @SalomonCrypto

(27/28) Luther opened Pandora's box not only with his ideas, but also by proving there was a market for even more radical ideas that would inevitably lead to violence.

In the end, the printers would commit to supplying that market, regardless of the consequences.

3:10 PM · Sep 1, 2022

♡ Reply 🔗 Copy link

Read 1 reply

(10/14) Wikipedia will tell you what's next. Suffice to say it completely reshuffled Europe, and by extension, the planet.

And this change, for better or worse, came at the end of the most horrific and long series of wars the world had seen (for now).



Reformation - Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformation>

(11/14) The printing press fundamentally reshaped the society of Medieval Europe, first slowly and then all at once.

First it provided content. Next it allowed people to share ideas. Then it forced people to start asking questions.

This was the context waiting for Luther.

(12/14) Luther was a match that set a tinderbox alight.

The printers, trying to surviving in a difficult business, saw an opportunity and moved mountains to take advantage.

The people finally found a way to express their anger at an extractive church.

And Europe exploded.

(13/14) Historians still argue about the end of the Reformation, which suits us fine. The effects of the printing press have no clear ending. In fact they never stopped.

We are here to examine how the introduction of the printing press changed society. Before vs after.

(14/14) The lesson of the printing press:

- mass communication technology will have huge consequences
- content → ideas → discontent → rupture
- war, upheaval, sundering and chaos are possible (if not likely)
- society will be changed in profound, unforeseeable ways



A screenshot of a Twitter reply. The user is Haym Salomon (@SalomonCrypto), with a 'Follow' button. The tweet is a reply to @SalomonCrypto and contains the text: "(28/28) The printing press was invented around 1440. ~75 years later, a small group of innovators took that same invention and built a new business model. That model would directly lead to a multi-generational war and remake the world. The internet was invented around 1990." The tweet is dated 3:10 PM · Sep 1, 2022. Below the text are icons for like, reply, and copy link, and a 'Read 1 reply' button.

Like what you read? Help me spread the word by retweeting the thread (linked below).

Follow me for more explainers and as much alpha as I can possibly serve.



A screenshot of a Twitter thread. The user is Haym Salomon (@SalomonCrypto), with a 'Follow' button. The tweet is the first in a thread, indicated by '(1/14) How Mass Communication Reformed Europe'. The text asks: "How did the printing press change Medieval European society? How did one unknown professor use it to become the most famous man in Europe? What horrors did it unleash? What does it imply for the world's next mass comms platform?" The tweet is dated 10:24 PM · Sep 1, 2022. Below the text is a link to 'Read the full conversation on Twitter'. At the bottom are icons for like, reply, and copy link, and a 'Read 1 reply' button.

...