
“Seeing Is Believing”

Philo T Farnsworth: Electronic Television

Breaking Barriers in Mass Communication

By Caleb Mawlam

500 Words

Senior Division

Documentary

Process Paper

With the NHD competition approaching, I wanted to research a topic from Idaho as I moved there from England when I was 10. However the topic also needed to fit the theme: “Breaking Barriers in History.” When I was looking for a subject, I came across a man who, when my age, lived in Rigby, a small town 11 miles from my house. His name was Philo T Farnsworth and he invented electronic television. At age 14, while ploughing the fields similar to the ones around my house, he came up with the idea that would change the world. I knew that this was going to fit the theme very well because electronic television broke a numerous amount of barriers in history. I loved researching electronic television, Philo’s life and the impact his invention has had on the world; one that we take for granted today.

Finding primary and secondary sources was a demanding challenge. This was because Philo Farnsworth was actually not that famous when he invented the television. The Radio Corporation of America historically takes most credit for being the company that successfully commercialized Electric TV rather than its inventor, Philo Farnsworth. Even though the research was hard, I was able to find enough sources by going deeper into archives, biographies, newsletters etc. Since my project was a documentary, I needed to find as much footage and photos as possible. I went to the “Television and Pioneer Museum” in Rigby where they let me film some clips of different photos, television models, and camera tubes. Some other great sources for photos and footage came from British Pathe Newsreels, Farnovision, and many more archival cites.

I chose a documentary because I could show history to people in immersive and interesting visual ways. Everyone is familiar with learning through the television. Dramatic sound and pictures could help people understand the enormity of the barriers crossed through this invention. I personally think that electronic television goes better with a documentary seeing that it is in itself a demonstration of the invention!

Before I started to make my documentary, I first wrote down a plan. Before inserting images and footage, I wrote and recorded my script. Next I created my documentary in a video editing software called Adobe Premier. I matched the pictures and footage to the script and used different transitions throughout the film. I used some well known footage, such as the moon landing, to demonstrate to viewers how much this invention has affected them personally.

Stephen Henderson, Professor of Communication at Brigham Young University - Idaho, was a helpful contributor to my film about Philo T Farnsworth. He understood the role Farnsworth played and allowed me to film an interview with him and include it in the film.

In conclusion, the invention of electronic television by Phito T Farnsworth fits the theme perfectly because it broke barriers in world communication like had never even been dreamed of. People could see political events, trials, assassinations, scientific marvels and other news without having to wait for printed forms or slow distribution. Even greater than radio or morse code, millions could watch and listen even within their own homes. The ripple effect of Farnsworth's invention continues today in numerous fields such as entertainment and technology. All this thanks to the barriers broken by a 14 year old American farm boy who had no electricity in his own house!

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Accessed 21 Feb. 2020. This is a picture of Philo in the fields. I used this image in my documentary.

Philo on His Farm. *History of TV*, (Unknown Date), www.thehistoryoftv.com/mztv-ptf-tour.

Accessed 21 Oct. 2019. This source has an image of Philo Farnsworth on his farm. This source was useful for my documentary.

Philo with His Tube. *CMG*, (Updated 2020), www.cmgww.com/historic/farnsworth/. Accessed 6

Jan. 2020. This is a picture of Philo Farnsworth with his camera tube. I show this picture near the end of my film.

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2015, youtu.be/2N_1YruK0Rc. Accessed 25 Mar. 2020. This source is the trailer for the

Paramount feature film, "The Pony Express." This source was useful for footage showing horse delivery of mail in the 1800s.

"President Roosevelt Speech." *Youtube*, War Archives, 26 Aug. 2011, youtu.be/IK8gYGg0dkE.

Accessed 22 Feb. 2020. This shows actual footage of President Roosevelt making a speech. I show some of this footage at the end of my documentary.

"The Price Is Right (1980)." *Youtube*, uploaded by Cars n Stuff, 21 Sept. 2018,

youtu.be/Jc45gpE-XYc. Accessed 22 May 2020. This is footage of the 1980s game show:

"The Price is Right." This was used to evidence mainstream entertainment.

Rank, Scott, editor. "Who Invented the Television." *History on the Net*, (Unknown Date),

www.historyonthenet.com/who-invented-the-television. Accessed 18 Oct. 2019. This

source tells you why Philo Farnsworth is the real inventor of television. This was useful for some general information about Philo Farnsworth.

"Ren and Stimpy TV." *Nickelodeon*, uploaded by Nickelodeon, 12 Feb. 2012,

youtu.be/02SwfHHb0FE. Accessed 11 Feb. 2020. This scene shows a cartoon in which I

show in my documentary. The cartoon is a show called Ren and Stimpy.

"Saddam Hussein in Court." *Youtube*, AP Archives, 23 July 2015, youtu.be/akylkk7Go9A.

Accessed 22 May 2020. This video shows footage of the Iraq leader Saddam Hussein in court. I show this video in the end of my project.

"Sad Documentary Music." *Youtube*, AShamuelev Music, 15 Aug. 2017,

youtu.be/6dT69FMYa-M. Accessed 22 Feb. 2020. This is some more music I used for

my documentary. This was helpful when I show parts in the beginning.

"September 27, 1966: MLK—A riot is the language of the unheard." *Youtube*, 7 May 2018, youtu.be/_K0BWXjJv5s. Accessed 22 May 2020. Martin Luther King JR talks about civil rights and equality. I show this clip at the end of my film.

"Small Screen Big Dreams Pt 2." *Youtube*, uploaded by The History of TV, 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtKjZRxAJBU. Accessed 13 Dec. 2019. This video was useful for facts about Philo. It was also useful for getting images and footage only.

"Sony TV Advertisement." *Youtube*, uploaded by Sony, Sony, 24 Apr. 2019, youtu.be/6Bf3ELxx7Q0. Accessed 12 Feb. 2020. This is a modern TV advertisement by the electronics company Sony. I used parts of this video in my film.

"Spongebob Watching TV." *Youtube*, uploaded by Ivi Moen, 27 Sept. 2010, youtu.be/mhoymAarK0E. Accessed 9 Apr. 2020. This source is a clip from the kids show Spongebob. I show this clip in the beginning of my documentary.

"Stop The Pigeon (1969)." *Youtube*, uploaded by Cult Kids TV, 21 Oct. 2015, youtu.be/zPnNMk8zKjs. Accessed 9 Apr. 2020. This source shows a cartoon intro in which I sue in my documentary. This video is called "Stop The Pigeon."

"Television Advertisement (1950s)." *Youtube*, 1 June 2013, youtu.be/2bNmeEcRCaA. Accessed 29 Dec. 2019. This is footage of a 1950s television advertisement. This was useful for my project.

"Timelapse of New York 4K." *Youtube*, uploaded by Michael Shameblum, 8 Jan. 2019, youtu.be/U3_uxUSeZV4. Accessed 10 Feb. 2020. This is footage of a timelapse of New York in 4K. I used this when I explain about media.

"TV Commercials (80s)." *Youtube*, uploaded by Analog, 23 Dec. 2018, youtu.be/T_strH9Whos. Accessed 11 Feb. 2020. This source shows you some old TV ads in which I show in my documentary. This was also useful for facts.

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Vintage TV's. "Betty Boop (1949)." *Youtube*, 11 Dec. 2009, youtu.be/EyKM_lam17c. Accessed 21 Sept. 2019. This is a video of an old cartoon. This was useful for the beginning of my film.

Vladimir Zworykin. Invent, (Unknown Date), www.invent.org/inductees/vladimir-zworykin. Accessed 6 Oct. 2019. This source is a picture of a russian immigrant who developed electronic television. This source was useful for my film.

"When Your Smiling, The Whole World Smiles with You (Louis Armstrong)." *Youtube*, uploaded by RiulDoamnei, 22 Feb. 2010, youtu.be/yfsmmk93H3I. Accessed 22 Feb. 2020. This is some music I used in my documentary. It matched my documentary very well.

Young Philo Farnsworth. I Love History, (Unknown Date), www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Filovehistory.utah.gov%2Fpeople%2Fdifference%2Ffarnsworth.html&psig=AOvVaw1z9OH7DxX70-NtVRWHtEko&ust=1590249615707000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCKDI83rx-kCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD. Accessed 22 May 2020. This is a photo of Philo at 13 years old. This photo was useful at the beginning of my documentary.

