From the first book printed in Ireland in the sixteenth century, to the globalised digital media culture of today, Christopher Morash traces the history of forms of communication in Ireland over the past four centuries: the vigorous newspaper and pamphlet culture of the eighteenth century, the spread of popular literacy in the nineteenth century, and the impact of the telegraph, telephone, phonograph, cinema and radio, which arrived in Ireland just as the Irish Free State came into being. Morash picks out specific events for detailed analysis, such as the first radio broadcast, during the 1916 Rising, or the Live Aid concert in 1985. Outlining new ways to think about Irish culture, this important book breaks new ground within Irish studies. Its accessible narrative explains how Ireland developed into the modern, globally interconnected economy of today. This is an essential and hugely informative read for anyone interested in Irish cultural history.

Christopher Morash is Professor of English at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He is the author of A History of Irish Theatre 1601–2000 (Cambridge, 2002; paperback edition, 2004).
# Contents

List of illustrations                              page vi  
List of figures                                  ix       
Acknowledgements                                x        
Chronology                                      xii      

Introduction: Ireland and the world             1       

CHAPTER 1: ‘Stumpeworne letters’: 1551–1660       5       
MEDIA EVENT 1: ‘Bloudy newes from Ireland’,       24      
                                      October 23, 1641 

CHAPTER 2: Public spirits: 1660–1800              30      
MEDIA EVENT 2: Postroads to liberty: January 22, 1793 55   

CHAPTER 3: Acts of Union: 1800–1890               60      
MEDIA EVENT 3: Parnellism and crime: April 18, 1887 91   

CHAPTER 4: Casual miracles: 1890–1920             97      
MEDIA EVENT 4: Broadcasting the Rising: April 24, 1916 125 

CHAPTER 5: Listening in: 1921–1960                131     
MEDIA EVENT 5: Helpless before the camera’s eye:   160    
October 5, 1968 

MEDIA EVENT 6: With satellite television you can   197    
go anywhere: July 13, 1985 

CHAPTER 7: Since 1990: digitised                   201     

Conclusion: imagining a mediated Ireland          226     
Bibliographic essay                              231     
Index                                            236     
Illustrations

1. *Aibidil Gaoidheilge agus Caiticiosma*, the first book printed in Irish in Ireland, was produced with specially cut type in 1571. It would be the first of many attempts to provide an Irish-language readership with a reformed catechism. Courtesy of the Library, Trinity College Dublin.


3. *The Young Gentleman Volunteer’s Universal Spelling Book*, printed in Dublin by Patrick Wogan in the 1780s, contained instructions for the two essential skills needed by a ‘Young Gentleman Volunteer’: literacy, and the ability to handle a gun. Courtesy of the British Library.

4. ‘To create and foster public opinion in Ireland and to make it racy of the soil.’ The slogan adopted by *The Nation* found an iconic image in Henry McManus’s painting, *Reading ‘The Nation’*. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland.

5. The first successful trans-Atlantic telegraph lines, laid in 1866, ran from the west coast of Ireland to Newfoundland, in the process drawing a new informational map, with Ireland at its centre.

6. On April 18, 1887, *The Times* published a facsimile of a letter in which Charles Stewart Parnell appeared to condone the Phoenix Park murders five years earlier.
Apart from the political storm that it provoked, the visual nature of the facsimile caused consternation in media circles in an age when news circulated by telegraph. Courtesy of the Library, Trinity College Dublin.

7. One of the earliest practical processes for producing colour photographs was developed in Dublin in 1892 by Professor John Joly of Trinity College. Interestingly, he chose an image that was iconic of tradition – an Irish peasant girl – to demonstrate the process in the pages of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy. Courtesy of the Royal Irish Academy.

8. In September 1897 the Lumière cameraman Jean Alexandre Louis Promio, shot the first moving images of Ireland including this footage of a very empty Sackville Street taken from O’Connell Bridge in Dublin. Courtesy of Association Frères Lumière and Irish Film Institute.

9. O’Connell Street, immediately after the 1916 Rising. The Irish School of Wireless Telegraphy, from which the world’s first radio broadcast was attempted, is the pile of rubble in the foreground on the right. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

10. ‘Worst of all was the gloating hatred in some of the faces of these policemen.’ Television footage of the civil-rights march in Derry on October 5, 1968, shot by RTÉ’s Gay O’Brien, which brought the reality of police violence into homes outside of Ulster, is seen by many as a turning point in the Northern Ireland conflict. Courtesy of RTÉ Archives.

11. In the mid-1920s, Ireland had a number of magazines dedicated to the new medium of radio. However, radio had barely become a reality when new media technologies beckoned. This 1926 edition of the Irish Radio and Musical Review reports on John Logie Baird’s latest invention, the ‘televisor’. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

12. ‘I must admit that sometimes when I think of television and radio, and their immense power, I feel somewhat afraid.’ President of Ireland, Eamon de Valera, on the opening broadcast of Telefís Éireann, December 31, 1961. Courtesy of RTÉ Archives.
This internet visualisation suggests a way of picturing the results when searching for the word ‘Ireland’ using the internet search engine Google. The programme that produced it allows the viewer to visualise the links from one page to the next; the balls on the horizon break down into individual pages as the viewer moves towards them. Courtesy of Diarmuid O’Donoghue, Department of Computer Science, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.
Figures

1. Irish imprints by decade, 1700–1800  
2. Irish imprints by decade, 1800–1900  
3. The number of books and periodicals banned in the first fifteen years of censorship ranged from 47 to 171 per annum  
4. Television and radio licences in the Irish Republic, 1963–71
Acknowledgements

This book makes forays into so many discrete disciplines that I wrote it with an acute sense of standing on the shoulders of a great many diverse scholars, from early print specialists, to railway and postal historians, to commentators on contemporary broadcasting legislation. In recompense, I hope that these scholars in turn will find here, at the very least, something that will connect their own fields to others in ways that might be new or unexpected. More specifically, I would like to thank the numerous librarians and archivists who were so generous with their time, with particular thanks to the staff of the National Library of Ireland, the Royal Irish Academy, the British Library, RTÉ, the Linenhall Library and the National Archives of Ireland (who are owed particular thanks for permission to quote from unpublished materials contained here). Charles Benson of Early Printed Books in Trinity College Dublin, was a particular source of wisdom, as were Nicholas Carolan in the Irish Traditional Music Archive and the staff of the library at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (especially Penny Woods in the Russell Library). I also found (perhaps ironically for a book that is about everything other than face-to-face conversation) that ideas for the project as often as not arose from talking with colleagues too numerous to name in the NUI Maynooth, where a genuine collegiality makes it possible to have enthusiastic discussions with friends in many fields, including Diarmuid O’Donoghue in the Department of Computer Science, who generously provided me with his work on internet visualisation. I owe particular thanks to colleagues in the School of English, Media and Theatre Studies, for their conversation, ideas and friendship. Three former students, Denis Condon, Deirdre Quinn and Tom Richards, particularly helped me to shape my ideas. Further afield, Peter Hart was especially helpful. The nature of this project was such that I picked up ideas from good friends outside of academia, especially Dave Selkirk and Woytek Kosinski, an engineer and an internet entrepreneur respectively. The organisers of the
2008 International Association for the Study of Irish Literature (IASIL) conference in Porto gave me the opportunity to give some of the work here a public airing at a crucial stage, in a way that valuably sharpened the argument for me. I was also fortunate in the final stages in having a keen research assistant, Shane Creevy, funded under NUI Maynooth’s SPUR initiative to encourage young researchers.

From the beginning, my editor at Cambridge, Ray Ryan, believed in this project; for bringing into the medium of print so many important contributions to Irish studies he has earned his own place in this history. Throughout the writing of this book, I have had a sense that it has all really been an attempt to explain the intensely mediated world of my children, Christopher, Dara and Aoife, who will know better than most why I dedicate it to the person to whom we all owe most, my wife Ann.
**Chronology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event / Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ca 1456</td>
<td>Johann Gutenberg prints first Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1551</td>
<td>First Irish printed book: <em>The Boke of Common Praier</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1571</td>
<td>First printed book in Irish in Ireland: <em>Aibidil Gaoidheilge agus Caiticiosma</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1572</td>
<td>First Deputy Postmaster appointed; first mailboat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1601</td>
<td>Battle of Kinsale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>John Franckton granted patent as King’s Printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1618</td>
<td>Stationers’ Company take over patent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1641</td>
<td>Outbreak of Ulster Rebellion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651</td>
<td>First English newsbook: <em>Heads of Several Proceedings</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td>An Account of the Chief Occurrences in Ireland (Dublin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>The News-Letter (Dublin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>Battle of the Boyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1709</td>
<td>Copyright Act (8 Anne cap. 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1716</td>
<td>Limrick [sic] News-Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>Declaratory Act (6 Geo. I, cap. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1725</td>
<td>Dublin Weekly Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1737</td>
<td>Belfast Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1732</td>
<td>Sligo Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Cork Evening Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>Freeman’s Journal (Dublin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779</td>
<td>Volunteers demonstrate for Free Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Volunteer Post (Cork)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Declaratory Act repealed; Irish Parliament in College Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>First Irish-language periodical: <em>Bolg an tSolair</em> (Belfast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>The Press (Dublin; suppressed 1798)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Rebellion in Ulster and Leinster; French forces land in Killala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1800  Act of Union
1801  Copyright Act (41 Geo. III cap. 107)
1803  Abortive rising led by Robert Emmet
1813  Irish Endowed Schools Act (53 Geo. III, cap. 107)
Paddle steamer *Thames* makes first crossing from Dublin to London
Bianconi cars begin running from Clonmel to Cahir
1818  *Rob Roy* makes first steam crossing between Clyde and Belfast
1824  *Morning Register* (Dublin)
1828  *Pilot* (Dublin)
1829  Catholic Emancipation
1831  Postmaster General Act (1 Will. IV, cap. 8)
Act Authorising Dublin–Kingstown Railway (1 and 2 Will. IV, cap. 69)
1832  *Dublin Penny Journal*
1833  *Dublin University Magazine*
First steam-powered press in Ireland
1834  Dublin–Kingstown Railway; first in Ireland
1837  First commercial telegraph line, London
1838  Steamer *Sirius* makes first trans-Atlantic crossing without sail, Cork to New York
1839  Daguerre makes public technique for daguerrotypes
*Cork Examiner*
First photographic studio opens in Dublin
1842  *The Nation* (Dublin; suppressed 1848)
1844  Samuel Morse invents Morse Code
First Irish telegraph line, Dalkey
1845  Great telescope at Birr Castle completed
Potato crop fails; first year of Famine
1848  *United Irishman* (suppressed May, 1848)
Abortive Young Ireland rebellion
Regular mail service by rail between London and Dublin
1851  Julius Reuter founds telegraph news agency
1852  Submarine telegraph cable, Holyhead to Howth
1853  Dublin–Belfast rail line
1858  First trans-Atlantic telegraph cable
1859  *Irish Times* (Dublin)
1863  *The Irish People* (Dublin; suppressed 1865)
1866  First regular trans-Atlantic telegraph service
Chronology

1867  Fenian disturbances in England and Ireland
      Clan na Gael founded in New York
1870  *Irish World* (New York)
      *Belfast Telegraph*
1873  *Irish Monthly Magazine*
1874  650,000 miles of telegraph cable worldwide
1875  *Southern Cross* (Buenos Aires)
1876  Alexander Graham Bell patents telephone
1878  Thomas Edison patents phonograph
1879  University Education (Ireland) Act (42 & 43 Vict. cap. 65)
1880  First Irish telephone exchange opens, Dublin
1881  *United Ireland* (Dublin)
1882  *Irisleabhar na Gaedhilge: the Gaelic Journal*
1884  Gaelic Athletic Association formed
1890  Eaweard Muybridge displays zoopraxiscope, Dublin
1891  *Irish Daily Independent* (Dublin)
      Death of Parnell
1892  Irish Education Act (55 and 56 Vict. cap. 42); compulsory
      education
1893  Electric railways from Haddington Road to Dalkey
      Gaelic League founded
1895  *Irish Homestead*
      Edison kinetoscope on display in Dublin
1896  First Irish cinematograph show, at Olympia Theatre
      First phonographs for home use
1897  First *Lumi`ere* films made in Ireland
      Marconi patents wireless telegraphy
1898  First use of wireless telegraph for news reporting, Dublin
1899  First production of Irish Literary Theatre
1903  John McCormack; first recording
      Wyndham Land Act, allows tenants to buy land
1905  *Sunday Independent* (Dublin)
1907  Wireless trans-Atlantic telegraph begins
1910  *The Lad from Old Ireland* (dir. Sidney Olcott); first feature
      film shot in Ireland
1913  Irish Transport and General Workers’ Strike
1916  Easter Rising; rebels attempt radio transmission
1919  First meeting of Dáil Éireann
1920  KDKA begins broadcasting in Philadelphia
Chronology

1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty ends War of Independence
1922 Beginning of Civil War
1923 White Paper on Wireless Broadcasting
1924 Marconi Company makes first English radio broadcast
1925 BBC begins broadcasting
1926 White Paper on Wireless Broadcasting
1927 De Valera orders suspension of Anti-Treaty Campaign
1928 Irish Statesman (Dublin)
1929 Dublin Magazine
1930 Censorship of Films Act
1931 BBC Belfast first broadcast as 2BE
1932 Boundary Commission defines border between Free State and Northern Ireland
1933 First broadcast of 2RN
1934 John Logie Baird demonstrates ‘television’ in Dublin
1935 Censorship of Publications Act
1936 Irish Press (Dublin)
1937 Man of Aran (dir. Robert Flaherty)
1938 Vigilanti Cura; Papal Encyclical on cinema
1939 BBC begin first regular television broadcasts
1940 EMI open first Dublin recording studio
1941 Irish Constitution
1942 The Bell (Dublin)
1943 33 rpm LP and 45 rpm single replace 78 rpm disc
1944 Republic of Ireland Act
1945 BBC television begins broadcasting from Belfast
1946 Television Act lays basis for commercial television in UK
1947 Ardmore Studios (cinema) opens, Bray
1948 UTV begins broadcasting, Belfast
1949 Broadcasting Authority Act
1950 Telefís Éireann; first broadcast (New Year’s Eve)
1951 First broadcast of The Late Late Show
1952 Telstar satellite launched
1953 Radio Caroline begins broadcasting in North Sea
1954 Television coverage of disturbances in Northern Ireland
1955 Satellite coverage of Mexico City Olympics; first major live global television event
1956 First email sent; UCLA to Stanford University
1957 Riots in Derry and Belfast; British troops enter Northern Ireland

© in this web service Cambridge University Press
www.cambridge.org
1970  *Fortnight* (Belfast)
1971  First colour broadcast by RTÉ
      Directive under Section 31 of Broadcasting Act bans interviews with members of organisations linked to political violence
1972  ‘Bloody Sunday’; British Army kill thirteen people in Derry
1973  *Sunday World* (Dublin)
1974  First use of word ‘internet’ to describe linked computers
1976  *In Dublin* (Dublin)
1977  *Hot Press* (Dublin)
      *Magill* (Dublin)
1978  RTÉ2 (television)
1979  RTÉ launches Radio 2
1980  *Sunday Tribune* (Dublin)
1982  *Angel* (dir. Neil Jordan); first film funded by Irish Film Board
1986  Anglo-Irish Agreement
1988  Broadcasting and Wireless Telegraphy Act
      Section 35 of Finance Bill facilitates film production
      Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC)
1989  First licensed commercial station in Republic: Capital Radio
      Sky begins satellite broadcasting
      EU Television without Frontiers Directive
      *My Left Foot* (dir. Jim Sheridan) wins two Oscars, 1990
1990  Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau develop World Wide Web
1994  IRA announces ceasefire; Loyalist paramilitaries follow
      Netscape Navigator launched
      *Irish Times* launches online edition: Ireland.com
1995  First computer operating system with web browser: Windows 95
      Green Paper on Broadcasting
      Referendum legalises divorce in Republic
1996  Telefís na Gaeilge begins broadcasting (TG4 as of 1999)
1998  First commercial broadcaster in Republic: TV3
      *Michael Collins* (dir. Neil Jordan)
      Good Friday Agreement
1999  Exchequer surplus in Republic exceeds €1 billion
2000  *Metro Éireann*, multi-ethnic newspaper (Dublin)
2002  *Foreign Policy* ranks Ireland as world’s most globalised society
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>BBC begins Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) in Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Broadcasting Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RTÉ begins DAB broadcasting; announces Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) for 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economy enters recession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a scene described by Chris Morash in his *A History of the Media in Ireland*. It takes place in 18th century Dublin and illustrates the communal nature of early media. In coffee houses, such as Dick’s Coffee House in Skinner’s Lane, as well as drinking coffee, customers could read *The Flying Post*, printed and edited in the same premises, and debate issues not just with each other, but with the editor as he set up print and wrote stories. The housing of *History of the Media*. America’s earliest media audiences were quite small. These were the colonies’ upper class and community leaders - the people who could read and who could afford to buy newspapers. The first regular newspaper was the Boston *News-letter*, a weekly started in 1704 by the city’s postmaster, John Campbell. Like most papers of the time, it published shipping information and news from England. Most Americans, out in the fields, rarely saw a newspaper. They depended on travelers or passing townsfolk for this news. When rebellious feelings against Britain began to spread...