

## Across the Great Divide: listening, *techné*, and telegraphy

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In this talk, I will examine the transition from wired to wireless telegraphy as a way of considering, more broadly, the relationship of listening techniques to media archaeology. While both forms of telegraphy required training in hearing and sending Morse code, and while many wireless schools borrowed their pedagogy from wired training manuals and programs, there were key differences—both technological and perceptual—that made the two communications technologies distinct. For instance, those trained in hearing the onset and offset of a wired telegraph sounder could not interpret the steady-state beeps and buzzes of wireless code, and vice-versa, despite speaking the same “language.” In addition, the new soundscape of wireless—which included interference, static, fading, and other novel phenomena—was distinct from the regulated, mechanical chattering of wired telegraphy. Each system demanded of listeners distinct, yet overlapping, modes of diagnosing and analyzing sound. In this paper, I will trace both the continuities and discontinuities in telegraphic listening across the great technological divide. In so doing, I hope to offer an initial case study for a more general theory of listening and *techné*, one that focuses on: the asynchronous coordination of listening techniques and audio technological *aprioris*, the creation of affordances, and the role of expertise.