



Crosbie ('What Is New Media?', 2002) argues that new (mass) media have characteristics that, when combined, make them very different to other forms of mass media. These include:

- **Technology:** They cannot exist without the appropriate (computer) technology.
- **Personalisation:** Individualised messages (either tailored to the particular needs of those receiving them or having the appearance of being so constructed) can be simultaneously delivered to vast numbers of people.
- **Collective control:** Each person in a network has, potentially, the ability to share, shape and change the content of the information being exchanged.

Crosbie uses the following example to illustrate this idea:

Imagine visiting a newspaper website and seeing not just the bulletins and major stories you wouldn't have known about, but also the rest of that edition customized to your unique needs and interests. Rather than every reader seeing the same edition, each reader sees an edition simultaneously individualized to their interests and generalized to their needs.

Ownership and control



Preparing the ground

The distinction just drawn between old and new media forms is important when considering the relationship between media ownership and control, since the old and new media involve potentially different relationships between owners, controllers, producers and consumers. To understand this, we need, initially, to define what we mean by **owners**. These, as you might expect, are the people who own whatever medium in being used to communicate information. We can identify two *basic* types of media ownership.

- **Private ownership**, where companies are owned by individuals, families, shareholders and so forth. Rupert Murdoch, for example, owns a controlling interest in News Corporation, a company that publishes books, films and magazines and broadcasts satellite TV programmes, among many other things.
- **State ownership:** The BBC, for example, is state owned – it is funded by the taxpayer and doesn't have private owners or shareholders. As an aside, however, we can note there are different *types* of state ownership around the world. In somewhere like China, for example, the government directly controls media content (the media is, in effect, state-run); the BBC, on the other hand, is overseen by a Board of Governors who, although directly appointed by the government, have a degree of