

Hierarchy of Influences Model

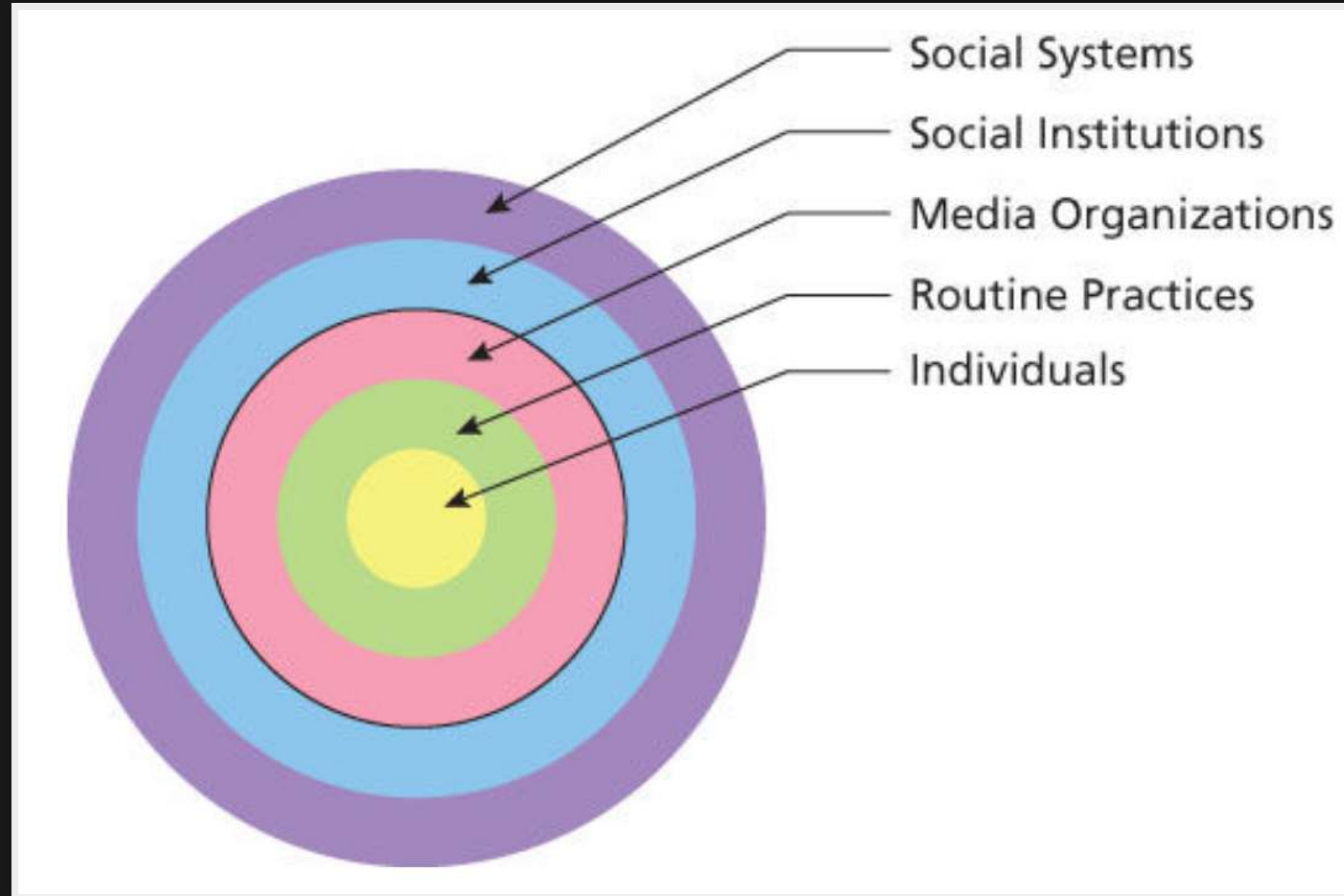
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There are a number of
different factors that
influence news content

(and those factors operate from the micro to the macro)

Levels of Analysis



Source

Individual Level

- The individual level refers to **the biographical, psychological, and sociological characteristics of an individual social actor**
- Examples:
 - Age
 - Race
 - Class status
- Influences are not always conscious; may operate at a subconscious level

Routine Level

- The routine level refers to **the patterned, repeated practices, forms, and rules that journalistic actors use to do their jobs**
- Examples:
 - News values
 - Balance
 - Inverted Pyramid
- Factors operate at a higher level because they reflect what is seen as appropriate or normal among fellow journalistic actors

Organizational Level

- The organizational level refers to **the policies, unwritten rules, and economic imperatives within journalistic organizations**
- Examples:
 - Ownership
 - Primary medium
 - Geographic location

Social-Institutional Level

- The social-institutional level refers to **the norms, individuals and organizations that operate outside a given journalistic organization**
- Examples:
 - Information sources
 - Advertisers
 - Media policy/regulation

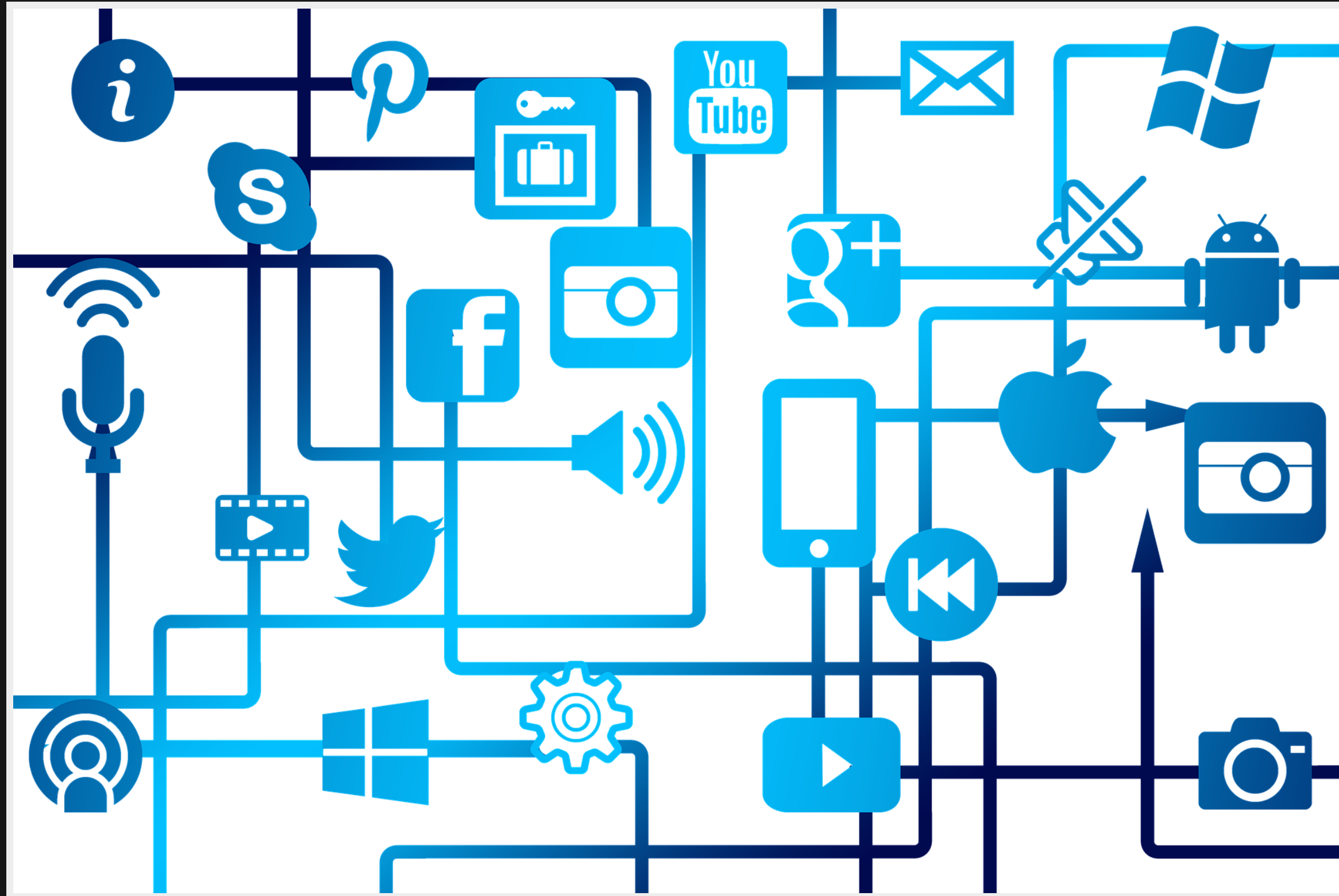
Social Systems Level

- The social systems level refers to **the symbolic frameworks of norms, values, and beliefs that reside at the societal level**
- Examples:
 - Economic subsystem (e.g., capitalism)
 - Political subsystem (e.g., democracy)

Importance of Levels and Factors

- Model does not claim one level is more important than another, or that one precedes another
- Factors can operate **independently from one another** and **in conjunction with one another**
- Shoemaker & Reese have pointed to dozens of different factors (**see their book**)

Changing Environment for Media



Source

Key Takeaways

- Hierarchy of Influences Model describes factors that affect news content, from a micro level to a macro level
- It has five levels: individual, routine, organizational, social-institutional, and social systems
- No one level is more important than the other; all forces are simultaneously acting upon the production of news content
- Journalism is rapidly changing, and the nature and extent of each influence is changing with it