# Principles and Practices of Journalism
By Carl Hausman

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## Introduction

Welcome to your introductory class in journalism and media. This text will be the primary resource you'll use to navigate the study of the information industries.

## MAIN FEATURES OF THE BOOK

There are a few important points to keep in mind when reading this book.

### A Focus on Critical Thinking

We spend a great deal of time exploring critical thinking, meaning the process of evaluating information, and attempting to determine how we know what we *think* we know. There is probably no other skill as important for the journalist, or the consumer of journalism, as the ability to spot a misleading statistic or a lapse in logic. We're overloaded with information today, and trying to consume it uncritically is something like attempting to take a drink out of a fire hose. If you're not careful, the stream will tear your head off.

### Material Reinforcing "General Knowledge"

Some of the material does not deal exclusively with journalism and media, and there's a good reason. For example, when we study the economics of journalism – really, the driving force behind the discipline – it is helpful to know something about market economies in general. A discussion of journalism ethics is more productive when it's grounded in an understanding of the frameworks of ethics and philosophy that were put in place centuries ago. Instead of memorizing rote detail about the expansion of the press during the American Civil War, it's much more productive to look at the root causes of the conflict, how the press played a role in the run-up to the war, and how post-war economies and technologies fueled the expansion of the news media. This type of so-called general knowledge is critical for the journalist, because you will be spending your career learning about anything and everything and explaining to the public how the pieces fit together.

### Discussion and Analysis of Ethics

Ethics is a major focus of the book, and with good reason: You can immediately and irrevocably scuttle your career in any of the information

industries by an egregious breach of ethics. You can live down a lot of other mistakes, but an incident that shows you can't be trusted will dog you forever. An understanding of ethical decision-making won't necessarily make you a more ethical person, but it will give you an understanding of where the lines are drawn, who draws them, and the consequences to you if you cross them.

A final note: This book is a work in progress, and a big one at that, and I'm sure you'll find some typos or layout quirks that need to be resolved. If you have a chance, email me if you spot something and I'll be able to fix it for the next printing.

## Updates

It goes without saying – but I'll say it anyway – that the fields of journalism and media are changing so rapidly that the landscape changes daily. This book covers areas that will generally stay up-to-date between yearly revisions. The very latest revisions about the future of news are contained in a book by that name which I will also furnish to you.

*Carl Hausman*

# Part 1: Basics

## Chapter 1: What's News?

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

**What's Ahead...**This chapter begins with an example of how news is made and how it is reported. Pay close attention to the example, because there is a hidden test of your news judgment contained in it. The point of the opening exercise is to establish some common ground about what news and journalism is. Next we examine the history of journalism, showing how three key factors -- technology, crises that focused the nation's attention, and profit -- have nudged journalism along its evolutionary trail. The chapter concludes with a brief exploration of issues in journalism.

**Why It's Important...** Journalism is our window to the world. By knowing more about the institution and the process of reporting, who know more about how we know what we think we know.

***Points to Keep in Mind While Reading***... Journalism is sometimes driven by technology, as in the example of the telegraph changing the nature of news; it forced reporters to be more objective before and during the Civil War because their news was sent to different parts of the nation, regions that held differing political beliefs. There are many such examples in this chapter; note, as you read, how technology changed news in the past and is changing it today.

**AND NOW, THE STORY OF A BIZARRE AND TRAGIC FIRE...**

A little smoke was billowing from the front and the back of the three-floor apartment building. The smoke -- not the fluffy white stuff associated with bonfires, but greasy, black, superheated gas -- spread like a lightning-quick cancer. In the back of the building, the common staircase linking all three floors sucked up the smoke and fumes like a huge chimney. Survivors would later say they heard the gases rise with a roar like a freight train.

From the street, you couldn't see any actual fire because the flames were licking up inside the walls, infiltrating the skeleton of the 70-year-old building. At 8:11 p.m., the first alarm came in to the Central Division firehouse. The firefighter on duty announced the location over the station's loudspeaker, and a pumper, a ladder unit and the rescue van roared from Central Station.

**How the News Media are Alerted**

The TV newsroom is usually a noisy place. A cluster of five people stand around a computer, discussing tonight's line-up for the 11 o'clock news. The news director, who is in overall charge of the department, contends that a story about a murder investigation should go first. A senior reporter who has just finished a three-part series on abuse of the elderly argues that the newscast should be led with part one of her story.

But suddenly things become very quiet. The police and fire scanner, which usually provides a steady babble of conversation about broken windows, license plate numbers and barking dogs, goes silent. And so does the newsroom. When normally garrulous public safety officials clear the air and halt their chatter, everyone in the newsroom knows that something big is happening.

Now, the commands come in terse, clipped tones: The dispatcher asks for "another alarm," meaning another fire unit will be sent to the scene. Then another. And another.

**Early Coverage of the Fire**

Reporters from the city's TV stations, radio stations, and the local daily newspapers arrive on the scene roughly at the same time as the third fire unit. The reporters immediately search for the man with the white helmet; he's the district chief. The district chief fields questions, dividing

his time between his primary responsibility -- directing the fire-fighting operation -- and answering queries when time permits.

> *A TV REPORTER: Is anyone still in there?*
>
> *THE CHIEF: Yeah, yeah. I think so, anyway. The owner of the building says twelve people live here. We've accounted for five. There are four old people who live on the first floor, and he says they don't go out much.*
>
> *A RADIO REPORTER: Can you get them out?*
>
> *THE CHIEF: Maybe, if you'll get the hell out of my way. (To nearby firefighters attaching their hoses to a hydrant): Put Captain Larsen on the nozzle. Look in the first two rooms on the right as you go in. The first two rooms on the right!*

Captain Larsen is in charge of the Central District Rescue Squad. It is he and his men who will crawl into the maw of the fire and search for victims. They travel on their bellies; the air near the floor is relatively cool -- say, 150 degrees -- but if they stood erect it would be possible that their protective masks would melt and the men would be incinerated from the waist up.

Captain Larsen's squad crawls ahead, pushing the nozzle forward, wetting down the path of entry, and groping for the first doorway. While they carry powerful flashlights, the beams serve only to illuminate a six-inch cone of smoke. By touch rather than sight they locate the door, which, in keeping with Murphy's Law of firefighting, is locked. The men rise to their knees and crack the door open with their axes.

As they enter the first room, the men are already exhausted. In addition to fighting against the pressure of the water coming from the nozzle -- something like trying to push a rocket back on its launching pad -- each man is encumbered by his coat, boots, hat and respirator, which weigh a total of 45 pounds per person. Fighting off the fatigue, Larsen's squad begins spraying the room and searching under beds and in closets, places where frightened and disoriented fire victims typically hide.

 Because of the thick smoke the firefighters are disoriented, too. One realizes that he is standing in an overflowing bathtub. Another finds that what he thinks is a wall is really the door of a refrigerator.

 Outside, fire crews are scrambling to set up ladders. They want to carve holes in the roof to allow the superheated gases to escape, and need to

have access to the windows to search for and extricate survivors. Lieutenant Masters is in charge of a ladder company. He's shorthanded as it is -- he's even conscripted a civilian to help him raise a ladder -- but he stops what he's doing to run over to the district chief when he sees an ominous sign.

> *"Chief," Masters implores, tugging on the chief's sleeve, "Look at the smoke coming out of the back...it's coal black, and it's swirling."*

The district chief knows what that means. He orders all men inside the building to evacuate.

And they almost made it.


## A Routine Story Becomes a Tragedy

When a burning structure is tightly sealed, as it is on the cold December night, the fire sometimes uses up all available oxygen. If a path to the outside is made, the oxygen rushes in underneath the superheated gases in what's known as a backdraft. A backdraft can be dangerous because the route firefighters are using for entry and exit becomes the direction the fire is spreading. In this case, the rushing air creates a powerful backdraft because the ceiling has not been fully vented yet, and the oxygen creates what is known as a flashover, a deadly effect where everything inside a room or hallway reaches its ignition point but can't burn because there's no oxygen. But when oxygen arrives, as it did at 8:37, everything inside virtually explodes.

The flashover killed three firefighters. One resident died, an elderly man who, moments after the flashover, leaped from the third floor to escape the flames. The ladder did not reach him in time. No residents were still inside the bottom rooms when the fire scene flashed over.


## What the Reporters Do with the Information They've Gathered

Here is some of what will happen with the information gathered by reporters at the scene:


## Television Reports

Ellen, a local TV reporter, will do a live report at 11:00 p.m. (There is no question in anyone's mind as to what the lead story is now, of course.) In the interim, she uses her smartphone to tweet an update and provide the

shell of the story to the station's website.  At 11:00 She will open live, her image relayed back to the station's anchor desk by the station's satellite news vehicle's (SNV) microwave link.   On her cameraman's cue, she recounts the grim affair for the camera:  "Three firefighters and an elderly man were killed this evening in a fire at 111 Delaware Street.  The firefighters were trapped inside the burning building, and the elderly man jumped to his death from a third floor window."

The newscast director will then switch to Ellen's pre-recorded "package" (prepared TV news piece) which was hastily assembled prior to airtime.  The package documented the events immediately after her arrival on the scene, including a shot of the elderly man leaping from the window and interviews of firefighters and residents of the building.

Next, the newscast switches back live to Ellen, who notes that the names of the deceased are not yet available because their relatives have not yet been notified.  She then conducts a live interview with the city fire chief.  The chief does not know how it happened that the men were killed; he bristles when asked if they were sent into an "inherently unsafe situation" because any fire, he maintains, is an "inherently unsafe situation."

Ellen asks about the cause of the fire.  "Can arson be ruled out?"  The chief says it can't -- a pretty standard answer, since it's difficult for arson to be immediately be ruled out under any circumstances, except for a fire caused by a lightning strike in front of witnesses.   But the chief volunteers a little more information.  The fire, he says, looks "suspicious."

 Why?  Because fires don't start in two places at once, as this one apparently did.   Secondly, the fire in the front porch appears as though it started in the middle of the room.   Fires usually start in electrical wiring, or in stoves, or in a couch (which is usually placed against a wall) where someone has dropped a cigarette.  But hardly ever do fires start in the middle of a room unless someone has piled flammable material there and then lighted it.


## Radio Reports


Bob, a radio reporter, has been filing frequent updates throughout the evening.  Bob's first "roser," lingo for a radio on-scene report, was a dramatic narration broadcast live.

>  *"...the building just burst into flames.  It practically exploded.  I can feel the wave of heat on my face, and you can probably hear the roar in the background.  Firefighters are making a rush for the front of the building right now, trying to beat back flames that just*

> *started funneling out of the front door.   There are three firemen inside...inside that hallway that's just turned into an inferno."*

Seconds later, he breaks in with another roser.

> *"On the third floor there's someone hanging from the window.  I can see smoke and flames behind him.   There's no ladder, no net, nowhere for him to go...He's falling, he's falling, he's falling. (Sounds of heavy breathing and footsteps as Bob runs to the scene.)  He's hit the pavement about twenty feet in front of where I'm standing.   He appears to be an elderly man, wearing pajamas..."*

 Bob has collected several minutes of "actuality," a radio term for interview material.  He also has quite a bit of "wild sound," the sound of the firefighters at work, the sirens of the incoming units, and so forth.   Bob is able to feed some of this pre-recorded material back to the station via a portable cellular phone and a high-quality digital audio recorder.  A reporter back at the station records the material and writes, edits, and shapes additional reports.   The reporter back at the station also anchors the ten-minute newscast at eleven o'clock, which features both a live on-scene report from Bob and some taped interviews, and prepares extensive scripts, recordings, and instructions for the morning news announcer, who will arrive at work at 5 a.m.

Bob also returns to the station to help with preparation of material for the morning news.

## Newspaper Reports

Monica, a newspaper reporter, writes a top-heavy, newspaper-style "summary lead" for her piece:

> *A fast-moving fire claimed the lives of three firefighters and an elderly man at about 8:15 last evening at 111 Delaware street, after flames trapped the firefighters inside a hallway and forced an elderly man to leap from a third-floor window.*

 Monica's paper also has other reporters assigned to the story, including a team that will write up features on each of the deceased firefighters.   They are fighting a deadline:  The morning paper "goes to bed" at 1 a.m., and the names of the firefighters will not be released until 10.  Under great pressure, the team assembles the stories as "sidebars" to the lead.  One begins this way:

*Paul Tartaglia had a history of putting himself in harm's way.  As a young rifleman his reserve unit in Iraq, he once flung himself on a hand grenade tossed into his tent, shielding more than 12 other soldiers from what he expected would be a fatal blast.  The grenade was a dud, but Tartaglia received the Silver Star anyway.  He called himself "the luckiest soldier who ever tripped and fell on a grenade."*

*Last night, as he once again put himself in danger to save others, his luck ran out.*

## Web Reports

Nancy, the web editor for a consortium of local media, takes information filed by various reporters and blends it into a several different types of media on a web site that serves a newspaper, an affiated radio station, and a television station.  She uses the newspaper copy more or less as-is, but adds several hyperlinks to the story, allowing readers to click on a key word and be taken to related stories and backgrounders from the newspaper's library.  She inserts digital video segments into the websites for the newspaper and television station.  Also, she downloads video from the radio reporters' portable video cameras – they've starting using video cameras in place of audio recorders because of the added benefit of having video that can be placed the station's website.  Nancy also coordinates the reporters' feeds to the station's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

## Hard and Soft News from the Fire

News that does not include immediate, "this is what happened" reporting is known as "soft" news.  Soft news usually is thought of as a "feature" or "human-interest" piece, and it usually begins with an anecdote (a story) rather than a hard-news, summary lead.  A story that begins with an anecdote is usually said to have a "feature lead."

## Follow-Up Reporting

The next morning after the fire...

All the first-shift radio and television reporters in the city are at work before the sun rises, as usual.  The newspeople update the story, adding the names of the victims, facts not available last night because it took several hours for relatives to be notified.  Also, fire investigators and city detectives, who have been on duty all night investigating the apparent arson, have some information about suspects and motives.

Police are often tight-lipped about giving out such details (too much public information can tip off the suspect) but they do acknowledge that "revenge" may have been a motive.

By 10 a.m., the radio reporters are gearing down their coverage. The brunt of their work is done for the day, because radio's period of biggest listenership, the morning "drive time," has passed. Only the largest radio stations in the city will continue to move full-speed on the story.

At 10 a.m., the TV news people are planning their coverage, lining up interviews, assigning various angles of the story to different reporters, and -- most importantly -- dogging the police department for any information on the "revenge" motive.

**The Story Goes National**

The story is now available through various news services across the country, but it does not receive equal attention everywhere. If forced to make a quick assessment, you might calculate that newspeople regard the relative importance of the story in terms of how far it is from their hometown. The city where the fire took place, of course, has a tremendous amount of coverage. TV stations in nearby cities, which have picked up the story from a variety of satellite video newsfeeds and wire services (a wire service is a type of news network that provides printed copy and other services to member stations and newspapers) plan to give the event major play, but it will not be the main story of the day for most of them.

**The Networks Make an Initial Judgment**

In New York City, the heads of the major network TV news divisions are screening footage of the fire provided by their local affiliates, and attempting to decide whether to use the story at all. It's an important story, and the video is compelling, but in the limited time available for the network news, it faces a great deal of competition. The President is holding a summit meeting with the leader of Russia, a major bill may come for a vote in Congress today, and seven U.S. military advisors have died in an ambush in a country strongly allied to the United States.

At 10:30 a.m., the producers of one network newscast begin debating the fire story. It's a rather cold-blooded affair, comparing whether the deaths of four people here are more important than the deaths of four people there. News decisions involving the magnitude of a story based on the

number of deaths can be, as the late John Chancellor of NBC News pointed out, a "cold, impersonal process," but it is "the mathematics of the news business."  When only two people die in a tragedy, he noted, it is a small story nationally; if it were twenty-two, it would be a major one.

## A New Development Changes the Importance of the Story

 But the fire remains a huge story locally, no question about that.  And at 3 p.m., the story becomes even bigger.   Police arrest a man and charge him with arson.  The motive:  He wanted to exact revenge against a former lover who had spurned him.  The horrid irony:  She no longer lived in the building.

The story immediately makes all the news outlets' websites and blogs. The local evening newscasts run several stories about the arson.  The evening newspaper carries six separate stories about the fire, including a detailed history of a fire three years ago that killed two firefighters, the most recent duty-related death.  Various news organizations update their websites throughout the day.

 The story now makes the network TV newscasts, but only as a fifteen-second piece read by the anchor with some footage of the fire (about seven seconds' worth) shown over the anchor's picture while the anchor continues to "voice over" the story.  The brief script:

> *What police called a senseless act of revenge was made even more tragic by a startling revelation...police in the city of Metropolis today charged a man with arson in connection with a fire last night that killed four people, including three firefighters.  Police say the man set the blaze as an act of revenge against a former girlfriend...but they say she had moved out of the building two weeks ago.*

## Where Does the Story Develop from Here?

That is the trail the story has left so far.  There is one major aspect of the story left to break, and you can probably deduce it by reviewing what has happened above.  The clue is buried there, and will be revealed at the end of the next section.

**WHY IS THIS STORY NEWS?**

In one sense, we can all agree about the most basic definition of news, and your "news judgment" would dictate what you would want to know if you drove by a major fire in progress:

> *1. Is anyone is dead, injured or still in danger?   Who?*
> *2. How extensive is the fire, and is it being brought under control?*
> *3. What started it?*

So far, we can all agree the fire constitutes news -- and if you posed any version of the three questions above, that basic news judgment is a reflection of normal curiosity.  But how can this concept be put into words?  What exactly is news? Many definitions of news have been posited.  Here is a good one from University of Oregon journalism professor Ken Metzler:

> *News is "prompt, 'bottom-line' recounting of factual information about events, situations and ideas (including opinions and interpretations) calculated to interest an audience and help people cope with themselves and their environment.*

Metzler's definition includes the idea that news is designed to capture an audience, and that is an important concept to keep in mind.  Editors and news directors certainly do, and this leads to another definition: News is what an editor says is news.

An example of this concept: The network news executives decided that the fire story was news, but only after the fire story took a bizarre twist. However, if the national news menu were any heavier that day -- suppose there were a stock market crash -- that same executive might decide that the story is not news, at least not news as far as tonight's edition of the network broadcast is concerned.

**Concepts that Help Define News**

You will note that several factors have so far come into play, factors that helped people at various news organizations decide whether the fire story was "news." While these factors can be categorized in many ways, I chose five while researching a book I wrote about news judgment: timeliness, magnitude, unusual aspects of the story, direct or indirect identification, and drama.

**Timeliness**.  Most of us have an innate interest in recent developments; hence the common expression, "Did you hear the latest...?"   Sometimes this interest in timely stories is a function of curiosity, while other times there is a direct need to know timely information.

 Our interest in the fire story was piqued because it was happening now, right this minute.   We wanted to know all the details about a story of this importance -- and we wanted them now, not tomorrow.

**Magnitude.**  The size and scope of an event has a direct impact on its newsworthiness.  The fire that led this chapter involved the loss of four lives. While in the icy mathematics of the news business four lives might not guarantee newsworthiness on a network newscast, it is a compelling factor nonetheless.   If 40 people died, the event would most certainly make the national news.  If 400 perished, it would undoubtedly be one of the biggest stories of the year.

**Unusual Aspects of the Story**.   The "man bites dog" bromide still holds true in the news business.   News is generated when something out-of-the-ordinary happens.   The event might not be anything earth-shaking, and it might be downright silly.   A seasonal story given prominent national play over a period of years involving the ill-fated and hopelessly complicated romance of a wild moose and a dairy cow comes immediately to mind.  Unusual aspects elevate a story in importance when they are coupled with a deadly-serious side, too, such as the death of three firefighters.  While firefighting is a hazardous job, it is still highly unusual for three firefighters to die in one blaze.   Ditto for planes crashing; it is the atypical aspect of a plane crash -- and not necessarily its magnitude -- that draws news  coverage.

**Direct or Indirect Identification.** A story about a fire in a downtown landmark is likely to interest listeners or viewers to a greater degree than a fire of similar import in a remote area.   If it happened in a building that thousands of people drive by each day, the event gains in news value because people identify with the scene of the event and can, to an extent, picture some of the story in their heads.   The same theory applies to stories about famous people.  We don't know them, per se, but we know about them.  We have some indirect, vicarious identification with them.  To reinforce the theme of our chapter-opening example, we identify with fire stories strongly, both on a direct and indirect level.   Viewers in the local area know where the neighborhood is, and probably know the street, too.   Hence the stronger appeal of the story to a local audience as opposed to a national audience.  We identify more closely with events geographically close.  There is also a strong

measure of indirect identification in that most of us have had some experience with a house-fire -- either having seen one or experienced one.

**Impact.** Another facet of identification is impact. The fire story might not touch us directly but, as alluded to above, it has an indirect impact. Further, as residents of the city, we have a presumed right to know why three of our municipal employees died in a fire. And we have a right to know if the fire department is up to the job. Remember the question posed at the end of the fire story: What else would be covered as the story develops? When you read the story, did you wonder why it was that a firefighter had to ask a civilian for help raising the ladder -- the ladder that did not reach the elderly man in time? Is there a personnel shortage? Is there a problem with lack of training? A reporter wants to find out. (And once did; this is a real story, and the reporter who made the "catch" filed a major and important piece.) The fact that the fire department may be understaffed is a big story, even if this detail required some digging to ferret out.

**Drama.** A drama is essentially a story, and newscasters are storytellers. At their root, most stories are about conflict. It may be conflict of men and women against one of our oldest adversaries -- fire. In other circumstances, the drama might center around the conflict of two people vying for a political office, or police attempting to stanch the drug trade.

In sum, news is what happens around us, perceived by us through a mass media that acts as an extended "sensory" or "surveillance" mechanism, and journalists keep that mechanism humming. Journalism is the business of news, and is sometimes a profitable business. Journalism also rides waves of technologies, adapting so as to exploit new media. And perhaps the most important characteristics of journalism, as defined by its history, is the craft's ability to shine in a crisis, and at the same time shine light on parts of society that some people prefer remain hidden.

## NEWS AS A BUSINESS AND A COMMODITY

Up until now, we have been defining news simply in terms of the elements of a day-to-day events that tend to surface on TV, newspapers, or the Internet. But news is also a business involving packaging of a commodity that is used to generate circulation, ratings, and page views. While these issues will be examined in depth later in to book, it is important to note that the shaping and packaging of news as a product that will produce a profit produces an odd and sometimes controversial mixture of items

chosen because a newsperson thinks they are important and items chosen because a newsperson thinks they will generate interest.

Further complicating this balance is the fact that those who stand to benefit from influencing the news industries have become skilled at providing pre-packaged "news" that is intended to generate audience and reinforce a particular point of view. The newsperson often comes the middleman in this transaction.

## The Question of Image versus Substance – A Look Back

To put this in some historical perspective, note that this question came to a head decades ago during the two terms of President [Ronald Reagan.](#) Reagan was a skilled and experienced performer who had a long career as a movie actor before going into politics. He was a handsome, resonating speaker -- perhaps the best speech-maker ever elected -- but he did not fare well in question-and-answer sessions. His aides preferred to play to his strengths and carefully orchestrate his media appearances, using strong visuals as a backdrop and keeping him sequestered from direct questions whenever possible. Balloons, wholesome young people, mountains, horses, and other props began appearing in the events staged for news coverage.

(A television "event" where the goal is to obtain favorable media exposure can be called what historian Daniel Boorstin terms a "pseudo-event." Boorstin believes that pseudo-events have come to dominate much of our journalism, a point to be discussed later.)

Those aides also understood television, and in some cases held television news in contempt; one aide, Michael Deaver, has pointed out that he does not even regard television news as real news. News divisions, he maintains, are profit-making parts of the entertainment industry.

The problem is that news divisions, if anything, were co-conspirators in this stage-management of the news. CBS reporter Leslie Stahl, who then covered the Reagan White House, recalled that she would receive a "pat on the back" from the network when she included the strong Reagan-supplied visuals in her piece. (Reporters and producers virtually everywhere are expected to "wallpaper" their reports with attractive visuals.) In fact, once when Stahl attempted to show the mechanics behind the staging, showing how in her view the impressive backgrounds contradicted the record of the president, she received a call from a White House aide praising what had been a very negative piece. She was baffled until the aide told her that in order to talk about the visuals, she had to show them -- and in the process the visuals drowned out her words.

## The Balance of Profit versus Responsibility

At the heart of this issue is money. Television, by and large, is in the business of producing ratings. (Even public television to some extent must produce programs that a reasonable number of people watch.) High ratings and a valuable demographic allow networks and local television stations to sell advertising for a premium. This, in turn, pays for the extraordinarily expensive activity of producing TV news. The same formula holds true for newspapers and magazines.

Even the most severe critics of the news media allow for the necessity to make a profit, but many of those critics also note that expectations of profit have soared to unreasonable levels. Ben Bagdikian, a former editor for the *Washington Post* and later a journalism professor and media critic, believed that corporate acquisitions of news organizations have pushed the expectation of profit to unreasonable levels, so that news media, television in particular, are now obliged to focus sharply on ratings.

The impact of ratings is palpable in every television newsroom. Many stations hire consulting firms to scrutinize their news programs and offer suggestions on how to increase the appeal of the stories and the on-air talent. Often these consultants conduct training sessions with the anchorpeople, teaching them such techniques as how to banter on the set. Fred Graham, a former *New York Times* reporter and CBS News correspondent, has bitter memories of when he returned to his hometown Nashville to anchor the news on WKRN. He says his tenure was an unhappy one because he was incapable of engaging in "meaningful happy talk."

"The plan had been to wave some of my knowledge and experience into the conversation at the anchor desk," he wrote. "The results suggested that either I was not adroit at doing it or that 'meaningful happy talk' was a contradiction in terms.

"During my anchor training in Iowa, the Frank N. Magid company [the nation's most well-known news consulting firm] handlers had come up with a technique for injecting my own thoughts and personality into the format. The voice coach suggested that when a scripted news item caught my attention, I could add a "dollop" of my own insights as I tossed the conversation to... [my co-anchor] for her next story."

Graham concluded that the only result of this strategy was his discovery that his co-anchor knew six different ways to say, "that's interesting."

Some news executives believe that consulting and audience research have distorted the news process completely.  Jonathan Katz, the former executive producer of the "CBS Morning News," says it is a "nightmare. It has become the Bible, the dominant ethic in television news programming...[some performers} are almost total creations of Q-research."

 By Q-research, Katz means a process by which a firm distributes questionnaires to viewers asking for feedback on a performer's likeability, recognition, and appeal.  The company that conducts this research, Marketing Evaluations/TV Q, polls about six thousand Americans by mail, and sells the results to networks, TV stations, ad agencies, and others interested in learning about a particular performer.

Newspapers are also scrambling to increase readership as their economics are in free-fall. Research shows that younger readers (the ones who are defecting from newspaper readership and the most valuable demographic) like bolder graphics, shorter stories, and fewer "jumps" (movement of the story to the inside page.) Many papers are accommodating them.

And web-based publications are facing the stark reality that an advertising-based income structure generally does not work very well, and their traditional advertising base has been usurped by search engine revenues.  (For the latest data on this as of mid-2011, see *The Future of News*.)

But the question remains: Is making the news "what sells" a distortion of the news process?   Should a journalist be in the business of giving the public what it wants, or should that journalist give the public what he or she thinks it should want?

## New Expectations of the Role of a Journalist

This leads to the broader question of what, exactly, is journalism for?  An experiment with journalists' roles known as "civic journalism" or "public journalism" is in progress at several newspapers, and a handful of television stations, across the nation.

 Basically, those who favor "civic journalism" believe that journalists should take a more active role in their community.  Some newspapers, for example, have set about solving problems, such as racial conflicts in local parks.  Others have brought citizens in for discussions and focus groups concerning what topics should be brought into sharpest focus during political campaigns.

The argument in favor of civic journalism is that it takes reporters out of the role of cynical observers and gives them a problem-solving orientation. Critics claim that it is the role of journalists to report, not to solve problems, and by having a news organization cover its own problem-solving efforts, objectivity is lost.

Another issue concerning journalists' roles has to do with their emergence as a new type of media star. In a widely quoted book titled Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy, James Fallows slammed the profession for its cynicism, elitism, and pre-occupation with high fees for their speeches. Fallows contends that reporters tend to present public life as a "depressing spectacle" rather than the stuff that moves the civilization. He also slams journalists for being rich, insiders out of touch with their readers and viewers.

And as new media develop, there is even some question as to whether reporters' roles are obsolete – whether the blogosphere, with its opinion-based atmosphere, provides a better grasp of reality than does reporters presuming to be "objective."

## Expectation of Ethical Conduct Versus Journalists' Drive to Beat the Competition

Part of the dissatisfaction with journalism stems from a deep-seated perception among some that journalists cannot be trusted. Ethics of reporters and news organizations are commonly called into question. Although journalism by and large is a respectable and respected profession, it is carried out in public and therefore transgressions by journalists are highly visible. Secondly, journalists themselves are in the business of judging the misdeeds of others, and therefore the public often is thought to believe that journalists should be held to a higher standard.

Highly visible cases cause some in the public to regard journalists as people who will do anything to get a story.

For example, as this was being written there was a bizarre scandal unfolding in Britain, where the News of the World tabloid was shuttered after it was alleged that reporters had hacked into voicemails and bribed police for information.

Impersonation is another persistent problem. Should reporters conceal their identity of pretend to be someone else in order to get a story? This chapter's In Depth feature highlights several cases of impersonation in the history of journalism. As you read through the story, consider whether any or all of the tactics employed would be acceptable to you. Is there a

right and wrong way to employ misrepresentation?  Where do you draw the line?

## IN DEPTH: MISREPRESENTATION

Don Hewitt, the creator and executive producer of 60 Minutes, worked his way up through the ranks of rough-and-tumble journalism.  He began his career as a copy boy at the New York Herald Tribune, served in World War II, and when he returned to the U.S. he took on several positions in wire service and newspapers. He moved on to television, directing the Kennedy-Nixon debate and becoming executive producer of 60 Minutes.

One of his many coups was his coverage of the 1959 visit by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to a farm in Iowa.  Hewitt, arriving to coordinate CBS's coverage, first took care of some routine items, hijacking NBC's remote truck and hiding it in a cornfield.  He then set about the task of spying on NBC.  Hewitt hired the ex-police chief as a driver, guaranteeing CBS crews access to just about any place they wanted to go.   But to prepare for those times when the ex-chief was not around, Hewitt had himself appointed an "honorary sheriff."   The next day, sporting his new badge and Stetson, Hewitt wandered over to the NBC remote truck.  (They had found it by then.) Here is how Hewitt recounts what happened next.

"Morning boys," said Hewitt. "What's goin' on?"

And the NBC crew told the "sheriff" exactly what was going on, including the placement of their "secret" cameras.

NBC again complained, this time about Hewitt impersonating a police officer.   "I'm not impersonating anything," Hewitt replied.  "I'm an honorary sheriff and I've got the hat and badge to prove it."

Some would condemn Hewitt for this; others would be in awe of his enterprise and chutzpa.  This is typical, because journalists and those who observe the world of journalism are usually split on the merits of impersonating someone else.

Impersonation is often viewed as the only way to get a story.  For example, Nelly Bly, one of the most famous reporters from the Yellow Journalism era,  exposed the conditions of the infamous Blackwells Island Insane Asylum by gaining admittance after feigning insanity.  It is difficult to conceive how she could have written such a powerful story any other way. Dorothy Kilgallen posed as "a girl from Peoria" in a  piece where she attempted to see what it was like for a girl from the midwest to try to break in as an actress in Hollywood. (Her conclusion: Stay home.)  Many

journalists, including Ben Bagdikian, have posed as convicts in order to write about conditions within the prison walls.

But occasionally the journalistic community rebels against impersonation. In 1978, the Chicago Sun-Times set up a bar, appropriately named the Mirage, and documented the stream of city inspectors who tried to bribe the owners. The series was outstanding and served a valid public need -- but it did not win a Pulitzer Prize. Two members of the Pulitzer advisory board (one of whom was Washington Post Executive Editor Benjamin Bradlee) objected to the misrepresentation. Bradlee questioned, in effect, how newspapers could promote honesty and integrity when they, themselves, are dishonest in gathering facts for the story.

The Pulitzer's snubbing of the Mirage story came as something of a surprise, since the Pulitzer had gone, on at least four previous occasions, to reporters who assumed a guise. A reporter from the Buffalo Evening News in 1961 posed as a caseworker to expose welfare mismanagement received the coveted award. A journalist from the Chicago Tribune masqueraded as an ambulance driver in 1971 to bring to light the discrepancies in medical care given to rich and poor won a Pulitzer. In 1971, a reporter from the New York Daily News pretended to be a Medicaid recipient and won the award, as did Bob Greene and a Newsday team involved in a story about the drug trade, during the development of which Green posed as a lawyer.

 So, given the assumption that the majority of the journalistic community will accept some amount of misrepresentation, where is the line drawn? There is no precise location, and some journalists, such as Bradlee, outlaw it all together. But others contend that some misrepresentation is all right, if it is not extreme, and if it is necessary to get the story.

A reporter taking her car to a repair shop suspected of doing unnecessary work (and not identifying herself as a reporter) would usually be considered a reasonable practice. After all, anyone could do this. But posing as a police officer, or doctor, or grieving relative would almost always be condemned.

Sometimes, misrepresentation is given greater tolerance by news executives, and the general public, when it is clear that it is the only way to get a story. One reporter, for example, got a very good story by posing as a construction worker and documenting the pilferage he observed at the site. He contends that this was the only method to obtain the information; had he shown up in his business suit, notebook in hand, no details would have been forthcoming.

It is interesting that respected philosophers have weighed in on the misrepresentation issue. Sissela Bok, who wrote a book about truth in everyday life titled *Secrets*, views is this way:

*If a group of editors and reporters have concluded that they see no alternative means and no alternative agencies of investigation to whom the probing of a particular problem can safely be left, they must still weigh the moral arguments for and against deceptive infiltration or other surreptitious methods.  Knowing that such means are morally questionable, they must then ask whether their goal warrants the use of such methods....*

While acknowledging some validity for impersonation, she also adds an observation which sides with Bradlee's argument against the practice:

*Another consideration that newspaper or television editors should take seriously before going ahead even with clandestine investigations they consider important has to do with the effect on their own credibility and that of the media in general.  They know that public confidence in media reliability is already low, and they recognize the existing pressure for rushed stories, forever incomplete, all too often exaggerated or misinterpreted.  If the public learns about an elaborate undercover operation such as that of the Mirage bar, many may ask why they should have confidence in the published stories based on information acquired through such an elaborate hoax.*

## CONCLUSION

One of the themes that will recur through this book is the fact that the nature of news changed every time a technological development enabled journalists to reach an audience in a different way. The telegraph made information a fast-moving commodity.  High-powered steam presses changed newspapers from an elite publication to a source of news for the common man or woman.  Radio and television brought about highly personal news that brought sound, and later sight, into the home.   The Internet allows for delivery of highly specialized content; you can easily design your own "newspaper" that feeds you only information in which you're interested.

Crises also force news to evolve. The Civil War was a turning point for American journalism, changing it into an objective, high-powered and high-profit business. Roosevelt declared war on radio, and most of the nation listened. The Kennedy assassination left most Americans glued to their televisions, and television news proved its merit that day and eventually became the most common source of news.

Money motivates change in the news business. News is now big business, and largely because of the influence of television, many news reporters have become wealthy celebrities.

All these factors have a profound impact on what we classify as news -- because news, in large part, is what journalists tell us news is.

## Chapter 2: Where Did Journalism Come From?

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

*What's Ahead*...This brief chapter presents a capsule history of news, looking at how delivery systems have changed with society and changed society itself.

*Why it's Important*...Having an understanding of how journalism evolved gives us a better understanding of how it functions today and perhaps some clue as to how it will operate in the future.

*Points to Keep in Mind While Reading*...Nothing exists or develops in a vacuum. A society is a sum of its parts, and those parts often interact in an ecological way. We are using "ecological" in the literal definition of the word, meaning a system where all parts have an effect on other parts. Notice the ecological effects cited as you read through the chapter.

The earliest journalism involved exchange of information that helped an expanding world keep tabs on affairs back home and commerce in the rest of the world. The Roman "Acts of the Day." instituted by Julius Caesar in 59 B.C., not only kept Romans informed of the events of their civic life but the hand-written sheets traveled across the vast empire, providing a stream of information and apparently a cure for homesickness among Romans stranded in distant outposts.

**THE EARLIEST FORMS OF NEWS**

For centuries, "newsbooks," handwritten (and after the 15th century, often printed), recounted singular events such as battles and royal weddings. Newsbooks gave way to regularly published newspapers in the 16th and 17th centuries; those newspapers sometimes concerned themselves with scandal but more often with commerce. Readers used them to sense the political climate in lands where they conducted business. Many newspapers in this time were licensed by the governments in their nations.

## EARLY TRADITIONS OF THE AMERICAN PRESS

The press in America fought a protracted battle over licensing, as recounted in Chapter 2 and elsewhere in this book. Traditions were forged when James Franklin, older half-brother of Ben, defied colonial authorities and printed a paper that was not licensed; and when John Peter Zenger, a German-American printer, was acquitted of seditious libel in 1734. Zenger had criticized a royal governor, and his defense was based on the contention that the criticisms were true, and that citizens had a right to criticize the government.

After the American Revolution, the newly united nation gave constitutional protection to journalism -- the only business then or now so protected. When the Constitution was ratified (an effort promoted in part through publication of The Federalist Papers in newspapers) ten additions, or amendments, were attached. The First Amendment guaranteed that Congress shall "make no law" that abridges (restricts) "freedom of speech, or of the press."

### The Bill of Rights

**Amendment I**

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

**Amendment II**

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

**Amendment III**

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

**Amendment IV**

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

**Amendment V**

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

**Amendment VI**

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

**Amendment VII**

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

**Amendment VIII**

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

**Amendment IX**

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

**Amendment X**

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

**THE PRESS FROM 1798 - 1860**

That blanket guarantee did not work particularly well.  George Washington withstood withering attacks from the press without fighting back.  But in 1798, the second president, John Adams -- who had called some newspaper attacks on his, party "terrorism" -- signed the Alien and Sedition Acts.

**Adams and the Press**

The parts of these laws dealing with sedition (attempting to undermine the government) were clearly aimed at muzzling the press.  Adams was particularly sensitive to criticism of his handling of the affairs that were leading to eventual war with France.

The law said: "If any person shall write, print , utter of publish...any false, scandalous and malicious writing...against the government of the United States, or either house of the Congress....or the President, with intent to defame...or to bring them...into contempt or disrepute' or to excite against them...the hatred of the good people the United States...(the writer) shall be punished by a  fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, and by imprisonment not exceeding two years."

The laws were clearly unconstitutional, but the Supreme Court had not yet begun the process of judicial review, so in effect there was no part of government capable of blocking the acts.

Adams's power-grab proved his undoing. He was voted out of office in his next run for re-election, and Thomas Jefferson, a populist, allowed the hated laws to lapse.

**The Press Regains some Freedom**

Jefferson was no fan of the press. He once lectured an editor: "You can reform yourself by dividing your newspaper into our chapters, headed: truths, probabilities, possibilities, and lies.  The first chapter would be the shortest." Nevertheless, he tolerated the institution, realizing that despite his low opinion of the press, a greater good was served by allowing free exchange of information.

The next president, who took office in 1809, was by and large a defender of the press; James Madison once wrote that a popular government without a popular press to provide the people with information would be the "prologue to a farce or a tragedy."

The next fifty years or so were tremendously eventful in the development of the modern U.S. and the modern press.

**Madison through Lincoln: The Shaping of the Modern Press**

Through the next half-century, from the time of Madison through Lincoln, the new country faced four major issues that played themselves out in the emerging press:

•Tariffs
•Money
•Land
•Slavery

A tariff is a tax on imports.  Tariff controversies heated up the conflict between the North and South.  By and large people in the South detested tariffs because they needed to import machinery and other manufactured goods.  Most of this could be purchased from Britain more cheaply than from the north, because Britain treated the American South favorably.  Why?  Because Britain desperately needed textiles such as cotton, which was in abundant supply in the American South.   The industrialized North favored tariffs because they protected domestic industry.

Newspapers in the North usually agitated for tariffs.  Southern newspapers predictably advocated the polar opposite.  The same cleavage occurred over the issue of money and centralized banking.  The north wanted a centralized and efficient national banking system.  The South had little use for this because it possessed little capital.  Land was the "currency" of the South.

And land policies further divided the North and South.  The nation was rapidly expanding West, and Westerners wanted free land.  Neither the North nor the South were particularly happy about giving away Western lands, but the South particularly disliked such policies because it further cheapened the region's prime asset, its land.  As tensions heated up, the North attempted to win allies in the West by giving away more land; the Homestead Act, signed on the eve of Civil War, offered 160 acres of land to the head of household if he lived on that land for five years and cultivated it or built on it.

Civil War might have been avoided were it not for the simmering  issue of slavery, an issue that in turn may not have boiled over were it not for the press.  The leading "abolitionist" (in favor of the abolition of slavery) among newspapermen was William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison started a paper called The Liberator in 1831.  It had a small circulation, much of it among Blacks who were politically disenfranchised anyway, but he kept

publishing and the message began hitting home. Press historians Michael and Edwin Emery maintain that Garrison caused "the most violent reaction since Tom Paine." The Liberator was effectively outlawed in some Southern states, and even some northern states allowed distributors of the paper to be intimidated.

## Abolition, the Press, and the Run-Up to the Civil War

Being an abolitionist was difficult and often hazardous. Elijah Lovejoy, publisher of the St. Louis Observer, an abolitionist paper, was killed by a mob. Others, including Frederick Douglass, faced continual financial pressure and the threat of violence.

Black journalists faced enormous adversity in their abolition efforts. Freedom's Journal, edited by John B. Russwurm, the fist black to graduate from a U.S. College, battled small circulation and income from the time of its founding in 1827. The Ram's Horn, founded by Willis Hodges, failed in one year, but one of its writers and editors, Frederick Douglass, was able to start a new publication, The North Star, based in Rochester, New York. The North Star faced continual financial pressure, and became a monthly publication in 1860.

Better late than never, mainstream penny press papers picked up the abolitionist cause. Among them was Horace Greely's Tribune. Henry Raymond's New York Times eventually gave belated support to abolition. The Chicago Tribune, published by Joseph Medill, was adamantly opposed to slavery, and a strong backer of a home-state abolitionist politician named Abraham Lincoln. But James Bennett's Herald was opposed to abolition, citing the Constitutional right of slave-holders to keep their property, a common argument of the anti-abolitionists.

## THE CIVIL WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

The conflict between North and South turned into a full-fledged shooting war on April 12, 1861; the press was there and seemingly everywhere during the four years of the war. The same issues that led to the outbreak of hostilities made the press rich and powerful. Citizens, hungry for news of the conflict rending their nation, had boosted circulations, and hot war caused readership to climb even higher.

The Civil War is often viewed as the crucible in which the practice modern journalism was forged. Massive numbers of reporters converged on battle scenes, and with the help of the Associated Press (and a Southern wire service with a conveniently reversed name, the PA) flashed news across the nation. About 300 photographers covered battles. Even though

newspaper technology did not yet allow direct printing of photographs, the pictures form the battle scene were used for hand-drawn illustration of surprisingly photographic quality

A highly compressed, crisp form of writing evolved, and after the Civil War had ended, a highly organized, heavily staffed, and affluent news apparatus stretched across the nation.  On April 14, 1865, a famous news flash was, in its style, virtually indistinguishable form a modern lead:

The President was shot in a theater tonight, and perhaps mortally wounded.

After the Civil War, a shattered nation began to rebuild itself.  As often happens, the war had depleted parts of the economy but invigorated others.  A massive infrastructure had been created during the war, and industry boomed.  For about thirty years after Lincoln's death, it appeared that the economy could grow without limit.  Cities teemed with workers and immigrants, boosting not only the manufacturing economy but the circulation of yellow papers such as those published by Pulitzer and Hearst.  Centralized populations boosted the profitability of the magazine industry, too.


## 1890-1912: JOURNALISTS LEAD THE REFORM MOVEMENT

In the years 1890 through 1912, there was a society-wide reaction against unchecked wealth, a movement that had profound effects on the development of journalism.  These years are often called the "Progressive Era." During this time, there was a re-examination of almost every aspect of life: corrupt political leaders were ousted, the "trusts" (gigantic monopolies that limited trade) were called to account, and the society began to examine social issues such as class distinctions and immigration.

### Examining the Effects of Industrial Society on the Poor

Journalists led this re-examination.  Among them were Lincoln Steffens, who investigated municipal corruption, Ida Tarbell, who took on the trusts, and  Jacob Riis, a reporter for the *New York Sun*, who wrote a series of articles and a book called *How the Other Half Lives*; Riis examined the deplorable conditions of the slums.

Those conditions were unimaginably wretched.  Tenements, filthy, rickety buildings which were firetraps and breeders of disease, housed tens of thousands of immigrants.

Census data from 1890 show the in one block on New York's lower east side, there were 2,781 people, but not one bathtub. Many of the rooms in

these tenements had no light or ventilation.  Here is how Riis described a walk through the tenement:

> *Be a little careful please!  The hall is dark and you might stumble over the children pitching pennies back there. Not that it would hurt them' kicks and cuffs are their daily diet.  They have little else.  Here where the hall turns and dives into utter darkness is a step, and another, another.  A flight of stairs.  You can feel your way even if you cannot see it.  Close? [Meaning, "stuffy?"] Yes...all the fresh air that even enters these stairs comes from the hall door that is forever slamming and from the windows of dark bedrooms that in turn receive from the stairs their sole supply of the elements...*

The journalistic spotlight brought many reforms, including state-led initiatives to combat poverty and child labor, and federal reforms to break up the trusts and institute primary elections.

## Political Reforms Brought About by the Press

Reforms in this Progressive Era helped take politics out of the hands of powerful party members and return some control to the people through primaries, initial elections to select a candidate who will run on the party ticket.   Further reform of the electoral system and primary elections took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The primary system is directly responsible for the way modern, media-heavy campaigns are run today, because the system dictates that candidates must now appeal to the populace to win primaries, not to party leaders.

## 1913-1945: REPORTERS GO TO WAR -- TWICE

The next fifty years were dominated by two great wars, combat on a scale never seen before.  World War I (1914-1918) saw the return of heavy-handed government censorship.  President Woodrow Wilson backed laws that punished members of the press who criticized involvement in what was an unpopular war.  However, the official government censorship office, headed by George Creel,
was well-respected and even-handed.

**World War I and the Internationalization of News**

World War I brought a stunned America firmly into the international sphere, and forced the nation to re-examine many of its priorities. Literature by the ton emerged after the war, including novels such as All Quiet on the Western Front.  Introspection also spread to the press. Walter Lippmann produced a detailed analysis of how people viewed the world around them titled Pubic Opinion.  This book, using many World War I examples, dealt with how we know what we think we know, and concluded that the media provide us with what is for most of us our only picture of the world outside.

World War I was dubbed "the war to end all wars," but another world war erupted twenty years later, with Adolf Hitler exploiting German resentment over tough provisions of the treaty that ended WWI.  Germany conquered many of its neighbors in Europe, meeting little resistance from nations either unprepared or unwilling to fight him.  The war actually began in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland, and then France, and then began battering Great Britain.  The United States initially stayed out of the war; most of the U.S. had little stomach for battle after the miseries of the first war.  Many newspapers, most notably the Hearst newspapers and the Chicago Tribune, railed against U.S. Involvement.  Attacks on the president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, were vicious and personal.  This was a time of widespread fear, not only of war but of enemies at home.  An enormous "Red Scare" that began in the 1920s carried through the 1930s, and alleged Communists were attacked.  A Hearst paper covered one of Roosevelt's public-assistance programs by proclaiming in a headline: "Taxpayers Feed 20,000 Reds."

**World War II – A Conflict Brought Home by the Electronic Media**

The U.S. might have avoided involvement in World War II for some time or perhaps entirely were it not for two factors: the Japanese bombing of an American Naval base in Pearl Harbor in 1941, and the new electronic media.

Radio brought the distant war home.  Journalists such as Edward R. Murrow brought the air raid sirens and the roar of guns into the nation's living rooms.  Apathy was no longer possible; the war was alive in America, and after the Japanese attack President Franklin Delano Roosevelt mobilized the nation on radio

"Yesterday, December 7th, 1941,  a date that will live in infamy,the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan... I ask Congress declare that since the

unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan...a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire."

Almost 80 percent of all American homes listened to Roosevelt's address. Congress did declare war, and over the next four years the world listened on radio and watched on movie newsreels as the greatest military mobilization in history eventually brought down the axis powers.

## 1946 - PRESENT

Television broadcasting began shortly after World War II; for several years it was something of a novelty. Audiences delighted in seeing the slapstick comedy of Milton Berle and the engaging advertising that often featured subjects such as dancing cigarette packs. Post-war years were calm and conformist, and as detailed elsewhere in this book, subtly sinister. Senator Joseph McCarthy engaged in reckless Communist "witch-hunts," ruining the reputations and livelihoods of many innocent people and using the docile press as accomplices. Only a frontal attack led by Edward R. Murrow, who had reluctantly moved into television from radio, was able to stop McCarthy.

But Murrow eventually fell out of favor at CBS because his work caused too much friction in an increasingly profit-dominated TV business, and because his shows received low ratings. Television's profits exploded, and within a decade it was arguably not only the most influential medium of the day, but in all of history.

## The Kennedy Assassination Brings Television News Front and Center

Television journalism took center stage on November 22, 1963, when President John F. Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas. Millions turned to TV, and for almost a week we were glued to our sets, viewing the aftermath of the shooting, the live-television shooting of Kennedy's purported assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald and the Kennedy funeral.

## Vietnam Brings a New Concept to War Coverage

Another war soon tested journalists, both from TV and print. In Vietnam, the United States under Kennedy had been amassing military advisors to aid South Vietnam in its battle with the Communist North. The advisors eventually became troops, and the North-South conflict because a U.S. war. Vietnam, too, was a "living room war" -- but this time, the media brought pictures into those living rooms, and it was a sight most

Americans did not relish.  Many journalists eventually turned against this distant war, and there are unverified but reliable accounts that then-president Lyndon Johnson was aghast when he saw Walter Cronkite, then the anchorman for CBS News, deliver a skeptical report about U.S. progress in Vietnam "If I've lost Cronkite," Johnson allegedly said, "I've lost America."

## News Reporters Become the News

He was right on both counts, and Vietnam was a graphic illustration of the power of the emerging television news medium.  In the 60s and 70s television reporters became stars in their own right, with recognizable figures such as Cronkite, David Brinkley, Chet Huntley Dan Rather, Mike Wallace, and Peter Jennings becoming wealthy celebrities.  (The road for Jennings was a bit longer; he anchored at ABC when he appeared painfully young, so young that he claims makeup artists added wrinkles to his face.  He was taken off the anchor desk but returned several years later.)

## Watergate

But television did not acquit itself particularly well in the huge story that developed in the 1970s, the Watergate scandal.  The Democratic party had its headquarters in the Washington, D.C. Watergate apartment and business complex In 1972, burglars who were linked to President Richard Nixon's campaign re-election committee were caught trying to beak in.

Their connections to the Nixon camp were at first unknown.  Two young police-beat reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein found that thread and traced it back to the White House.  In the end, they had uncovered a scandal that involved not only the break-in, but a large-scale cover-up, political dirty tricks, and financial mis-dealings.  Nixon resigned and many of his aides went to prison.

The Washington Post devoted an enormous amount of resources to the story.  Television largely played catch-up.  The Watergate affair is thought to have revived a flagging interest in newspaper careers in American journalism schools.

## The War Against Terror And The Balance Between Safety And Security

A final entry in this brief chronology of journalism highlights involves the series of conflicts that began with the Persian Gulf War, fought in 1991.  This war raised new questions about government control of news media

access; the government stage-managed aspects of the war and kept reporters at a certain distance from many people and events.

The war played beautifully on television though, partly because of the high-tech gadgetry involved. Networks regularly began full-scale coverage during evening prime time, and it was not unusual to hear people at lunch say they were going to stay home that night and "watch the war." Jay Leno even joked that this was the first war "with its own theme song."

A decade later, the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks and the war in Iraq revived many of the tensions between government and journalists. The 2001 attacks put Americans on notice that war is not only the concern of foreign policy analysts, and threats to security at home and abroad assumed a new urgency. But the media often found themselves in the position of arguing that security does not justify blanket censorship.

When journalists covered the war in Iraq, they found themselves "embedded" with combat units, an arrangement that provided them with up-close access but made them, many argued, a part of the combat unit and therefore not an objective observer of the actions.

As the war against terror continued, the administration and the news media found themselves in more or less continual confrontation over national security issues, capped by an event in which a member of Congress called The New York Times "treasonous" for publishing a story that detailed a secret program to monitor bank transactions that the government said could lead to terrorist activity.

The Times defended its actions by saying that some who were involved in the program, and another program disclosed six months earlier by the Times that monitored domestic phone calls, had expressed reservations about the legality of the actions. The Times, according to Executive Editor Bill Keller, was providing a public service by informing readers of the program and the objections to it.

National security remained a front-burner issue and again was top news when Osama Bin Laden was killed in spring, 2011. News media found themselves on opposite sides of the fence when it came to President Obama's decision not to release the photo of the slain terrorist.

Read through the details below in this chapter's In Depth feature, and think about the implications. With whom do you side?

## IN-DEPTH: WOULD YOU RUN BID LADEN'S DEATH PHOTO?

At the heart of one of the biggest news events since the 9/11 attacks of a decade ago was an ethics issue hotly debated in government and the media last week: whether to release Osama bin Laden's death photo.

After President Obama announced in midweek that he would not "spike the football" by releasing the photos, which reportedly show a gaping bullet wound near bin Laden's eye, analysts began weighing in, both pro and con, on the practical and moral considerations related to the pictures.

The *Los Angeles Times* editorializes in favor of Obama's decision, arguing: "The principal argument for releasing the photos is that their publication would rebut theories that Bin Laden is alive. The credible counterargument is that skeptics about Bin Laden's death — not all of them, but a significant majority — will be unpersuaded by release of the photos and will claim that they were doctored. Regardless of the evidence, they will persist in their denial — just as some 'birthers' have been unpersuaded by Obama's release of his long-form birth certificate."

But others, including Anthony Alfieri, director of the Center for Ethics and Public Service at the University of Miami School of Law, contend that such photos are an important part of history.

"We deserve to have access to information," Alfieri argued to the *Palm Beach Post*. "Should these documents be classified? There is no compelling national security argument for censorship or prior restraint of photos."

Journalists informally polled by Ryan Murphy, the digital media editor for the Radio Television Digital News Association publication *Roundup*, largely supported release of the photo, but noted that a gruesome image calls for some sort of advisory to viewers, and some commented that there would be additional issues involving sensitivity to Muslims.

The light-speed nature of social media also complicates the ethical question, notes Eastern Carolina University communications professor Cindy Elmore in an interview with TV station WNCT of Greenville, North Carolina. "Once you let those photos out now to the media, the genie's out of the bottle you can't control anymore what becomes of those photos."

## CONCLUSION

It becomes apparent even through a quick read of journalism history that the balance between security and the public's need and right to know is a

delicate one.  Also, the effects of technology on the substance of news become apparent when looking at a linear recounting of how news developed hand-in-hand with an industrial society.

# Chapter 3: Where Did Media Come From?

## INTRODUCTION

**What's Ahead…** This chapter provides a snapshot overview of the growth and development of communication. The story starts with an introduction to language, the basic tool for sharing ideas. Next, we'll examine ways of storing and transporting that language, using what are called media. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the technologies that move media and messages over long distances to many people, a process known as mass communication.

We'll see that communications technology often developed as a specific way to conquer a pressing communication problem, but often these developments came about because of accident or coincidence. Sometimes, everybody -- including the inventor of a particular technology -- was wrong about how it would be used and out it would affect society.

**Why it's Important…** People shape communication, but communication also shapes people. While we create the tools and technologies of communication, those technologies also have a profound impact on us, on the way we perceive the world.

Every time you watch TV news, write a memo, vote for a political candidate, or buy a tube of toothpaste, you are -- at least in part -- acting the way you do because you live in a world that communication built. How well you understand the workings of communication is partly responsible for how well you navigate in that world. And your understanding of the history of communications determines, to a great extent, how well you understand the present and can anticipate the future.

**Points to Keep in Mind While Reading**…One major theme of this book is its emphasis on how ideas fit together in a world that we mainly know indirectly through media. This chapter focuses on the way that the media system as we know it today evolved and not only reflects the world but shapes it.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

A homeless man who lived in a tent off a highway in Novato, California, was recently arrested for stealing high-powered industrial batteries.

He needed the batteries to run his computer, modem, and cellular phone. His tent, he told police, didn't have an electrical outlet.

While some might dismiss his priorities as the product of an unbalanced mind, we should also note that the opportunity to communicate one's message on one's own terms has driven many men and women to take great risks and undertake enormous sacrifices.

The stakes for the battery-thief are small. But in parts of the world, journalists face imprisonment, torture, and death for writing and reporting their ideas on their terms. They continue to file their stories. Under some governments, possession of a radio is illegal, but there are still plenty of radios. And in one country, a group of frightened farmers and business-people who longed for the right to express themselves freely put their lives on the line when they signed a document declaring their independence from a government that required a license to own and operate a printing press.

You may know the outlines of the last story already, because it happened in Colonial America. There is more on the story, however. Such events of history often get filed in a jumble of images in the corner of our minds, and the signing of Declaration of Independence is, to most of us, a mental montage of powdered wigs, quill pens, and a showoff who used up half the page scrawling his name. But when Jefferson, Adams, Hancock, and associates signed that document they were committing treason.

The penalty for treason was:

- To be hanged until you passed out, revived, and the process repeated as long as it looked as though you would survive it.
- After you are revived, to have your intestines pulled, inch-by-inch, from your body.
- To then have your arms and legs pulled out of their sockets.

Of course, the story of the growth of communication is not always so dramatic or the consequences so gruesome. But the process of

communication almost always involves fulfilling a deep-seated need: a desire to express an opinion, to learn about your environment, to gather information that will affect your life. (Think of the risks you have taken, personally, to express an opinion or find out something you felt should had a right to know.) The story of communication also involves great enterprise, brilliant invention, horribly bad decisions, prejudice, unexpected consequences, greed, and generosity, cowardice, and heroism.

It is, in sum, a typical story of people trying to attain something vitally important to them.

The first tool available in this quest was language.

## THE WORLD THAT LANGUAGE BUILT

We usually define language as a collection of sounds that mean the same thing to a group of people. Some scholars believe that animals, too, have a spoken "language" because they can make sounds comprehensible to other animals.

In any case, the first words spoken by a human were probably close to the rudimentary warning sounds an animal might make. Obviously, no one knows for certain what the first words were. But we conjecture that a cave man had a sound -- a growl, perhaps, -- that signified "get away from my cave." He might have had a more gentle sound that simply signified recognition, perhaps pointing to his eye and grunting a sound that indicates, "I see you."

### Written Language

Spoken language has a serious drawback: You cannot use it to keep records, other than those you can memorize, and with only a spoken language available you can only transport your thoughts as far as you can travel or shout.

Simple representations of images, such as drawings of animals, were used by cave-dwellers and probably qualify as "writing," because they might have been meant to communicate what kind of animal was found in the region. Real writing began when those pictures were stylized and used to communicate specific ideas or sounds that comprise an expression of ideas. An example of this process: A picture of an eye was originally used to indicate "I saw."

The eye eventually evolved into a circle or an oval. Our letter "o" comes from the early symbol for "eye."

## Ideographic Writing

Using pictures to represent things or ideas such as an eye or vision is known as ideographic writing, literally, "writing an idea." Using symbols to indicate sounds within a language, such as the letter "o", is called phonographic writing.

"Graph" is part of a Greek word that means "writing." As mentioned, "ideographic" means writing ideas. The "graph" root is part of many terms used in communications:

Photography = "writing" with light (Greek "phot,"  meaning light)

Phonograph = "writing" with sound (Greek "phone" for sound or voice).  Phonographic can refer to an alphabetic writing system or a sound system that plays music.  Both involve "sound-writing."

Pornography = "writing" done by immoral people (Greek "porno," meaning "prostitute"

Whenever you see the root word "graph" or a similar word "gram," you know that the term has something to do with creating a record that can be "written." It does have to be literally written, but figuratively recorded, as in an expression popular among computer users,  "written to the disc."

Ideographic writing is all right for recording events such as "I saw one cow," but expressing abstractions can be complex.  Although many ideographic written languages are in common use today, including Mandarin Chinese, the world's most popular language, they are difficult to master. Mandarin, for instance, relies on inventive juxtapositions of pictures to produce other words.

## Phonographic Writing

Phonographic writing, linking a symbol not to an idea but to a sound, vastly simplified the process of constructing and using a written language.  Most researchers believe that phonographic writing developed in regions we now know as the middle and near East, sometime around 2,500 B.C.  People known as Sumerians initially used  ideographic writing to record simple representative pictures on tablets of wet clay.  When dry, the clay tablets formed a durable and reasonably transportable record.  The nearby Egyptians, at about the same time, recorded their ideas by drawing more elaborate pictures on clay.

The Egyptians' system was known as hieroglyphics. The Sumerians' system, which involved impressions made by a stick with a wedge-shaped end, was called cuneiform.

Eventually the cuneiforms and hieroglyphics became stylized because precise pictures were difficult and time-consuming to draw with the wedge-shaped sticks, and the language began to include marks that indicated sounds in the spoken language.

The Sumerians and Egyptians now had two critical communication tools: written language and media.

## Media: Long-Living Language

A tablet used to store and record the language is a medium. The word "medium" is from the Latin word for "middle". It's the same word and the same derivation as the word you would use to order a steak "medium rare." One of the first uses of the word was to indicate a middle area through which something traveled, such as a path that runs through the middle of a mountain range. We still use the word "medium" to indicate a device or structure on which something else is carried or conveyed. The plural of medium is "media."

Media are part of the communication process because they actually help shape the message. An example is cuneiform communication changing from ideographic to phonographic writing because it was difficult to draw detailed pictures in clay using the wedge-shaped stick. As media scholars Melvin DeFleur and Everett Dennis have pointed out, this is one of the first examples of the technology altering the actual message.

## Media Begin to Shape Expression

Every medium, from clay tablets to television, shapes the message carried by it. Think about TV news: It is heavy on "visual" stories. Political candidates, for example, know that they generally need a good "visual" to make the evening news. And because television has developed a system of sending programs in half-hour or hour-long segments, politicians know that their message must not only be visual but fairly short.

That is not necessarily wrong, but it does change the nature of what appears on television news and what does not. A ten-second shot of a major presidential candidate riding in a tank to demonstrate

his commitment to a strong military will almost always make the news.  The complete text of a candidate's two-hour speech explaining the intricacies of economy will never make the evening news.  So we can conclude that television news has literally changed the definition of news (news that goes on television).  In this case, a short illustrative visual is news; the complete text of a two-hour speech is not.

A popular Canadian media theorist named Marshall McLuhan coined a phrase summing up this phenomenon: The medium is the message.  In other words, the technological channel of communication is not a neutral thing, despite the neutral-sounding word "medium." The medium changes and becomes an important part of the message.

## Media Storage Systems Change the Nature of Communication

Written language is of limited value if you must carry all your records and leisure reading on clay tablets.  Ink and animal skins proved a workable alternative.  Animal skins are often scarce, however, and animals are not cooperative about surrendering them.  Paper, made from crushed vegetable fibers,  proved more practical, and it was this tool that would change the nature of the written media and the message it was capable of sending.

# PAPER, MIGRATION, AND THE SPREAD OF COMMON LANGUAGES

The Greeks, great "borrowers" of the best of many cultures, adopted aspects of several early written and spoken languages.  In turn, the Greek language was "borrowed" by the Romans (at the point of a sword).  Latin, the language of the Romans, was mixed with Greek, and the Romans spread this new language as far as their ships and horses could carry them.

From 27 BC to 476 AD, the Roman Empire conquered and controlled most of Europe and parts of what is now the Middle East. Latin became one of the most important ingredients in the pot of languages that would simmer for centuries and produce modern English.

## Old English

Other ingredients in the recipe came from the north: As the Roman Empire began to collapse, its deterioration was coaxed along by invading tribes from northern Germany and Denmark, who forayed into the British Isles, a weak part of the Roman Empire. These tribes, most notably the Angles and Saxons, mixed their language with the exiting tongue, and a hodge-podge called Old English developed.

Old English is something like modern German in its structure in that it is highly inflected. An inflected language is one that uses complex changes in the form of a word to indicate its case, structure, and tense.

## Middle English

The next major change in language rode in on horseback, when the French Normans (from Normandie, a former province in France) conquered England in 1066 in a series of battles known today as the Norman Conquest. The Normans were technologically savvy, and had learned to fashion metal into a stirrup, which allowed them to stand securely on their horses and strike downward. This, in turn, enabled them to carve apart the English infantry. When the Normans marched into London, they made French the language of Literature and Latin the language of government. The French also imposed many aspects of their culture, including their legal system.

The existing "Old English" absorbed many French and Latin words and evolved into what is what is now known as Middle English. (The word "jury" is an example of a word and a legal practice that came with the Norman French.) Middle English was still highly regionalized. A Middle-English speaker from one area might have difficulty understanding someone from several hundred miles away.

Note how deeply the legacy of was is embedded in our culture, communication and commerce. Canned food, for example, was originally developed as a method for feeding traveling armies of Napoleon, and it proved so effective that Napoleon's armies were able to travel farther than previously thought possible. Many communications technologies, such as the telegraph, have their origins in battlefield communication. Customs such as the military salute evolved from knights in armor raising their visors so they view each other's faces and could recognize each other. The handshake we use every day was originally a feeling-out process where suspicious strangers, often in the process of negotiating a truce, would literally feel their way up each other's sleeves to hunt for concealed daggers. And as detailed in this chapter, warfare was instrumental in spreading language. One of the first actions a

conquering army would take would be to impose its own language on the society in conquered.  That is additional testimony to the power and importance we invest in language and communications.)

## Modern English and Standardization

The existence of paper manuscripts helped standardize Middle English, a process which in turn contributed to the development of Modern English, a process that occurred some time in the 16th century.

Standardization is an important part of the story. Only after English was more or less the same from region to region did it achieve widespread acceptance. Much of this standardization dates to Geoffrey Chaucer, who lived from about 1330 to 1400.  Chaucer was one of the first important writers to use English as a language of literature.   In Chaucer's time, French was still the dominant language of literature, as decreed by the Normans when they conquered England, and Latin was the language used by scholars.

But Chaucer chose to write in his own language and the dialect (a distinctive variety of a particular language) of his hometown of London.  Because printing was not yet practical, his works were hand copied by scribes.  The manuscripts were widely distributed and thus helped to standardize English spelling and grammar.  At the same time, the flexible English language, which had adopted so many features of other languages, was proving that it could provide a lively architecture for plays and literature. This is due in part to the fact that English had adopted so many other languages, and changed so rapidly, that it is not particularly precise. It is a great language, then, for puns, jokes that play off double meanings of words. One reason Shakespeare became so popular is that he frequently used hilarious double-meanings, many of them sexual in nature and thus not likely to survive the editors of textbooks.

# MASS COMMUNICATION: LONG-DISTANCE LANGUAGE

Hand-copying manuscripts was slow and expensive, and scribes did not always stick to the true meaning of the original, either out of mischief or incompetence.  In addition, various plagues had decimated the ranks of the scribes, and those who survived charged what the market would bear.

A metal-smith named Johann Gutenberg saw a tremendous entrepreneurial opportunity in the perfection of moveable type Moveable type was not new, but until the time of Gutenberg the concept had never worked well enough to be of much practical use. Gutenberg dug himself deeply into debt borrowing money to perfect his press, but after several years of development it worked beautifully.

The ability to mass-produce written language changed everything. Languages became highly standardized: Chaucer now came rolling off the printing presses in great numbers, as well as editions of the Bible and works by Shakespeare. All these editions used (more or less) the same alphabet, grammar, and spelling. Dictionaries further standardized the language. As a result of these processes, more people became literate, and translation between existing major languages became practical.

The flow of information began to change the way people conducted their lives. Traders now thrived on information about wars and unrest in the distant lands with which they did business. Those who depended on public support for their livelihood took notice: One popular explorer, who may have been the world's first public relations practitioner, used the Gutenberg press to print leaflets extolling the benefits of conquering new worlds, and distributed them in advance of his fund-raising visits. We know him as Christopher Columbus. Columbus also benefited from communications in another way: he used one of the first "how-to" books, carrying a copy of explorer Marco Polo's writings with him while searching for the New World.

### The New Mass Communication Becomes a Threat to Established Order

Not everyone was thrilled by the prospect of printed material circulating among a newly literate public. European royalty were profoundly suspicious of the idea. The reasons are straightforward: Unless a dictator controls it, the absolute last thing the dictator wants loose among the public is a tool that can:

1. Reach large numbers of people fairly quickly, filling them with ideas and perhaps motivating them to action.

2. Expose people to conditions in the rest of the world...

3. Uncover the injustices of the ruling class...

4. In a self-perpetuating cycle, foster more literacy.

When independent-minded printers tested these concepts, they usually lost. One printer, a gentleman named (rather aptly, for reasons you'll discover in a moment) John Stubbs, published a criticism of Queen Elizabeth's plan to marry a duke. The queen was not amused, and to show her displeasure had Stubbs's right hand cut off.

More acutely aware of where his best interests lie, the repentant Mr. Stubbs held up his left hand and shouted "God Save the Queen." And thus began a long tradition of strained relations between printers and royalty.

## Licensing of the Printing Press

One of royalty's first strategies in combating the flow of information was licensing of printing presses. One of the earliest licensing agencies was a secret court called the Star Chamber, which, among other its other duties, made life miserable for anyone who printed or read what the government did not approve of. "Star Chamber" is an expression used today to denote a secret, unfair, proceeding; the name originally came from the meeting place of the court, a room called the Star Chamber in Westminster Palace. The Star Chamber mandated that printers needed a license to operate and own a press, and prescribed severe punishments, including death, for those who printed without a license and, later, for those who read illicit material.

If kings and queens were irritated by criticism from subjects at home, they were outraged when they heard about printed broadsides by colonists in America. Their indignation ran so deep that they extended the licensing requirement in the colonies even after it had been canceled in England.

## The Printing Press in Colonial America

There was good reason for the monarchy to fear the power of the press in the colonies. The American Revolution is in large part a story of how media influenced public opinion. Printed media during the time of the American Revolution accomplished exactly what the rulers feared:

- Media exposed colonists to printed accounts from writers and philosophers who claimed that people were born with rights...and those rights included life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Ironically, many of these ideas came from

British writers, such as Milton. When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, he borrowed ideas from this type of political philosophy, which is known as natural law.

- Media inflamed colonists with political tracts that blasted royal rule. A pamphleteer named Thomas Paine was particularly instrumental in this through his work called *Common Sense*.

- Media conditioned colonists to look for political news in printed form.

The printing press proved itself capable of toppling governments, and the American Revolution was one of the first graphic displays of the power of mass communication.

Mass communication is the process of using a technological medium -- such as a printing press and paper -- to reach a large audience. It is a unique type of communication that has different mechanisms and effects than communicating between individuals or internally sorting out the thoughts in our own minds.

## DEFINING MASS COMMUNICATION

We usually divide human communication into three types: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and mass communication.

### Intrapersonal Communication

This essentially means communicating within yourself -- or the flow of thoughts within your own head. We study intrapersonal communication to learn how people "internalize" what they observe in the outside world. This is not so abstract as it might seem, because a related concept of how we know what we think we know, called "epistemology," is a critical part of everyday life. Are you capable, using your own words and thoughts (internal words), to render an "unbiased" judgment? Can media, which are run by people who have their own thought processes, be completely "objective" and "neutral?" This concept is covered in an upcoming chapter dealing with media and society.

### Interpersonal Communication

Daily interactions between and among people occupy us more than any other form of communication. Interpersonal communication ranges from writing letters to giving a report at work to late-night talks with between spouses. Skill in interpersonal communication is important for resolving conflict, persuading others, and maintaining relationships. Interpersonal communication involves more than just speech; when we study such transactions, we also look at gestures, physical closeness, and posture.

### Mass Communication's Attributes

Mass communication is a process that uses a technological device to reach a wide audience at fairly high speed. The technology of a mass communications medium is generally accessible to most people in the audience. Most members of that audience are unknown to each other and to the person who originates the message, who usually is part of an industry that creates mass communications usually with the intent of earning a profit. The audience generally provides very little feedback, and that feedback is significantly delayed.

To examine this definition point-by-point, let's look at each of the characteristics cited...

### Technological

Mass communication media utilize some sort of mechanical device. Radios and televisions use tubes and transistors to transduce sound into an electromagnetic signal; newspapers, books, and magazines utilize printing presses, special inks, and -- today -- computers.

### Wide Audience

By the very nature of the enterprise, it is important for mass media to reach a wide audience. Usually, that audience is defined only by general characteristics. For example, we know that heavy metal broadcast on radio will generally reach more people in their 20s than in their 70s. But we don't personally know the individuals receiving that signal nor, for most purposes, do we want or need to.

### High Speed

One goal of mass media is to reach an audience in a timely manner. News, for example, has a short shelf-life and the technologies of the mass media are designed to speed it to its destination.

**Accessible Technology**

Mass media does not reach a "mass" audience unless most members possess the means to decode the technologically encoded media. No soft drink manufacturer, for example, would pay a million dollars a minute for a commercial on a medium that can only be received and understood by a handful of people.

**An Audience Generally Unknown to the Sender or to Other Members of the Audience.**

David Letterman may know his mother is watching -- and may even say, "Hi, Mom," but the purpose of his program is to reach a large number of people he cannot possibly know. While individual members of the audience may know each other but as a rule Letterman viewers are anonymous from each other.

**A Message Generator Who is Part of an Industry**

The way we usually define mass communication is as a profit-making industry staffed by professional communicators. In some cases the "profit" may be indirect, but the communicators themselves are generally getting paid for their effort.

**An Audience that Provides Meager, Delayed Feedback**

You can't talk back to Letterman. If you could and did, you and the millions of other listeners would so disrupt the show that it would look nothing like it does at present. You can write a letter or e-mail the network, but Letterman is probably not waiting for your immediate response.

## HOW MASS COMMUNICATION CONQUERED DISTANCE AND CHANGED OUR VIEW OF THE WORLD

Media used in mass communication, which we will refer to as mass media, grew exponentially, allowing cultures to spread messages quickly and over great distances.

The print media -- books, magazines, and newspapers -- reached progressively larger audiences as the technology of printing and transportation developed.  In addition to technological changes in printing, the technological and social infrastructure (the over-all structure of society) that supported mass communications exploded.

But a problem still remained.  Even though early mass media could save thoughts committed to language in a form where they could last a long time, and could widely distribute them, no medium could effectively move ideas faster than a man on a horse.

## Early Attempts to Move Messages over a Distance

Various methods of communication to transmit ideas over a distance did exist, but they only worked with rudimentary ideas and short distances. Shouting worked pretty well for a few hundred yards.  Visual signs could transmit ideas for a few miles or so.  The Greeks had devised what might have been the first long-distance communication system by arranging large vases in patterns visible from afar.

Other options included smoke signals could be seen for several miles if the wind cooperated. Sailors and soldiers, since the dawn of warfare, had used various visual systems to signal allies on the battlefield.  A flag is the most rudimentary example.  Later, elaborate systems of signals produced with hand-held and otherwise mobile flags were used to convey letters of the alphabet to someone viewing from a distance. The Army's Signal Corps, for example, today uses highly sophisticated electronic gear but originally used the tools that still decorate their shoulder insignia: torches and flags.

Still, each system was deficient, and an expanding nation found itself desperate for a way to overcome distance.

## The Telegraph

In the 1830s, at about the time that American newspapers were taking advantage of new printing press technology and putting low-price papers into the hands of large audiences, two Englishmen named William Fothergill Cooke and Charles Wheatstone perfected a device that sent a signal through a wire and moved a needle at the other end of that wire.

The implications of this phenomenon were enormous -- and not lost on an American named Samuel F.B. Morse. (He perfected a

device called a telegraph (meaning "writing over distance"). Morse coupled the device with a new discovery, the electromagnet.

Morse's invention proved eminently practical. It caused a magnet at one end of the wire, attached to a key and activated by an operator tapping out a code that represented the alphabet, to cause an electromagnet on the other end to tap out the same code. This could be accomplished over hundreds of miles.

## How the Telegraph Changed the Expanding Nation

The nation was wired in less than 20 years. During these years of almost crazed expansion, the telegraph not only carried messages but literally changed the face of the nation. For example, telegraph lines were strung along the same path as railroad lines, because there was already a flat, clear space to mount the poles, and because railroad engineers could keep an eye on the lines. As a result, centers of rail transportation, such as Chicago and New York, became great communication hubs as well.

The nature of news changed. Fresh, new information became a valuable commodity, especially when firms Chicago and New York began trading stocks and commodity investments. (Remember, they were not physically trading corporations or wheat; members of stock and commodity exchanges were dealing in communication and information shared among investors who bet on the rise and fall of companies and the price of various goods.) News from distant regions could be relayed quickly, and Americans developed an interest in that news. Toward the middle 1800s, that news increasingly hinted at the possibility of war between the states.

The technology of the telegraph soon changed the way newspapers gathered and presented their news. In the 1840s, several newspapers papers banded together to buy time on telegraphs (which were expensive and sometimes difficult to access) and share the information gathered and relayed by far-flung reporters. This news "cooperative," the Associated Press, is still one of the most important sources of news.

## How the Telegraph Changed the Structure and Content of News

When the nation's troubles did erupt in civil war, the telegraph, and the Associated Press's use of this technology, not only expedited the reporting of news but actually changed the structure and, for that matter, the definition of news.

When the first rumblings of the Civil War rocked America in 1960, the populace was starved for information about the events that were tearing their nation apart.

The Associated Press was feeding accounts from many locales, but the telegraph system was overburdened and in some cases subject to sabotage and censorship. As a result, reporters were instructed to condense their stories so that the first few lines would be intelligible even if communications were cut. The style of news changed. Before the war, news was usually presented in a leisurely, rambling narrative style. But wartime realities contributed to a change in the structure of news. It was now presented with a top-heavy "summary lead" that told the who, what, where, when and why up front.

This style became known as the inverted pyramid. This is the style still used by modern newspapers. While newspaper editors no longer worry about transmissions being interrupted, they continue to use this style because writers and readers have become accustomed to it, and it is an efficient model for communicating news. Not coincidentally, it is also easy to edit; if the editor is short on space, he or she can just lop off the final few paragraphs.

The AP also had to adapt to the fact that it served client newspapers in many locations and of various political persuasions. Note that not all northern newspapers supported abolition of slavery and other causes behind the conflict. A biased report would alienate many customers. As a result, the AP insisted that reporters adopt a neutral, just-the-facts approach. This style and approach became known as objectivity, and it characterizes our attitudes about journalism today. Sometimes news is defined as an objective report.

## Radio

While the telegraph was an enormously successful technology, wires were not practical for many applications. Stringing the wire was difficult, and the wire itself was an easy target for sabotage. Some people who badly needed long-distance communication couldn't use wires. Captains of ships, for example, needed something more efficient than the visual devices that could only be seen a few miles in good weather, and hardly at all in fog.

The possibility of "wireless" communication obsessed an Italian youth named Guglielmo Marconi. Marconi already knew, from reading about the accomplishments of other inventors, that a current in one wire could not only travel to the end of the wire

-- as in telegraphy -- but could also induce a current in a nearby wire.

This principle, called induction, (from "induce," meaning "to cause") produced electromagnetic radiation that traveled through the air at the speed of light.   This type of "radiation" was referred to, in shortened fashion, as "radio," even though all electromagnetic radiation -- radio, light, x-rays -- is the same phenomenon occurring at different frequencies.

**Radio Shows Promise of Being Profitable**

But in the mid 1800s radio could only send impulses across a laboratory.  Marconi believed that he could vastly improve the distance of transmission and send Morse code without wires.

In the late 1800s Marconi began systematic experiments to accomplish that goal, equipping his younger brother with a portable receiver and a rifle.  The younger Marconi would walk into the countryside and when he received a signal from his brother's transmitter, he would fire off the rifle.  When Marconi heard the rifle go off far in the distance, he thought he was on to something.

And when he couldn't hear the rifle any more, even though his brother reported, on his return, that he had heard the signal and fired the shot, Marconi knew he had a great idea.  While the Italian government had no interest in his device, the navies of Britain and the United States did, and Marconi became a rich man installing his system on their ships.

**Radio: The First Monopoly**

One reason Marconi did so well financially is that he took out very restrictive licenses on his process and equipment.  A ship could not just buy a radio; the shipping company had to buy a Marconi system and carry an operator in the employ of the Marconi Company -- and all of this came at a premium price.

Some ships couldn't afford Marconi radio systems, and after a few of these ships sunk and their crews drowned because they couldn't sent out an SOS, or if they could, not reach a Marconi-equipped rescue ship, the government stepped in and decreed that this new technology could not be cornered by one man or one company.  This was an important factor in the dawn of modern government regulation of media.

# ADDING THE HUMAN ELEMENT: MASS COMMUNICATION ENTERS THE 20TH CENTURY

Telegraphy and wireless telegraphy were practical tools but they lacked what we might call the "human element." Dots and dashes were a code not everyone wanted to learn. In the years before and after the turn of the century, about 1875 through 1920, inventors and scientists worked to develop media that added sight, sound, and motion to mass communication. The mainstays of modern mass communication, the telephone, broadcast radio, sound recording, and motion picture film (which laid the groundwork for television) all developed during this period.

## The Telephone: Adding a Voice to the Telegraph

A Scottish speech teacher Alexander Graham Bell solved the problem of moving the human voice over a wire, and he did it more or less by accident -- two accidents, actually.

First, Bell was attempting to develop a hearing aid for his hearing-impaired wife, not a telephone. But when he discovered that sounds could be transduced (changed from one form of energy to another) from the mechanical energy of sound (a vibration of air molecules) into electrical energy and back again, it became apparent that sound carried over wires could serve to link individuals. This was a technology that required no special training to operate.

The second accident, as recounted in many books and films, is the famous incident when Bell himself uttered the first words spoken over a telephone when he spilled acid on himself. He purportedly called his assistant: "Mr. Watson, come here. I need you." Whether anyone would speak so precisely and grammatically as acid worked its way into his lap is a matter for conjecture, but the impact of the telephone is not: Patented in 1876, it made instant communication possible and figuratively removed the barriers of distance.

## Modern Radio: The Sum of the Wireless, the Telephone, and Sound Recording

The human voice found its way over the airwaves some years later. In much the same way that a microphone impressed a pattern on

electricity carried over the wire in Bell's telephone, a scientist named Lee de Forest found that radio waves could be modulated (made to carry a detectable pattern) by a device called an "audion tube."

For a while, radio carrying the human voice was a laboratory novelty, but on Christmas Eve, 1906, radio ship operators, accustomed to hearing dots and dashes in their headsets were startled to hear an inventor named Reginald Fessenden read a speech, play a violin solo, and broadcast some recorded music.

Radio and recorded music, of course, would have a long and profitable partnership -- despite the predictions to the contrary by experts, including Thomas Edison who invented the phonograph in 1877. The first phonograph consisted of a cylinder covered with foil coupled to a large horn.

Edison spoke into the big end of the horn, at the small end of which was affixed a small needle. When Edison spoke the first recorded words (reportedly "Mary had a little lamb") and turned his cylinder at the same time, the mechanical energy of his voice was collected by the horn and vibrated the needle, which carved a jagged groove in the turning cylinder.

When the needle was placed back in that groove, and the cylinder turned, the needle bounced around in the pattern created by the original sound. The mechanical energy was translated back into another kind of mechanical energy.

The commercial opportunity for storing music, a form of entertainment that previously could be enjoyed only in person, was obvious to almost everyone -- except Edison, who ridiculed the idea; he had, after all, invented a strictly business device, a dictation machine. The market (made up of consumers) eventually made its own wishes known through its collective pocketbook.

## A Lesson from Radio: Why We Can't Predict the Future of Media

The developers of a communications technology often do not know the role the particular technology will eventually fill. Bell guessed wrong with his hearing aid, and Edison with his dictation machine. The experts who invented 8-track tapes (devices that competed with audio cassettes and now are seen only at garage sales) and now-obsolete formats of home videotape also were wrong.

Sometimes, media take a path of unintended consequences, and even the experts don't know what will happen. There's a direct

corollary to the "information highway." Everyone has an idea where it will go, but no one knows for sure.

## Radio Becomes a Profitable Mass Medium

The market moved radio in unexpected directions, as well. Marconi Company, as well.  Part of the story dates back to David Sarnoff, who, as a young radio operator, stayed hunched over his telegraph key for several days communicating with the ship Titanic as it sank in the Atlantic. Sarnoff, awed by the power of radio to cover great distance, envisioned a day when the medium would reach into every home.  He composed a memo to his employers predicting that radio had enormous potential as a "music box," a device that would transform every home.

His bosses ignored him.

Sarnoff's prophecy came true, and made him a rich man.  He would later head the Radio Corporation of America, RCA, which later become the parent of the National Broadcasting Company, NBC.

## The Moving Image: Film Plus Motion Sets The Stage For Television

Photography had been in existence since about 1826 or so, but in the United States it was not a medium of much importance until the Civil War, when a photographer named Matthew Brady loaded his glass plates and chemicals into a wagon and documented the true miseries of war.

But it was the misery of the process of photography intrigued an amateur photographer named George Eastman, who was a bank clerk in Rochester, New York. Eastman noted that this appealing hobby was ruined by the fact that the photographer had to cart around bulky and fragile "wet" plates -- glass plates coated with a silver substance that had to be dipped in acid to make an image.

Working mainly from his mother's kitchen, Eastman engaged in thousands of experiments to produce a "dry" plate, one that did not require immersion in a separate liquid to make the silver crystals (which reacted to the presence of light) retain their image.

Later, he developed a flexible backing for the silver substance.  His flexible celluloid base came to be known as "film." (At that time, the word "film" had no meaning in relation to photography -- it meant only "a thin covering."  The substance Eastman used was

actually the "film" that collected at the top of a boiling cauldron of substance that another inventor's attempt to make as a substitute for ivory.)

When Eastman marketed his first portable camera equipped with flexible film that could be rolled tightly within the camera, he opened a new world not only for hobbyists but for photo-journalists.

A new type of "illustrated" newspaper developed, featuring large front-page photographs. The *New York Daily News*, originally the *"Illustrated" Daily News*, was the one of the first "picture newspapers."

Could Eastman's flexible-film photography be combined with Edison's sound recording? Both Eastman and Edison thought so. They concentrated on developing a "motion picture film" that would create the illusion of movement by exploiting an odd mechanism in our brain and optic nerves.

We retain an image in our "mind's eye" for a split-second after seeing it. This is called "persistence of vision" and accounts for why you see the image of a flashbulb for several seconds after someone takes your picture. Persistence of vision was a well-known phenomenon in Edison's and Eastman's time; there were many popular parlor toys that mechanically moved drawings of horses, each in a different position, past the viewer's eye. The individual frames froze, for a split-second, in the viewer's mind and created the illusion of movement.

In 1893, Edison patented a motion picture projector which used a roll of Eastman's flexible film drawn past a sharply focused lamp. This gave birth to two industries: initially, films, and later, television.

## The Additive Effect of Media and Journalism Technologies

For the most part, each of these new media developments did not kill off older media. In many cases, they strengthened existing media by opening new markets for that medium.

The great inventions of this era did not kill the industries centered around print and paper. In fact, technological developments such as improved, steam-powered presses increased the quantity and quality of books, newspapers and magazines.

The newspaper industry grew exponentially during the height of the American industrial revolution, 1850 - 1900. That growth is

related to industrial and technological development, but not only in the field of mass communication.  For example:

- Between 1850 and 1900, cities were extensively wired for electricity. People could now read after dark, and evening newspapers would eventually become more popular than those published in the morning.

- Heavy industry brought people to cities.  Before 1850, the nation was mostly agricultural. Toward 1900, most people lived in urban areas.  Newspapers prospered because they could now publish large numbers of papers and sell them to a concentrated audience.  Also, remember that industrialized cities relied on a cash economy, which of course was profitable for newspapers' advertising departments.  In earlier days, agricultural communities operated in large part by barter, such as trading chickens for horseshoes.  That is an efficient arrangement for a farmer with unshod horses and a hungry blacksmith, but a difficult transaction to arrange via the classifieds.

- Photography brought a new dimension to the print media, and the ability to take and distribute photos strengthened the appeal of the print media.

- Later, television made the motion picture industry more vibrant by providing a new outlet for films.   While the development of home VCRs was originally bemoaned by both the television and film industry, it actually made each industry stronger.  Film companies now typically make a good share of their profit up front by selling rights to video rental firms such as Blockbuster Video.

Sometimes, new media coax existing media into more specialized functions actually better-suited for a particular medium.  Radio used to be a mass entertainment medium, broadcasting drama and variety nationwide.  But when it became apparent that television could do that task much better, radio evolved into a medium that targets specific listeners in a narrow range.

## MODERN MEDIA COME OF AGE

Advances in mass communications profoundly changed the way Americans interacted with media.  In earlier times, the events of the

world were often distant affairs that were somewhat removed from the routine of daily life.  But media changed all that.  During the early days of World War II, for example, before the United States entered the war, radio, newspapers and motion picture film brought graphic details on Europe's troubles to the United States and the rest of the world.

## World War II: A War Brought into the Living Room

One of the most moving examples took place in Great Britain, which was under relentless attack by Nazi rockets.  A reporter named Edward R.Murrow made daily wartime broadcasts from London. His reports began  simply and dramatically with the words "This...is London". He would then describe the violent events of the past several hours, often with a tribute to the heroism of the British people.  Occasionally, the sounds of bombs dropping could be heard in the background.

Following the war, weary families craved relief from the troubles of the world and gathered around their radios to listen to comedy, drama, musical performances, variety shows, and day-to-day serials that came to be known as "soap operas" (because a soap company was a major sponsor of the more popular programs).

If sitting in the living room and staring at the radio seems to you like it would be a bit awkward, you are probably right. While people loved radio, television was a much more powerful living-room mass communication tool.

Television exploited persistence of vision in a similar fashion to motion picture film, but the scanning process was electronic rather than mechanical.  Although the mechanical principle of television had been demonstrated in the 1800s, and the electronic possibilities in the 1920s, TV did not become a viable mass medium until the 1940s.

## Television Enters the Picture

Once again, many experts were dead wrong in their assessment of television; many thought it a passing fad that could never seriously compete with radio.  Among them were distinguished reporters such as Murrow, who at first resisted attempts to lure them to TV. But television was a magnet for the public, and Murrow found that

he and his "old team," as he put it, must learn to "master a new trade."

Radio survived the arrival of television by transforming itself from a mass entertainer -- a format at which it was at a hopeless disadvantage with television -- to a "narrowcaster," a medium that brought specialized news and entertainment who a segmented audience.  In doing so, radio followed a trend that is common among almost all media: moving from serving a general audience to a specific, highly-targeted audience, as new media took away the general audience.

## Modern Media Complete The Cycle: Elite, Popular, And Specialized

When you look back at the history of media, a common theme is visible: Most media began as rather expensive technological devices that were available to only the wealthy or to intellectuals.

As we will explore in upcoming chapters, books were originally very costly and were bought and sold by the wealthy elite.  The first newspapers cost more than the average citizen could afford, and until the technology developed to the point where they could be sold for a penny or so and subsidized by advertising, they remained out of reach of the masses.  Magazines also started as elite publications; radio and television were originally expensive toys available only to a few.

But as a medium matures, it usually reaches a stage where it appeals to a wide, popular audience.  This is exactly what happened with radio in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and with other media as well.

Radio has now become a highly specialized medium.   You will find very little general entertainment on the radio dial.  Formats are rigidly defined: all news, all sports, hot hits, hot country, classic rock, and so forth.   Magazines are also specialized.  The general interest magazines of previous years (*Life, Look)* are gone; in their place are niche-market magazines that appeal to certain professions (*Dental Management News*), lifestyles (*Cross Country Ski World*), and interests (*MacWorld*).

A present-day example of this phenomenon is the growth of computer networks.  Fifteen years ago logging onto a computer bulletin board was something only an elite computer expert would do (or want to do).  Today, those media are mainstream

This pattern of media development was named the EPS cycle by a scholar named John Merrill.  The acronym stands for ELITE, POPULAR, AND SPECIALIZED.

## Television Networks and the Cyclical Nature of Media

Network television became, perhaps, the most profitable and influential media conglomerate in history.  The growth of the big three networks actually paralleled the development of the telegraph in the structure was largely dictated by available technology.

But even the seemingly invincible Big Three -- NBC, CBS, and ABC -- saw their fortunes decline as new technologies enabled competitors to challenge them.  As a result, television and cable has undergone specialization: There are several all-news channels, shopping channels, a food channel, and a "fish channel" that allows viewers to transform their TV sets into imitation aquariums.

Note that the television networks are a good example of how technology affects content.  As you read through this chapter's *In Depth* feature, try to think of other examples of how the medium changes the message.

## IN DEPTH:  HOW TECHNOLOGY SHAPED THE TV NETWORKS

During the first three decades of television, the 50s. 60S, and 70s, programming was dominated by three major networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC.  A network, in this usage of the word, is an organization that buys programming from independent producers and produces some programming, usually news, and then distributes programming to television stations. (Radio networks work in a similar but not identical fashion.)  The network pays the stations to carry the network's programs.  This produces a profit for the network, because a program playing regularly in several hundred stations across the country means that the network has an attractive venue in which to sell advertising.

The network's domination of television was due in large part to the nature of the television signal, and is another illustration of how technology drives media. When the federal government took the then-available number of channels (12, channels 2-13 on what is known as the VHF -- very high frequency -- dial) and parceled them out across the country to the major cities, it was necessary to put the channels at a certain distance from each other.  In other

words, you could not put a channel 2 in Boston and another channel 2 in New York because they interfered with each other; TV signals are very susceptible to interference.

It turned out that when you take twelve channels, spread them apart by the required distance, and locate most of them in major cities, you wind up with a maximum of three channels in each of those major cities. As a result, only three competing networks were able to prosper. While there were several attempts during this period to start a fourth television network, they generally failed because there simply was no way to find enough stations to carry its programming and advertising.

This changed when cable came into the television picture. Originally, the function of cable TV was to bring good reception into areas where the signal was weak. For a while, cable was known as CATV, or community antenna television.

In the 1970s and 1980s, cable began reaching homes in areas where people already had good reception. It offered more pictures and better pictures, and American households began signing on to services that brought in "superstations" such as WTBS in Atlanta; a "superstation" is simply a television station that makes itself available to cable systems nationwide and succeeds in securing many placements on cable systems and selling a high amount of advertising.

Cable-only services, such as HBO (Home Box Office) and CNN (Cable News Network) began putting their signals over cable stations, using satellite technology to beam their signals to the central distribution points for the cable systems. It took several years for such services to make a profit, and as is often the case media "experts" were wrong about the future. CNN's efforts, for example, were openly ridiculed by some in the established network news media, who took to calling it the "Chicken Noodle Network."

CNN's efforts, coupled with the complacency of its competitors and advances in cable technology, would be one skirmish in a battle that would considerably weaken the Big Three networks. While the Big Three are still powerful, their share of the viewing audience is down precipitously from their glory days.

# MEDIA AND THE DIGITAL WORLD OF "UNIMEDIA"

The cable revolution marked the beginning of a broader sea-change that will alter all media, and our relation to that media. This is the phenomenon of media convergence. "Convergence" means "coming together," and that is exactly what the digital revolution is bringing to media.

## Defining Digital

"Digit" means "finger" and that is how people originally counted. It is no coincidence that our number system works in groups of ten. (When you add a zero, you're multiplying by ten, meaning you use a number system based on ten.) Computers, though, for all intents and purposes cannot count to ten. They can only count to two, and "know" only two numbers: ON and OFF.

The digital revolution actually dates back hundreds of years if you include the first practical applications of ON and OFF: The automatic loom, perfected in the 17th century. A system of paper and cylinders allowed punch-holes to determine a pattern that would guide the loom. A wire could either extend through the hole and trigger a command, or where there was no hole, not trigger a command. The punch-card would later be applied to a crude mechanical adding machine, which later became a more sophisticated mechanical adding machine, which evolved into a computer.

## Why Digital Technology Changed Everything

The beauty of a computer is that it processes everything in terms of this on-and-off code. Sounds, images, and text are all the same thing to the computer, and this opens the door to a "convergence" of all media into one process that can be universally be utilized by computer-driven devices.

If the media do evolve into an interconnected source that comes into the home and office by cable, or by radio waves, whoever controls that source, or that largest part of it, will also control a huge and enormously powerful industry. That is why we are seeing major media corporations attempting to position themselves to utilize the new media, even though no one really knows for sure precisely how those media will develop.

## CONCLUSION

The drive to communicate has driven us to develop and invent elaborate systems for sending and receiving messages over long distances, and storing them in an easily retrievable and accessible manner. Communicating is important to us, and we are willing to take some risk in order to do it. Sometimes we have had to take such risks, because rulers actively tried to contain many forms of mass communication media.

As media developed, they shaped the type of message sent by media. In many cases, the media became the message, or at least part of it.

Media often develop as a hobby or luxury for the elite, then become vehicles to deliver information to the masses, and then become more specialized in nature. Radio, magazines, and computer media are three salient examples of this.

We've seen in this chapter that media often develop in unexpected ways. About the only thing predictable about new media is that they usually add to our ability to perceive more of the world, and they usually make that world seem a much smaller place.

**Part 2: The Media of Journalism**

**Chapter 4: Books and Publishing**

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

***What's Ahead***…This chapter gives an overview of the book industry and shows how books, the earliest media, formed a template for the evolution of other media.

***Why it's Important***…Understanding  what might be called the basic unit of journalism and media provides a broad understanding of how all information industries work.

***Points to Keep in Mind While Reading…***Note the linkage of technology and the content of books – a graphic example of how the medium is the message.

The earliest journalism involved exchange of information that helped an expanding world keep tabs on affairs back home and commerce in the rest of the world.  The Roman "Acts of the Day." instituted by Julius Caesar in 59 B.C., not only kept Romans informed of the events of their civic life but the hand-written sheets traveled across the vast empire, providing a stream of information and apparently a cure for homesickness among Romans stranded in distant outposts.

**THE BIRTH OF PUBLISHING**

The most influential figure in the publishing industry is a rat.

While authors may, by reflex, conclude that this refers to a publisher of their acquaintance, and publishes will likely conclude the reverse, the main character here is a real rat, a rodent who jumped ship in France sometime around 1350.  He had been infected by the bubonic plague in

what is now the nation of Ukraine when invading Mongols threw rotting corpses over the city walls in an early act of germ warfare.

The rat was also infested by fleas, and when he left the Ukraine-to-France voyage he carried those fleas with him. They, in turn, jumped to other rats, spreading the disease, and the fleas eventually turned their tastes to humans, infecting them and spreading the plague throughout Europe.

Here is how historian James Burke describes the results:

> *"Millions died -- so many that there were not enough living to bury the dead. The plague brought everything to a halt. By the middle of the fifteenth century the population of Europe was half of what it had been a hundred years before, and the common graves stretched for miles from every town and village."*

Oddly enough, the Black Death eventually stimulated the economy, because there were a lot of material items remaining for the few who survived the plague. Among the popular extravagances after the plague abated were clothes, and there was a brisk business in linen. Linen is made from a tough, fibrous plant called flax. When linen wears out it can be recycled into high-quality paper, as it still is today.

## THE INVENTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRINTING

By early 1400s this recycling trend was coupled with other technological developments and produced a booming paper industry. Paper had been around for a long time, but sophisticated production methods and abundant raw materials increased the supply and the quality. Also, the emerging mercantile society needed it to record transactions, instruction manuals, and the news items that affected trade.

There was just one problem: Documents still had to be laboriously hand-copied by scribes, and most of the scribes had perished in the plague. Those who survived charged outrageously high prices.

Lots of paper, lots of demand for written documents, but a sharp bottleneck when it came to putting words on the paper. Conclusion: Some sort of movable type would answer the problem and in the process make its inventor rich. The concept of movable type was not new, either. The Chinese had printed with porcelain blocks centuries before, but gave up, probably out of frustration because their language contains thousands of different characters. In Europe, where there were only about two dozen different letters in the alphabet, scribes sometimes used letters, words, and illustrations carved from wood, but the woodcuts wore out quickly and the edges were never very sharp to begin with.

## The Gutenberg Press

A metalsmith in Mainz, Germany, named Johann Gutenberg had been experimenting with various metals and alloys (combinations of metals) and found a proper mixture, a mixture that could be heated and molded but still set up hard enough to impress a precise image. He also significantly improved the technique of making the molds from which the individual letters would by made, and the method by which the letters were held in place during the printing process.

His press caught on like wildfire. (Gutenberg died in poverty, though, because he had borrowed money from his lawyer, who sued for the rights to the press and won.) Within 40 years, there were presses in more than a hundred cities. It produced a terrific economy of scale for those who wanted to spread a message: Records from 1483 show that while a scribe charged one florin to reproduce a 20 page book, a printer would charge three florins to make over a thousand copies.

This meant that people with a message could reach a wide audience quickly, and that changed the character of written communication. In addition to being used for beautiful Bibles, the Gutenberg press and presses patterned after it produced a variety of how-to publications, texts, political tracts, and what might be described as public relations material.

## The Press Changes Society

Christopher Columbus was a great fan of the Gutenberg press. He arranged for the printing of small pamphlets, which would become known as "newsbooks," that were distributed in advance of his visits to European cities. Those visits were primarily fund-raising events, because Columbus had to collect money to finance his trips to the "New World" and as a pre-requisite, needed to sway the opinion of the public and its rulers.

Columbus did not promise that the streets of the New World were paved with gold, but he did write that "most" of the waters in an island he visited contained gold -- a powerful incentive for national leaders looking to increase the funds in the treasury.

**The Spread Of Dissent and the Gutenberg Press**

The Gutenberg press also helped dissidents spread political and religious views. Martin Luther was a Catholic priest who attacked his church for allowing the sale of indulgences, meaning church-sponsored forgiveness of sins based on "good deeds." (Luther had many philosophical differences with the Catholic Church, but the one that caught the public's imagination was his objection to a large contribution to the church constituting a "good deed.") Luther's religious tracts were printed and distributed throughout Europe, reaching what was, for the time, a huge audience. Moreover, Luther wrote in the vulgar (when applied to language, "vulgar" means "common") language of German, rather that the Latin which was reserved for religious and scholarly writing.

Kings and queens recognized the power of the press and tried to use it for their benefit. When Henry VII was trying to solidify his claim to power, he published a papal bull written in defense of his claim. (A papal bull is an official letter from the Pope; "bull" is a reference to a bulla," which is a large ornament that the Pope uses to impress his seal on wax used to close the envelope.)

Kings and queens also, however, recognized that the press could be a powerful tool against them. As discussed earlier, people with dictatorial authority usually hate literacy and the spread of ideas because it undermines their power. The book is often a target when power is threatened. When people are exposed to new ideas and learn that there are other ways of life, existing rule is challenged. The long European period of censorship, licensing of printing presses, and suppression of speech ended in Europe but continued in the American colonies until the Revolutionary War.

**The Book Becomes a Target for Suppression**

Books are influential and they are tangible, symbols of an idea that can be held in the hand -- or tossed in the fire.

Book-banning, which sometimes culminates in the act of book-burning, has a long pedigree. In the 3rd century BC the Chinese Emperor Shi Huang Ti burned thousands of books in the Empire's library, saving only books about farming, law, and medicine. He also ordered the torture and murder of dissident intellectuals.

When the dark ages began, they did so with the destruction of many libraries, either as an act of censorship of simple sabotage of a civilization's intellectual infrastructure.

Book-burning often underlies the theme that knowledge is a threat to a dictator. Hitler was, perhaps, the biggest book-burner in history, ruling that any book not receiving official approval be cast into enormous fires ceremonially lit in Berlin.

Censorship of books is not always so dramatic. Sometimes it assumes a bureaucratic, institutional tone. The Catholic Church issued an index of "Forbidden Books" in 1559, and published editions regularly until the 1960s; over 4,000 books were listed.

Many advocates of free speech criticize censorship, but the problem is that almost everyone is a censor at heart. Few would argue that hard-core pornography should be housed in an elementary school library. Having agreed on that, we are left to fight over the details, and school libraries are often the battleground because they are supported with taxpayer money and are usually under the direct control of an elected school board. Are frank discussions of sex in the works of Judy Blume appropriate for school libraries? Some officials do not think so. The Catcher in the Rye has been a test case in many library disputes. Even Huckleberry Finn has been banned on occasion because of explicit racial slurs that were part of the book's narrative.

The permanence and portability of a book is what makes it a common target. It can be examined at length without any special technical process or equipment, passed from person to person, and physically removed from a collection.

## THE PRESS CHANGES AMERICA

The printing press in America was first used for religious books, such as the Bay Psalm Book, the first book printed in the colonies in 1640.

### *Common Sense* and the Revolutionary War

Important political books in the colonies would probably be more accurately described as pamphlets, but nonetheless they were influential. A slim volume (57 pages) by Thomas Paine proved to be one of the most influential books in history. Titled Common Sense, it provided a clear and convincing manifesto of the American case against the British. Some historians maintain that it sold more than 100,000 copies in colonial America -- which was roughly one book for every four settlers.

**Books Become A Popular Mass Medium**

The post-revolutionary period saw works by writers such as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Before the Civil War another politically influential book, Uncle Tom's Cabin, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, changed the political landscape by making a powerful case for abolishing slavery. There is an unconfirmed story that when Abraham Lincoln met Harriet Beecher StowE during the Civil War, he said, "So you are the little woman who started this big war."

By the mid-to-late-1800s, technology had driven the price of books down and popular works such as books by Horatio Alger found their way into the hands of everyday Americans. The typical Horatio Alger story was a rags-to-riches tale featuring hard-working, thrifty, and diligent young men who, in an expression popular during this time, "pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps." (Note that this provides two examples of how the language preserves parts of the culture and hones them into a verbal shorthand: The term "Horatio Alger story" is widely recognized as a reference to someone who succeeded after starting from humble beginnings; "boot," from the bootstrap expression that fancifully meant to grab your boots and pull yourself up into the air, is now how we refer to a computer that is able to start "from nothing.")

"Dime novels" surfaced in the mid to late 1800s. These were short, cheaply manufactured books, usually with paper rather than hard-cloth covers, that usually featured adventure stories and westerns.

**Literature Becomes an Agent of Social Change**

America became a truly prominent literary power around the turn of the next century. Again, the book became a powerful motivator for change and reform. Upton Sinclair was sickened by the conditions in the meat industry and wrote several articles about the topic. None had the impact of his fiction treatment, though, and the novel The Jungle demonstrated how a good story line based on fact was sometimes more powerful and persuasive than journalistic fact. Sinclair, a socialist, used the proceeds from his novels to finance his unsuccessful political campaigns.

Novelists such as Hemingway and Steinbeck continued to weave social commentary into their novels, and today their works have woven themselves into the culture. Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises, for example, became a symbol of the disillusionment of young people in the 1920s, and since there is a renewable supply of disillusioned youth it remains a powerful symbol today. John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath symbolized the plight of dispossessed farmers in the 1930s, people whose

land had dried up into a "dust bowl," forcing them to become virtual refugees within their own county.

## Books as Cultural Shorthand

The ability of books to capsulize our feelings is one of the medium's great strengths. If someone says to you, "they remind me of a family from The Grapes of Wrath," does that have a succinct, powerful meaning to you? Narratives such as this are one way in which we conveniently "package" our culture in ways we can remember.

Never underestimate the power of a good story! Legend and narrative often prove more moving than straight recitation of fact. And the book, the most personal mass-media method of one person relaying a story to another, has long been enormously influential in shaping our view of social conditions.

Many of these stories are virtually hard-wired into our brains after years of exposure to them, and their mere mention triggers something of a mental "shorthand" that establishes connections to the complex problems of society.

Think of all the "shorthand" you know from books:

> •Alice in Wonderland = A normal person trapped in an absurd world.
>
> •Babbitt = A materialistic, dimwitted businessman who spouts hollow enthusiasm and speaks in cliches.
>
> •Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde = Someone who had both good and evil sides (i.e., all of us).
>
> •The Invisible Man = As invoked by Ralph Ellison, a Black man whom a prejudiced society has robbed of his identity.
>
> •"Out, Damned Spot!" = The tormented ravings of someone (in this case, Lady Macbeth) overcome by obsessive guilt.
>
> •Romeo and Juliet = An ill-fated romance that can't continue because of unfair circumstances.
>
> •Scarlet Letter = A mark of shame that a small-minded society is only too happy to repeatedly point out.

•Rip van Winkle = Someone who is out of touch with society (having literally been "out of it" for quite some time) and brings an odd perspective to what he sees in modern times.

•Scrooge (and/or The Grinch) = A sour person who must spoil festive occasions for everyone else.

•Wizard of Oz = A man who gives external "validation" to people who don't know that they already have what they want. The scarecrow, for example, wants a brain, and is convinced he has one only after the Wizard gives him a diploma to prove it.

There is a powerful and worthwhile message to all of these stories. The last one is particularly important.

## Nonfiction Books Become a Mechanism for Personal Development

The non-fiction book was equally important through these periods, and had profound effects in ways you may not immediately realize. One such change has to do with public education. Remember that we have grown up in a fundamentally different society than 15th century Europe, and instead of the government trying to keep us away from books, books are literally forced upon us the first grade. Public libraries and public schools both owe their existence, in different ways, to the book. A free public education and a free source of books for everyone took -- and still takes -- some sacrifice on the part of the taxpayer. But it is the price way willingly (usually) pay for living in a system that depends on the choices of an informed electorate.

Most of us only appreciate free access to information after it is taken away. For example, American tourists in totalitarian countries are often shocked to learn that seemingly innocent volumes such as the phone book are off-limits. This seems absurd until you think like a dictator: If you are worried about people plotting against you and arranging clandestine meetings and coups and the like, a phone book is one of the last things you want in their hands.

Textbooks and how-to books are both a reflection of 20th century culture and significant contributors to that culture. There have been textbooks since the Middle Ages (during which time students bought manu scripti from scribes at top dollar or rented the scrolls and copied them themselves). But after World War II, hundreds of thousands of soldiers went back to school under a government-sponsored program called the G.I. Bill. College enrollments soared, and publishers found the textbook market lucrative.

The post-war years also were a time of personal growth and exploration. "How-to" books often reached large audiences. Baby and Child Care by Dr. Benjamin Spock became a best-seller, and was instrumental in creating the expectation that an expert could help a reader cope with the complexities of modern life. Today there is an ever-flowing river of books offering advice on practically any topic, and troubled people often head to the bookstore to find a solution to their problems.

## The Paperback Engineers Growth in the Publishing Industry

During the postwar era the paperback helped move publishing into the arena of big business. Paperbacks were not new; they had, in fact, been in existence for more than a century. The postwar surge was one of several waves of popularity for the paperback book.

To put this in perspective, note that World War II and the Civil War, 80 years earlier, were both instrumental in making the paperback viable. During and after the Civil War, conflict-weary and cash-poor soldiers and civilians turned to light-hearted fare to forget their troubles. Much of this came in the form of cheaply produced novels, some paperback, some inexpensive hardcover. The previously mentioned Horatio Alger stories were a staple of this period.

Paperbacks also became a cheap way to pirate books, especially those of foreign authors. The Copyright Act of 1891 changed that, granting authors from overseas a royalty, and the paperback industry went into a slump.

## Paperbacks During WWII

But it made a comeback shortly before and during World War II, Americans hungered for an entertaining alternative to the grind of stoking a frantic war-time economy. Several publishing companies established or greatly expanded their paperback lines to meet this demand. (The government also wanted to encourage morale-building heroic books about the war, and rewarded paperback publishers who produced them with additional rations of paper. Paper, like many other commodities during the war, was scarce in civilian life because so many resources had to be allocated for the military.)

Many of the familiar paperback publishers got their start during this era, including Pocket Books in 1939 Dell in 1943.

After the war ended in 1945, the nation took a breather and then set about devoting the energy that had been usurped by war into carving out the idyllic version of a prosperous life.

**The Paperback Explosion of the 50s**

The 50s as we know today have been shorthanded by the popular culture, and many of us characterize this as the era of "Leave it to Beaver," a time when suburban families were stunningly normal and comfortable, and for some reason wore high heels, dresses, suits, and cardigan sweaters while hanging around the house. While no real family was ever as "normal" as the Cleavers, their lifestyle did reflect, if not the reality, the perceived, hoped-for reality of the time. Many people desperately wanted prosperity and "normalcy" after about five years of being consumed by war. As a result many veterans went back to school, and many men and women devoted themselves to fulfillment either at the office or within the family or both.

It must be stressed that the 50s were not a time of paradise, and this was especially for those who did not fit the popular conception of normality. There were few advances in civil rights during the era, a situation particularly galling to minority veterans. People who were suspected of being communists were drummed out of public life, and a witch-hunt mentality developed; Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin was a leader in this national witch-hunt, and was reckless in making accusations and indifferent to the suffering he caused.

Having said that, though, it is clear that the 50s, a time when people wanted to get down to business, set the stage for an enormous expansion of the economy. That expansion had particularly powerful effects on the publishing industry.

The book industry of the 50s became fueled by sales of paperbacks, reference books, and textbooks, and became -- in spite of itself -- big business.

**Publishing Goes Corporate**

Publishing had never been known, before this time, as a particularly profitable nor well-organized enterprise. It was sometimes characterized as a "gentleman's business," where editors and publishers worked by instinct, published many works they felt had great artistic merit but little chance of commercial success, and did many a deal over lunch and consummated it with a handshake.

But when money began to roll in after the post-war expansion, the publishing world became a profit center and attracted outside investment. Many "went public" or were acquired by large publicly owned corporations.

The concept of "going public" is often vaguely understood, but so important to understanding the media industries that it is worthwhile to take some time to explore the concept in this chapter's In Depth feature.

IN DEPTH: HOW PUBLICLY TRADED COMPANIES AFFECT THE WORLD OF MEDIA

Going public simply means that shares of stock, each share a small investment in the company, will be traded on public exchanges, such as the New York Stock Market. "Traded" is a misleading term; shares are actually bought by investors who believe they can buy the stock before it gains value, and shares are sold by investors who believe the value of the stock has peaked.  In other words, it is simply a matter of people trying to buy low and sell high.  There is no actual "trading" in the usual sense of the word, meaning "I'll give you this if you give me that."

Going public usually provides a huge infusion of money to the company.  For many reasons, most of them obvious, this is a benefit to a firm looking to expand.  In today's competitive market, most firms feel they must continually expand or fall behind their competitors.  Money from sale of stock allows expansion and does not burden a firm with interest payments.  Money from sale of stock is not a loan.  It does not have to be repaid.

However, there is another kind of debt incurred by going public, and that is the duty to make a consistent profit.  When a company offers its stock publicly, investors buy it for only one reason: To make money, either in the form of rising stock prices or dividends (bonuses to stockholders).

Investors who buy stock in a book company do not necessarily have any interest in the product.  They simply believe, based on market conditions and past performance of the stock, that they are going to realize a short-term or long-term increase in the value of the stock.  And the value of the stock is in large part determined by how many people want to buy it.

A publicly owned business needs to keep stock prices high.  For one thing, when prices fall because investors fail to perceive the growth value of a stock, the business literally loses money.  Secondly, falling stock prices induce investors to sell, meaning that the company has less cash to use in expansion or day-to-day operations.

Having to keep stock prices high changes the nature of a business. Risky projects, even those that might eventually pay off handsomely, are usually not attractive to investors and can bring prices down. Poor earnings over a three-month period might be acceptable to a privately held company -- after all, everybody has slow periods -- but a poor quarterly earnings report for a public company can be swiftly punished on Wall Street. Investors will demand to know why they have lost their money.

Investors also will be unhappy if a book company loses money on books with literary merit but no profit. These investors may be exquisitely cultured people who read first novels before breakfast, but the fact remains that they are usually investing their money to make a profit. And a profit they will demand.

To cope with the ebb and flow of profit and loss, it is attractive for publishers to join up with large corporations that have a variety of business interests. This type of company is called a conglomerate. Conglomerates usually have smoother sailing on the sea of profits and losses, because they have many businesses under their control, and a loss in one business or division can be absorbed and may not necessarily hurt the total bottom line. Conglomerates also allow for the sharing of management, equipment, and other costs among their member companies.

But a conglomerate is in business to make money for the shareholders who finance it, and regardless of whether the product is soft drinks or books, each division is expected to turn a profit. There is nothing inherently evil in that. After all, when any of us invest money in a mutual fund, or a stock-funded insurance policy, or in a college education at a school whose endowment is riding in the stock market, we want a profit, too.

## HOW THE BOOK INDUSTRY OPERATES

The modern publishing company often "orchestrates" activity among a wide variety of independent contractors and freelancers. Many, of not most, operations are carried on outside of the company walls: printing, cover art, and often some of the editing. Authors almost always are freelance, selling their work to publishers on a project-by-project basis. This means that a publisher can set up shop with low overhead, and some small houses literally consist of one or two people who contract out every step of the publishing process. These small houses are scattered throughout the nation. However, most of the publishing industry remains centered in New York, and while small publishers can and do put out books that sell well, large firms have an obvious advantage in attracting

top authors and devoting large and experienced editing staffs to their projects.

Some publishing "houses" (the common term for book-publishing firms) specialize in a certain type of book, such as reference, textbooks, or novels. Others produce a diverse mixture of book types, often producing the books within various divisions of the company.  In fact, one of the most well-known publishers, Random House, was born with this strategy in mind. Bennett Cerf, the founder, vowed to publish "at random" various high-quality books that came his way, regardless of category.

## Types of Books

Book categories are sometimes confusing because there is considerable overlap among them.  Adding to the confusion is the fact that books are categorized according to where they're sold rather than their content.

The ratios of the various categories produce a few surprises.  First is the ratio of fiction to non-fiction.  Non-fiction is the clear leader in the number of titles, accounting for between 80 and 90 percent of all books published. Another surprise is the category leader in terms of profit for the publishing industry: text and professional books, accounting for somewhere between 40 and 50 percent of publishing revenue.

Here are more specifics on the types of books published.  For this discussion, books are grouped into five categories: trade, religious, professional/technical, and textbooks.

### Trade

"Trade" means any book that is sold to the general public through regular bookstores and sold to libraries.  This includes fiction and non-fiction.  Within non-fiction, the term "trade" covers art books, biography, most general reference, how-to, and so forth. Trade books are the most visible products of the publishing industry but they account for only about 15 to 20 percent of all books sold.

### Professional/Technical

These books are for specialists in various fields, such as law, medicine, real estate, engineering, and architecture.  They are not necessarily textbooks (the next category discussed) although they can be used in college classes, as can virtually any book. Professional/technical books are sometimes breathtakingly

expensive for a number of reasons, including the fact that they are difficult to write and assemble, often requiring extensive illustration. These books are usually produced in very small numbers, meaning that the per-book production cost will be high. Many of the costs of producing a book are fixed, such as editors' salaries and overhead for the office, and if those costs cannot be amortized over a large number of books, they will appear -- rather dramatically -- in the cover price of books printed in small number. Books of a professional and technical nature also can be priced high because a segment of the market literally has to have them. An example is the market represented by lawyers, who must buy books that summarize the latest case law.

The last example also points out the advantageous application of new technologies. Most case law now comes loaded on CD, an infinitely superior method than paper for this particular application. Lawyers researching a case about "age discrimination" can type in those search-words, with, perhaps, some additional terms to narrow the search further, and do in a few minutes what might take hours or days in a the library. The O.J. Simpson case first showed an interesting side to this trend; viewers noted that desks, including the judge's, were equipped with portable computers.

## Textbooks

A textbook generally contains special features that enhance its educational value. Those features, referred to in the publishing industry as "apparatus," often include chapter summaries, pre-made tests loaded onto computer, instructors' manuals, and so forth.

Sometimes, textbooks are identical to professional books, and their classification stems from the place they are sold. For example, the book Modern Video Production is sold through mail-order to video professionals as a professional publication and is sold through college bookstores as a textbook.

Textbooks are usually meant for one of two markets: college or "eh-hi", which is an abbreviation for elementary and high-school. College textbooks are usually sold to individual college professors, who "adopt" the book for their classes. In the el-hi market, books are usually purchased by a person or group representing the entire school or the entire school district. Sometimes states adopt a book for a particular grade level throughout the state. This can and does lead to controversy when an issue becomes politicized, such as the

treatment of evolution.  Some people believe that "creationism," the theory that life was created by God, deserves equal status with the theory that modern life forms evolved from earlier life forms.  As a result, the selection of books for certain school classes sometimes hinges on the treatment of this topic within the book.

Textbook publishing was, for years, a stable and consistently profitable business, but recent trends have rattled the industry.  Rising production costs and increased competition from the used book market have dented profits, and the increasing availability of photocopiers has given rise to "course packets" that have also nicked textbook profits.  (Textbook publishers have brought suit against various photocopy chains that offered course packets without compensating the authors and publishers whose work they appropriated, leading to the establishment of a system under which the copy shops pay for permission to use selections.)

## Religious Books

Bibles, hymnals, and similar works are the mainstay of publishers in this category.

## Mass Market Paperbacks

This is another category that is partly defined by point of sale.  "Mass market" paperbacks are sold in department, grocery, and drug stores.  Sometimes, but not always, they are of cheaper paper and cover stock than trade paperbacks.

## Categories within Categories

It is obvious that there are many subcategories within these broad classifications.  In non-fiction, books are usually grouped as reference, biography, business, personal development, how-to, health, history, and so forth.  Fiction publishers often use the word "category fiction" to describe any fiction that has a discrete handle: romance, mystery, horror, crime (different from mystery because a mystery always has a case to be solved; crime may simply deal with a murder or theft without keeping any identities secret), action, etc.  The other type of fiction -- anything not in a category -- is sometimes called the "mainstream" or "literary" novel.  For lack of a better definition (and basically there is no better definition) a mainstream or literary novel is a work with considerable literary merit dealing with an important issue.  The mainstream novel,

despite its fuzzy definition, has considerable prestige, reflecting a verbal bias in the publishing industry. Occasionally, a mystery will be reviewed and given the compliment: "as good as a mainstream novel."

The novel, a book-length work of fiction with a sustained narrative throughout, dominates fiction sales. While some collections of short stories and poetry sell reasonably well, they are not as popular as novels. (Note that the term "novel" is sometimes applied in the term "non-fiction novel" to a work of non-fiction using dramatic techniques narrative techniques similar to those found in fiction.)

## The Organization of a Publishing House

The head of the house is usually called the "publisher" or "president." Sometimes that person shares both titles. There are a number of editors of various function and rank in a publishing organization, starting with the editor-in-chief. Sometimes a "publisher" can also be the "editor in chief." When publishing houses are organized into divisions, there may be separate publishers for each.

By definition an editor is someone who revises or corrects written material and/or supervises its creation. Various editors perform all those functions under varying arrangements at different houses. High-ranking editors may spend most of their time supervising the overall direction of the publishing effort. A little father down the ladder, other senior editors will sign up works initially selected and advocated by junior editors. A special type of editor known as an "acquisitions editor" is sometimes placed in overall charge of securing new works.

Editors at many levels change, correct, and supervise revisions. Sometimes these are called "development" editors, or "project editors." Copy editors" painstakingly correct errors of grammar, spelling, and fact in the author's copy.

The designer (sometimes called the "design editor") is in charge of the look of the book: typeface, page design, cover, and so forth A "production editor" is in charge of making the whole project materialize into a book; he or she will supervise the project from initial manuscript, to galleys, which are initial copies of the typeset manuscript usually reviewed for accuracy and style by the author, to page proofs, the final incorporation of art and text to be checked by the author, editor, and designer, to bound book.

Several departments are not involved in writing and editing per se: Members of the house's promotion department are in charge of getting

publicity for the book, often by arranging publicity tours for the author. The fulfillment personnel are responsible for the intricate job of getting books into the stores. The permissions department ensures that the author and editor have obtained proper permission to use the copyrighted material of others, and also grants permission to other publishers, usually for a fee, to use material from the publishing house's books.

## HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A BOOK

Book publishing is a fairly democratic enterprise. People of all ages, appearances, races, sexes, and political persuasions can get a book published. While this is not to say that publishing is equally accessible to everyone at every level of society, authors are more or less anonymous and submit most of their work through the mail or through an intermediary called an agent.

While connections and fame (from other endeavors) do matter, the beginning writer does have the ability to enter the market. Chances of getting published in fiction are daunting, but thousands of books are published a year and every novelist by definition had to start as a first novelist. However, many first novelists overcame considerable odds to become published. Stephen King did not meet with early success, and pounded out his books while living in a trailer park, scraping by on a part-time teacher's salary. Tom Clancy had a difficult time making a go of his writing career at first, and had to squeeze in novel writing around his job as an insurance agent. Mystery writer Mary Higgins Clark was in her 40s when the death of her husband forced her to writing as a way to support her family. Her first works were written before dawn, the only time she could find away from job and family responsibilities.

Another problem facing the writer is that publishers are not always accurate in the their assessment of new books. Herman Wouk's The Caine Mutiny was rejected by 27 publishers before it was sold! One prankster retyped the manuscript of a National Book Award-winning novel and submitted it to several publishing houses and was roundly rejected. Editors did not recognize the book, although one told the author/typist that there were similarities in style.

Non-fiction is an easier market to crack. There are a number of reasons for this, but paramount is that there is a more predictable market. If you are an expert on fly-fishing (using lures that look like flies to catch fish, not fishing for flies) and you approach a publisher who has experience in publishing and selling books about the outdoors, the odds are that someone, somewhere, is going to buy your book. Perhaps it will not be enough to make a profit, or even break even, but total disaster is not likely. And depending on many external factors, a lot of people may buy the book.

Should you write a novel about a man who catches a fish, becomes obsessed with it, and eventually loses it, you might find no market whatsoever. Would you buy such a book? Probably only if it were by Hemingway, in which case you would have a lot of company because his fish story sold well.

## How Authors Approach Publishers

The way authors sell their books to publishers depends on the category of book. First novels are usually sold as a complete manuscript. After a novelist becomes established, and commands a loyal following, he or she may be able to sell subsequent books on the basis of a plot outline, a sample chapter, or a phone call.

Non-fiction authors generally sell their project based on a detailed outline and usually one or more sample chapters. Non-fiction, for obvious reasons, lends itself to this type of marketing more readily than fiction, where the sustained success of dialog, plot, and characterization cannot really be ascertained on the basis of an outline. There is another reason for the use of outlines to sell non-fiction: Publishers of non-fiction often have considerable expertise in the area of the proposed book and may want to suggest changes, additions, or approaches. Some non-fiction publishers actually prefer to see an outline rather than a completed manuscript.

Manuscripts or chapters and outlines are submitted to publishers in two ways: over the transom and through a literary agent.

## Over-the-Transom Submissions

"Over the transom" is an expression that dates back to the days before central air conditioning when most offices had a crossbeam over the door to the hallway; that crossbeam was called a transom, and their usually was a window above the transom, a window kept open most times. Mail carriers, the story goes, would sling the heavy manuscripts over the transom and through the window. An over-the-transom submission is, simply, one that comes through the mail, unsolicited.

## Agented Submissions

A literary agent is a representative of one or more authors. He or she sells the manuscript or book idea and negotiates the contract for a share of the advance and royalties (terms to be defined in a moment). Sometimes the

agent participates in the development of a book idea, and searches out an author from among his or her clients. The agent usually receives a ten or fifteen percent commission on all the moneys paid to the author.

Why would an author give up 15 percent of his or her income to an agent? Probably the most compelling reason is that some publishers will not read submissions that do not come from an agent.   The publishing industry used to employ many entry-level workers, informally known as "first readers," who would wade through the over-the-transom submissions. (That pile of submissions is still known in the trade as the "slush pile," which gives you an idea of the reverence overwhelmed publishers have for the stuff that comes in uninvited.) But as the industry grew leaner, many first readers were eliminated, and today many publishers rely on agents to screen out the hopeless material.   It is in the agent's best interests to do so, because if he or she submits a steady stream of dreck, the publishers will no longer take that agent seriously.

Agents are also used because authors are willing to pay the 15 percent to receive expert help negotiating the contract.  Some agents are lawyers, but those who have no formal training in the law generally have broad experience with contracts, experience authors often do not possess.  Even a moderately busy agent can negotiate ten contracts a month; ten book contracts might cover an author's entire professional life. Contracts are often quite complex because they contain provisions about such contingencies as sales of foreign rights (the right to sell the book to overseas publishers), television, and movie rights.  Finally, authors sometimes work through an agent because they are simply not businesspeople and prefer to leave negotiations to those who know and like doing business.

## Negotiating Advances and Contracts

The item central to most negotiations is, of course, money.   Authors typically (though not always) receive an advance, which is an advance, up-front payment to be deducted from the author's royalties to be received after the book is published.  Royalties are a percentage of moneys from sale of each book.  Logically, authors want a big advance and publishers want the advance to be small.  Technically the advance is supposed to be repaid to the publisher if the book does not sell enough copies to cover it, but in practice many such advances are not recovered when the sales fall short.

There is no real "standard" advance for a book, although run-of-the-mill non-fiction works typically receive ten to twenty thousand dollar advances, advances which are sometimes parcelled out in steps contingent upon receipt and acceptance of various chapters.  An important non-fiction book

by an established author can command an advance of   $100,000 or more. Fiction by unknown or little-known writers does not command much of an advance, if any.  But when an author proves that he or she has become "habit forming," like Stephen King or Tom Clancy, advances climb into the millions.

## The Risk Level in Publishing a New Book

One of the ironies of publishing is that it is a risky business controlled mostly by large corporations -- organizations run by people who do not like risk.

And one of the frustrating aspects of the business, for everyone involved, is that there are few "sure things" except for books by authors such as King and Clancy.  But there are only so many Kings and Clancys to go around, and if publishers did not take risks no author could aspire to become a best-seller; in fact, King and Clancy would still be teaching substitute English and selling insurance, respectively.

The frustration, for authors and publishers, is compounded by the notion expressed so well by Kenny Rogers in the song The Gambler: "Every hand's a winner, and every hand's a loser." Translation: you can win with a weak hand if conditions (including that over-arching condition known as "luck") are right, and lose with a powerful hand if conditions are bad or if you play it poorly.  The Caine Mutiny, a winner book that went on to become a blockbuster movie, would have been a loser if the author had given up after his 26th rejection.

The same situation confronts authors and publishers of more routine works.  One of my first books was rejected by no fewer than 121 publishers. It finally sold to publisher #122, a shoestring business hopelessly short on capital that promptly went broke and left the manuscript in a drawer in an abandoned desk in an abandoned office.  Two years later I finally retrieved rights to the manuscript and, owing to a lack of common sense, started the entire process over, submitting the same manuscript to ten publishers.

Of whom six bid on it. And the eventual publisher sold it to the Book of the Month Club.

As we say in publishing, "go figure."

## EBOOKS

In mid-2011, electronic sales of books by Amazon.com overtook sales of physical copies.  As is typical in the world of media, competing

technologies also complicated the advance of eBook sales, with Kindles, iPads, Nooks, and various tablets fighting for market share.

The effect of eBooks on the marketplace, as well as an examination of how tablet technology is changing news, is discussed in The Future of News.

## CONCLUSION

Like Mark Twain's obituary, which to his glee was accidentally published while he was still alive, reports of the imminent death of the book are premature. New technologies, such as digital and multi-media applications, do threaten the book, but the traditional book is a very durable technology.

We will close with the same theme on which we opened: The book as we know it is a highly refined technology, even though it is a very old technology -- with some aspects of that technology, such as chapters and page numbering,  dating back the Roman Empire.

The book continues to do today what it has done since its invention: influence thought and sometimes inflame sentiments.

# Chapter 5:  Newspapers

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

*What's Ahead...*Chapter 5 presents a broad history of newspapers, some background into the philosophy of the medium, and shows how the industry operates today.

*Why it's Important*...Newspapers remain one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, vehicles that carry news.  The confront technological challenges, though, that are interesting and instructive about media technologies in general.

*Points to Keep in Mind While Reading*...Note the strong correlation between the conditions in society and the development of the newspaper, particularly the Industrial Revolution.  Nothing develops in a vacuum. Newspaper economics have clearly plummeted in the last decade, but as we stress as a common theme in this book, if can take years or decades for technologies to be sorted out and exploited.

The earliest journalism involved exchange of information that helped an expanding world keep tabs on affairs back home and commerce in the rest of the world.  The Roman "Acts of the Day." instituted by Julius Caesar in 59 B.C., not only kept Romans informed of the events of their civic life but the hand-written sheets traveled across the vast empire, providing a stream of information and apparently a cure for homesickness among Romans stranded in distant outposts.

When Alan Neuharth, the flamboyant self-described "S.O.B." who founded USA Today, wanted to make his new national newspaper compete with television, he took a direct approach.  He made the vending machine look like a TV.

There are about 135,000 of the unique vending machines in cities and towns across the country. The box itself is on a pedestal and the "screen" tips back a bit so potential buyers can see page one of the paper inside without squatting.  Page one features an appealing color picture designed to say -- in Neuharth's words -- "read me, buy me."

**A MODERN EXAMPLE WITH HISTORICAL PRECEDENT**

From the beginning of *USA Today*, Neuharth was insistent to the point of fanaticism about the front page beckoning readers and buyers. He placed vending machines in the newsroom and corporate meeting rooms so that editors would see precisely what the public saw. During one staff meeting, he jabbed his finger at the vending machine, stuck in a quarter and pulled out a paper, unfolded it dramatically, and railed about the fact that while there was a beautiful cheerleader in a tight sweater on the picture, only her head and shoulders were visible in the top half of page one. In language we won't reproduce here, he berated his editors to be sure that in the future whatever appeared above the fold on the front page -- the part that shows through the window of the vending machine -- included the all details the readers would want to see.

Neuharth's tantrum was a staged drama, a management technique that eventually produced results. USA Today hit rocky waters after publication started in 1982, and for several years it virtually hemorrhaged money. But the Gannett chain had deep corporate pockets, and eventually USA Today turned the corner and become one of the steadiest players in the shaky newspaper industry.

Why did *USA Today* succeed? Part of the reason was a redesigned approach to the newspaper itself. With typical modesty, Mr. Neuharth claimed he would "reinvent the newspaper" in such a way that it be "so different, so advanced in design and appearance and content that it would pull the rest of the industry into the twenty first century, albeit kicking an screaming."

His paper was undeniably new in its specific design and content, but the actual evolution of this "reinvented" paper was followed three trends that we have seen before:

> •*USA Today* adapted to the culture of the times. Earlier generations of newspapers, going all the way back to the 1800s, had also changed the "definition" of a newspaper by focusing on more local, rather than national, events. Routine police blotter material, for example, became "news" after residents in the growing industrialized cities of the U.S. Began to take an interest in the affairs of their neighbors.
>
> In the late 20th century, USA Today's emerging readership were children of a TV age, used to color, appealing graphics, and short takes on news.
>
> •The paper adapted to the demographics of the 1980 and 1990s. 19Th-century papers did this, too. In fact, a newspaper as we know

it was not feasible until potential readers lived in fairly large cities and used a cash economy.

*USA Today* was designed for the mobile community of the late 20th century. It was a national newspaper that had many features specifically designed for travelers, including a colorful weather page on the back.  USA Today also adapted to the demographic reality that the bulk of U.S. population was no longer confined to the major cities of the Northeast.  Neuharth wanted a paper that would appeal to readers in the Midwest, and the South, and the rest of the country.  He expressed this in what are fighting words in the newspaper industry: "The national edition of the New York Times had surprisingly sparse sales...A limited number of thought leaders, or those who wanted to be, read it in major cities, or pretended they did.  But The Times was so hidebound in approach that readers in Battle Creek and Boise and Baton Rouge simply had no interest in fighting their way through this dull, gray old lady."

•*USA Today* adapted to the technology of the late 20th century, exploiting recent developments to their fullest.

In the early 1800s, the circulation of newspapers was jumpstarted by refinements in the steam-powered press.

In the 1980s, the circulation of *USA Today* also took advantage of developing technology: the satellite.   The paper significantly cut distribution costs by transmitting the entire layout by satellite to printing plants around the country -- many of them owned by parent company Gannett.

*USA Today* has more than its share of critics.  Many deride the paper for a fast, franchise approach to news; its detractors sometimes call it "MacPaper."  Others contend that the publication is superficial and gives short shrift to "real news" at the expense of fluff and graphics.

Regardless, *USA Today* became a financial success and continues to survive even though it and its parent company, Gannett, are instituting massive layoffs.  Like newspapers before it, the publication evolved as a living, breathing part of the society around it.


## THE EVOLUTION OF NEWSPAPERS

There has always been some mechanism of distributing news.  Sometimes, it was as rudimentary as a circle of people who gossip with each other. Gossiping became a trade when "criers," who spread news by lung-power, began to receive tips for their work.  Messengers spread news on foot and

were often selected for their athletic ability.  Even poets were engaged in a kind of "news," recounting details of battles and other lore.

## News In Ancient Rome

The distribution of news in an organized fashion probably started with Julius Caesar, who ordered that news of the Roman community be announced in the forum.  In 59 B.C., Caesar ordered that a written record of the acts of the day, or the Acta, posted in a public place.  Some members of the far-flung Roman Empire commanded the resources to receive hand-written copies of the Acta.  Thus began a flow, or at least a trickle, or written news.

A variety of written communications existed from the time of Rome up until the invention of the Gutenberg press around 1450, but these were more in the character of correspondence. In fact, the printing press did not spur the immediate production of publications that truly resembled a newspaper.  Most of what rolled off the early presses were one-shot products that resembled small, thin books.  These would become known as "newsbooks."

## The First Newspapers

In Venice, handwritten sheets of news were sold for a small coin called a gazetta, and thus became the forerunners of newspapers as well as a common newspaper name.

What probably qualifies as the first newspaper (that we know about) was printed in German in 1609.  The oldest known newspaper written in English, the Coronto, was published in 1620.

These papers, though, did not completely resemble what we would define as a newspaper by modern terms.  Media historian Mitchell Stephens defines a newspaper as a publication available to the general public, published regularly and frequently, using a mix of stories in each issue, and published with a consistent format and regular date. Other historians add additional qualifications, including its availability to people from all social and economic classes, and the accessibility of the language. Depending on whose definition you use, the early German papers and the Coronto may or may not be "newspapers," although they certainly qualify as the direct ancestor of today's newspapers.

The Oxford Gazette, which debuted in 1665, is often cited as the first English newspaper to be published on a stable and regular schedule (twice weekly).   In 1702 the Courant became the first English daily.  (The word

"Courant" and "coranto" both share the same root as the word "current," and all apparently evolved from a word meaning "to run.")

Which was the first American newspaper? Once again, it depends on the definition. Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick, published in 1690, was apparently the first newspaper to appear in the colonies, but it lasted only one issue. Publick Occurrences managed to offend many people, including the governor of Massachusetts, who, on the basis that the paper was published without a license, shut it down.

Note that sensational news coverage did not begin with The National Enquirer. Violence and sex was a part of Benjamin Harris's first and last edition of Publick Occurrences. News Historian Mitchell Stephens notes that Harris's first paper, which was published in London, began with a report about a man found "hanging by the Arms in a Wood...with his Head and Hands cut off, and his Bowels pulled out." There was also a story about a "Popish Priest...who...had occasion to make use of his Ladies Chamber maid." (Harris was vehemently anti-Catholic.)

But what really put the issue over the top was a story alleging that the King of France had slept with his son's wife.

The first regularly published newspaper was far more sedate. The Boston News-Letter, first published in 1704, was officially licensed by the British crown, and carried a notice that it was printed "by authority." It was by most standards a dull paper, focusing on shipping news and sanitized political stories.

## PRESS FREEDOM AND THE EARLY PAPERS

From the standpoint of newspaper law and tradition, the two most significant developments during the colonial period before the Revolutionary War were the end of licensing and the end of prosecution for seditious libel.

Licensing meant, simply, that the government granted a license to operators of a printing press and fined or imprisoned those who operated without such approval. When licensing could no longer be enforced (we will examine the circumstances of that in a moment) the government chose to punish publishers after the fact for the crime of seditious libel. "Seditious" means undermining the government. "Libel" (as it was defined then) is a statement that holds a person or institution up to scorn or ridicule or causes some other sort of damage.

The end of licensing and the end of enforcement of seditious libel are events that have a direct connection to the way the American press system

operates today. Much of our current press law and tradition stems from the following two cases.

## James Franklin and the New England Courant

James Franklin, the older brother of Ben, published an unlicensed paper called the New England Courant. The first edition appeared in 1721. James Franklin was openly critical of the colonial government -- a stance that eventually landed him in jail.  But 16-year-old Ben visited James in jail and collaborated with him on the content of the coming issues, with the result that the paper "edited through the jailhouse door" broke the back of licensing.

Licensing had become difficult to enforce.  Colonial administrators had their hands full just maintaining public order among an increasingly rebellious public.  Prosecution for seditious libel, however, supplanted licensing as a governmental tool for stifling the press.

## John Peter Zenger and the New York Weekly Journal

Zenger was a German immigrant, a printer by trade, and his paper was harshly critical of New York Governor William Cosby.   Cosby was, in fact, an oaf, but a governor nonetheless, and in 1734 he had Zenger arrested for seditious libel.

During his trial, Zenger asserted that what he wrote about Cosby was true. By what seems like a bizarre modern-day standard, the law made no allowance for this. Instead, under the laws of the day the fact that a libel was true made it more inflammatory -- therefore, a more serious crime and a cut-and-dried case.  The judge told the jury that the law was clear and directed them to return a guilty verdict.

But Zenger's attorney, the elderly Andrew Hamilton, had argued the case brilliantly.  Instead of arguing for the abstraction of a "free press" he concentrated on the right of average citizens to complain about their government.

The tactic worked.  The jurors ignored the judge and found Zenger innocent.

## The Legacy of Franklin and Zenger

It is seductively easy to read too much into these cases. They did not immediately or entirely change the climate of free press nor the law.  But they did become symbolic of a larger trend. These two premises:

- freedom from licensing and prior restraint,  and
- the right to print the truth

became strong and persistent themes in American mass media.

We still do not license newspapers. (Some electronic media are licensed for reasons of scarcity of spectrum space, a concept discussed elsewhere. Also, the courts are very reluctant to engage in prior restraint, the process of stopping a news medium from publishing something, because that process is similar in practice and result to licensing.  Prior restraint of news media has been enacted just a handful of times in recent history, and in most cases only when grave questions of security or constitutional rights of others were alleged to be at stake.

The American media system also is given free rein to print or broadcast provably true material. If a libel suit is lodged against a mass medium, truth is an absolute defense.  So is "fair comment," the right to a reasonable opinion.

These factors have allowed the newspaper industry to operate with few restrictions from the colonial era to the present, although wartime censorship did erode some of those freedoms.

American presidents and newspapers have usually lived in peaceful coexistence, but in times of war several presidents have clamped down on the press. Lincoln, for example, occasionally shut down newspapers and sent editors to jail.  Woodrow Wilson, president during World War I, enforced strict laws limiting criticism of the war.  Richard Nixon managed to stop a newspaper from publishing embarrassing secrets about the Vietnam War.  During the Bush administration, there have been continuing battles between the press and the administration over what information should remain secret and what is fair game for the press.

Because newspapers evolved hand-in-hand with the social conditions of the nation, they grew along a pattern that was ecologically (meaning as part of the entire system of society) related to changes in the national culture, the country's demographic patterns, and advances in the available technology.

## PERIODS OF NEWSPAPER HISTORY

Media historians often segment the evolution of American newspapers into four eras:

> •The Partisan Press Era (colonial times - 1833)
> •The Penny Press Era (1833 - 1865)
> •The Yellow Journalism Era (1865 - 1900)
> •The Modern Era (1900 - the present)

Also, the Modern Era is often described as including two "movements":

•Jazz Journalism (in the 1920s)
•Alternative or "New" Journalism (roughly the 1960s to the present)

### The Partisan Press Era (Colonial Times - 1833)

As the name implied, newspapers during this period had a strong political viewpoint. ("Partisan" has the same root as "party.") These papers usually appealed toward the elite -- that part of the population that was highly literate and had enough money to buy a paper. A paper cost five or six cents each, about the cost of a pint of whiskey in colonial days.

Partisanship in newspapers wasn't an artifact of the prevailing natural culture because at the time newspapers were very much media of persuasion. The *Federalist Papers*, arguments in favor of adopting the Constitution, were published in newspapers. Colonists were accustomed to reading the fiery separatist rhetoric of Thomas Paine.

The demographic population and employment patterns of the emerging nation kept the partisan press small and fairly expensive. Individual copy costs were high because there was little in the way of advertising to bring reader costs down; that was due to the fact that the majority of the population lived in agricultural settings and there was a widespread barter economy. Technology of the era dictated small press runs, because printers were limited to creaky hand-operated presses.

### The Penny Press Era (1833 - 1865)

We usually link the start of this era to the first issue of the *New York Sun*, a paper published by Benjamin Day.

The *Sun* sold for a penny, and contained a mix of crime news and feature stories. It was unabashedly a paper for the common man and woman.

Other publications, such as James Gordon Bennett's New York Herald, improved on the basic formula by adding an editorial page and financial news. The New York Times was begun as a penny press paper, although it was not particularly successful. Some papers, like the one-penny New York Tribune, published by Horace Greeley, were politically oriented, but still written and edited for the masses.

## The Penny Press and a Changing Audience

The Penny Press capitalized on the public's growing thirst for news of the community. Cities were growing rapidly and each assumed a unique cultural life of its own.   And when a largely industrialized population moved into cities, they established a ready market for local news, as well as lighter "human interest" fare that distracted them from what were often brutal work-days in the factories established during the industrial revolution.

## Effects of the Industrial Revolution

The industrial revolution was a period of rapid industrial growth that began in England about 1750 and spread to the United States in the next century.   Invention of machines such as the steam engine changed population and manufacturing patterns.

Steam engines could not be used in the home (like spinning wheels could) and therefore necessitated the construction of factories. Factories were often located near sources of coal, water, and potential workers, and cities typically expanded around these factories.

Manufacturing methods changed in many ways, but foremost was the introduction of specialization to the process.  Instead of manufacturing the entire product from start to finish, workers would complete one part and send the product along to another worker who would install or attach the next part.

Specialization of labor also was became part of the Penny Press. Benjamin Day, for example, hired reporters -- specialists in the gathering and writing of news.  Previously, newspapers had been more or less a one-person operation.

The penny press era was very much a product of the technology of the time.  Steam-powered presses made it possible for many copies to be made cheaply, and the availability of advertising -- this era also saw the development of the classifieds -- further lowered the price of the issue to the consumer.

**The Penny Press and the Run-Up to the Civil War**

The angst of a nation torn over slavery increased demand for newspapers during this era, and although the press as an institution regards itself as progressive and inclusive, many of those bearing the obvious brunt of the slavery issue found themselves without a voice.

Race issues were at the heart of the Civil War, but although some publications attacked slavery, many publications were apathetic or outrightly hostile.  The New York Sun's motto was "It Shines for All," but an editor once told a protestor that "the Sun shines for all white men, but not for colored men." That protestor, Willis A. Hodges, was told that if he wanted to express the view of blacks he should start his own paper.

Which he did: it was called the *Ram's Horn*, and Frederick Douglass was named editor. Douglass was an escaped slave who was an exceptional public speaker.  He toured Europe, recounting his life under slavery, using his speaking fees and contributions to eventually buy his freedom.  Douglass founded his own paper, the North Star, in 1847.  It was later called Frederick Douglass' Paper.

The North Star advocated abolition of slavery, as did its cultural ancestor, Freedom's Journal, which began publication in 1827. Later, papers would meld discussion of racial issues with items of general interest to minority readers.  Around the turn of the century, several such papers were published, and a few are still operating today, including the Amsterdam News in New York and the Chicago Defender.

As civil war loomed and finally erupted, newspapers were in great demand.  Readers sought news of the conflict that would rend families and the nation.  As we have previously discussed, the development of "wire services" -- news services that sent reports by telegraph to many papers -- began to change the nature of news, ostensibly supplying reports that were more "objective" than those in the Partisan Press era.

But objectivity has always been a difficult concept to define.  This chapter's In Depth looks back at this issue.

IN DEPTH: AN OBJECTIVE LOOK AT OBJECTIVITY

When Samuel Morse refined his telegraph, he not only put the Pony Express out of business but made it possible for a group of newspapers to pool their resources and form the Associated Press, the first nationwide electronic news service. This service was a totally new type of business, and it would foster an equally unique type of information exchange -- for the AP would soon become the principal source of information about the American Civil War.

Since the AP served customers of all political persuasions, the coverage had to be neutral in tone. As a result, a new mass communications technology melded with an event of staggering proportions in a new symbiosis which produced not only the news service but the principle of journalistic objectivity.

Before that time, especially during the heyday of what we call the Partisan Press era, most American newspapers were anything but objective.

But was that necessarily bad? Media analyst W. Lance Bennett, in his book News: The Politics of Illusion, argues that lack of purported objectivity may have actually been a plus:

"Most newspapers were either funded by, or otherwise sympathetic to, particular political parties, interest organizations, or ideologies. Reporting involved the political interpretation of events. People bought a newspaper knowing what its political perspective was and knowing that political events would be filtered through that perspective. In many respects, this is a sensible way to approach the news. If one knows the biases of a reporter, it is possible to control for them in interpreting the account of events. Moreover, if reporting is explicitly politically oriented, it becomes possible for different reporters to look at the same event from different points of view."

Bennett's assertion -- a common one -- is that "objectivity" was born as a business practice but soon became a "value."

Journalism Professor Conrad Fink, though, maintains that it became clear that the "value" of objectivity is clearly not practically possible, and the AP turned it into an "ideal."

"...true objectivity was -- and is -- impossible to achieve. But the effort to achieve it became the core philosophy of the influential Associated Press when it was reorganized in 1894 into the forerunner of today's mammoth international news agency....Many individual newspapers, serving local audiences equally diverse [of all political persuasions] and following the

AP model, later developed the same business reason to strive for the ideal of objectivity."

But evaluating objectivity with the word "objectivity" is really begging the question, and the real question obviously is: Does the concept of objectivity that has evolved today -- be it a business practice, a value, an ideal, whatever -- really give us news that is detached from bias, or journalists' pre-conceptions?

There's no concrete answer. Obviously, no one can operate out of an emotional vacuum. Journalists can try to keep personal biases out of reporting, and they can try to be fair; but not being machines, journalists cannot operate with machine-like precision -- weighing this, and weighing that, and producing a product that is free from bias.

And as veteran reporter Bill Moyers points out, perhaps the real problem is assuming that such "objectivity" is really possible:

"...journalists look at ideas and events through their own eyes. There is nothing wrong with that practice: The mistake is to pass it off as something other the pursuit of truth by men less opinionated than their peers.

I learned at the White House that of all the great myths of American journalism, objectivity is the greatest. Each of us see what his own experience leads him to see. What is happening often depends upon who is looking. Depending on who is looking and writing, the White House is brisk or brusque, assured or arrogant, casual or sloppy, frank or brutal, warm or corny, cautious or timid, compassionate or condescending, reserved or callous."

## The Yellow Journalism Era (1865 - 1900)

"Yellow" journalism has come to be known as reckless, inflammatory reporting designed to stir sentiment and, in the process, sell papers.

The term was coined because of a comic strip carried in a newspaper of the era that featured a boy who wore a yellow, sack-like shirt. Two New York newspaper publishers, Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, locked horns in a fierce circulation war, and Hearst hired away the cartoonist who drew the cartoon. Pulitzer claimed he owned the rights to the "Yellow Kid" cartoon, hired another artist to draw it, and for a while New York had two "Yellow Papers."

## Pulitzer and Hearst

Pulitzer and Hearst, and their respective papers, the New York World and the New York Journal, are symbols of the yellow journalism era.

Pulitzer, a Hungarian immigrant, came to New York from St. Louis, where he had owned the Post-Dispatch.  In St. Louis, Pulitzer hit on a winning formula of crusades, exposes of corruption, crime, and sex.  And in the living laboratory of a teeming New York, he applied his formula to the World -- and almost immediately started selling papers in numbers unheard of until that time.

Hearst came from California where his father owned the San Francisco Examiner.  The younger Hearst had worked for Pulitzer's world, and not only learned the formula but believed he could improve on it.

In a dramatic showdown, Hearst bought the ailing New York Journal and came to New York, prepared to out-Pulitzer Pulitzer.

The battle was joined in a stream of outrageous (and often misleading) headlines, lurid reports of crime and sex, and in an incident that symbolized the entire era, incendiary reports about the trouble brewing in Cuba, an island which was at that time was controlled by Spain.

## Hearst and the Spanish-American War

What happened was this: Horrifying stories about Spanish murder and torture of Cubans had enraged many in the United States, who had read about the atrocities in the Yellow Papers and elsewhere. Such reports were not always particularly accurate.  (But of course they did sell many newspapers.)

Hearst was a zealous advocate of military action against Spain, and may indeed have played a major part in starting the Spanish-American War in 1898.  Legend has it in the early stages of the confrontation between the U.S. and Spain, Hearst dispatched an artist named Frederic Remington to do sketches for the paper. (Photos were not yet in common use in newspapers.) Hearst wanted illustrations depicting the stewing hostilities. But Remington could not find hostilities, and purportedly cabled Hearst:

EVERYTHING IS QUIET. THERE IS NO TROUBLE HERE. THERE WILL BE NO WAR.  I WISH TO RETURN.

To which Hearst replied:

PLEASE REMAIN. YOU FURNISH THE PICTURES AND I'LL FURNISH THE WAR.

That, anyway, is now the story goes, and it remains one of the most durable legends of newspapering; it was given energetic "legs" in Orson Welles's movie Citizen Kane, where a thinly disguised version of the story was injected into this thinly disguised movie about Hearst.

The story itself may be true, but it is based only on the memoirs of a Hearst reporter named James Creelman, who never offered any documentary evidence and, as we will see in a moment, probably had good reason to resent Hearst.

War did break out, and part of the cause indisputably was Hearst's treatment of an explosion aboard an American battleship, the Maine. To this day, no one knows for sure what caused the blast, but page one of the Examiner clearly laid the blame on Spain. "Remember the Maine" became a popular rallying cry, and public pressure -- much of it instigated by the Yellow Press -- caused President McKinley to reverse his stand against going to war. The U.S. won easily, thumping Spain in a series of battles that included Teddy Roosevelt's charge up San Juan Hill in Cuba.

But it was not without American casualties, and one of them was newspaperman Creelman, who was shot and regained consciousness to see none other than William Randolph Hearst. Creelman would later recall his shock that "the man who had provoked this war had come to see the result with his own eyes." Hearst had the wounded Creelman dictate his story, and when he finished Hearst said, "I'm sorry you're hurt, but wasn't it a splendid fight? We must beat every paper in the world!"

## The Yellow Press and the Climate of the Culture

The yellow press was a product of its cultural time in that it was concerned with abuse of power and world affairs -- raw nerves in a society that often forced workers into dehumanizing factory conditions, as well as a society flexing its international muscles and deeply concerned with expansionism.

Demographic patterns fed the furnace of social inequity, a prime subject for Yellow Press crusades. Pulitzer, himself an immigrant, was a crusader against immigrants' exploitation.

Technology, including sophisticated rotary powered presses, enabled publishers to virtually flood the market with papers, so much that by 1900, the dawn of the "modern" era, the market was practically saturated.

## The Modern Era (1900 - Present)

Conventional wisdom holds that by the turn of the century the public had absorbed its fill of lurid newspapers. There is probably much truth in that, and the evolution of a new philosophy of newspapering also may have hinged on the fact that people in the business of newspapering began to view it more like a business.

Several papers set out to re-invent themselves. The New York Times, which had been established as a Penny Paper, sought a new market position as an ultra-respectable "newspaper of record." The Times sought to re-clarity its objective role, and began shifting attention to serious matters of domestic politics, the economy, and foreign policy. In many cases, the paper printed the entire text of speeches and government documents.

Chain ownership became a powerful economic factor in the modern era. Being part of a chain is eminently practical from an economic point of view because it allows for spreading investment, management skills, and editorial talent among several publications.

### Jazz Journalism

Modern newspapers also began to seek specialized audiences, a prudent exercise in a glutted market. During the 1920s, newspapers such as the New York Daily News (originally called the Illustrated Daily News) practiced what is sometimes called Jazz Journalism -- reporting with an emphasis on action, scandal, and, above all, pictures. Recent advances in photo reproduction technology had made the high-quality, full-page photo possible.

The newspapers of the jazz era were designed to exploit this technology; they featured an unfolded size of about 12 by 14 inches, which allowed the photo to be displayed full-page when the papers were stacked on the news-stand. In a practice still followed today, there was often a news photo on the front and a sports photo on the back of a newspaper, each set off with a splashy headline. By displaying some papers face up and some face down, retailers could effectively double the allure of the papers.

(The printer's term for a 12x14 inch paper is "tabloid." {A standard newspaper, 14x22, is called a "broadsheet."} "Tabloid" became forever associated with visual, splashy, lurid journalism. The word is now also applied to TV programs, even though the literal use of the term obviously has no meaning.)

## The Alternative Press

The 1960s were a time of wrenching dissent in the U.S., much of it a general reaction to the sometimes suffocating conformity of the 50s but most of it a specific reaction to the Vietnam War.  A type of reporting billing itself as an "alternative" to the mainstream press grew out of the era.  The Village Voice was the most important alternative newspaper, and set the model for the genre: unabashedly leftist, sometimes risque, and usually provocative.

## The Business Becomes More Businesslike

After 1900, the U.S. had become not only an industrialized country but a premier center of business; "management" became a specialized field of practice and study.  Newspapers, like other industries, became business-like, embracing a business and corporate culture.  The industry would also pay attention to its bottom line by seeking loyal audiences.

Americans now lived mostly in cities and began to enjoy a reasonable quality of life.  This demographic change would bring about increased buying power as well as interest in finance; The Wall Street Journal, for example, became a paper of interest to many in the mainstream of American life.  People also wanted information on how to spend their increasing leisure time, and newspapers accommodate with travel pages, movie reviews, and other "service" sections.

## Technology Spawns New Media

Technology, once the newspaper's ally, soon began to betray its old friend.  Once presses and motor vehicles reached a certain level of sophistication, which they did toward mid-century, there were little to be squeezed out of these old technologies.  Presses could not be made much faster or cheaper, and delivery trucks couldn't move any faster.

As we have seen, innovative papers such as USA Today scored some advances with color and satellite distribution, but in sum, the paper as we know it is not that much different from a newspaper of the 1890s.

Other media, though, are vastly different in form and function from a century ago, and many did not exist when newspapers ruled the media roost. And that is one of the problems confronting the operation of a newspaper in the 21st century.

## OPERATION OF THE MODERN PAPER

A newspaper has to fight what is, in a way, an unfair battle with other media because by definition a newspaper's product is news. Radio and television carry news but also carry entertainment. While more specialized media such as magazines also carry a form of news, specialized media aim their content at an audience already disposed to want it. But a newspaper's content is almost entirely journalistic and geared toward what is basically a general audience.

Having stated that, it is also worth noting that the printed page has technological advantages that other media may never be able to entirely overcome:

•Portability and disposability.
•Denseness of content, especially in the paper's ability to carry easily scanned classified ads.
•Ability to carry a great deal of advertising without destroying into the ease of reading news content
•Tangibility; a newspaper can be held in the hand, discussed, cut into pieces, and passed from person to person. (And incidentally, this is exactly what happens in television newsrooms; newspapers are powerful agenda-setters.)

### The Newspaper in Relation to Other Media

It is also important to note that newspapers are still by and large healthy, and in some cases are the strongest medium in many markets. On average, newspapers generate more advertising revenue than any other individual medium (such as television or radio or cable).

Circulation figures are hard to compare with other media because there is not always a direct translation. We are comparing, for example, people who buy a newspaper to the number of television households who use the TV for a certain period of time. But no matter how we view the figures, it

is apparent that newspapers deal in smaller numbers than television. There's a similar problem in trying to measure exactly what counts in online newspaper views.  Is it raw clicks?  Unique visitors?  Time spent on the page?

## Number of Newspapers

It's difficult to put a number on existing newspapers, especially since several major ones and many minor ones have gone completely online and not longer exist in print format.   But what appear to be reliable estimates put the number at about 1,400 daily newspapers in the U.S., a number that has shrunk considerably since the beginning of the century.  Most U.S. dailies are published in the evening

The estimated number of weekly papers widely, partly because there are many different classifications into which a weekly falls and it is difficult to maintain a meaningful count by category.  Some are typical newspapers, not much different in form than a daily.  Others consist mostly of advertising with very little news content, and are called "shoppers." Some run a middle path.  Still others are "alternative." In addition, many weekly papers are free, gaining their revenue entirely from advertising and foregoing the complexities of charging a cover price. It is often estimated that there are about 20,000 weeklies in the U.S.

## Newspaper Organization

Most newspapers divide their staffs into editorial and business personnel. "Editorial" in this usage means anything related to news.  The business side handles advertising, circulation, finance, and general administration.

In overall charge of both editorial and business is the publisher, the chief executive of the newspaper. Beneath the publisher in the hierarchy are the chief editorial officer, usually called an executive editor, editor in chief, or something similar; and the top business officer, whose title varies considerably.

Newspapers are almost always broken up into hierarchical departments. Under the editor is a managing editor, who supervises the day-to-day newsroom operations, and also supervises a group of sub-editors.  Sub-editors are in charge of departments such as sports, regional news, financial news, travel, lifestyle, and the department or "desk" that handles local news, often called the "city desk" or the "metropolitan desk"

Other editors supervise the staff of "copy editors" who check for factual, grammatical, and spelling errors in reporter's copy.

Reporters generally work directly under the supervision of one sub-editor. Typically the city editor has the largest reporting staff of any sub-editor.

On the business side, the chief business officer supervises heads of circulation, production, distribution, and advertising. There are two departments reflecting the two types of advertising: classified and display. Classified ads are placed by merchants, private citizens, or anyone wanting a small advertising space. Display ads are larger than classifieds, often include artwork, and cover a designated part of the page, or the whole page, or sometimes more than one page. Display ads are usually purchased by large businesses, either directly or through advertising agencies.

## How a Newspaper is Put Together

The advertising is laid out first. When an editor looks at his or her space to be filled for that day's paper, the ads are already blocked in. What's left over is given the decidedly unglamorous name of news-hole. Most daily newspapers, on Monday through Friday, have a news-hole that amounts to about 40 percent of the paper. Advertising takes the other 60 percent. On Sundays the ratio often approaches 90 percent ads to 10 percent news.

That ratio -- 60/40 -- is fairly standard and newspapers typically do not go far above or below it. Too many ads and too little news will not only irritate readers but clutter the pages and deaden the power of the ads. But too few ads mean that each page is not carrying its own weight money-wise. Laying out and printing each of those pages is a surprisingly expensive proposition, and a paper that has an excess of news is relation to ads is usually losing money. If a paper expands the amount of news it prints it generally does so by expanding the number of ads, adding pages, and keeping the news/ad ratio the same. Adding an extra page seems like a simple solution for heavy news days but it is usually not economically feasible.

Most daily papers function, to some extent, around-the-clock, and all content is not assembled immediately before publication. Some feature stories and other sections are written days before deadline. Many international stories come in overnight because it is day in the overseas nations being covered. News wires, such as the Associated Press, United Press International, and Reuters are monitored continuously for breaking news.

The "wires" do not come in by wire anymore, but by satellite, and the satellite signal is fed to several computers. Computer terminals are used by all reporters and editors, and layout of the story is done by computer

Deadlines are ever-present in the news business, and in many sections of the paper the stories are being written literally a handful of minutes before the presses roll.

The presses usually turn out several editions of a daily metropolitan paper. This allows the first edition to be shipped to other states and far outlying areas.  The next edition may be intended for the suburbs, and the final one will be the "city edition." The *New York Times* puts out three editions, one at about 9:35 the night before the actual date of the newspaper, the next at 12:30 to 1 in the morning, and the final edition  at about 2 a.m.

Web editions are generally updated as news is received, processed, and written, although that is not always the case.  For years, many print editions resisted scooping themselves online, but with online editions increasingly becoming readers' primary destinations, that strategy has dubious merit.


**COCLUSION AND A NOTE ON THE FUTURE OF NEWSPAPERS**

The obvious problems facing newspapers have both been touched on briefly in this chapter: the aging demographics of newspaper readers and the impact of the Web.

As has been the practice through most of this book, discussion of the web has been relegated *The Future of News.*

Btu we should note at this point that mewspapers executives realize full well that Internet editions will reach younger readers.  The problem is that an organization that constructs web-based content, using audio and video, might no longer be a "newspaper."

But unfortunately, web editions of papers have not shown a particular propensity for making money.  While profit-and-loss figures are closely guarded, it is an open secret in the news industries that websites are terrific "value added" vehicles but still lack the type of business model that will produce a reliable profit.

Almost all economic indicators for newspapers are moving down at present, including the amount of advertising and the size of circulations, but keep in mind that these reductions are from a very high plateau.

It is important to remember that while newspapers are experiencing growing pains -- or, in the view of some less charitable critics, the onset of old age -- they remain a powerful force.

## Chapter 6: Magazines

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

**What's Ahead**...This chapter examines the history and development of magazines, but not in isolation. We look at them as factors that both reflected and shaped society.

**Why It's Important**...Magazines are a preeminent lifestyle medium, and the magazine is a living laboratory in which to study how people interact with media.

**Points to Keep in Mind While Reading**...The chapter contains several examples of how supposedly "doomed" magazines were resurrected when a challenge from other media forced them to re-invent themselves.

**WHAT WORKS? YOU DECIDE**

Here are three ideas from the world of magazine publishing. One of them seems sensible. Two of them actually worked. You decide which is which:

•A publication for people who travel cyberspace; it will be a dense, ugly magazine complete with art and headlines that are deliberately made difficult to read.
•A magazine for people who own car washes.
•A glossy magazine, begun with a sizable pile of start-up capital. addressing the issues confronting the millions of women over 40.

The first publication is *Wired*, a magazine aimed at the esoteric group of men and women who surf the Internet, a group thought by many market researchers to be unlikely to buy a paper-and-ink magazine. Wired has a busy, cramped, and somewhat irritating layout. Investors had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the project. It took the market by storm.

As did *Car Wash News*, which serves a small readership, but a loyal one. They need detailed information about the car wash industry and are willing to pay for it.

The third example, *Lear's* Magazine folded after a couple years. The late Frances Lear, ex-wife of TV producer Norman Lear, decided to take her substantial divorce settlement and make it do some good, investing in a magazine for the woman "who wasn't born yesterday." But her potential audience already had a variety of other magazines that could give them what they wanted. And perhaps what they did not want was to be reminded that they weren't born yesterday.

In addition to being unpredictable, the magazine industry is traditionally volatile. Magazines come and go, and in the long run, more go. Many general-interest magazines have folded. Specialization is the name of today's game, and while it is a risky contest, those who find the right market and serve it with targeted content can do spectacularly well. Most magazines do not reach this level, however, and that is a pattern that started in 1741.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE MAGAZINE

Ben Franklin, whom we last encountered in this narrative when he was publishing his jailed brother's newspaper, later went into the magazine business with the General Magazine. Franklin tried to be the first American printer to bring a magazine to market, but is main rival, Andrew Bradford, beat him to the punch with the American magazine, published on February 13, 1741.

### A Poor Early Market for Magazines

Both folded after a few issues. Conditions in the colonies simply weren't conducive to the success of a magazine. Most importantly, mail service was slow and undependable, primarily because the road system was primitive. The population of the colonies was still small, and many people did not have the money to subscribe to a magazine.

Why did these conditions hamper magazines but not newspapers or political tracts such as *Common Sense?* Newspapers generally serve a local audience, while magazines seek national readership. Bad mail service, then, is crippling. It would certainly be difficult to convince subscribers to spend money on a regular publication they might not receive regularly. By their nature, magazines usually do not carry vital and timely information in a one-package deal, as did *Common Sense.*

Without an easily reached and loyal readership, a magazine's expense can quickly exceed its income, which is what happened to the first colonial publishers. This probably was especially frustrating to Franklin and

Bradford because they undoubtedly knew that magazines were alive and well in Europe.

## Demographic Change Opens the Door for Magazines' Rebirth

It wasn't until the mid-to-late 1800s that conditions in the U.S. began to mirror Europe in a way favorable to magazine publishing.  By then, the U.S. had:

> •a larger population
> •a sophisticated postal system (which, in the case of the U.S., had begun to offer favorable rates to magazines)
> •a cash economy
>  •increased literacy
> •a variety of issues that were of interest nationwide

## The Nation's First Investigative Medium

Once these conditions were met, magazines became the country's first national medium.  They seized on subjects of nationwide importance and, in one of the first perceptible trends in the magazine business, began wide-scale investigative journalism.

The first major case came in the mid 1800s, when New York City was under the thumb of a group of crooked politicians led by William Marcy Tweed, known as "Boss" Tweed.  Boss Tweed's co-conspirators, known collectively as the Tammany gang, led a surprisingly efficient municipal enterprise. "Tammany Hall" built many civic projects, including bridges and parks.  But no project got underway without the necessary paperwork, which usually meant a wad of cash handed over to Tweed and his gang.

The new magazine *Harper's Weekly* was one of several publications to probe Tweed's influence-peddling.  *Harper's* also made use of what has become heavy artillery in political coverage: Humor.  Pointed cartoons by Thomas Nast helped   deflate Tweed, puncturing his image as a "friend of the people" who also happened to be a good-hearted extortionist.  Tweed eventually died in prison.

### IN DEPTH

Never underestimate humor as a force in politics.  Various polls consistently show that a fair percentage of Americans form their political beliefs -- at least in part -- from late-night TV monologues.

Satire, the type of humor that ridicules beliefs, traditions, and societal norms, can be devastating.  Many of the most powerful political statements in history have been couched in satire.  Among them: Gulliver's Travels, by Jonathan Swift, and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain.  Gulliver's Travels mocked various levels of society by means of the hero's trips to exotic lands.  At one of those destinations, a particularly low-functioning level of humans -- the Yahoos -- served horses, an allegory that related to Swift's appraisal of certain levels of his own society.  Mark Twain roundly ridiculed the pretensions of American society and the hypocrisy of slave-owners.

The late 1800s were free-wheeling times when commerce was virtually unregulated.  As detailed in the last chapter, the post-war, late-industrial revolution economy was booming.  As in most  boom times, there was a fair number of scoundrels looking to take advantage of prosperity.

*Ladies' Home Journal* undertook an investigation of the patent medicine and cosmetic industries in 1887.  The magazine detailed instances where a popular type of mascara had the quite unwelcome side effect of making the user go blind.  A reporter named Ida Tarbell took the powerful John D. Rockefeller to   task in a series of articles published in *McClure's* Magazine.   Rockefeller, head of the Standard Oil Company, was a sharp businessman whose sharpness sometimes exceeded the bounds of ethics.

He would, for example, lower oil prices in an area for as long as it took to put his competitors out of business, then, in the absence of competition, jack the prices sky-high.  Tarbell wrote about these and other practices.  Press attention to the so-called robber barons of this era was instrumental in the progressive movement, which sought to break up the "trusts" -- large conglomerates like Standard Oil which enjoyed a virtual monopoly and could therefore conspire to set prices artificially high.  Led by Theodore Roosevelt, the progressives helped pass anti-trust legislation -- the exact same legislation that broke up the giant telephone company AT&T almost a century later.  Lincoln Steffens wrote powerful magazine pieces about municipal corruption called titled "The Shame of the Cities."

## Magazine And Newspaper "Muckrakers"

Note the parallel development of investigative magazine journalism and newspaper journalism of the late 1800s: both media were concerned with exposing abuses of power.  At roughly the same time that Ida Tarbell was writing magazine pieces about the unchecked abuses of corporate power, Nelly Bly, a reporter for Pulitzer's newspaper, the *New York World,* was reporting undercover from an insane asylum.  She'd had herself

committed after pretending insanity, and wrote about the grim conditions she encountered.

This type of reporting became known as "muckraking." The term as originally coined by Theodore Roosevelt was not a complimentary one, as it was an analogy to "muckraker" in a religious allegory called Pilgrim's Progress. The character was a man who raked muck, a substance covering the bottom of barn stalls that needs no further definition. He never looked up from his task because he had become consumed with the muck. Reporters of the era proudly wore this pejorative badge.

## Literary Content In Magazines

Newspapers were for obvious reasons largely confined to news, but magazines were by definition "storehouses" of a variety of fare. *Harper's* and *McClure's* also published fiction, as did magazines such as the Atlantic and The Saturday Evening Post. The addition of fiction to the magazine mix was an ideal readership booster, because newspaper-glutted readers of the late 1800s could, if they wanted no more news, supplement their printed diet with literature. Many fine writers were featured in magazines of the late 1800s and early 1900s, including Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, and Victor Hugo.

After World War I, many in the United States had developed a less parochial view of the world, and some magazines reflected this, becoming more cosmopolitan in nature. The *New Yorker* was founded in 1925, and soon set standards for magazine excellence by becoming the literary home for an eclectic group of wonderful writers. A small part of the New Yorker story is told in this chapter's In Depth.

IN DEPTH

Harold Ross was not a college man, nor was he a renowned writer, but he had an incomparable eye for talent. He founded the New Yorker magazine in 1925; it was an urbane publication that mixed fiction, fact, and humor. Ross developed a stable of brilliant writers. Some of them, truth be told, were more brilliant than stable.

These writers were granted great freedom and Ross handled them like fine china, paying them well and giving them elastic deadlines. The group often socialized at the Algonquin Hotel in New York City, where they met for lunch at a large round table and attempted to one-up each other.

This particular lunch-time vicious circle thus became known as the Algonquin Round Table, and it included familiar names like Robert Benchley, Heywood Broun, and Dorothy Parker.

Parker, who also had helped Ross found the magazine, was probably the most famous member of this group of literary snipers. And she showed the Algonquin Round Table no more reverence than any another target: "The Round Table thing was greatly overrated. It was full of people looking for a free lunch and asking, 'Did you hear the funny thing I said yesterday?'"

Parker lived a melancholy life, and attempted suicide several times. (After one attempt she woke up in an oxygen tent and asked the doctor if she could have a flag for her tent.) Once when she was hospitalized for alcoholism, her doctor warned her that if she didn't stop drinking, she'd be dead in a month, to which she dead-panned, "Promises, promises."

Her humor reflected her caustic take on what to her was a difficult life, and she became known for her bittersweet short stories and verse. For instance:

*Razors pain you; Rivers are damp; Acids stain you; And drugs cause cramp. Guns aren't lawful; Nooses give; Gas smells awful; You might as well live*
.
But Parker was probably best-known for her wisecracks -- chief among them her response when she was informed that president Calvin Coolidge had died.

"How can they tell?" she asked.

## Newsmagazines

The same era also saw the rise of newsmagazines, publications which sought to digest what had become, at the time, a seeming glut of news. *Time* was founded in 1923 by Henry Luce and a partner who later died unexpectedly. Time did well, and Luce went on to expand his magazine empire by starting other publications that gave readers tightly written summaries of trends and events. His stable included *Fortune*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Life*, and *People*, (*People* was founded by his company after Luce's death, but it was a direct outgrowth a Luce creation: the People page in *Time*. *Time* itself was started as a summary of the week's events, a tool for handing the information crisis in a busy, cosmopolitan era.

The "digest" concept was also attractive to another publisher of the early 20th century, DeWitt Wallace, who, while recuperating in a hospital, came

up with the notion of shortening significant articles into a publication that would allow the busy reader to ingest one significant article per day. That publication, of course, was *Reader's Digest*, and it became one of the largest-circulation periodicals.

## Picture Magazines

*Life,* and a competing magazine titled *Look* (a virtual copy of Life) appeared in 1936 and 1937 respectively, each using the picture format (Figure 5.6) to captivate readers. Photography, thanks in large part to better-quality film and more easily portable cameras, became an increasingly influential medium. Photographers for Life and Look documented war, poverty, middle-class America, and a variety of general interest subjects.

The editorial strategy of compiling articles and photos of sweeping general interest made the medium of magazines tremendously successful, but in the 1950s the general-interest magazine met its match in the new medium of television.

## Decline Of General-Interest Magazines

Television proved to be a much better mass entertainment vehicle than magazines could ever home to be. Static photos on the printed page literally paled in comparison to moving photos. As a result, the fortunes of the general-interest magazine began to wither. *Collier's*, one of the leading magazines in the 1940s, ceased publication in 1956, and while *Look* and *Life* hung on for a while, their circulations began to nose-dive. Both finally crashed in the early 1970s.

But as so often happens when one medium elbows another away, the displaced medium searches for a new identity. In the 1950s, magazines began to move into the lifestyle business -- publishing articles, but selling dreams.

## MAGAZINES AND THE NEW LIFESTYLE

Perhaps no one understood this concept better than the man who produced a magazine that, in his words, was geared toward: "the select group of urbane fellows who were less concerned with hunting, fishing, and climbing mountains that with good food, drink, proper dress, and the pleasure of female company."

The words are from Hugh Hefner. He wrote them in the first issue of *Playboy,* which hit the stands in 1953. It was a ground-breaking magazine: It moved away from the macho approach of some of the existing men's magazines, and out-classed the classy men's magazine of the era, *Esquire.* It also added a healthy dose of sex. But it was designed to be a guiltless, playful sex: In an unusual move for the magazine industry, the naked women were intended to look more like "the girl next door" than the girl on the next barstool.

At first, the magazine was a pastepot job -- literally pasted together on Hefner's kitchen table. Hefner toiled on his project at night while working during the day at, of all places, Children's Activities magazine. For the first edition of Playboy, he used (without her permission) photos of actress Marilyn Monroe as the "Sweetheart of the Month." (The "Playmate" concept would not evolve until the next issue.)

As the magazine grew in circulation and stature, it attracted talented artists, writers, and photographers. But perhaps more relevant than what was in the magazine was what was not in it. Hefner was adamant that the quality lifestyle reflected in the editorial slant permeate through all the pages, and he regularly rejected advertising that reflected the seamy side of life instead of "good food, drink, proper dress, and the pleasure of female company." In other words, inflatable dolls and baldness cures were out.

## THE MOVEMENT TOWARD TIGHTER FOCUS

*Playboy* would hit rough waters when the magazine lost its focus and was challenged by magazines more explicit in nature, meeting more specific desires. Through the 70s and 80s, such narrow focus on lifestyle would become the coin of the realm throughout the magazine business.

Most general interest magazines faded away. Only a few, such as Reader's Digest and the major news magazines, kept their readership. In their place came publications that reinforced a strong, focused lifestyle and world view. For example:

> •*Cosmopolitan:* A frankly sexual women's magazine that also looked at issues of contemporary society.
> •*Working Woman*: Reflecting new employment trends, a magazine dealing with the workplace, personal life, and the intersection of the two.
> •An endless variety of health and fitness magazines. A prime example is Joe Weider's *Strength and Health*. While it had been in

print for many years, it languished for many years as a basic gym rag. But during the 70s it blossomed into a full-color, mainstream publication that included women as well as men, casual bodybuilders as well as hard-core. *Strength and Health* changed its focus to reflect the concerns of an increasingly health-conscious public. In order to keep this focus, the canny Weider spun off *Flex* as an alternative for the hard-cores who wanted more information on advanced routines and competition. *Strength and Health* and Flex became successful by being two magazines, each serving a specific audience, rather than one unfocused magazine trying to do both.

Other new magazines in the specific-focus era of the 70s and 80s dealt with new work patterns and technology:

•Home Office Computing. A brilliant start-up, the magazine anticipated the many cottage industries that would spring up because of technology. The concept seems quaint and almost laughable today, when someone working at home with a computer is just as much the rule as the exception, but for the time it was an incisive market move.
•Portable Computing. Millions of people own laptops, and this magazine provides specific information and product reviews.

Some publications zeroed in on hobbies; others on the growing area of personal finance. The emerging market of older Americans caught the eye of the industry and *Modern Maturity* began a growth spurt and eventually became the largest-circulation magazine in the nation. New political magazines such as George aimed at the younger reader interested in politics spiced up dry issues with new approaches and eye-catching covers.

Magazines serving various ethnic groups proliferated. For example, the well-established *Ebony* was joined by other publications such as *Emerge*, a weekly newsmagazine primarily aimed at college-educated African-Americans.

If the list seems virtually endless, it is because the magazine industry today reflects a society with enormous variety in its interests. In part this is due to both the complexity and simplicity of modern life. We are confronted with many new options, technologies, and employment challenges, and seek help in coping with this information crisis. At the same time, most of us (at least most magazine consumers) have mastered the art of basic survival and want to indulge in hobbies and interests; we want to kick back and enjoy, perhaps, a cigar and a glass of chardonnay. Or at least a copy of Cigar Aficionado and *Wine Spectator* -- two of the magazine success stories of the 90s that still have strong circulations in 2011.

THE **MODERN MAGAZINE INDUSTRY**

There are about 12,000 publications that can be classified as magazines in the United States. Again, hard numbers are hard to come by because some web publications refer to themselves as magazines and the entire definition is in flux.

But essentially, a magazine is usually defined as a publication that is bound, rather than folded, has a cover, and is usually printed on better-quality paper than a newspaper. When a magazine resides on-line, it is generally distinguished from an on-line newspaper by content, which in most cases (but not all) comes from a print parent magazine.

A variation of the magazine is the newsletter. While not strictly a part of the magazine business, newsletters often share similar attributes of the magazine, and in some cases it is difficult do distinguish between a small magazine and a large newsletter.

## CATEGORIES OF MAGAZINES

Magazines are usually classified by category. For purposes of this discussion, we will consider newsletters as a type of magazines. The categories are:

1. Consumer magazines
2. Trade magazines
3. Institutional magazines
4. Newsletters

In addition, magazines are sometimes classified according to their method of circulation:

1. Sold by newsstand and store distribution
2. Distributed free
3. Paid circulation
4. Controlled circulation

Following are definitions of these categories and classifications.

### Consumer Magazines

A consumer magazine is intended for the general public and sold on newsstands or through subscriptions that are easily available to the public. (The category does not mean that the publication is only concerned with consumer issues, along the lines of *Consumer Reports*, although Consumer Reports is, under our definition, a consumer magazine.)

Consumer magazines are often very specific in content (*Cowboy Magazine*, a quarterly that "covers all aspects of the cowboy lifestyle"), but and are also sometimes broad in scope (*People*).          Consumer magazines sometimes sponsor web sites that expand on their magazine's content, such as Time Daily, which offers a daily news update.   Web sites occasionally offer interactive opportunities keyed to the magazine's focus: *Sports Illustrated* hosts fantasy football on its site.

## Trade Magazines

Trade magazines are aimed at people in certain professions. Medical magazines, dog-breeding publications, janitorial supply publications, whatever -- all are fall into the trade category if they deal with a particular business and are geared for people employed in that business.  Sometimes this category is referred to as "business magazines," but that can be confusing because many consumer magazines deal with business issues.

There are trade magazines for almost every conceivable occupation:

> •Shoe Service -- a monthly publication for people who own shoe repair shops
> •National Wool Grower -- keeping readers up to date on the sheep industry
> •Roofer Magazine -- the magazine covering the roofing industry for roofing contractors

Trade magazines often have small circulations, but they can still be very profitable because they reach a highly specialized audience, an audience certain advertisers must reach.  It would seem logical, for example, that the manufacturer of sheep-shearing equipment would have to reach the readers of National Wool Grower magazine.  While he or she could reach millions of people in consumer magazines, how many of them are interested in buying sheep shearers?

The trades sometimes command a premium per-copy selling price. However, as we will see in the coming section on closed circulation magazines, the advertising base is often a more important source of revenue than money from sales of copies.

There is sometimes a fine or blurry line between trade and consumer magazines.  Variety, for example, is a trade magazine of the entertainment industry but it is available at most large newsstands and is read by many people not directly involved in entertainment but interested in following the business.

## Institutional Magazines

Corporations, non-profits, and educational institutions frequently publish their own magazines sent free to employees, students, and other interested parties. In some cases, the magazine is aimed entirely at external sources and is used as a public relations vehicle. Regardless of the intended audience, the institutional magazine usually seeks to generate morale and good relations within an organization or between the organization and external people who have in interest in the organization. For example:

•College alumnae magazines seek to keep an emotional and intellectual contact between the college and graduates (who are the most likely individual donors)

•In-house sales magazines pass along information on sales techniques to a company's staff, not only making them more effective salespersons but showing that the firm has an interest in their development.

•Magazines reporting on company events, personnel, opening of new facilities and other company news, seek to help workers feel connected to the firm. This function is especially attractive to corporations that have many sites across the country or the world.

## Newsletters

All three magazine categories above classify publications according to their content and intended audience. The "newsletter" category also refers to the size and shape of the publication.

It is a difficult distinction to define, and even those within the industry are sometimes unsure of the difference between a newsletter and a magazine. Some newsletters are easily categorized: If it is a four-page publication without art, such as the Kiplinger Washington Newsletter.

Most newsletters are significantly smaller than magazines, and are frequently delivered in an envelope, often a standard business-size envelope. Newsletters usually do not have a cover; content begins on page one. Also, newsletters more often than not are printed on paper that when folded is close to the standard 8/12 by 11 size of normal typing or writing paper.

One additional distinction: Newsletters usually do not carry advertising, while magazines usually do.
Newsletters may be as simple as a mimeographed sheet that goes to a church membership, or as sophisticated as an oil industry publication carrying late-breaking, vital news so important that subscribers are willing to pay thousand of dollars a year for it.

There are tens of thousands of newsletters. One directory that tracks newsletters lists over 20,000, and that does not include many small, organizational publications.  While for obvious reasons there is no way to count every church newsletter, school newsletter, on-line newsletter, and so forth, some estimates put the total number of all publications that could be classified as newsletters well into the millions.

Newsletters are delivered by mail, fax, or Internet.  And don't assume, by the way, that the Internet has killed off the print newsletter.  There are various newsletter firms still thriving  with print editions.  One actually has a very healthy print newsletter for computer programmers – who view the paper edition as a welcome break from the computer screen.


**Classification Of Delivery Systems**


There are three basic methods of providing a magazine to readers: newsstand and store sales, free distribution, paid circulation, and controlled circulation.

> ***Newsstand And Store Sales.*** Magazines you see in newsstands have been distributed by wholesalers, who in turn receive the magazines from national distributors.  Distributors are large corporations which receive magazines from publishers.  A distributor must be convinced that there is a sizable demand for the magazine before agreeing to move it to wholesalers.  Wholesalers also supply magazines to retail stores, such as supermarkets.  Supermarkets are vital venues for magazine sales, often accounting for half the retail sales of many publications.

> ***Free Distribution***.  Some magazines simply give the publication away, providing it free to wholesalers, placing it on their own give-away newsracks, and dropping shipments at college campuses, libraries, and other high-traffic locations.  This is an attractive option for cheaply produced magazines and tabloids which carry a large amount of advertising.  The Village Voice in New York City, for example, in 1996 decided to stop charging for the publication in Manhattan (you still must pay for it in some of the outer boroughs).  The rationale: The Voice carries a great deal of profitable advertising, particularly apartment ads. (Apartment hunting is a high-stakes, Darwinian process in Manhattan, and apartment-seekers often line up hours in advance at newsstands

waiting for the **Village Voice** delivery truck to drop off the new week's copies.) By increasing circulation, the resulting increase in advertising rates will, the Voice expects, more than cover the losses from the per-copy purchase price.

***Paid Subscription.*** It is generally more attractive to a magazine's owners to have the publication distributed by mail than on newsstands. The mail subscription is stable for a year or in some cases more. Mail subscriptions do not require shipping the magazine through several middlemen, and the money for a subscription comes in advance. (This can be a substantial amount of money if you have several hundred thousand subscribers.)

Magazines will often offer steep discounts to lure potential subscribers, because a high volume of readers can translate to high advertising rates.

***Controlled Subscription.*** Trade magazines that serve a clearly defined audience sometimes give the publication away free to qualified subscribers. To "qualify," the potential subscriber usually fills out a card listing his or her professional position and duties. If the applicant is n a position to buy goods and services advertised in the magazine, or might otherwise be influential in the industry or of future benefit, he or she will be added to the list.

Controlled-subscription magazines can therefore charge a premium for advertising because they reach a carefully cultivated readership. As an example, several video-production magazines are closed-circulation; they reach producers or production supervisors who have the authority to buy equipment. They also feature articles of vital and current interest to people in the industry. It stands to reason that these magazines will be an almost irresistible buy for television camera manufacturers.

## The Internal Structure Of A Magazine

We can group the functions of employees within a magazine into four main categories:

1. editorial,  2. production,  3. circulation, and  4. advertising sales.

> ***Editorial.*** The editor, sub-editors, writers, and reporters are in charge of developing story ideas, writing articles in-house or assigning them to freelancers, and in many cases responding to story ideas generated by freelancers. Editors invent art ideas for

the articles and assign the actual design to staff or freelance artists. Editors also plan the layout of the magazine. One important function of the editor is to assure that stories are compatible in style and substance with the thrust of the magazine. Magazines stay alive by providing readers with recognizable and comforting similarity of content. At the same time, there must be enough dissimilarity from issue to issue to keep the reader buying the magazine.

Magazine editors are virtually unanimous in their contention that the most important thing writers can do is to observe the structure of other stories, and the scope of ideas in previous issues, and come up with an approach that is in character.

This philosophy  -- "give us the same thing but different" -- allows magazines to cultivate a highly targeted audience. Story selection and the general "take" of the magazine typically becomes highly stylized, and magazines sometimes stretch a bit to give their copy the 'edge" that readers expect.


**Production.** Staffers in this department take on the complex task of physically putting the magazine together. This involves buying the paper and supervising the printing process.


*Circulation.* Staffers in this department maintain the subscription base and administer the distribution of magazine copies.

Circulation is an enormously complex job because there are many variables attached to each subscriber, including not only the name and address. but the date on which the subscription expires, and how many attempts have been made to sell a re-subscription. The circulation staff must undertake extensive break-even analysis to determine how many solicitations for new subscribers or repeat subscribers are feasible and worthwhile.


**Advertising Sales.** Advertising revenue is the lifeblood of most magazines, and the advertising sales department is the heart that keeps it pumping. Only a few magazines subsist without advertising (among them MAD and Consumer Reports). Magazine advertising is interesting in and of itself but it also provides a key to understanding the economics of the magazine industry and media in general.

**THE ECONOMICS OF THE MAGAZINE INDUSTRY**

As noted in the beginning of the chapter, magazine publishing is both a profitable and a risky business.  Most -- in fact, probably close to 90 percent -- of all magazine startups fold within ten years.

The risk comes in part from the highly competitive nature of the business, the fickle attention span of readers, and external economic factors such as the health of the economy and the price of paper – and, of course, the uncertainty about the future of online media.

It is sometimes difficult to separate these factors.  In the early 1990s there were brutally tough times in the magazine industry, with many "books" (as magazines are called in the trade) going out of business.  Some foundered because advertisers, themselves stung by either general or specific economic downturns, cut back on advertising.  The price of paper rose, adding another crushing burden to an industry that spends about 25 percent of all costs on production.

Having stated that, it must be noted that any magazine can absorb virtually any expense if advertising revenue is strong enough.  Advertising is almost always the basic underpinning factor in a magazine's success.

Unfortunately, advertising in the online magazine world has not proved to be the gold mine that was anticipated just a few years ago.  Having said that, magazines have been one of the slowest media to adapt to the online world, subsisting for years as virtual "pastewear."  The introduction of Apple's iPad has been viewed as a possible game-changer, though, because it exploits the true strength of online media and has proved versatile in production of magazines.  More on magazine/media economics can be found in Chapter 3 of **The Future of News.**

**Selling The Readership**

Successful advertising sales start with readership.  The reader is actually what is being "sold." The magazine sales department is not peddling advertisements, per se; they are instead offering an audience, a collection of consumers, to someone with a product or service to sell.  The more closely the advertising department can define that audience, assuming it meets the basic criteria the advertiser seeks, the higher the efficiency of the advertising.

Readership is an expensive commodity to obtain and maintain.  A startup magazine begins cold, with no readership, and must identify likely buyers.

In newsstand and retail sales, the cover is the magazine's calling card, and an enormous amount rides on the lure of the cover. Publishers test various colors and designs and generally do their damnedest to put the most alluring photo and design up front.

But for magazines whose subscription sales are likely to outnumber newsstand sales (and that is most magazines) the development of a reader base is often accomplished through advertising in other media, such as newspapers and television, and direct mail. Direct mail involves renting lists of likely prospects from a company that specializes in constructing these lists. (We say "rent" because there is a limitation imposed on how often you may use a list, and most rentals are for one time only. How can the company tell if you use the list twice? The list is "seeded" with real and phony names and addresses of people who will report back to the mailing list rental agency if they receive two or more mailings.)
Magazines often sell their own lists to other publications or to businesses offering a product or service that would interest their readers.

Circulation, meaning simply the number of readers, is obviously a critical factor to anyone considering buying an ad in a magazine. Other factors are persuasive too, including the durability of the magazine, meaning how long it typically stays in the home, and the pass-around rate, meaning the number of people who read each copy. But the hard circulation number is the coin of the realm in the magazine business, and publishers expend great effort to keep that figure high. As we have pointed out, many publications derive most of their revenue from advertising, and some go so far as to offer copies for free in hopes of building a huge circulation.

Should you have a suspicious mind, you are probably wondering what would keep an unscrupulous publisher from claiming a higher circulation that exists in reality, or even from printing up a huge number of copies and dumping them in the river. You would not be the first to ponder this question. An industry-funded group called the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) monitors the books and subscription lists of paid circulation magazines.


**How Advertising Is Sold**

Competition for ad money is keen. Advertising space is usually purchased by ad agencies, organizations staffed in part by media buyers -- professionals who do nothing but evaluate various media to determine the best venue for their clients. Who buys advertising in magazines? Almost anyone who has a product or service than must reach a targeted audience on a national or regional level. The businesses that typically do not take advantage of magazines are those that are too small to afford or benefit from magazine coverage, and those that must post fast-changing data,

such as grocery stores listing their specials.      The automotive industry usually leads other industries in its consumption of magazine space.  Large magazines usually have specialized salespeople who are knowledgeable about these industries attempting to lure advertisers from those industries.

***Publication of Rates.***  Rates for advertising space are published on what is called a rate card and are also listed in a publication titled Standard Rate and Data Service (SRDS). SRDS publishes rate cards from several thousands of rate cards not only for magazines but for other media as well, including television and radio. Magazine sales material almost always includes other information about the readership, including its annual income, age, and educational level.

***Regional and Demographic Editions.***  Many magazines publish regional and/or demographic editions so that advertisers may further target their market.  Regional editions allow insertion of ads for local advertisers and also let national advertisers target only the areas that will be interested in their product.  For example, a tire manufacturer can buy only in the northern editions and therefore not waste money peddling a brand of snow tires to folks in Miami.  Also, an ad in a regional edition is a good way to test market a new product; the manufacturer can compare sales in the region where the produce was advertised to regions where it was not.    A demographic edition is sent to readers who can be easily identified by some clearly measured characteristic, such as the businesses in which they work.  For example, Fortune magazine, a publication about business, has two demographic editions: Industrial Management and Global Financial.

***Ad Placement.***  In addition to these factors, advertisers must select the placement of the ad.  Back and inside covers are excellent showpieces but are more expensive than the inside of the book; an inside page can also be broken up so that the advertiser can buy only part of the page.  Color ads are more expensive than black and white, primarily because they cost more to print. Advertisers also typically receive discounts if they purchase several ads in advance.

***Determining CPM.*** At the core of the decision, though, is usually what the ad costs in relation to the number of readers reached.  This is expressed as CPM, cost per thousand.  (Mil is the Latin word for one thousand).  Magazines reaching a fairly well-targeted, affluent readership may have a CPM in the range of $45.

**EFFECTS OF ADVERTISER PRESSURE**

The relationship of magazines to their advertisers is unusual and perhaps unique among the American mass media, and we can use the CPM example above to illustrate this.

A high CPM means that magazines charge more to reach fewer readers. They can do this, in most cases, because they have clearly identified those readers and can provide a direct conduit between reader and advertiser.

This is particularly true among magazines serving an extremely segmented audience, such as trade journals targeted toward a particular industry.

Magazines are also put together far in advance. (One of the oddities of working in the magazine business is the out-of-sync relationship of your business and personal calendar; I have put together the framework of more than one Christmas issue in mid-August.) The practical result of this is that salespeople have an opportunity to further clarify their market.

This chapter's *In Depth* looks at the ethical dilemmas involved.

IN DEPTH: ADVERTISING, WIDGETS, AND YOU

Let us assume that the magazine plans to run an in-depth review of widget. (A "widget" is a hypothetical product frequently used in hypothetical discussions of economics, and for reasons you will surmise it is necessary to keep this discussion hypothetical for the moment). The widget article is planned for the November issue. Usually, a decision like this would be made in, let's say, the previous July. A lot has to be done: writers lined up, sample widget ordered or borrowed from the manufacturer, art laid out, the article promoted in the October issue, and so forth. I

t is only natural that magazine salespeople, who now have some time to work their contacts and exercise their expertise, will approach the widget companies with this information. A full-page ad adjacent to an article titled "Buying Your Next Widget" is just about 100 percent efficient for the manufacturer: it not only reaches people who are interested in widget, but are reading a specific article about buying one. It is also natural for the people buying the ad to want to know how their widget fared. Should their $15,000 ad appear next to an article that calls their product "a disastrously designed blight on the widget market," the ad may not only be a waste of

money but actively counterproductive -- calling attention to the negative review.

Magazine management will probably be fully aware of this problem, and therein lies a recurrent dilemma: Do they soften editorial content so as not to drive away advertisers?  Or the converse: Do they write complimentary articles in order to please and attract advertisers?

The world of widgets may be very small, and alienating a major producer of the product could seriously damage a magazine's ability to attract future advertising from any sector of the industry.

This situation is far from hypothetical: the sometimes incestuous relationship between adverting and editorial is an open secret in the magazine business.  While some magazines guard their integrity scrupulously, others either do not choose to or cannot afford to. Because they deal with a narrowly focused market, they are especially vulnerable to loss of revenue from advertisers in their product category.

Conglomeration in the magazine industry also poses some troubling dilemmas.  If a magazine is owned by a larger corporation, which may be involved in dealings that could be covered within the magazine's pages, can it maintain its independence?

## CONCLUSION

You can make an interesting audit of your own lifestyle by examining the magazines you read.  Make a list; if you spend some time at it the list will be longer than you might expect and might make a surprisingly accurate portrait of your social status, professional interests, and personal preferences.  You may also notice a startling change in the magazines you read today as compared to just a few years ago.  Your interests in music, money, and news may have evolved in ways you never expected.      That, of course, is why magazines do so well -- sometimes -- and so poorly -- sometimes. They appeal to very strong, very specific, and rapidly changing interests.
Hitting the target is difficult but the rewards for a bulls-eye are terrific.

## Chapter 7: Radio and the Birth of Electronic Journalism

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

***What's Ahead...***This chapter is divided into three parts: The history of radio, how radio works, and how this medium operates today in the modern media marketplace.

***Why it's Important...***In addition to the fact that radio is interesting in and of itself, this medium provides several keys to understanding all electronic mass media:

· How technical innovation can create a new market and drive the society that uses that technology in unexpected directions

· The powerful influence of advertising, and how the emerging technology of radio was shaped by advertising

· How radio waves -- the basis of not only radio broadcasting but television, wireless digital, and even the humble garage door opener -- actually function – information that will prove surprisingly useful for a journalist

· And the ways in which audiences are identified and marketed by media.

***Points to Keep in Mind While Reading...***Pay particular attention to the parallels between radio and other media, especially parallels to the emerging digital/electronic media.  Also, note that radio was not only an "invented" technology, but a completely new form of entertainment and information; try to draw connections between the media that came before it and the media that developed later.

What did radio borrow from other media?  What patterns did it establish for media that would develop later?

 Invisible signals flashing through thin air seemed, to radio's early listeners, to be nothing short of magic -- a type of wizardry that not only moved messages with lighting speed, but eliminated geographic barriers. Distance no longer imposed geographic limits on one's awareness of human events. Information could pass through space, penetrating walls

and mountains. Any form of human expression that could be communicated through voice or music could reach the most distant farmhouse as well as a Manhattan penthouse. A simple box could turn one's home into a theater, a concert hall, or a classroom. The romance of the idea is powerful and undeniable.

And it's a short story, beginning little more than a hundred years ago.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MAGIC MEDIUM

Radio traces its origins to the theoretical physics of James Clerk-Maxwell. Clerk-Maxwell's "A Treatise on Electricity and Magnetism" was published in 1873, and postulated the existence of electromagnetic waves. Using mathematical formulae, Clerk-Maxwell determined that an invisible energy existed in the universe, an energy that behaves like visible light.

About a decade later a German physicist named Heinrich Hertz conducted a laboratory demonstration that confirmed Clerk-Maxwell's theory. Hertz's demonstration of the existence of electromagnetic phenomena, however, provided no clue as to any practical application of this form of energy. In fact, it was doubted at the time that these waves would be of any practical benefit.

About a hundred years ago, a young Italian tinkerer named Guglielmo Marconi was the catalyst for translating these academic discoveries into a means of transmitting information. "Hertzian" waves fascinated the young Marconi, who outraced other scientists who were attempting to somehow manipulate these waves to send telegraphic messages.

Marconi used an on-and-off method to transmit the code developed by Samuel Morse, and within a couple of years developed a method to transmit signals powerful enough to cross great distances, including vast expanses of water. The development of ship to shore "wireless," as it was called, promised to be a considerable advantage in an age of growing inter-oceanic travel and commerce.

Marconi brought his discoveries to the Italian government, which expressed to interest. Marconi's mother, who earned a reputation as a wily and persistent businesswoman, brought Marconi to England instead. The British government, by contrast, was entranced by a technology that offered a rapid communication system to its far-flung empire.

Marconi's product showed every promise of becoming a practical success, and a company was formed with Marconi as one of six directors and a

major stockholder.  After patents and licenses were obtained, radio became a financial success as well.

Marconi repeated this success in the United States, where the Navy had a strong interest in a technology that promised it tremendous strategic advantage.  Marconi formed an American company, and radiotelegraphy, as the industry was called, became an American commercial venture that would soon form the basis of an entire industry.

## Radio Finds a Voice

Other inventors and experimenters were intrigued by radio but disenchanted with dots and dashes.  The challenge was to discover a way to manipulate radio waves so that sound could travel through space the same way it travels through wires. An inventor named Reginald Fessenden believed that the physical nature of the on-and-off interrupted wave -- which worked fine for Morse code -- would prevent the interrupted wave from ever transmitting sound.  Fessenden teamed up at General Electric with F.W. Alexanderson, and together they developed a device called an alternator, which or  could transmit a continuous wave.

Fessenden put the alternator through a test-drive on Christmas even at Brant Rock, Massachusetts. He played his violin, read from the Bible, wished the audience a merry Christmas, and told them that he would broadcast again on New Year's Eve.  No doubt this came as quite a shock to the small audience of shipboard wireless operators -- who previously had heard only the staccato of dots and dashes.

In the early years of the century, many experimenters moved radio forward.  One of them, Charles D. Herrold, who operated a college of engineering in San Jose, California, transmitted regular programs and provided listeners with a written schedule.   Herrold's operation ended when World War I began, but after the war others took it over.  Today, KCBS Radio in San Francisco traces its lineage to Herrold's small, low-power transmitting facility.

That low power, incidentally, remained a serious problem for early radio stations that wanted to transmit voice and music. An interrupted wave carrying Morse Code could travel many miles, but waves carrying sound produced a weak signal. An experimenter named Lee de Forest worked to improve the capability of the new medium by amplifying the signals.  His invention was called an "audion tube," and in theory it was really quite simple: The signal was transmitted across an electronic grid, and a more powerful signal was sent through that grid, picking up the imprint of the first signal but greatly amplifying it.  The device operated most efficiently in a vacuum; hence it was later called the vacuum tube.

De Forest also provided early radio programming to a scattered group of experimenters and amateurs. Early listeners heard a wide variety of live musical performances, lectures, recordings, and reports of events. The hum and babble over the airwaves was fascinating, in part, because it was so novel -- much the same as early Internet transmissions. It was an exciting time, with wireless companies sending out dots and dashes, legions of amateurs "playing radio," operating out the their bedrooms or barns or chicken coops. The government began to issue licenses for radio stations, in a vain attempt to sort out some of the confusion developing because those who "played radio" often arbitrarily chose a frequency and did not give much thought to the problem of interference.

## Early Regulation

The first attempt to regulate radio, the Radio Act of 1912, was more or less a failure because it gave the Commerce Department the right to grant licenses but no real enforcement power if the licensees did not live up to their end of the bargain. 25 years later, the federal government would try again, and this time they came up with a body of regulations that actually worked, the Radio Act of 1927, which was then superseded by the Communications Act of 1934. These acts required broadcast stations to act in the public interest, established a regulatory body, and gave it some teeth. The full story is in a separate chapter on regulations later in this book

The days of "playing radio" were also due to come to an abrupt end. With the advent of World War I, the Navy and Army shut down the amateur stations and took over the commercial wireless operations. Because of the expertise they had developed, the amateurs were in demand by the armed services.

## Radio After World War I

During the First World War technology advanced rapidly, and after the war's end several American firms resumed exploring the commercial possibilities of radio. Several major companies were involved in one aspect or another of wireless technology, among them, General Electric, AT&T, Westinghouse and, of course, American Marconi.

During the war, numerous contentious patent disputes were put aside as the firms concentrated on filling military orders. Following the armistice, American Marconi found itself to be an unwanted player in the communications sweepstakes. America was turning isolationist, and American Marconi was owned by the British. Communications technology

was considered too important to be in foreign hands. So a deal was made, and a new American corporation was created.

Shareholders of Marconi were given a piece of the action. The articles of incorporation stipulated that no more than twenty percent of the stock could be held by foreigners and that only U-S citizens could be officers or directors. Large blocks of the stock were picked up by G-E, AT&T, Western Electric and Westinghouse. The name of this new corporate behemoth, established in October of 1919, was the Radio Corporation of America. Many of the former American Marconi employees moved over to RCA; among them, David Sarnoff. At RCA he picked up the theme he had begun at Marconi, trying to generate interest in his "radio music box" idea. As before, there were no takers. But it wouldn't be long before RCA realized it was missing the boat.

## Radio Carries a Tune

Why did it take so long for the radio industry to catch on to the seemingly obvious potential of radio?  At the heart of the problem was a classic chicken-and-egg scenario: listeners had no easy way to pick up the signal short of building their own sets.  This meant very few radio receivers were in existence.  Companies were reluctant to invest in manufacturing receivers, though, because there wasn't much actual radio for listeners to pick up.  Schedules were still catch-as-catch can, and programming was decidedly uneven.

And from the standpoint of the companies that could provide radio programming, there really was no point in developing a regular, high-quality schedule until there was a large number of listeners and a way to make money off them.

The Westinghouse Company would crack this particular egg. Westinghouse, located in Pittsburgh, had carved out a strong role in communication and electric power.  During World War I, the firm had acquired many government contracts for radio and related communications.  But when the war ended, Westinghouse was at a competitive disadvantage because the market was dominated by RCA and the American Telegraph and Telephone Company (ATT).  RCA and ATT controlled the lion's share of the radio-related patents.

The man who helped Westinghouse crack that barrier was named Frank Conrad. Conrad had only a seventh grade education, but he learned on the job and became one of Westinghouse's most valued employees. But his bosses told him that amateur radio work was on his own time. Using his call letters, 8XK, he talked from his garage to other hobbyists, who often commended him on the technical quality of his transmissions. As interest

grew, Conrad began to present programming for a short time every Saturday night using records from a local music store that received free mentions. He also carried some live saxophone and piano recitals. Keep in mind that radio was still a novelty, not in wide use. It was for experimenters and hobbyists. But with a big boost from Frank Conrad, radio was about to take the country by storm.

A local Pittsburgh department store ran a newspaper ad mentioning Conrad's programs, noting that the transmissions were picked up by a "wireless set" operating at the store. The ad pointed out that similar sets were on sale at the store for ten dollars. Conrad's boss, Westinghouse vice-president Harry Davis, saw the ad and had an idea: If enough interesting programs could be provided, radio could move beyond the stage of being a hobby for technically oriented people, and become a medium for everyone to enjoy. In short, radio could become a mass consumer product and Westinghouse could make the radios...and the profits.

Davis called Conrad into his office and outlined a plan. Conrad would build a new transmitter to be located at the Westinghouse plant. A regular (though limited) schedule of programming would be instituted and publicized in advance. Davis figured that, with some regularity of programming, people would want to buy radios. (Hindsight tells us he was absolutely right.) Davis took his idea a step further with an eye toward maximum publicity. He wanted Conrad and his co-workers to have the new transmitter up and running in time for the upcoming presidential election.

Time was short, but Conrad said it could be done. In the last week of October, the U-S Commerce Department assigned the call letters KDKA to the Westinghouse station. The Pittsburgh Post agreed to telephone wire service results to the station and, on November 2, 1920, KDKA broadcast the election returns that put Warren Harding in office as the twenty-ninth President of the United States.

## Radio after KDKA: The Coming Chaos

Across the country, people were talking about this phenomenon  called radio. Companies and entrepreneurs were opening up radio stations. Manufacturers were turning out radios as fast as they could. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, described it as "wireless fever" and called it "one of the most astounding things that [has] come under my observation of American life."

In those exciting and chaotic early years, radio programming was a hodge-podge proposition. Station operators relied in large measure on free "talent". Musical groups, soloists, lecturers were happy to go on the air for

the exposure radio provided. Other commercial stations sprung up quickly, but the term commercial station mean only that they were licensed by the U.S. Department of Commerce. Advertising still played no role in radio. But for the time being, many newspapers, college and universities, and religious organizations developed new stations even though those stations did not produce revenue. (Again, it is impossible to keep from making a comparison to the companies that now sponsor websites for publicity and good will, with no immediate mechanism in place to make money.)

In fact, the situation became something of a stalemate. Station owners were not about to pay for programming when they didn't have to. Besides, there was no firm notion on how, exactly, stations should support themselves. The idea that advertisers could pay for commercial announcements was not widely accepted.

Many thought such advertising would not only be crass, but would discourage listeners from tuning in to stations. Political leaders and many radio broadcasters were adamantly opposed to "selling out" to sponsors. Hucksterism was to be avoided.

But the idea that stations existed to sell radios was on the wane. As listenership increased, so did the demand for improved technical quality. Station owners felt the need to purchase better-quality professional equipment instead of relying on gerrybuilt studios and transmitters. This was going to cost money. What's more, the better performers were becoming less enthusiastic about appearing on the radio for nothing. And the listening public was becoming more sophisticated and demanding about the kind of programming it expected.

Something had to happen. There was talk of following the British system of financing broadcasting, charging set owners annual user fees. That concept didn't fly in the United States. Another idea that thudded involved radio stations making direct pitches, asking listeners to send in money to support the station. That tactic didn't generate much interest, though it is used even today by public radio and TV stations.

Commercialization of the airwaves was about to begin. It would start fairly unobtrusively, then gain momentum and boldness. It would turn radio into a "cash cow" for many owners. It would also allow radio programmers to hire the best talent available...from symphony orchestras to first-rank Hollywood and Broadway stars.

## AT&T Develops Toll Broadcasting

The first inkling of radio's new commercial potential came in 1922, and the company behind it was AT&T.  The concept was radical: AT&T -- the telephone company -- would provide no programs, only facilities.   In the same way as the company provided customers with a telephones -- and a telephone network to plug it into -- so would broadcast facilities be made available to paying customers for whatever they wished to put over the air. AT&T's profits would come from the charges made for this service.  The concept was called toll broadcasting  Under AT&T's concept, programming was to be supplied by paying customers.  If you wanted to perform or lecture on the air you could do so for about  $50 for 15 minutes of airtime. The company originated this concept at station in New York City with the call letters WEAF.

But AT&T discovered a flaw in the concept -- the same flaw marring the entire radio industry. If there was no attractive programming, there was no audience.

AT&T decided that it needed to supply a certain amount of programming to prime the pump, so to speak. And soon, WEAF began to attract paying customers. An area real estate company decided to give toll broadcasting a try. Its message stressed the appeal of country living and the firm, with apartments for rent in the "country," was happy with the response  it received. As the months progressed, other companies paid for the privilege of getting their messages out to the public by radio.  Commercial broadcasting was on its way to becoming the means of support for the great majority of radio stations in the United States.

## Exit AT&T

Ironically, just as radio's commercial and very profitable future was taking shape, AT&T got out of the radio business, selling pioneer station WEAF to RCA for one-million dollars.

The phone company's decision came after a good deal of wrangling among the principal players in the fledgling industry, specifically those companies which had bought stock in RCA and reached agreements on cross-licensing of patents. AT&T had been contending that it held the exclusive right to sell commercial air time.  In addition,  it controlled the higher quality phone hook-ups that would allow two or more stations to carry the same program simultaneously, a concept known at the time as "chain broadcasting." Other broadcasters had to use inferior telegraph lines.

Clearly, a resolution of the tensions was overdue. So the feuding parties agreed to binding arbitration.

AT&T did not fare well. The decisions favored RCA, GE and Westinghouse. After further discussions, the phone company agreed to a plan under which it would essentially leave the radio business but would have the sole right to set up wired interconnections (networks) among stations.

## Development Of The Networks

Broadcasting pioneer David Sarnoff, who would later become the president of RCA, demonstrated the potential of network broadcasting as early as 1921 when radio was still in its "hobby" stage. The occasion was a championship prizefight with international appeal: Heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey versus French champ Georges Carpentier. The event would take place in Jersey City, New Jersey. Using a borrowed transmitter and a gerrybuilt antenna, Sarnoff arranged to broadcast the fight through radio sets and loud speakers in theaters, halls and barns connected together in a "network" throughout the eastern part of the country. It is estimated that some 300-thousand people listened to the big fight. It was an important day for radio, but not nearly as good for Carpentier who lost by a knock-out in the fourth round.

The next year AT&T hooked-up its flagship station, WEAF in New York,with Boston station WNAC for a musical program. By 1923 there was a mini-network of six stations and by 1924, a chain of radio stations reaching from the east coast to the west. RCA, Westinghouse, and General Electric ventured into "chain broadcasting" but because they had access only to lesser quality telegraph lines they were not as successful as AT&T -- although their time would come.

## NBC and CBS

By the mid l920's, the significance and potential of radio broadcasting was apparent to all but the most diehard skeptics.  RCA, which had ignored Sarnoff's prescient "music box" memo just a few years earlier, now was ready to take the big plunge. With Sarnoff's continual prodding, RCA established a permanent network, calling it the National Broadcasting Company. And just a few months later, NBC set up a second network. The original one was dubbed the Red Network and the newcomer, the Blue Network.

The federal government eventually forced NBC to give up its Blue Network because the government feared too much concentration in the hands of one company.  The Blue network would eventually become the American Broadcasting Company, ABC.

The idea of radio networking made sense on several fronts. If many stations, instead of just one, were carrying the same programming simultaneously, the cost of the program could be shared.  The quality of programming could be upgraded, thus attracting more listeners, and the larger the audience the more appealing the program would be to sponsors. It seemed to be a win-win situation for all concerned -- except, perhaps, for those who felt community-oriented programming was being squeezed into smaller and less desirable time periods. Many believe those people had a very valid point.

## NBC's Competitors

NBC could look over its corporate shoulder and see competition moving in. A struggling company called United Independent Broadcasters was offering some programs. But it wasn't much to worry about. NBC was clearly the king of the hill and UIB most likely wouldn't last -- and it didn't. Rather, it evolved and became a formidable competitor which eventually would wrest the leadership role from the National Broadcasting Company. The upstart firm started with WCAU in Philadelphia, then picked up a dozen stations including New York City's powerful WOR. However, it was not successful, and before it failed altogether the Columbia Phonograph Record Company became a white knight of sorts, investing enough money to keep the  network afloat and renaming it the Columbia Phonograph Broadcasting System.

The new name didn't help. Sponsors were hard to come by as most radio advertisers preferred to be associated with the quality network, NBC. New investors, including WCAU owners Isaac and Leon Levy, jumped into the breech as the CPBS, piling up debt, was about to call it quits. At about this time, the name of the network was changed to The Columbia Broadcasting System.

## CBS

William S. Paley was twenty-six years old and an executive in his family's Congress Cigar Company, a firm which had done some advertising on WCAU and on the CBS network. He was impressed by the power of radio advertising. With the encouragement of the Levys and the blessing (and investment) of his family, Paley decided to see if his instincts about radio were right. He moved to New York as President of the Columbia Broadcasting System.  David Sarnoff didn't know it yet, but he now had good reason to look over his shoulder.

**Sarnoff and Paley**

Sarnoff liked to be remembered for his role in an international tragedy, when he was in his early twenties, long before he became known for his contributions to radio and television broadcasting.  Sarnoff had come to this country with his family from Russia at the  turn of the century. He took a job with the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company   of America and became a highly competent operator, sending and receiving the dots   and dashes of Morse Code. According to an official biographer's story, Sarnoff can take the credit for notifying the world on April 14th, l912, that the luxury ship Titanic had struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sunk with the loss of more that 1500 lives.  Sarnoff allegedly stayed   at his post for 72 hours with almost no food or rest, acting as the information link between the scene of the disaster and the mainland.

The word "allegedly" is used here because there is  serious question that the account of Sarnoff's heroism is accurate. Later information shows that Sarnoff may have been carried away when he spoke with his biographer and portrayed himself as the only link to the Titanic when, in fact, other operators may have played significant roles as well.  Like many great people, Sarnoff had an impressive  ego.  A knack for self-promotion likely led him to play with the facts. Nonetheless, his place in history is assured. From very humble beginnings he moved successfully through the Marconi company to the Radio Corporation of America where he served as Chief Executive Officer from 1947 until his death in 1971.  He was an early proponent of radio broadcasting when others failed to see its potential and was  a major force in the development of television.

William Paley grew up in comfort, unlike David Sarnoff, the man who would become his great business competitor.  But Paley wasn't really satisfied as an executive in his family's cigar company. He found the challenge of his life in the young and not-at-all prosperous radio network, the Columbia Broadcasting System.  Paley was urbane and could be a charmer. He was also a shrewd businessman who nursed CBS to health and then built it into a colossus.  In the late 1940's, during the golden age of radio, Paley made a swift and dramatic move on NBC, staging a "talent raid" on the other  network, luring many of its top stars  to CBS. In both radio and television, Paley was noted for his programming  genius and his appreciation of talent.

As World War Two approached, Paley supported establishment of a serious radio news operation for CBS. CBS News, initially in radio, then in television,  became known as the premier broadcast news division.  With the help of correspondent Edward R. Murrow and  colleagues Eric Sevareid, Charles Collingwood, William Shirer and others, CBS set

journalistic standards for the broadcast industry. Paley was proud of his news  division which was not expected to be a profit center. It was "the crown jewel"  in the CBS empire.

Under Paley, the respected CBS Labs developed the long-playing record. There were also some missteps along the way.  In the 1940s, the CBS-developed  color television system lost out to the RCA version. In the 1960s,  during a period when many corporations went on a diversification spree,  CBS bought up several companies, including the  New York Yankees, (which then dropped from  first to last place in a scant two years) a guitar  company, and a toy company. In later years, CBS  divested itself of most of these not-very-successful acquisitions, deciding to concentrate on its core businesses.   But, like Sarnoff, Paley is a truly historic figure in the saga of broadcasting.


## Advertising Comes of Age

Radio was still uncomfortable with its growing commercialization.  The fact that radio came into the living room dictated, according to the thinking of the day, a certain decorum.  Hard-sell messages were looked down upon.  Network executives fretted over the content of commercials: was toothpaste a distasteful product to advertise on the air?  Should one mention the actual price of the product?

One interesting practice in the effort to advertise without really advertising involved a rather circular approach to advertising. To gain the advantage of frequent on-air mention without the unseemliness of actually presenting a commercial message, entertainment groups were frequently named after their sponsors.   The Cliquot Club Eskimos, for example, were named after a beverage company.

But the raw power of the medium meant that subtlety would not last. Slowly, the commercial sales pitch became a common feature of radio. Many stations that had been started as good-will and publicity vehicles by newspapers, department stores or other business ventures made the move into commercial sponsorship.

As a result, advertising agencies (companies that design a firm's advertising, advise on where to place that advertising and negotiate the sale of advertising time or space on various media) began to play a major role in radio.   In fact, ad agencies began to create and produce programs as well as sponsor them.   Radio departments were created at leading ad agencies, and agency personnel coordinated scripts and hired talent.  The networks, which received revenue for the airtime, were enthusiastic about this arrangement.

By the mid 1930s, radio was being taken seriously as a major economic power.  In fact, some newspapers saw radio as a threat to the very existence of printed media, and engaged in such futile protests as refusing to print radio station broadcast schedules.  Despite this tactic, radio only became stronger, and entered crested in popularity during what was known as its "Golden Age."

**The Golden Age and Mass Entertainment**

What intrigued advertisers about radio was the massive audience -- both national and local -- that the medium could serve up week after week.

But what troubled radio executives was how to reach and hold this broad and diverse audience week after week.  The regular schedule of radio programs could chew up enormous amounts of material, and all this newfound popularity was straining an industry that actually wasn't quite sure what it was supposed to be providing.  What was the ideal radio program?  Since there was no existing "tradition" of radio programming, radio programmers had to look to other models.  For example:

> · Newspapers knew that columnists appearing in the same part of the paper each day attracted a regular readership, as did comics strips, which provided readers with running stories that needed only small development week after week.

> · The motion picture industry had exploited the serial with great success.  Multipart adventures and dramas drew regular crowds who faithfully followed the adventures of Tarzan or "The Perils of Pauline."

> · A type of stage show known as vaudeville attracted audiences who craved the variety of different acts performing rapid-fire, one after the other.

These types of programs, adapted for the airwaves, became mainstays of radio in the 1930s and into the 1940s.  And radio developed these forms into programs styles that were uniquely radio -- combining the appeal of the serial with radio's relentless (if still sometimes indirect) advertising message.  For example, "Jack Armstrong, All American Boy" was sponsored by Wheaties, a cereal that touted itself as the "breakfast of champions."

Serials gave listeners the opportunity to become familiar with a cast of characters who would develop over time. It was the characters, actually,

who carried most of the show; the plots were generally devices to provide the characters situations and predicaments to negotiate.  While imaginative dialog and sound effects were used, the real magic took place inside the listeners' heads, who added their own imaginations to the mix and created unseen characters in the theater of the mind.

Vaudeville's radio version evolved into the variety format.  Instead of the lighted stage in the darkened theater, the magic sound of laughter emanated from a stage the listener could only imagine.   A cross between variety and serial -- the situation comedy -- soon became a mainstay of radio's Golden Age

Programs like situation comedies and escapist adventure, as well as game shows, provided good times in an era when good times were scarce. Radio's Golden Years were terrible times for the nation as a whole. The 1930 and 1940s were a time of deep economic depression  followed by a huge overseas war. That war would soon provide a new stage for radio.

Note that it is not unusual for bad times, socially and economically, to be a boon to entertainment.  Movies also do particularly well during depressions and recessions.  This has led some investors to remark that entertainment is a "recession-proof" industry.


## Radio Journalism Becomes Prominent

While some early broadcasts featured news items, such as  election returns in 1920 on KDKA, regular reporting of news did not develop quickly. Radio, which had few reporters, was in no position to compete with newspapers, which as an industry had two centuries of collective experience and tradition to draw upon, a solid economic base, and a vast network of news providers.   In fact, news on radio was often used as a filler when announcers were obliged to fill air time when a performer failed to arrive at the studio.   (And often as not, the announcer would read the news right out of the local paper.)


## The Hindenburg

But certain events pointed to radio's potential. One of the most dramatic demonstrations of the power of radio news to cover breaking events -- and score a huge "beat" over newspapers --  took place in 1933 when a reporter was describing the expected routine docking of the dirigible Hindenburg as it arrived in Lakehurst, New Jersey.

The airship exploded while the announcer was on air live -- and the announcer's wrenching description of the scene, as burning passengers fell to earth, became a vivid and memorable example of what radio could do.

## Commentators

Prior to World War II, there was major development of the role of commentators. One of the best-known was H.B. Kaltenborne, who had a background as a newspaper editor. Kaltenborne began to give "talks" on the air -- which sometimes contained withering criticism of the government. There was some movement to stifle him; after all, radio was licensed by the government, in the public interest. Was it proper for Kaltenborne to use public airwaves to roast public officials? Kaltenborne won out, and established himself as the dean of radio news commentators; but the fundamental issue of how a private individual could use public airwaves remains more or less an open question today.

## Edward R. Murrow

As the war in Europe heated up, Americans began to experience the full force of radio. When a CBS radio administrator named Edward R. Murrow began his famous broadcasts from London in the 1930s, radio had been broadcasting from Europe for almost a decade. CBS, led by the young William Paley, had emerged as a competitive force against the powerhouse NBC. A CBS news reporter named Caesar Searchinger pioneered those European broadcasts, which allowed Americans to hear the live voice of the British monarch, and later that of playwright George Bernard Shaw, who used the opportunity to castigate the American social system.

But it was Hitler who made Europe seem relevant for Americans. The voice of Hitler, as well as other European leaders such as Churchill, Mussolini, and Chamberlain, was literally brought to the American dinner table and living room.

Thanks in large part to radio, European events began to seem more like American events, and just as important. The isolationism that had characterized American foreign policy since the end of World War I melted away as the world became, figuratively, a much smaller place. There was a growing realization that what affected Europe affected America.

When Germany began its blitzkrieg (German for "Lighting War") Murrow was on hand to describe -- live, as it happened -- the nightly bombing raid He conveyed to Americans, sitting in the comfort and security of their homes, the stark, ravaging fear that accompanied the sound of the air-raid sirens. Radio listeners heard the sirens, the explosions, and the screams,

while Murrow's rich, clipped baritone described the scene in economical phrases that captured the sights, the sounds, and even the smells of his surroundings:

This...is London.  (Bombs explode in background.) There are no words to describe the thing that is happening.  The courage of the people, the flash and roar of the guns rolling down the streets, the stench of the air raid shelters.

## Franklin D. Roosevelt

Gradually, Americans became aware that Hitler must be stopped.  Europe had been at war for years, while America sat on the sidelines; Americans, sickened by the devastation of World War I, justifiably wanted no part of another European conflict.  But President Franklin Delano Roosevelt believed that America must enter the war, and he used radio as a medium to present this view.

Roosevelt recognized the value of radio as a mass medium with an intimate quality.  Roosevelt broadcast what became known as "fireside chats," friendly, encouraging conversations, which originally dealt with his plans to work the country out of its depression troubles.   Later, talk turned to war.

Roosevelt was one of the most media-savvy of all presidents.  He was the first to make extensive use of the press conference, and he also surrounded himself with advisers who were accomplished journalists and writers.

Americans in cities, towns and on farms all over the country tuned in to hear their president, often speaking like a father, offering bits of hope.  Then, in early December of 1941, President Roosevelt spoke before a joint session of Congress, his speech carried live by radio.

Yesterday, December 7th, 1941, a date that will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan... I ask Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan...a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

Congress acted on the President's request and the United States went to war.  Sons, brothers, husbands and fathers volunteered or were drafted.  The families who stayed behind relied more and more on radio to keep them in touch with developments. Reports from overseas were sent by

short wave radio to network control rooms in this country, which then fed them out to their affiliated stations.

## CBS at the End of World War II

By the end of the war, radio journalists had become proficient at gathering news that was startling in its immediacy. Murrow and seasoned team of correspondents formed the nucleus of a news organization that would come to represent a major force of excellence in American journalism. CBS became the model for other networks as they developed worldwide news organizations of their own.

Radio news, and radio, entered the 1950s at a crest of power, prestige and popularity. And then the roof fell in.

## Television Lowers The Boom

Television had been demonstrated at the 1936 World Fair (covered by the **New York Times,** which offered the observation that television's commercial possibilities were doubtful); it was perfected in the 1940s and became a household fixture in the 1950s. At first, many in radio were openly skeptical of the possibility of television becoming a respected and respectable medium. Many of the star newspeople at CBS avoided the medium because they viewed it as a short-lived gimmick.

But that gimmick crushed radio like a steamroller. Performers who could be seen had much more appeal than those would could only be heard. Stars like Jack Benny made the crossover to television and saw their audiences increase dramatically. Television began to exploit its own technical advantages, becoming more than just radio with pictures. Milton Berle, for example, used elaborate slapstick sight-gags to produce his own variety of slapstick. Ernie Kovaks used special effects, often tying up breathtakingly expensive studios for hours to produce a visual that would last only a couple of seconds.

Radio's magic was gone; it simply could not compete with a medium like television. But it could leave the mass audience to television and reinvent itself as a medium that appealed to a more targeted listenership.

## Radio's Revival and the EPS Cycle

Here we find one of the most dramatic illustrations of Merrill's EPS -- elite, popular, specialized -- cycle of media. Radio, which started as an exclusive hobby for those who could figure out how to actually build one,

progressed to a position of great prominence and mass audience appeal. But when television proved far superior in appealing to that mass audience, radio specialized, reaching a narrower audience who, typically, favored one type of music. Compare this with magazines and computer media; you'll find much the same pattern. Television, too, is now entering a specialized stage with dozens of narrowly targeted cable channels.

## Radio's New Strategy

Radio targeted its audience through airplay of recorded music, song after song. This was not exactly a new practice, having been "invented," according to radio legend, in the 1930s when an announcer named Martin Block popularized the format in a program called "Make Believe Ballroom." Block reportedly came up with the idea when a studio orchestra failed to show and he needed to fill time. Block is credited with developing the modern "disc jockey" format, which was later adapted into programs like "Your Hit Parade," which played the most popular tunes of the week and was in part responsible for the evolution of the "Top 40" format.

Music on radio was generally an eclectic mix well into the 50s. Disc jockeys might play some classical, followed by jazz, followed by big band, and then followed by, essentially, whatever the disc jockey wanted to play. Disc jockeys had developed considerable skill in weaving all this together. They became consummate professionals, able to entertain, persuade, and motivate. What's more, they had fun doing it. And when television threatened to dismantle the radio industry, the talent of the emerging corps of disc jockeys was melded with a powerful new force: Rock and Roll music and the lifestyle that went with it.

## Rock Saves Radio

As rock evolved from rhythm and blues, the youth of the nation became captivated with this new form of musical expression. Rock in the 50s was rebellious, a refreshing change from the heavy cloak of conformity that settled over the post-war United States. Young people wanted more of a role in society, and coincidentally they also were developing quite a bit of disposable income during these prosperous years.

Radio stations sensed this new awakening, and as millions tuned into the sounds of early rockers like Bill Haley and the Comets, Carl Perkins, and Ferlin Husky, radio programmers discovered something of enormous importance:

This was more than music. Rock was a life-style.

The old hit-parade format -- playing the most popular songs of the week according to record sales -- was now used to program stations' broadcast schedules.  It was a relatively easy format to implement, even in the tiniest radio station: All you had to do was read one of a number of record industry publications and play the top 40 most popular cuts.

As it turned out, making money off Top 40 was fairly easy, too.  Soft drink manufacturers, traditionally heavy advertisers, , found that they had a direct pipeline into the youthful lifestyle...in one case, they called it joining the "Pepsi Generation."  Grooming products and the rapidly growing fast-food market all fueled radio's comeback.

Radio had found a new and eloquent voice.  Disc jockeys such as Allen Freed, who developed the concept of "personality" as an essential component of top-40 radio, became stars.   Radio itself became a powerful force in the music world, so much so that some radio programmers engaged in an unethical and illegal practice called "payola," where -- in return for bribe from the record company, they would give a certain cut heavy airplay.

(Note that the power of the mass media to influence sales of records, stocks, and even the "selling" of political candidates worries lawmakers, who have created a raft of restrictions on what you can and cannot do. But one of the hard parts of regulation is dealing with the fact that "plugging" something for personal profit is so easy -- and so difficult to prove.)

The youth culture was the biggest, but not the only, segment of the population to be intrigued by the new music box.  Adults found radio to be a fine companion; development of new, small components called transistors (replacements for the bulky vacuum tubes invented by de Forest) meant that radio could travel to the beach, to the back yard, and most notably, in the car.

## Radio Tunes into its Audience

Programmers became aware that enormous numbers of commuters were driving to and from work in the morning and evening, respectively, and once radios became commonplace in cars the programmers exploited this lucrative "drive time."

Soon a station could be identified by its format, a term that came to mean the type of music played on the station.  A station was usually known as Top 40, or Country and Western.   Those that chose a middle path were called Middle-of-the-Road (MOR).

Through the 1960s, methods of sampling the audience became more sophisticated and the distinctions among audiences were fine-tuned.   By the late 1960s, where perhaps four or five stations had dominated a major metropolitan area, now there were room for many more because of the niche markets that had been discovered and cultivated.

Almost all this growth came on the AM band.  (AM stands for amplitude modulation, a concept explained in the next section.)  There were several reasons for this.  The FM (frequency modulation) band had been available for years, but confusion over assigning frequencies had caused that technology to languish.  Getting an FM radio for your car was an expensive proposition, and home sets equipped to receive FM often did not work very well.

But in the late 1960s, significant advances were made in the quality of receivers as well as the capability of stations to transmit a high-quality FM signal.

Once FM was perfected it outshone AM in sound fidelity, primarily because the signal is less prone to interference and because FM stations are assigned a broader range of frequencies, meaning that the signal can carry more sound information.  Once-unused FM frequencies became dominant powerhouses, and AM suffered.  But after incurring severe losses in the 1980s, AM radio stations returned to relative health, many of them by programming talk and news, two formats that have continued to increase in popularity through the 1990s.

Today, the super-segmented format is the hallmark of modern radio, and we'll see how that approach is utilized later in this chapter.  First, though, a look at how radio works.

## THE WORKINGS OF RADIO

The mysteries of the radio wave confounded scientists for years.  But through experimentation and theoretical prediction, they were able to identify, and then demonstrate, and then exploit this phenomenon.

Understanding radio is important, because today, radio promises to perform new functions, including letting our computers communicate without wires, transmitting voice and digital messages to anyone anywhere, and further breaking down the constraints of geography.

**The Radio Wave**

Let's start by examining the wave itself. When you think of a "wave," as the term is used in science, the first image that probably comes to mind is that of the familiar sine wave. That causes some confusion, because if you could see a radio wave, it wouldn't look like the sine wave. A sine wave is a graphic representation of wave measurement, not a picture of the wave. Here is how a wave is actually produced, and how a sine wave is used to represent that wave.

Picture this: If you chuck a rock into a pond, it produces a series of ridges and dips in the water. If you looked sideways at the water, from eye level, you would see that the ripples appear something like a sine wave. Suppose you needed to measure the wave as part of a scientific experiment, in order to tell colleagues how high the ridges on the ripples were, how quickly they formed and disappeared, and how many ripples were produced per second.

You would measure the wave in several places and chart the results in such as way that you could picture how many times the ripples were produced per second. If you did many measurements, a simple exercise in connect-the-dots would produce a sine wave.

Exactly the same representation is used to depict the positive and negative polarities in electricity and in electromagnetic waves.

The problem is that since you cannot see an electromagnetic wave, you must visualize it with the sine wave. With that in mind, it becomes a bit easier to understand how a wave is modulated. In AM, the amplitude (height) of the carrier wave is modulated with the signal that carries the sound information. And in FM, frequency modulation, the frequency of the carrier wave is altered

A final note: When we said that an electromagnetic wave wouldn't look like a sine wave, we sdiscussed a sideways view of waves in water, which do indeed look like a sine wave.

Water, in this case, produces motion that has an actual horizon when you find the right angle to view it. But water actually rises and falls when disturbed, primarily because it cannot be compressed. Air, though, can be compressed, and sound is produced by compressions and rarefactions (pulled-apart zones) of air molecules. Get the point? If you measured air pressure around a sound source, you would find a series of compressions and rarefactions; they could be graphed as a sine wave.

And this is about as close as we can come to visualizing an electromagnetic wave.

**Measuring the Radio Wave**

The electromagnetic wave, depicted as a sine is measured in three basic ways: *frequency, amplitude, and wavelength.*

> ***Frequency.*** Frequency means how many times a wave goes through a complete cycle. If a wave goes through 60 cycles in one second, we say its frequency is 60 cycles per second.  The modern abbreviation for cycles per second is Hz, named after Heinrich Hertz, the physicist to whom you were introduced earlier in the chapter.
>
> Because electromagnetic waves change cycles very quickly, measurement in Hz -- cycles per second --  would become rather cumbersome because of the number of zeros we would need after such high numbers.  Engineers and physicists have, therefore, standardized a series of measurements using multiples of the Hz.
>
> 1 cycle per second = 1 Hertz, abbreviated 1 Hz.
> 1,000 Hz = 1 kilohertz, abbreviated 1 kHz
> 1,000,000 Hz (or 1,000 kHz) = 1 megahertz, abbreviated 1 mHz
> 1,000,000,000 Hz (or 1,000 mHz) = 1 gigahertz, abbreviated 1 gHz
>
> -or, expressed another way-
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | 1 Hz  (hertz) | = 1 cycle per second |
> | 1 mHz (megahertz) | = one thousand hertz |
> | 1 kHz (kilohertz) | = one million hertz |
> | 1 gHz (gigahertz) | = one billion hertz |
>
> ***Amplitude.*** Amplitude is the height of the wave.  Amplitude generally translates into power: The higher the amplitude, the more powerful the wave.
>
> ***Wavelength.***   The wavelength is the actual physical length of the wave.  If you measured how long in distance it takes a wave -- traveling at 186,000 miles per second -- to move from neutral polarity to high polarity back to neutral again (one cycle) that would be the wavelength.
>
> Wavelength used to be a more commonly used measurement -- some radio dials used to be marked in wavelengths instead of frequency -- but frequency has proven to be a much more useful system of measurement.

The only real use of wavelength you'll encounter in broadcasting, interestingly, is in the height of a transmitting antenna. A discovery that dates back to the days of Marconi revealed that an antenna radiates most effectively when it is the same height as the length of the wave it is radiating. This, though, would prove impractical for many transmissions, since individual waves at the lower radio frequencies are thousands of feet long. But it was learned through experimentation that an antenna that was a multiple (a half or a quarter) of a wavelength, or in the case of shorter waves, twice or four times the length) works just about as well.

Most radio stations today use a "quarter-wavelength" antenna. That is, the antenna structure is one-fourth the length of the wave it is transmitting.

## Types of Radio Waves

Electromagnetic waves have particular characteristics that help determine their most effective use. The two most important characteristics for us to consider at this stage are:

1. The way the wave is modulated
2. The manner in which it travels

A wave is modulated when it is fed through a device that controls the flow of electrons and shapes the signal. For example, a raw radio wave, a wave with no programming information, which we call the carrier wave, would be fed through a grid that carries the output of a radio announcer's microphone. The signal from the microphone is then impressed on the signal and the signal is modulated.

The two types of modulation most applicable to broadcasting are amplitude modulation (AM) and frequency modulation (FM).

## Amplitude Modulation

AM radio changes the amplitude of the raw wave to impress modulated signals upon it. The advantage of AM radio waves is that the waves used to produce an AM signal travel great distances. The disadvantage of AM signals is that static is itself a type of amplitude modulation, and AM radio is quite vulnerable to static interference. When you listen to AM radio during a stormy night, for example, you'll hear the crackle of lighting. What's happening is that the interference of the lightning is changing the amplitude of the wave -- actually making the modulation peaks higher -- and overloading the signal.

A secondary disadvantage of AM radio as it is used in this country is that the waves cannot carry a great deal of information.  When the AM frequency band was set up, not a great deal of separation was allowed between the frequencies on which stations were allowed to operate.  Therefore, there is less bandwidth on which to modulate information.

That makes more sense if you use an analogy:  You probably realize that standard telephone wires cannot carry a great deal of audio information.  (Audio is the electrical signal that is transduced from sound.)  They certainly cannot carry as wide a range of audio frequencies as the wiring from a stereo amplifier to the speakers.   As a result, the sound of a telephone is nowhere near as full and rich as a stereo (also, of course, the quality of the speaker is much different).

## Frequency Modulation

Frequency modulated (FM) radio has a much wider bandwidth due to the way operating frequencies were assigned when the FM band was laid out.  Also, FM is much less subject to static that AM.

Frequency modulation is just what the name implies.  The imprint of the programming signal is placed on the carrier wave by altering the frequencies of the carrier wave.  Because the information is not carried by changes in amplitude, FM is much less subject to static interference.

FM, though, does not carry long distances like AM because FM tends to travel in a line of sight.  AM produces other types of waves that bounce off the top layer of the atmosphere and hug the contours of the ground.   This is why AM radio waves of a high frequency carry across oceans and continents.  A wave with a high frequency will have a short wave length (because the wave must change polarity many times in a second, the distance between changes must be shorter than a lower-frequency wave).  That is why so-called short waves -- waves with a short wavelength -- are useful for long-distance broadcast.  A shortwave transmitter produces waves that travel in all directions and skip great distances.

When the frequency of a wave becomes extremely high, it tends to travel in a straight line and stay very tightly focused.   Super-high frequency waves such as microwaves (meaning microscopic wavelength, the effect of billions of waves transitions taking place in a second) can be sent extremely long distances as long as the receiving and transmitting antennas can "see" each other.  Microwaves can be shot into space, collected by an orbiting satellite, and transmitted back to earth.  This is how live pictures of a war being fought halfway across the planet can be beamed instantly -- at least, at the speed of light -- into your living room.

**Radio Terms that Have Spread throughout the Language**

Now you know not only the derivation of the worlds "short wave" and "microwave," but also why the length of the wave is important to the function of the particular technology. Other words in electronic media have literal meanings, too, that you might not be aware of. "Broadcasting" was originally a term in farming, meaning to cast (or throw) seeds by hand over a broad patch of land. When we speak of high "fidelity," we're using a variation of the Latin world "fide," which means "faithfulness." A high-fidelity recording is one that is faithful in its reproduction of the original. "Fido," incidentally, means "one who is faithful," good qualities in a recording engineer, a friend, or of course a dog.

**RADIO TODAY**

This final section picks up with radio's development into the modern medium we know today, and adds details about radio operations that will probably make more sense following completion of the section on how radio works.

**How Radio Stations Get a Frequency**

Radio stations are assigned frequencies by the Federal Communications Commission and are licensed to serve individual communities and surrounding areas. The radio station does not "own" the frequency, but instead rents it. The license to use this frequency is renewed periodically. There is always the threat that the license will not be renewed if the station repeated violates technical regulations, airs obscene material, or (in what is actually the most frequent reason for losing a license) cannot muster the cash to operate properly.

AM stations are assigned to frequencies from 535 to 1605 kilohertz. This spectrum is divided into 107 different channels, each of which is 10 kilohertz wide. This bandwidth was set by the federal government years ago, and it does not provide a lot of spectrum space to include sound information. Thus it has less than ideal capabilities for high fidelity transmission.

AM broadcasting occupies the medium frequency band of the radio spectrum.

There are about 5,000 AM stations on the air today. The vast majority of these are commercial stations. Only about half of the commercial stations, though, regularly make a healthy profit.

AM stations are classified to one of four categories. Class I stations operate with high power, reaching a wide area; class IV stations are local, low-power facilities. Class II and III stations are, as you might expect, are in the middle of the power hierarchy. They are often called "regional" channels because they typically serve not only a city or town but the area surrounding it.

FM channels operate in the range of frequencies from 88 to 108 megahertz. The channel width is 200 kilohertz (20 times the width of an AM channel).

There are about 4,500 commercial FM stations on the air, and about a thousand non-commercial stations.

The maximum signal strength for both AM and FM stations is determined by the distribution of other stations; the FCC has worked out the frequency allocations to insure that signals do not interfere with each other. Because AM radio signals travel much farther at night (the atmosphere becomes more reflective at night, and the AM sky wave travels much farther), most AM stations must reduce their power -- or stop transmitting altogether -- at night.

## How the Radio Station Operates

Some radio stations occupy entire buildings, although in many cities radio stations are housed on one or more floors of an office complex. Sometimes, they are located in the same building as a television station (that usually is owned by the same parent company) or in New York and Los Angeles, in the headquarters of the networks.

Most radio stations are commercial operations, meaning that they sell airtime for revenue. But many stations (mostly FMs) are non-commercial, non-profit organizations serving wide interests that might otherwise be ignored in the commercial world. The modern public broadcasting system has advanced exponentially from the early "educational" radio that surfaced in the 1960s. Early stations were uneven in quality and often served the primary function of training radio operators, and the public service programming, while well-meaning, could be rather shaky.

Today, public radio has overcome those beginnings to become a truly first-rate service that responds to un-met needs while still providing programming that appeals to many. Programs such as "All Things

Considered," "The Prairie Home Companion" and other shows past and present have drawn large and appreciative   audiences.

## Radio Personnel

One interesting aspect of radio operations is that the medium  draws together people of such diverse backgrounds who work closely toward a common goal.  Here are the major personnel functions of a typical radio station:

> ***Management and Administrative***. These people are primarily concerned with the work flow within the station.  They make out invoices, issue pay checks, set profit goals, make sure that the station stays within the law, and supervise the people and the facility.  Key personnel within this category:
>
> > •General Manager.
> > •Traffic Manager (who handles flow of paperwork from management to staff).
> > •Personnel Director.
>
> ***Technical.*** Employees in this category are concerned with the operation and repair of station equipment.   This equipment is very complex, and today is largely computer-controlled.
>
> > Key personnel here:
> >
> > · Chief Engineer, who has a federal license proving his or her technical prowess.
> > · Station Engineers, some of whom fix equipment, and some of whom operate it.  In very large stations, "engineers" run the console that controls the outgoing signal, as well as operating the CDs and other playback equipment.  But today most announcers run their own console, an arrangement known as "working combo."

## Programming

These employees must put together coherent combinations of program elements and put those elements over the air.   Staffers in this category include the:

> · Program director, who is in charge of the construction of the format (and also typically has some management duties).
> · Announcers, who project their personality into the program and, more often than not, run the equipment that puts the signals on air.

· News Director and reporters, who oversee and operate the news function, if there is one. Many stations air no news. Federal regulation used to require that every broadcast station have a credible news operation, but the movement toward de-regulation in the 1980s changed that requirement. Some argue that it was good for radio, allowing stations that did not want to allocate resources to news to prosper, and making those stations who did want to mount a heavy news effort more salient in the market.   Others contend that the public interest is damaged when a station serving a particular segment of the population simply chucks any pretense of a news service.

· Sales. The members of this department actually produce the station revenue, relying on the programming department to provide the bait to produce a significant audience.  The structure of sales departments varies from market to market, but two factors are almost always true: a) salespeople are on average the best-paid category, and b) the road to top management is usually through sales.

## Radio's Bottom Line

A commercial station makes money by selling advertising.  While dribs and drabs of income may be gathered from rental of studio space and equipment, and from payment by networks to carry programming, the bulk of revenue comes from commercials.

Public and non-commercial radio must raise money through donations, although the federal government has loosened restrictions on "underwriting." Underwriting means that a non-commercial station may accept money for operating expenses, and mention to donor with a no-sell or very soft-sell message.   Federal money also subsidizes non-commercial radio, although that source is diminishing. Non-commercial radio often receives much of its overhead funding from sponsoring organizations, such as colleges and universities.

More about radio networks:  While traditional-style networks still exist (CBS, NBC, and National Public Radio are examples) and are an important source of programming for some member stations, the commercial networks today do not provide anywhere near the revenue as they did in radio's golden age.

Because of the flexibility of radio, a radio station can join a network simply by re-aiming its satellite dish.  Many of today's "networks" are really ad-hoc affairs, and a radio station can belong to several different "networks" at once. A program aired during the day may come from one network, while the evening fare comes from another.   For example, a station may receive programming from:

A satellite music service. Many local stations find it economically advantageous to pay for a central service that provides the entire music feed, complete with announcer. Cues beamed down from the satellite instruct automated equipment at the local station when to play pre-recorded local weather, commercials, and other announcements. Formats from a satellite service are carefully constructed; they hone in on very specific audiences. One interesting example of a very successful service is the Satellite Music Network (SMN) headquartered in Dallas. SMN which beams programming to about 700 affiliates in the U.S. SMN has seven different formats: a hard-rock format called Z-Rock, a rhythm -and blues service called Heart and Soul; Rock 'n' Hits (which is Top-40), Stardust (music for older listeners: Pure Gold (oldies) and StarStation (adult contemporary, a format we'll define in a moment).

A service that provides part-time or full time talk. These services include talk radio programs, usually in two-or-three hour segments. They are very popular on the AM band. (Here's another example of technology influencing content. When FM's superior fidelity put AM stations with music formats at a serious disadvantage, many found redemption in talk radio, which does not require a wide bandwidth or high-quality sound reproduction.)

A service that provides news. Several news services beam radio newscasts to member stations, as well as news segments for local news anchors to include in their newscasts.

Podcast features. A wide variety of material is available on the Internet, either downloaded or emailed in MP3 format. Also, many stations are offering extensive programming in podcast form, though music licensing generally makes it difficult to podcast music from large labels.

Irrespective of the type of programming aired, and whence it comes, it is intuitively obvious that the goal in commercial radio is to sell commercials.

Of course, that's not exactly right, and the distinction is important for fully understanding the role of radio in the connected world of media.

**The Real Product of Radio**

The goal is to sell listeners to an advertiser. That is that actual transaction. Radio stations take this very seriously; while radio sounds like fun (and sometimes it is) it is also a very much a business.  Jobs and heavy investments are on the line, and a great deal of research goes into every important programming decision. So when a radio station salesperson tells the ad agency representing a soft-drink company, "I can deliver you a solid audience of urban males and females, ages 12-24," (not untypical dialogue, by the way) he or she will typically have pages of ratings data to back up that claim.

Note that "rating" has a specific definition in mass communications: it is the estimated percentage of all possible listeners in a particular area who actually tune into a station for a certain amount of time.   The word is often used informally to refer simply to the number of people who watch or listen, but there are many measurements, and variations of those measurements, that are used in calculating audience.

Those data, though, are the end points in a long and arduous process.  A radio station undertakes exhaustive research to:

· Determine its most lucrative niche in the marketplace.  What segments of the population are un-served or under-served?

· Construct the right mix of music and talent.  This often involves convening focus groups to draw out listeners about their likes and dislikes, as well as playing music to assembled groups of listeners and gauging their reaction.  Stations keep very careful logs of telephone calls dealing with complaints about or praise for the music or on-air talent.   And by the way, do you think radio stations have request lines just to keep you happy?  Maybe that's part of it, but when you ask for a favorite song, you are providing the station with valuable audience research data.

· Identify -- and this is important -- what drives audience away, and of course avoid doing whatever that is.

**The Magic Demographic**

The point is that it is the specific audience, the profitable demographic, that rules in modern radio and in most of modern media.

In fact, we can go so far as to say that the success of a radio station does not depend on how many people listen.  Rather, it hinges on what kind of people listen and how regularly they listen.   Program directors are as

likely to complain about "wasted" audience -- too much undefined audience -- as they are about too few listeners.

Radio has become a superb medium for reaching some listeners at the exclusion of others.  Capturing a specific demographic lets advertisers know who is there and who is not there.

Review your own listening habits to reinforce this point: If you live in a metropolitan area, you have access to at least 20 radio stations.  But how many do you listen to?  Two or three at most?

Are you an attractive candidate for an advertiser who wants to sell:

•Cosmetics?
                    -or-
•Auto parts?
                    -or-
•Caribbean vacations?

Based on your buying habits and listening habits, then, do you think that an advertiser knows where to find you, and people like you?  In all likelihood, he or she does -- with a precision that might be a little un-nerving.

This is not to say that size of an audience is unimportant. Clearly, a bigger well-defined audience is better than a smaller well-defined audience.  But in these days of supersegmented audiences, the advertiser must find "the right demographic," that magic mix that fuels that magic medium.

Incidentally, a "good" demographic can be nearly twice as profitable as a poor one.  An all-news station  with an affluent demographic can make more

## How Formats are Used to Capture a Demographic

Let's close the chapter with a look at popular formats, whom they attract, and how they fare in the marketplace.  Note that this is not a complete list of formats.

If you really tried (and some have), you could probably come up with more than a hundred variations of program strategies that qualify as formats. Some who track formats have tried, but most have given up the attempt to classify each and every variation of program strategy; today, we tend to use broad categories descriptive of formats and apply qualifying adjectives to further delineate those formats. (For example, a "lite" adult contemporary features less rock than a "hot" AC.)

IN DEPTH: HOW FORMATS ARE DESIGNED

The construction of the radio format provides an excellent lesson in how media are tailored to capture a certain segment of the population.  Even if your interests lie entirely in journalism, be aware that journalism and all media survive by meeting the specific needs of an identifiable audience.  Because most of us are familiar with most offerings on the radio dial, formats are excellent vehicles to understand audience segmentation, and, to an extent, economics.  In the following "In Depth" feature, we examine a few major formats, often in relation to their "CPM," or cost per thousand, meaning the cost of reaching a thousand listeners.

ADULT CONTEMPORARY Adult contemporary (AC) is a wide-ranging format that generally includes a few current popular hits, called currents, recent hits, known as recurrents, and older songs, known as oldies. AC ranges from rocking, hot AC to lite, or easy AC. Some AC declares itself a mix, using a mixture of types of songs and eras of songs. AC formats are usually designed for general listeners rather than those listening strictly for only one genre of music. There are Hot AC and Lite AC variations on this theme.

AC has a relatively affluent demographic. CPM is high. This format scores particularly well among women around 30 years old.
ADULT STANDARDS. Adult standards is pretty much the same format as middle-of-the-road (MOR). MOR is still an extant format, but adult standards is the term used by Billboard and Arbitron.
In any event, adult standards usually means music such as Tony Bennett and Brenda Lee. However, this format is no longer synonymous with World War II music. Selections from the Platters and even the Carpenters are often heard on adult standards stations. Remember, fans of the Carpenters who were in their late 20s when the Carpenters were in full flower are now in their 50s. Time marches on.

CPM runs high, but raw numbers are declining.

CLASSICAL   e classical format usually includes orchestral, opera, and occasional show music. Some classical stations feature modern orchestral pieces, but most tend to stick with Bach, Brahms, and Beethoven. CPM is very high; the audience is typically highly affluent.

CLASSIC ROCK. This used to be a splinter format of album rock but now has its own distinct identity. Classic rock might best be defined as the top hits from the best 100 rock albums of all time without new releases;

selections from Cream and the Moody Blues are examples of classic rock mainstays.

CONTEMPORARY HITS RADIO (CHR). CHR, also known as Top 40 or current hit radio, used to be what the secondary title says: the top 40 songs repeated over and over. But that strategy is hopelessly vague for a station that wants to distinguish itself in the marketplace. Today's CHR/Top 40 typically features heavy dayparting, that is, specially designed formats for the changing listenership during the day. Some CHR/Top 40 stations also "mellow" their playlist to capture a broader audience whereas others play Rhythmic Top 40 to skew toward the younger audience. These formats often use heavy promotion to build their audiences.

CHR/Top 40 has a fairly low CPM because its audience generally does not have much money, but again, young people have very active spending habits.

COUNTRY. Country is a format with rural roots, but it is not limited to rural listeners. Country melodies typically have a "twangy" feel, and the lyrics often deal with the struggles of everyday life. Country music was rocket-hot in 2006 and is still among the most popular formats today. But oddly, that's a mixed blessing to country programmers and radio producers, who must tread the delicate line between ignoring the new material and alienating longtime listeners. Country is not regarded as having a particularly affluent demographic, although the format has made significant inroads among the affluent and the young, thanks in part to the huge success of several country crossover stars. The young are not particularly affluent, but they do spend a great deal.

MODERN ROCK. Modern rock or new rock features very progressive music, including many selections that would be characterized as alternative new rock. Music tends to current with bands that have gained prominence within the last five years. CPM is highly variable.

NEW AC/SMOOTH JAZZ. This music features jazz and compatible vocals. These stations play easy-going music designed to create a "jazzy feel or mood." Music tends to be medium tempo and it is sometimes referred to as New Adult Contemporary. CPM varies widely.

NEWS/TALK. According to some analysts, this combination of call-in, live interview, and news programming, news/talk is the most successful format on the AM band. Although durable and popular, this format relies on good talent and is somewhat market driven. When times are not

turbulent, talk ratings decline. Luckily for news/talk programmers, we seem to be realizing the ancient oriental curse of "living in interesting times." As of late 2005, News/Talk was the highest-rated of all formats, down only a tick from its high point in the election season of 2005.

News/talk has a fairly affluent demographic. (All-news has a very affluent demographic.) It's particularly strong among businesspeople. Listeners tend to be older (35 and up) rather than, say, in the 18–34 demographic range.

OLDIES. Just what constitutes an oldie is debatable, but to most producers, an oldie is a cut released at least two or three years ago, and of course, many oldies date much farther back than that.
Some stations use rotations from all eras of recorded music, but the oldie market is segmented, too. You'll find that most rotations (the scheme of music played) in oldie formats center on an identifiable 15 year period, many playing music from the early 60s through the 70s for baby-boomers.

Oldie CPM often runs a little higher than average, and some oldie formats are quite successful, and highly specific oldies formats, such as "classic rock oldies," have sizable and loyal audiences. In 2004 and 2005, oldies lost audience.

RELIGIOUS. The format is self-explanatory, but do note that the format can take on aspects of other formats. Some modern Contemporary Christian music, for example, is virtually indistinguishable from that played on adult contemporary.
Many of these stations are noncommercial, so CPM is either not applicable or, in the case of commercial religious stations, varies widely.

ROCK. Rock, usually called album-oriented rock (AOR), features longer, heavy-rock cuts and is primarily aimed toward a fairly young male audience. Album rock has many variations on its basic theme, but it essentially features older music, longer cuts, and longer sweeps (back-to-back music segments) than Top 40 does.
AOR has a low CPM because its audience is viewed as being less affluent and less likely than other audiences to buy a broad range of products.

SPANISH. The Spanish format has become red hot because of the growing number of Latinos in the country. Radio station producers took note of this when they saw the results of the most recent census, hence, a growth in Spanish stations. (In some Mexican border communities and southern Florida, of course, Spanish stations have been broadcasting for years.) Spanish formats have splintered into sub-formats as the genre becomes increasingly popular.

CPM can be good in many areas when there is a mating of easily identifiable products with this audience.

URBAN. Urban formats feature rap, hip-hop, hard rock, and other format particulars designed to appeal to young, urban audiences, often blacks and Latinos. Not surprisingly, urban is a popular format in large cities.

Like all formats, urban varies in the content and thrust of its programming.

Many urban outlets also feature a healthy dose of Top 40 cuts and are nicknamed "churbans" or Rhythmic Top 40. (If you hear, say, a Whitney Houston cut on an urban station, you're probably listening to a churban-leaning urban.) Rhythmic oldies tends to be a mix of urban oldies interspersed with early rap and upbeat Motown hits. Urban CPM can be quite respectable because the format moves certain products very well.

REMAINING FORMATS. There are dozens of other formats, including all-news, various ethnic formats, and even an occasional all-Elvis station (including one on satellite). Of particular interest is the emerging all-sports format, which is proving successful for WFAN in New York and WEEI in Boston. The Internet allows incredibly narrow formatting, though business models for many of them are not fully developed. The most unusual format we know if is DogCatRadio.com, which programs music for pets to listen to when their owners are away. While it gets thousands of hits, it has yet to show a profit.

There is a great deal of overlap among formats. It's impossible to surgically separate, for example, a hot AC from a light Top 40/CHR. Note that new formats constantly merge and that many of today's large-scale formats were "splinter" or "hybrid" just a few years ago.

**RADIO 2011**

The phrase, "when one door closes, another opens" is an obvious cliche, but like many cliches it holds a grain of truth.  Digital technology has turned virtually all entertainment and news industries on their heads.  It will come as no news to you that changes in delivery system have left executives in all media scrambling to find new revenue models. For many services and industries, the news is all grim.
But things look much better in radio, and the future - while no one can predict it with certainty -- seems bright.  Why? If you're entering radio

today, new options are open to you, options unthinkable when the first version of this book was produced more than 20 years ago.

For example, if you're involved in music you might get a job at a "traditional" radio station or record label, or you might start your own recording studio. A recording studio even fifteen years ago involved staggering sums invested into mixing consoles, filters, and other paraphernalia to shape the audio signal. Today, even a modestly-priced computer and software that is often available for free can produce roughly the same product.

Are you fascinated by radio programming? You may elect to enter "traditional" radio and work your way up to program director. Conversely, you could also start your own radio station over the Internet. There are several modestly-priced options that are within the range of almost anyone, financially and technically, who wants to start and maintain an Internet station.

In 2010, radio revenue marked its first increase since 2000, posting, according to the trade group the Radio Advertising Bureau, a six percent increase over 2009.

"Spot" advertising, commercials placed by an advertiser at stations of the advertiser's choosing, was up six percent, and network radio was up 3 percent last year. Advertising on digital radio, meaning websites, streaming audio over the Internet, and HD ("hybrid digital") was up 24 percent.

Listening patterns, though, are changing from previous years. Faced with a wide variety of choices, the average American has cut back on the number of hours he or she spends with radio from about 16 per week a decade ago to about 13 per week now. At the same time, there's been almost no decrease in the number of Americans age 12 and over who listen to radio. The figure currently stands at about 91 percent.

Clearly traditional radio, which we often call "terrestrial" radio, is losing share to Internet, iPods, and other digital media, and shares of audience are dropping as traditional radio finds that it can offer two, three or four channels with digital signals as well as virtually unlimited market segments on the Internet. Clearly, this is both a closing door and an opening one. Highly specific markets can often be exceptionally profitable. What such markets lack in numbers they make for in appeal to advertisers who desire a focused demographic with predictable buying habits.

Speaking of reaching specific demographics, new developments in targeting radio listeners hold terrific promise for the future of radio -- or

whatever we choose to call radio in the digital future. We're talking about algorithm-based radio, a service that uses a sample of listener preferences to predict preference in music and, of course, purchases. Pandora, probably the most successful of algorithm-based radio, recently raised more than $100 million for an initial public offering, which means a change in company financing in which stock is sold to the general public.

After a few tough years, Sirius, the satellite-relayed subscription service, in early 2011 had passed a whopping 20 million subscribers. Offering clear, high-quality audio mostly to listeners in cars, Sirius serves up an astounding array of channels, ranging from jazz to easy listening to sports to comedy.
Services that serve up on-demand music orders are beginning to take off as well. A service called Thumbplay, which offers what is essentially an all-you-can eat menu of music for $10 per month, was recently sold to radio giant Clear Channel Communications.

But we haven't yet touched on what promises to be the biggest game changer in the radio industry, and invention that brings the "radio" back to "radio." We're referring to the mobile market, the fertile ground for advertisers seeking to reach predominately young audiences. Some mobile smart phones ("phone" may in fact may be becoming a quaint term) are now equipped with HD radio receivers, some with FM, and almost all are cable or receiving and playing back an audio signal of some sort. Mobile radio could be an advertiser's dream, because in addition to reaching people anywhere, a traditional strength of radio, all new smartphones are equipped with GPS location sensing devices. While the privacy implications have to be sorted out, delivering ads based on the location of the listener has obvious profit potential.

Imagine: a portable device that reaches the listener with music suited to that person's preference and lifestyle. If that sounds familiar, note that that a half-century ago, when radio was reeling under the crush of television, a new invention called the transistor allowed youthful listeners to take their music with them and immerse themselves in a lifestyle based on their music. The rest was history. And the rest of the story is the future.
Welcome to Radio 2.0.

## CONCLUSION

Radio started as a technological fad, and worked its way through the elite, popular, and specialized cycles. Radio is very much a medium driven by technology. When technology changed, the format of the medium changed

with it, and that's an evocative   illustration of the phrase, "the medium is the message."

As we've seen, the technological limitations of radio also determine on what frequency you may operate a radio station, and where stations of various power are located; they must be far enough apart not to interfere with each other.

Add the medium to the message and you get an industry that has adapted to become a highly individualized service, valuing a specific demographic.

## Chapter 8: Television

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

***What's Ahead***...This chapter shows how television and cable are media in transition, poised to leap into the digital age but not quite sure if or where to look before they make that leap.  We begin with a highlight history of television, discuss how television and cable operate today, and conclude with a discussion of issues facing what is arguably the most powerful of all media industries.

***Why it's Important***...TV is the test case" for the viability of the new digital world.  What happens to this medium will probably affect many aspects of our lives because television, as you are certainly aware, is an enormously powerful medium that is deeply entwined with our culture. Also, the history of television is a mirror that reflects the fascinating process of people trying to contend with an exploding technology.

***Points to Keep in Mind While Reading***...Television changes everything: what we do with our free time, how we elect a president, how we perceive the world outside and match that world with the pictures in our heads.  As you read through the sections on TV's history and present, note how the medium's development has changed the "ecology" of our lives.  Note, too, that no matter how much and how vigorously people complain about television, the medium also has produced a great deal of net benefit to the society.

GREAT MOMENTS IN TELEVISION... As author Ken Auletta tells it, here is how one series was invented: The late television roducer Aaron Spelling had what he thought was a surefire ratings leader.  In the Twentieth Century Fox parking lot, he described the series to then-Entertainment President of NBC Brandon Tartikoff.

"I can pitch it to you in a sentence," Spelling said.  "Student nurses in Dallas in the summer and the air conditioning doesn't work and they sweat a lot!"

Replied Tartikoff: "This is a guaranteed 40 share!"

Actually, the show -- which would be named Nightingales -- never garnered that 40 percent share of the viewing audience. Low ratings forced its cancellation after a short run. But what does the way it was conceived say about television, television audiences, and television executives?

This is no small question, because the anecdote actually illustrates two conflicting points of view: the widely held belief that you cannot underestimate the intelligence of a television audience and the contrary fact that the audience did not fall for this particular contrivance.

Television's history is dominated by episodes reflecting mediocrity at its dullest, counterbalanced by shining moments of achievement. In short, like almost any other human endeavor, television combines elements of good and bad. But television does it on a grand scale, literally in everyone's living room. And like all human endeavors, it tells us a great deal about the people and the society who created the medium.


## THE DEVELOPMENT OF TELEVISION AND CABLE

Television was a monumentally complex technology, especially when you consider that the basic operating principles still in use today were developed more than a half-century ago. But after several false starts and delays, television took hold of our culture and captivated us like no medium before it.

### Early Origins

Television traces its origins to a Swedish laboratory, where, in 1817. a chemist named Jons Jakob Berzelius discovered an element called selenium, an interesting substance that would carry more electricity when it was stuck by light. The more light, the greater the current flow.

### Photoconductivity in Photography

American inventors were intrigued by this quality, called photoconductivity, and tried to use it for photography. One experiment involved focusing light from a lens onto a mosaic of "photoelectric" cells, which produced stronger signals where the light was brightest. The output of the cells was fed to a bank of tiny light bulbs which produced a rough approximation of the image the lens had seen. The image did not have to be recorded on a sheet of film, and the changes in electricity could vary from second-to-second. This process promised something revolutionary.

The photographic image could move.

## Mechanical Scanning

As you can imagine, this was quite literally an electrifying development. But as you can also intuit, the arrangement of photoelectric cells and light bulbs was not a particularly handy or nimble contraption, nor did a bank of little light bulbs produce much of a picture. In 1884, a German inventor, Paul Nipkow, improved on the process by linking, by wire, two spinning discs. The discs were perforated, and a scanning device peeped through each perforation on the "camera" disc and detected the relative strength of light at that point. Then a corresponding signal was sent to the "receiver" disc.

The camera and receiver discs spun at exactly the same rate and exposed the same perforations at precisely the same time. If you looked at the receiver disc, the patterns of light would imitate that light and shadows that made up the image scanned by the "camera" disc.

Pictures produced by mechanical scanning were still not very clear. A Scots, John Logie Baird, improved on the image in 1923, using a patchwork of darning needles, hatboxes, and sealing wax. This arrangement produced what is usually credited to be the first real transmission of a television image. Baird's experiments were aimed at transmitting the image of a live, moving subject, and he summoned an office boy as a model. The boy would sit before the blinding lights only if paid a few shillings for his time, and John Logie Baird became the first recipient of a lesson in television economics.

## Electronic Scanning

It became apparent that this technology was hopelessly clumsy, and the race was on to somehow scan a picture electronically. Through the 1920s and 1930s, Vladimir Zworkin worked to develop a prototype of the electronic scanning gun. The device would scan a photosensitive plate onto which a lens was focused. Zworkin and another inventor, Philo T. Farnsworth, married their technologies through an able matchmaker, RCA Chief David Sarnoff, who hired Zworkin and bought out the patents from Farnsworth. The result: a workable camera and receiver, devices that Mr. Sarnoff proceeded to market aggressively.

In 1930, two other firms in the race to develop workable televisions did the (then) unthinkable: General Electric and Westinghouse merged their research and development laboratories in Camden, New Jersey. The companies conceded that by working together, they could develop basic technologies from which everyone could profit. But at the same time, each company gave up the possibility of completely cornering the market.

### The Dawn of Commercial TV: 1939-1950

Television sets became available to the general public around 1939 when Sarnoff demonstrated the new technology at the World's Fair.  The sets sold for upwards of  $200 -- a lot of money in 1938 -- and produced a very small picture that was of poor quality.  But the public liked the idea, and so did President Franklin Roosevelt.  Much of the news media did not care for television, including The New York Times, which dutifully covered the fair and noted that the medium's "commercial possibilities" were in doubt.

### TV Signals Become Standardized

In 1941, a group of engineers called the National Television Standards Committee, established by the Federal Communications Commission, set a standard for electronic television: 525 lines scanned at 60 fields per second, with half the picture being created during each field.  This is exactly the same standard used by analog TV today -- s standard that must be replaced before becomes digital.

In the United States, North and Central America, and parts of Asia, television signals are made and received according to the NTSC (National Television Standards Committee) standard. NTSC is not the only standard. There is a total of 11 standards in use worldwide.

### How NTSC Works

First, the image is captured by a camera, with the lens focusing on a target inside the camera tube.  Behind the target, and electron gun shoots beams of electronics and scans the image along 525 lines, 525 times per second. The process is reversed inside your TV. A gun in the back of the TV shoots electrons at the back of your picture tube.  The picture tube is coated with thousands of tiny phosphorescent dots on the back of the picture tube. These dots are called pixels, which is shorthand for "picture elements." On a color TV, there are clusters of three pixels in the primary optical colors, red, green, and blue.  Take a close look at your television screen, using a magnifying glass, and you'll see the rectangular red, green, and blue pixels.

When the scanning beam passes over the pixels, it lights up the appropriate color with the proper intensity, and the mosaic of dots appears to our eyes as a complete picture.

The scanning beam illuminates 525 lines per second on the TV screen, the odd lines first and the even lines after; this is necessary because if the whole picture were painted at once we would detect a flicker as the picture breaks down.  You can freeze the scanning pattern by taking a photograph

of a TV screen using a fast shutter speed. The picture will be only partially filled in, and the lines scanned a fraction of a second previous will be fading.

This system is completely different from what your computer uses. The computer image is "bit-mapped," meaning that digital computations are used to determine which pixels, identified by number, are activated.

Within the last few years broadcasters have broadcasters to digital television. The appeal of digital TV is not necessarily better pictures, although if a great deal of spectrum space is used the pictures are of higher quality, but flexibility. Because digits can easily be manipulated, a station broadcasting on a digital channel could chose to transmit one high-video-quality film or six programs of lower-quality video.

## The Cable TV Concept Appears

In 1948 a utility worker and part-time TV-store owner named Jack Wolson had a terrific idea. Wolson lived in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, a hilly region distant from the TV stations in Pittsburgh -- two factors that prevented local residents from getting decent reception. Wolson set up a powerful antenna and, for a fee, ran wires to his clients' homes. This was called Community Antenna Television, or CATV, and it was the grandfather of the modern cable system.

## The 1950s: Evolution of the New Medium

World War II, fought from 1939-1945, virtually halted advancement of television because science and industry were absorbed in the war effort. But after the war, weary and traumatized Americans settled into new housing developments, placed a strong emphasis on home and family life, and found that the television set was much more interesting than the fireplace.

The 50s saw stunning, leapfrogging advances in the technology and the content of television.

## Channels Allocated

Television signals are extremely intolerant of interference; radio stations signals can have a little overlap and still produce a fairly clear signal, but television signals degrade catastrophically. In 1952, the FCC devised a comprehensive scheme called the Table of Allocations to assign frequencies across the nation.

The table stipulated that there would be 70 channels, from 2 to 69. (Channel 1 was given to researchers who needed a frequency to operate radio telescopes.) Channels 2 to 13 were known as VHF, very high frequency, and were commonly found on a most TV dials. Channels 14 to 69, UHF, or ultra high frequency, were expected to fill the remaining demand for television station channels. The majority of allocations, in fact, were UHF. The table of allocations listed about 2,000 frequencies which would be available to 1291 communities across the nation. Such a meticulously planned scheme minimized the threat of frequency interference. All channel 4's, for example, were spaced far enough apart geographically so that the signals could not clash.

The table of allocations had an unintended side effect: It effectively limited television to three major networks. Most large cities had a maximum of three allocations, hence stifling opportunities for a network to compete with NBC, CBS, and ABC. A fourth network, called the Dumont network, was formed in 1944. Founder Allen B. Dumont folded the network in 1955, though, and throughout the rest of his life Dumont remained an advocate for addition channel availability.

## Color Television

Color TV dates from about 1953, when NBC developed a non-mechanical color scanning system. As became apparent with black-and-white technology, mechanical systems were easy to make but entirely too cumbersome for practical use. When NBC developed the practical electronic color scanning camera and tube, the entire industry (with some prodding from the federal government) settled on this as its standard. Also, NBC took great pains to make the new color system compatible with existing black and white television sets.

## The Birth of Entertainment Genres in the "Golden Age"

His nickname was "Mr. Television," and he liked to smoke cigars and wear dresses -- often at the same time. Milton Berle who hosted the Texaco Star Theater in the late 1940s and early 50s, probably did more to sell early TV sets than any RCA sales executive. Americans became entranced by the diverting and unabashedly goofy comedy that came from the small screen. Milton Berle was the first of many comedians who found themselves perfectly suited to the new medium. Bob Hope hosted his first special in 1950, and I Love Lucy had its debut in 1951.

I Love Lucy was a pioneering show in more ways than one. First, it set the tone for generations of "situation" comedy to come. Secondly, it set new

standards for television production.  Lucy's husband and co-star, Desi Arnaz, was by all accounts a gifted producer and businessman. He was one of the first to use multiple cameras to capture different angles and allow the director to cut, for example, from a long-shot of Lucy getting tangled in an elaborate costume as she tries to sneak into her husband's nightclub act to a closeup of Arnaz's face as he gymnastically rolled his eyes skyward.

Lucille Ball was no slouch when it came to the business end of the business, either.  She declined CBS's offer to broadcast the program live from New York -- the way that radio series had been presented -- and asked instead that the program be shot on a Hollywood sound-stage, on film.  The existence of those high-quality film prints, along with the innate charm of the show, is why I Love Lucy is still shown on television today.

The early to mid 1950s were a period of rapid growth for the television industry.  Programming was exciting and experimental in nature; great actors and playwrights were anxious to try their hand at this new medium. Dramas aired live, giving the small screen the tension and electricity of a Broadway stage. This era became known as television's "Golden Age." Westerns, police dramas, and game shows proliferated.
The Quiz Show Scandals

Quiz shows were enormously entertaining. They featured almost unbearable tension as contestants were locked in an isolation booth and scowled and perspired as the clock ticked away and they struggled to come up with the answer to the question posed by the host. Often at the very last second, the contestant would in a bolt of inspiration divine the answer.  It seemed almost too dramatic to be true.

And of course it was.  It turned out that the sponsors of some of the programs, who also took a hand in producing them, fed the answers to the performers who could put on the most dramatic show.  Congress investigated, and the FCC devised strict rules to keep quiz shows more hygienic in the future.

**Television Becomes a Major Force in Politics**

More importantly, perhaps, television began to make its mark as an important part of the American political landscape.   Richard Nixon used the new medium brilliantly to deflect charges that he had taken campaign money for personal use.  Nixon, who was then vice-president under Dwight David Eisenhower, was in danger of being dropped from the ticket as Eisenhower's running-mate in the 1952 election; Eisenhower was concerned about Nixon's reputation and was discretely looking about for a new vice-president.

Nixon took the offensive by taking to the air in 1952 (Figure 9.6). He delivered an impassioned speech in which he denied any wrongdoing and claimed that the only gift of significance he had taken was a black and white dog named Checkers. His little girl loved the dog, he told the audience, and no matter what anyone said, his family was not going to give Checkers back.

(Obviously, no one wanted to take Nixon's dog back. But Nixon knew -- or at least suspected -- that this new medium of television was an efficient conduit of emotion, and an impassioned and emotional appeal could deflect attention from the real issue. And how right he was! The "Checkers Speech," as it came to be called, saved Nixon's career. But the medium that helped make Nixon would later help break him.)

## The Birth of Television News

The evening newscast in the 1950s usually consisted of nothing more than a short series of newsreels stung together by a narrator. On one early newscast, the Camel News Caravan, host John Cameron Swayze would hold up a carton of (the sponsor's) cigarettes and thank Camel for sending cigarettes to overseas troops.

But some documentary programs in the 1950s were highly sophisticated. Edward R. Murrow and Fred Friendly produced trenchant works about the Korean War in the early 1950s, and went on to found a program called See It Now, which was in part responsible for bringing down the fanatical anti-Communist witch-hunter, Senator Joseph McCarthy. See It Now was the first major rumbling of the powerful new medium that would quake the nation, and it raised ethical questions about the proper use of the medium, questions that are still being debated today, especially after the release of the film Good Night and Good Luck, which refocused attention on the role of the McCarthy incident in shaping television news. This chapter's "In Depth" feature addresses not only the case but some of the ethical considerations behind it.

## IN DEPTH: "TAIL GUNNER JOE"AND THE PRESS

Joseph McCarthy rose to political fame on his credentials as a war hero. He called himself "Tail Gunner Joe," referring to the position of the soldier who defended a bomber from a position near the tail of the airplane.

McCarthy, though, was never a war hero nor a tail gunner. He simply made up those details for personal benefit, a habit that would stick with him through his political career.

McCarthy rose to national prominence by exposing "The Red Menace," the threat to U.S. security posed by so-called communist sympathizers and infiltrators. This was a terrifying issue to many Americans, who viewed post-war expansion by the Communists -- who were our allies during World War II -- as a threat. As a Communist-hunter, McCarthy again did not let facts get in the way of his career. He recklessly accused hundreds of people of having communist leanings, ruining lives and careers. Almost all of these accusations were made without proof or even anything that remotely resembled evidence: McCarthy would claim to have a "list" that never materialized, a list from high government "sources" who were never named. And the press hardly ever pressed him on the existence of those lists.

Edward R. Murrow and his partner Fred Friendly wanted to produce a program that exposed McCarthy. Murrow had
sterling credentials from his years as an on-air correspondent. Friendly worked behind the scenes and was a respected producer. For a series of programs called See It Now, they gathered film showing McCarthy at his worst: bullying, waving sheets of paper that contained the "lists" that never materialized, spewing "facts" that were simply untrue.

McCarthy's political career was doomed after that, and while he tried to counter-attack, Americans had a big dose of the real Tail Gunner Joe and did not like the taste it left in their mouths. In fact, a rebuttal aired by McCarthy a week later may have done more damage that the first program, showing the senator as surly and arrogant.

The fact is that while McCarthy was a clever schemer, the news media were responsible for making him so powerful. Reporters, both from print and the newly emerging broadcast organizations, often repeated his patently bogus claims without checking them out. And it is not inconceivable that many of the news media were themselves terrified of McCarthy, who leveled charges of communism against his political enemies -- meaning anyone who dared challenge him.

Put yourself in the place of a reporter covering a modern story that has a similar parallel: Suppose, for example, a Senator levels a scandalous charge of financial impropriety against another politician. Would you, as a reporter, repeat the remark, attributing it to the senator, or would you hold off until you personally had checked it out? What would happen if other reporters simply repeated the charge (as they probably would); would you risk being hopelessly behind on the story? And suppose the senator making the charge was way off-base. Would you stop quoting him in the future? At what point?

## The Maturing Medium: TV from 1960-1980

During these two decades television evolved from a novelty into an everyday part of our lives.  Television was in part responsible for the election of the first "TV President," John F. Kennedy, and the medium drew a shattered nation together when he was killed three years later. News became an important part of television's menu, and ratings-driven news changed the nature of the enterprise.

## Birth of the TV Presidency

The ecological impact of television became apparent when the visual grammar of the medium helped swing an election. In 1960, John Kennedy faced off with Richard Nixon in a series of debates.   Nixon, who had used television so well in his "Checkers" speech, was this time one-upped by Kennedy.  Viewers saw a fresh, rested Kennedy (he had slept all day) debating a drawn, perspiring Nixon.Nixon was ill and had treated the debate like another campaign stop; he'd made a major speech already that day.  Worse, he refused to wear television makeup.  Worse still, the director of the program, Don Hewitt, took "cutaway" or "reaction" shots of Nixon, who was in one instance licking perspiration from his upper lip while Kennedy attacked him.

The image: Kennedy had made Nixon sweat.

A poll of listeners who had heard the debate on radio indicated that most thought Nixon had won.  But television viewers mostly named Kennedy the winner.  But in the poll that counted -- the election -- Kennedy won by a narrow margin.

## Television News Comes Of Age In The Kennedy Assassination

Kennedy figured tragically in an event that made television news the primary conduit of breaking information.  He was shot by an assassin in Dallas, and stunned Americans watched the resulting drama play itself out on television.  Walter Cronkite, who happened to be eating lunch at his desk, caught the first "flash" from the wire service. (A "flash" is a top priority news item, more important than a bulletin.)

CBS had the clear lead on coverage, and Cronkite proved more than able for the task of sifting through the flow of information that day. Finally, his voice quavered as Cronkite, clearly jolted by the news on the paper he held in his hand, announced the death of the president.

The hunt for the assassin resulted in the quick arrest of Lee Harvey Oswald -- who himself was shot dead on live television by an apparent revenge- or publicity-seeker named Jack Ruby, who stuck a gun in Oswald's stomach as the suspected assassin was being led through a corridor by police. And days later the nation was at the Kennedy funeral, via live television.

## Television News Becomes a Network Profit Center

The 60s and 70s saw television become the pervasive news medium. The format evolved into a sophisticated program gathering reports from correspondents worldwide. Cronkite, who anchored on CBS, became, according to opinion polls, one of the most trusted people in the country.

A team of anchormen on NBC, Chet Huntley and David Brinkley, brought gravity and wit (respectively) into their performance.
They would sign off each broadcast by bidding each other farewell: "Good night, Chet...Good night, David." Both men expressed dislike for the ritual but it became a recognizable trademark and NBC brass kept it. The trademark became one of the first and most recognizable intrusions of show business into the evolving business of TV news.

ABC ran a distant third in the news race for much of this period. The network tried a series of anchors, including a painfully young-looking Peter Jennings (who noted that he may have been the first anchor person to have makeup artists add lines to his face) to a team of anchors stationed across the nation.

The ABC program would "whip around" from one anchor to another, an innovative technical feat that thoroughly confused the audience. But the experimentation, even though it stumbled at first, would pay off later. ABC News would be guided by Roone Arledge, who formerly was in charge of sports for the network and pioneered the use of video graphics to tell the stories unfolding on the field. Arledge brought his infatuation with graphics and the "up close and personal" nature of sports to news, with great ratings success.

ABC's rise to prominence was not smooth, however. The youngest of the Big Three networks sought to capture higher ratings through a strategy that proved disastrous: teaming veteran reporter Harry Reasoner, who was hired away from CBS, with Barbara Walters, who had traveled the hard road of early women broadcasters and had found fame as a host and interviewer on NBC's Today Show. The on-air chemistry between the two never clicked. In fact, to most viewers it appeared that the pair adamantly disliked and resented each other -- which was, from all accounts, the case.

But ABC's experiment pointed up a larger trend: News had become a profit center, and profit was driven by ratings. Among other factors, ratings were created by the on-air charisma of the anchors. Throughout the 70s, increasing attention was focused on the process of tailoring news to garner good rating, and ratings for all types of news went through the roof.

Why did networks and local stations suddenly invest so heavily in news? Part of the answer is that news produces a highly coveted audience: People who, in accordance with the very nature of the show, are watching. Someone watching a movie or situation comedy often has the program on purely as background, and while this certainly happens with news, the viewer is typically more attentive. Secondly, news produces a demographically desirable audience: usually more well-educated and more affluent than other types of audience segments.

News also proved enormously profitable when developed into new formats. In 1968, Don Hewitt proposed to his CBS bosses a TV news "magazine" program that would combine hard, investigative news with "soft" features and personality pieces. The program was called "60 Minutes," and while it took several years for it to become profitable, it became a consistent ratings leader by the mid 70s. And today, after some fine-tuning, "60 Minutes" is competing successfully against programs that are figuratively its grandchildren.

Newsmagazines are also popular because of simple economics. A one-hour newsmagazine can be produced for about $400,000. An hour of television drama will usually cost twice that. There are many reasons, but foremost among them is that news does not require elaborate sets or sound-stages, it is produced with a much smaller crew than entertainment programming, and news reporters and anchors, while well-paid, generally do not make as much as entertainment stars. (They are also under contract to the networks, and the networks can make heavy use of the news stars.)


## News Becomes A Local Profit Center

The news boom really hit home at the local level. Local stations do not make much of their programming except for news. News, then, becomes a premier profit-center for a local station because the station keeps all the revenue from selling commercials on the program, as opposed to just a small portion of commercial time during the network shows it carries.

The news department also becomes the image of the station. It is the operation that gives a station its distinct identity.

## Entertainment Programming Develops Sophisticated Genres

During the 60s and 70s, entertainment programming was solidified into moved through various genres.  Early on, left over from the 50s, were variety programs like the Ed Sullivan Show mimicked vaudeville, a form a stage entertainment popular in the early 20th century, by bringing on a variety of acts -- music, comedy, acrobatic, even puppets.  Both Elvis Presley and the Beatles received their first major American exposure on Ed Sullivan.  Westerns, such as Gunsmoke and Wagon Train, dominated the television schedule in the early 60s, maturing into sophisticated programs that reflected serious issues.  Medical drama was also important during this time: Ben Casey and Dr. Kildare were notable examples.  Police dramas took center stage in the 70s.  Many, such as Kojak, starring Telly Savalas ,were truly excellent, featuring crisp writing and gritty location shots.   Daytime slots were dominated by soap operas, continuing series that developed during the radio days and received their somewhat unflattering nickname because many episodes were sponsored by soap companies.

But when we discuss entertainment the genre that comes to mind most readily is situation comedy, the lifeblood of the TV schedule. (A "situation" comedy is one where the main characters exist in a continuing home or work environment and deal each week with a new circumstance brought on by their particular circumstance.) While other formats have come and gone (and come back again) comedy has remained a relatively stable part of the programmer's lineup.

Perhaps it is because the structure of the sitcom is so well-attuned to the small screen.  The pattern was set by I Love Lucy: Most of the action took place in the Ricardos' apartment, with frequent scenes of Ricky doing his nightclub act.   The "action" such as it was involved the interplay of the quirky characters who lived in and visited the New York City apartment building. (Does this sound familiar?  Is there some resemblance between I Love Lucy and the most popular situation comedy on television that ended a successful run in 2005?)

The sitcom structure meant that television could simply disregard the sprawling plots of a novel or the big-scale photography of the feature film and do what it did best.  Because sets did not change considerably, the programs could be produced quickly and relatively cheaply.   In the 60s, the Dick Van Dyke Show confined itself mostly to Rob's office and Rob and Laura's home in New Rochelle, where they enjoyed a "typical" suburban life (except for the fact that they slept in separate twin beds, a situation dictated by network censors concerned with keeping the moral barometer of the program on the same level with then-current public perception.)

Through the 60s and 70s, situation comedy ranged from the truly abysmal -- shows in which a man's dead mother was reincarnated as his car -- to inspired programs such as The Mary Tyler Moore Show,  produced by Ms. Moore and her then-husband Grant Tinker.  Their company, MTM, would produce exceptional comedy, much of it not only funny but thought-provoking; "Taxi," a classic show, is one example of comedy that often had a serious side as well as a sharp, satiric bite.

Producer Norman Lear pushed the envelope of social commentary in the 1970s, a time when the country was involved in some painful self-examination about such issues as the Vietnam War, racial disharmony, and a foundering economy.   Lear's program, All in the Family, featured Archie Bunker, a character who was unabashedly a bigot. This frank portrayal was controversial, with some critics contending that Bunker's use of racial epithets legitimized discrimination, much the same charge as brought against Mark Twain, who dealt realistically with racism while crusading against it in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

**THE MODERN TV AND CABLE INDUSTRY**

Television essentially assumed its modern form by 1980, and in the nearly two decades since saw evolution of program forms that appealed to specialized segments of the audience.  The biggest change in the industry was the multiplication of channel options due to cable, a change that has altered the relationship between networks and local affiliates. Syndication, the process of selling programs directly to television stations while bypassing the networks, is also an important aspect of the modern industry. And perhaps the most salient aspect of television today is the enormous proliferation of news.

**Modern Programming**

From 1980 to the present, the industry saw situation comedies go through a period when many were family-centered, such as The Cosby Show and Family Ties, to more edgy and satirical programs today.  Some of the most satirical situation comedies are in animated form, such as The Simpsons and Family Guy.   Police and medical dramas became a little more sophisticated (and, some argue, more confusing) by adding multiple plot lines.  Hill Street Blues, popular in the 80s, introduced a large cast of complex and flawed characters, much the same approach as the 90s' police hit, NYPD Blue, which also pushed and set new limits on permissible profanity and nudity on network shows.

The 1980s saw a spike in so-called reality television, which featured "real people" who often asses of themselves. Again, that was not exactly a new trend -- a 1960s program called Candid Camera took a similar but more gentle approach -- and it is not a trend that has yet faded away. Talk shows became a staple of the 80s and 90s, and in addition to being cheap to produce they capitalize on the appeal of watching "real people."

"Reality" TV currently is extraordinarily popular on television, partly because of audience demand but also due to the fact it is cheap to produce. Programs such as "Pawn Stars" and "Ice Road Truckers" essentially have their sets and characters already provided; imagine the savings inherent in reality TV as opposed to production of a situation comedy.

Such narrow-demographic programming probably would not be a significant part of television were in not for the increase in the number of available channels. Before the modern era of television, programs had to appeal to the broadest common denominator. And additional channel choice came about because of the explosion in the cable industry, an event fueled in large part by Ted Turner.


**The Impact of Cable**

Ted Turner owned a small UHF television in Atlanta. The station was insignificant and seemed doomed to stay that way. primarily because of the poor transmission characteristics of UHF. (The signals do not travel very far and they are subject to interference.)

But Turner suspected that satellites and cable -- both relatively new technologies -- would soon provoke a revolution in television broadcasting. At the time, Home Box Office was having modest success with a service that beamed down movies to cable systems, which would then send the premium service (meaning service that you paid extra money for in addition to your cable bill) to customers.

Turner bought the rights to sporting events such as the Atlanta Braves' games (actually, he bought the team, too) and though the 80s acquired an inventory of movies and television programs.

He beamed his signal up to satellite and convinced many cable stations to carry his station, which was given new call letters -- WTBS -- and a new description: a superstation.

The fact that he had a poor UHF signal made no difference at all in the cable realm, because on cable or a satellite the strength of the broadcast signal from the channel of the originating TV station is irrelevant. Turner's station came in as well as any station on the cable band.

Turner provided an in-demand service: New programs to cable operators hungry to provide more and better channels to their customers.

In addition, his timing was perfect.  During the 80s, cable penetration climbed to about half the entire TV audience.

## The Cable News Network

Turner was attracting attention in the broadcast/cable world, not all of it positive.  Some viewed him as an unsophisticated opportunist, a son of the Deep South in a rumpled suit, and many in the industry openly ridiculed him when, in the early 80s, he conceived a service called the Cable News Network.

CNN would beam 24-hour news around the world by satellite.  The skeptics termed CNN "the Chicken Noodle Network." Critics wondered aloud why anyone would want to watch 24-hour-a day news.  When CNN not only survived but prospered, more well-financed competitors, just to be on the safe side, started their own 24-hour news services, one of which Turner bought and immediately closed down.

The Chicken Noodle Network not only proved the viability of cable news, but started scooping its competitors.  During the Gulf War in 1992, CNN got stories and pictures the major networks did not, and because CNN had established an international structure, it became the de facto television news service of record world-wide.

Ion 2011, CNN has seen its ratings decline precipitously, and FoxNews holds a commanding lead in viewers.

## The Effect of Cable on Today's Programming

The point is not so much the rise of Ted Turner: Rather, it is that cable television expanded the TV market and after making the pie bigger, took a bigger share.  The Big Three networks found their revenues and audiences declining, and audiences began to use television in a different way:

·      The audience looked for highly specific programming that fit their interests.  All-sports, all-cooking, all-nostalgia, and even all-fish channels were launched on cable.
·      The audience voted with their wallets, electing to pay directly for the kinds of news and entertainment service they wanted.

## Economics of the Television/Cable Industry

As you observe, changes in television form and content are often driven by sheer economics. While not as heavily market-driven as commercial stations and networks, even the Public Broadcasting Service, PBS, must produce decent ratings for its programming in order to garner corporate underwriting support. A coming chapter deals with media economy in depth, as well as the unique challenges of public broadcasting. But to conclude our discussion of the continuing evolution of television, here is a snapshot of how this medium makes its money, followed by a brief discussion of how television may evolve in the near future.

## The Network-Affiliate Relationship

Most local TV stations receive the bulk of their programming from networks. For the first 30 years of television's existence, network affiliation was a cut-and-dried affair: You affiliated with CBS, NBC, or ABC. Those who did not affiliate were left to the economic wasteland occupied by "independent" stations, more than half of which typically ran in the red. Today, however, there are several new networks, including UPN and Fox. Fox scored a major coup by convincing several powerful and profitable local stations to change affiliation, dropping their ties with a Big Three networks.

The networks pay their affiliates to carry their programs. The networks, in turn, sell commercials placed within the programs to sponsors. Most sponsors covet the ease with which they can reach x number of viewers on x number of stations nationwide. This is considerably easier than buying commercial time individually on dozens or stations. (Although some sponsors do buy local stations directly, a process known as "spot" advertising. Most buy spot advertising because they cannot afford a network commercial or simply because they don't want a network audience. Farm equipment manufacturers don't particularly need part of their advertising budget spent in New York City, and it's pointless to pitch snow tires on Miami television. These manufacturers would be more likely to buy time on individual stations in parts of the country where there product would be in demand.)

In recent years the traditional relationship between networks and their affiliates has been shaken to the core. The availability of new channels on cable, and increasing cable penetration, means that not being affiliated with one of the Big Three Networks is no longer an economic death sentence. Station owners are now more likely to shop around for a more profitable network, and the new networks are capable of purchasing the rights to high-rated programming.

## Syndication

A large proportion of the local station's programming is bought from syndicators. Syndication is the process of selling programming to local television stations, bypassing the stations' networks. Syndicators buy movies, television series, and other programs from producers, and offer them as a package to local television stations.

This is a complex process, best illustrated by an example that follows the chain of events form the creation of a program until its sale to syndication:

A program is usually produced by an independent producer. Typically, that producer is located in Hollywood. Producers put together "pilots" -- sample episodes -- and attempt to sell them to networks.

Who makes money from this transaction? The producers, actors, and everyone else involved in production if the show is sold. However, the income may or may not be enough to provide a sufficient profit at this stage.

The networks buy the rights to the programs they want and air them. Now, the networks profit by selling commercials to nationwide advertisers. The networks hope that a large and desirable audience will watch the program; good "numbers" mean that commercials can command more money. (As you remember, the local television stations are paid by the networks with which they are affiliated to carry the programming.)

After the program has been on the air long enough to provide a sufficient backlog of shows, the programs are sold to local stations through syndication. Local stations bid for the right to re-run the episodes. The re-runs will be exclusive to their market. (In other words, only one Chicago television station -- the highest bidder gets the rights to re-run "Friends." And only one New York station gets that privilege.)

There is an exception to this practice with some shows in which new episodes are sold directly through syndication, such as talk shows and some programs such as "Star Trek Voyager." This practice used to involve producers gambling on shows that would not be sufficiently popular to merit network play, but could still turn a profit if enough local stations bought them through syndication. However, some programs which are naturally well-suited to daytime play, or which would appeal to independent stations, now go directly into syndication because broadcast executives feel this is the most efficient way to market them.

Syndication can be a high-stakes gamble. The producers gamble that after the program is aired by the networks, its ratings will be sufficient to keep it

on the air for several seasons.   If this doesn't happen, there will not be enough programs to syndicate.  And in any event, if the show is not popular in the first place, local television stations will not be inclined to buy it in syndication.

Local television stations gamble that they will be able to make enough money on local commercials to overcome the fee they pay for running the syndicated program.

## Local News: Public Service or Profit Center?

Local stations also make money, generally a considerable chunk of it, from news.  The news department is expected to turn a profit by generating good ratings.

This aspect of local news is often a source of friction within the station, because most stations are run by salespeople or business executives who have risen through the ranks to become general managers.  Sometimes, there is considerable disagreement over what "news" is.  Is the news department supposed to devote a large amount of time to covering, let's say, city council?  Or should it enthusiastically embrace sure ratings-grabbers such as medical spots, or stories about dating, or stories at eleven that have a tie-in with the nine-o'clock movie?

## International Markets

International sales of U.S. programs has become a significant source of revenue.  In some cases, the programs paint rather an odd picture of life in the United States. (When I was in China during the 1980s, when that nation was first opening up to international travel, I was repeatedly asked if I owned an oil well. One of the most popular shows on Chinese TV at the time was Dallas.)

## ISSUES SURROUNDING TV AND ITS FUTURE

Television is no stranger to controversy, but the medium is unfamiliar with challenges to its economic foundations.  For most of television's history it has been an effortless moneymaker.  Today, however, the evolving digital media threaten to take away some of television's base, absorbing, perhaps, significant parts of the audience through new delivery systems.  At the same time, television remains the most powerful existing mirror of our culture, and many critics look in that mirror and do not like what they see.

## Ethical Questions

Television is perhaps more that a mirror, because many who study the medium believe that it creates trends in society rather than simply reflecting them.  For example, some contend that violent content in television fare increases violence in real life. Television networks are currently debating their responsibilities in shielding society from such influences, by softening content or providing explicit ratings as the sexual and violent content of the programming.

What are the responsibilities of television to its viewers and to society as a whole?  Should television give viewers what they seem to want, or give them what they "need?" Who decides? An interesting cultural aspect of this dilemma is posed when news executives weigh the merits of hiring anchors who look good -- presumably fulfilling the audience's documented desire for attractive Commanding Presences -- versus anchors who are experienced newspeople.

## TELEVISION 2011

The network-affiliate relationship and the role of syndication and local news are changing significantly as new media merge and converge.

According to a firm called Gravity Media, many people in the U.S. currently spend as much time watching TV as the would in a full-time job.

Gravity Media also notes that the days of television programmers being able to dictate viewing habits via a schedule are clearly in decline.  At the forefront of TV's economic development are applications that allow seamless, on-demand viewing of video material.

Copyright law is also at the crux of modern TV's development.  Just a few years ago content producers were adamant in fighting any encroachment of ownership by placement of segments on YouTube.  But now many are selectively allowing some copyright infringement in the hopes that exposure will stir demand.

In a similar vein, after years of resistance programmers allowed content to be delivered through venues such as Hulu.com and Netflix.com.

At the time of this writing, the economic viability of such concerns was under question.

**CONCLUSION**

Television was a technological challenge, but experimenters finally knitted together a complex system to transmit moving pictures, and by the 1950s the medium was a firmly established part of our lives. During the 1960s, television flexed its muscles. In particular, it was instrumental in electing the first true television president, John F. Kennedy. Through the 1970s and 1980s, television matured into a pervasive medium that affects almost all parts of our culture.

Cable spurred the growth of new networks, which caused enormous changes in the TV industry. Viewers have many more channels from which to choose, and new networks have sprung up.
Television stations make a great deal of money from local news, and also from showing syndicated programs.

Some key points to take away from this:Television changed the nature of news; news on television became centered around personalities, such as the early anchormen. We began to expect good-looking and appealing anchorpeople as part of the product. And the product became a huge money-maker for the TV industry.

Most media industries are preparing for the coming digital shake-up by integrating themselves with strategic partners.

## Chapter 9: The Internet and Merging Media

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

**What's Ahead**...This chapter discusses the meaning and importance of the digital age, beginning with an exploration of how digital technology developed, and how, in the process, it changed our relationship with numbers and technology.  We then examine new, emerging media such as the Internet and Web and demonstrate how they are prototypes -- beginning models -- for the revolution in digital media, and how current media are being affected by digital evolution.   The chapter concludes with an examination of current issues relating to new media.

**Why It's Important...** New media systems develop in sometimes unpredictable ways.  One reason for this unpredictability is that there is ecological (system-wide) change when a new medium interacts with an existing media market and what may be a fairly primitive communications infrastructure.  Also, we are never very sure-footed when attempting to figure out how to make money with a new medium, or how to regulate it.  Understanding these factors allows us to better appreciate why so many firms are positioning themselves to be part of the "new media," even though they don't yet know specifically what that new media system will be.

**Points to Keep in Mind While Reading**... Note from the examples in this chapter how the needs and demands of the market have led previous developing technologies down unexpected paths. It is difficult to introduce a new technology when a massive structure of old technologies is in place. Note, too, how and why it is so difficult to regulate new media,  and how ethical dilemmas seem to be overtaking us; as often happens, the pace of technology out-runs law and ethics.

In the beginning there was the digit.  The digit changed everything when people first discovered new ways of using it, and it's changing everything again.

"Digit" means finger, and originally carried only that meaning. The word began to have a stronger connection with the idea of numbers and number systems when people began to count on their fingers -- leading, of course, to a number system based on ten.

**DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**

Connections between numbers and the way we transact our lives run deeper than you might imagine. Philosophers and scientists have devoted centuries trying to comprehend the inter-relation between numbers, technology, and everyday life. Numbers, they discovered, are used for more than simple calculation. They can also be used to change our way of thinking, allowing us to grasp deeper concepts that can be used to explain and manipulate physical things.

What do numbers -- digits -- have to do with the world in general and the world of communications? The story starts in the early days of civilization and ends at the computer age, where it begins all over again.

**The Role of Numbers in Everyday Life: Three Revolutions**

The way we use numbers quite literally changes the way we think and the way we live our lives. For example, you can imagine the difference between a society that understands the concept of positional notation and one that does not. The discovery of positional notation was one of the first numerical revolutions, and is an interesting example of how a new understanding of numbers advanced technology and society.

**Revolution 1: Positional Notation**

What is positional notation? When you write a number such as 602, you are actually referring to:

· Six one hundreds
· no tens
· and two ones

This concept -- that a number increases in powers of ten depending on its notation -- had enormous implications when it was invented thousands of years B.C. Even more important was understanding the theoretical concept of the zero, an abstract way of saying "no tens" in the number above.

Societies that understood these concepts could deal with large numbers, make accurate records of large numbers, and do fairly complex computation. This was an enormous plus for societies entering stages of their civic life in which they would rely on numbers to record transactions (difficult when counting on your fingers and limited to a top total of ten). Later, the ability to keep track of the days and the phases of the moon allowed various societies to create calendars and accurately foresee the tides and the changes of season.

**Revolution #2: Calculus**

Philosophers and scientists then began to look for other ways to use numbers to explain and control the universe. One of the most successful among them was Isaac Newton, who was at the forefront of another revolution in the late 1600 and early 1700s. He discovered and clarified differential and integral calculus. Simply stated, Newton formulated a system for understanding motion. This system allowed him to explain how the planets stayed in motion. Interestingly, once scientists used Newton's calculus to understood the motion of the limited number of planets they could see, they were able deduce the existence of planets they could not see. The irregular orbit of one planet, they realized, must be caused by the gravitational pull of another planet farther away from earth and out of telescope range.

Newton's calculus was revolutionary not so much for the problems it solved but for the way it solved them: It made small problems out of big problems. Rather than using theoretical, "pure" mathematics to predict the outcome of the entire path of motion, Newton did his computations using many small measurements, rather than trying to predict the path of an entire curve in one sweeping calculation.

Newton's solution was to compute using many small measurements. For example, you might break the problem down to many small "steps" rather than trying to calculate the path of an entire curve in one sweeping calculation. This was an enormous contribution, paving the way for the digital age. Historian Charles Van Doren explains:

The beauty of calculus is that its own precision can be adjusted...to conform to the degree of the precision of measurements. If these are very rough, the calculations can be very rough. That is, the size of the steps within the curve can be relatively large, with no overall loss of accuracy in solving the problem. If the measurements become more accurate, the calculations can be adjusted by increasing the number of (smaller) steps, so that again nothing is lost.

An example is the breaking down of a musical signal into a series of digital inputs that are stored on a disk and then converted back into sound by a compact disc player,amplifier, and a pair of speakers.

The breakdown of the sounds consists of a series of numerical measurements made very close together in time....The closer the measurements are to one another, that is by analogy, the smaller and closer the steps, the more accurate is the picture that is being made of the continuously changing musical signal.

**Revolution #3: Using Numbers to Automate a Process**

This concept -- a "digital" way of using number patterns to represent a theoretical curve or a musical selection -- represented a new way of making things work. The first use of "digital" technology probably dates back to the earliest version of the player piano (which was actually an organ). The instrument played a note when a sheet of paper dragged over the controls triggered the playing of a note when there was a hole in the paper. A wire finger would poke through the hole and trigger the organ to play.

> The concept:
> No hole = Off
> Hole = On

This concept proved its practical applications when applied to the automated looms in the 1700s. A loom weaves cloth by sending a shuttle horizontally across a pattern of threads stretched vertically. Weaving a pattern into a fabric was time-consuming and complex, because the weaver had to calculate which color thread to shuttle through the work at each instant, thousands of times per piece of cloth.

A series of inventors discovered that the digital concept could automate the process. Holes were punched into a roll of paper. No hole (off) meant one type of thread, and the presence of a hole (on) meant another. A later inventor further refined this method, adding enormous flexibility, by imprinting stiff paper cards with the punched holes. These "punch cards" were fed into the loom in sequence. Thus a large amount of complex information could be stored in a handful of cards, and used to manipulate a complex series of mechanical operations.

**THE BIRTH OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

It didn't take long for people involved in the business of counting and correlating numbers to embrace this new on-and-off technology, and the first device resembling a computer was invented in the late 1800s, when population in the United States was growing so quickly it was difficult to count. James Burke, an historian of technology, writes that it took eight years to tabulate the results of the 1880 census.

**The Hollerith Computer Manipulates Information**

Why was census-taking so difficult? In addition to counting the increasing raw number of people in the country, the census-takers need to correlate

the results -- mix various figures to produce specific results. How many people who own their own homes also have children?  How many veterans are unemployed?

In the late 1800s, an official of the census ordered a young engineer named Hollerith to use this evolving on-and-off technology to solve the problem.  Hollerith used cards the size of a dollar bill (so he could take advantage of machinery already built to handle dollars) and punched in holes corresponding to the various bits of information that needed to be sorted).

Thus his machine could not only count but manipulate information.


**The Binary System Makes Information Standardized**

The secret to the computer's speed and reliability is the simplicity of this on-and-off system, known as the binary system.  Binary has the same root prefix ("bi") as bicycle -- "two."

You can manipulate many types of information using a binary system.  For example, the software program used to write this text represents the letter "a" as:

off-on-off-off-off-off-off-off-on,

--or, numerically, with 1 standing for "on"--

01000001

These eight "bits" of binary information represent what is called one "byte".  A byte is not a particularly handy way to measure the size of a binary file because you would quickly find yourself having to use huge numbers.  Therefore it is easier to measure by kilobytes (one thousand bites) or megabytes (one thousand kilobytes), or gigabytes (one thousand megabytes).

A page of double-spaced manuscript uses about 1.25 K (kilobytes) of binary information, or 1,250 bytes, or -- since each byte is eight ones and zeros, 8 x 1,250 = 10,000 digits.

If you had a lot of ambition and an unusual amount of time on your hands you could punch all those ten thousand digits onto cards and automate word processing by building a mechanical typewriter that works like an automated loom, pounding out the same page time after time. But you would soon long for the flexibility of an electronic computer can could move those strings of bits along in an instant

**Electronic Manipulation of Binary Code: Vacuum Tubes to Silicon**

So instead of using mechanical devices for counting and manipulating bits, scientists in the 1940s and 50s turned to series of vacuum tubes. Vacuum tubes looked like light bulbs, and used wires and tiny screens inside the glass to amplify, move, and redirect streams of electricity that carried on-and-off digital information. What is usually thought of as the first modern computer, the UNIVAC, used thousands of tubes.

But tube technology has built-in limitations. Tubes need a lot of power and room, and after a while it becomes difficult to route the miles of wire needed to string them together. UNIVAC took up an entire room and used as much electricity as an electric stove with all its burners on. But it was a mental pygmy compared to today's hand-held calculator.

The replacement for vacuum tubes was the solid-state circuit. Small pieces of solid mineral substances, through which a current is routed, can perform roughly the same function as vacuum tubes. One solid-state device, the transistor, was invented in 1947. It became common in small radios during the 50s. The transistor revolutionized the computer industry, but it was still
clumsy to wire hundreds of transistors together on a circuit board. But scientists in the 60s and 70s refined a photographic process in which a large layout of the electronic pathways is photographed, reduced to microscopic size, and imprinted on a small piece of mineral. The substance that proved most adaptable was silicon, an element common in almost all minerals. Soon the center of the computer industry became a low-lying area known, at first in jest, as Silicon Valley.

The silicon chip enables computation using an enormous amount of digits "put through" the computer brain at high speed. This, in turn, allows the "throughput" of enough digits to reproduce text, sound, and pictures, the data passing along the so-called Information Highway.

**TODAY'S DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION**

The concept of a digital infrastructure is not synonymous with the Internet, the World Wide Web, or multimedia. Each of these is a component of the digital infrastructure.

The Internet is a collection of digital transmission lines and host computers, a web originally woven by the government. It allows computers to share information and information pathways.

The Internet began as a project of the defense department. The DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) wanted to develop a system that could link various military sites in a "headless" network. Lore has it that the motivation was to produce a network that could not be knocked out by one missile strike. Some accounts dispute that, and the real origins may be lost in history. In any event, the intent was to produce a system of communication that could create its own pathways, bouncing digital information from New York to Washington DC or, if necessary, from New York to London to Alaska to California to Washington, DC.

This early form of the Internet, called the DARPANET, overcame the initial problem of computer-to-computer transmission, the fact that files of digital information, transmitted as a big chunk, would clog the system. So researchers developed what is called TCP/IP software. TCP stands for transmission control protocol. IP stands for Internet Protocol. "Protocol" means a standard system laid out step by step.

## The TCP Protocol

The TCP breaks a message into pieces small enough to scatter over the Internet. All the pieces bear an address, and the IP guides the pieces to their destination. The message-pieces simply bounce from computer to computer, taking whatever route is available. While many messages take a direct route, it takes only a fraction of a second (literally) for messages to go by a different route, even if it is around the earth. Delays in the Internet (which do happen) result from overloaded computers relaying the messages, not from the distance the messages are sent.

## Physical Location of the Internet

But exactly where is the Internet? The real answer is everywhere, because it is a network of networks Some people locate the Internet's "backbone" along the path of a large cross-country fiberoptic cable owned by the National Science Foundation. Around this "backbone" were clustered powerful "host" omputers belonging to government, business, and education. The host computers receive the information and send it toward its final destination according to whichever pathways are open at the time. If you think about it, you realize why the Internet experienced such initial growth: Any time a host computer joins the system it actually adds to the capacity of the Internet, because it becomes one of the tools to sort and propel the message bits. This is not to say that the capacity of the Internet is limitless, though, and some experts say it is likely that we will see overloads of computers and cables as people begin to send "fatter" files containing more information.

Logging directly on to the Internet requires some technical expertise, so most users chose an intermediary, an Internet service provider, generally called an ISP.

**IN DEPTH: NET NEUTRALITY IN 2011**

The simmering legal, ethical, and technical issues related to "net neutrality" vaulted back into the news IN MID-2011 after Google and Verizon proposed a mechanism that could allow different types of wireless traffic to move through cyberspace at varying speeds. The two communication titans proposed that there be a ban against "undue discrimination against any lawful Internet content," saying that the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should have the authority to oversee broadband, reports the Agence France-Presse. While this is in keeping with the general philosophy of net neutrality, the companies' joint proposal would apply only to wired applications, not wireless communications such as cell phone networks, reports the journal eWeek. The crux of the controversy is that net neutrality proponents argue that data should be moved at the same speed regardless of the originator, saying it is unfair to charge some originators extra for moving their data. Proponents argue, among other things, that bandwidth hogs such as file-sharing networks slow down the internet for everybody and should have their data put on a separate, slower track, warning that clamping speed and price controls on the Internet will discourage innovation.

## Defining the World Wide Web

The World Wide Web is part of the Internet that features graphical displays. It uses a computer language known as hypertext markup language (HTML); HTML allows jumping between cross-referenced items. The absurdly long addresses for web sites, which are known as Uniform Resource Locators, or URLs, begin with HTTP, which stands for "hypertext transfer protocol," a system that enables this cross-referencing link.

A Web page usually features several of these links. The page is a graphic display stored in computer memory, using HTML programming language to provide links. Clicking on a highlighted link connects to you other relevant pages, either on the same site or on a different site -- one that can literally be on the other side of the earth.

While the terms "Internet" and "Web" refer to functions of the same apparatus, Web is usually applied to discussion of the graphical interface on a site that is permanently mounted on a server.

**Defining Multimedia**

Multimedia is a broad term usually meaning a combination of sight, sound, and text orchestrated by the computer's digital brain. For example, a multimedia digitally combines a written article with a sound file and a short video clip. The definition of multi-media is elastic and may also include other elements, such as film, linked to the computer.

**Finally, Defining 'Prototype'**

The Internet, the Web, and multi-media are important prototypes of the evolving digital media system, meaning the first version of something, a version after which later efforts are patterned.

The word comes from the Greek proto, meaning the first or the original, and typos, meaning a blow or impression, as in an indentation made by a hammer. A type, therefore, becomes the initial impression that serves as a representation of al things similar. A typewriter writes with such symbols, and the meaning of "moveable type" is obvious.

When you see prot- as a prefix, it often carries the meaning of "first." The word "protein" meant the "original substance after which all things in the body are patterned," the original conclusion of the early scientists who discovered protein. Protozoa, a one-celled animal, is from Greek words meaning "first" and "animal"; zo- is the same root as that produces the words "zoology" or "zoo."

**INTEGRATION OF OLD AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

The prototypes of the digital revolution exist in what is basically a non-digital world. The components of the evolving digital infrastructure are not all new. Your landline telephone, for example, is a technology that hasn't changed fundamentally in the last fifty years. But the telephone infrastructure is so massive that it is virtually impossible to uproot and replace it. Each telephone -- every phone in every home and every office in the entire country -- has an individual wire that runs back to the telephone company. Most of these wires are of an old type that cannot carry digital information, although the cables into which they are spliced, the main trunk lines, usually can.

What happened with the telephone in recent years is an excellent example of the typical pattern of mixing old and new technologies: Methods to integrate the old and new technologies were devised. For example, in order to transmit information from new digital computers over old-fashioned phone lines, consumers used a modem. The modem sends

digital information over non-digital by turning on-and-off digital pulses into corresponding sound signals.

The modem first modulates the signal. Modulate means to place one signal or pattern on top of another. What sounds like a continuous high-pitched squeal is actually a series of audio pulses sent at high speed, almost like super-high-speed Morse code.

The modem at the other end de-modulates, or removes the sound signal, and translates the information back into the digital code the computer can understand and manipulate. The word "modem," in case you haven't already guessed, is a contraction of "MODulator-DE-Modulator."

Television is being completely re-made to accommodate digital technology. The old TV system, which most of us probably still use, is a bizarrely cumbersome hodgepodge if electronic scanning patterns, synchronization signals, and audio signals sent over different radio waves that the video. This technology dates back to the 1920s!

As in the case of the telephone and TV systems, including cable, the entire existing communications infrastructure isn't going anywhere soon. We cannot scrap the existing phone system. We have to fit the existing pieces together and build the new system within reasonable constraints.

That is what drives the move to digital: the promise or a "unimedia" which comes from one primary source in one primary format.

## DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 allowed virtually all media providers to move into cyberspace by merging with each other, within limits that do not allow for a complete monopoly. Also, they may offer programs and services that involve a convergence of media and delivery systems. Even electric companies are allowed to join the rush to deliver unimedia to your home. (Electric companies are in an interesting position; they do not have much media content to deliver but they certainly own a lot of wires and poles.).

These firms do not know for sure what precise forms the new media will take, nor what options the consumer will demand. Such uncertainty is a lesson learned from history:

> 1. Media tend to follow their own path, a path blazed in part by the vagaries of technological innovation and sometimes unpredictable consumer demand. The telephone was invented by someone trying to make a hearing aid; the economic viability of a telephone was at

first not recognized.  The phonograph was originally a business dictation machine; inventor Thomas Edison scoffed at the idea that people would use it to listen to music.

2. New media hardly ever kill off old media. Even the media that suffered seemingly lethal blows when a new technology emerged -- such as radio after the invention of television -- managed to re-invent themselves and find a new source of revenue.

Existing media usually survive a technological tidal wave by finding new ways to exploit that technology and by finding profitable niches (specialized areas) in the expanding media market.

But the most salient aspect of the new digital economy has hurt traditional media badly: Search engine technology in effect cuts out the advertising middle-man, a concept that will be examined in coming chapters on advertising and media economics.

## ETHICAL ISSUES INVOLVING THE NEW MEDIA

The evolution to digital media is happening so rapidly that the technology is in some cases out-running our ability to make informed judgments about issues such as responsibility, access, intellectual property, and privacy.

### Responsibility

Because computers are relatively inexpensive -- certainly a fraction the cost of a television station -- there are few limits on who can become an Internet "publisher" or "broadcaster." According to current law, anyone can operate a "host" computer and anyone can get an Internet address. (Addresses are allocated and maintained by an industry group, not the government.)  This situation is a challenge to lawmakers because in the laws governing the Internet are less than clear-cut and there are no traditional guidelines about what you can and cannot say.  A television station can lose its license or suffer significant advertising revenue loss of it behaves in an egregious manner. But someone on an Internet chat group or the host of a web page has no such restraint -- even though he or she might actually reach the same number of people.

Sexually explicit communication is an issue as well. Sexual material is one of the few outright profit centers on the web, and promises to fuel the development of new media in much the same way as X-rated videotapes were in part responsible for the development of home video.

Today, sexually explicit Internet transmissions are basically unregulated except for areas such as child pornography.  One reason is that the courts tend to treat Internet communications like telephone conversations, which are given great latitude for full expression.   But others argue that because anyone, including children, can tune into explicit web sites or Internet newsgroups, the Internet is more like a television station and should be regulated as such.

## Access

Even though a computer is among the cheapest mass communication tools, the device is still not affordable to every individual. It's argued that unless new interactive media are heavily subsidized to keep basic access prices artificially low (as is the case with basic local phone service) the poor may become increasingly disenfranchised.

That thesis applies to nations as well. Poor countries cannot afford the infrastructure to establish advanced communications, and that may preclude them from pull participation in global commerce.

Some of the concerns noted in the box on "Net Neutrality" apply here, too.

## Intellectual Property

There is a fine line between dissemination of information in the public service, such as posting an article to a newsgroup, and outright theft. Many newspapers have been challenged in court by writers' groups that claim it is unethical to take an article written for a certain price and for a certain publication and distribute it in cyberspace.

Privacy

The computer's ability to mix and match information about you can lead to a data-storm of personal information crackling through cyberspace. The followihng"In Depth" feature examines my view on how some emerging digital technologies are eroding privacy.

What is your view?  Are the benefits of technology worth an erosion of your privacy?

## IN-DEPTH: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY'S COST OF CONVENIENCE

A while ago I bought some dog biscuits designed for small dogs. Within a week, I received in the mail a free sample of dog food "specially formulated for small breeds."

It wasn't a coincidence, and it wasn't much of a mystery: I use a supermarket "loyalty card" that allows me to pay a lower price on many items. My supermarket collects data on what I buy and sells that data to marketers.

None of this seems particularly sinister. But suppose I'd purchased a carton of cigarettes? Could that information be purchased by life insurance companies to verify whether I really qualify for my nonsmoker policy? Should health insurers be able to monitor how much ice cream I buy? Would a young female consumer want it widely known that she had purchased a home pregnancy test?

Spread the implications of mixing and matching data across all of your purchases and financial activities -- prescription drugs, political contributions, websites you subscribe to -- and the scenario becomes more than a little creepy.

Technology "leverages" ethical dilemmas involving the handling of personal information because the galloping advance of technology often outruns our ability to make reasoned decisions and construct forward-looking policies to manage the handling of such information.

What can be an extraordinary benefit of a particular technology can blindside us when unintended or unexpected consequences are exploited. Auto global positioning systems allow us to navigate in unfamiliar territory and guide emergency workers to our location. But when one car rental company used them to track the speed of drivers, imposing hefty surcharges on drivers who got from Point A to Point B too quickly, the gadget took on an Orwellian persona.

Devices that track inventory, both in terms of price and location within the store and warehouse, speed purchases and provide undeniable efficiency for the customer and the store. When such tracking devices are placed on the people who maintain the inventory, however, the complexion of the situation changes considerably. In some businesses in Britain, workers are being "electronically tagged" with computer chips so that their movements can be monitored. While this presents undeniable advantages for efficiency, the implications of monitoring unauthorized break time and other movements strike many workers' groups as unsavory at best.

Many other technologies present a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality.

Automatic toll collection systems speed us through the Lincoln Tunnel, but data on our location can be used by law enforcement and civil litigants

-- including divorce attorneys who want to prove we were somewhere we shouldn't have been. Some "free" computer programs provide us with attractive benefits but implant secret programs that display pop-up ads, collect data on our surfing habits, or even hijack our browsers to force us to visit certain sites. Credit data accessed by vast computer networks allows us to borrow money on a moment's notice -- but that same data, when handled carelessly, also enables thieves to put merchandise on our tab and instigate a credit tangle that may follow us for years.

Given that by the time we forge legislation to deal with a new technology the problem probably has worsened already through several new "improvements," ethical conduct is the first and often best line of defense. What constitutes ethical conduct in the handling of personal information?

I would suggest three essential duties:

· The duty to be careful. Several cases in recent months have demonstrated that the root of many modern dilemmas is old-fashioned slipshod handling of important stuff. Citgroup shipped unencrypted tapes containing data of nearly four million customers -- tapes that were lost in handling. The loss of that unencrypted information came only a couple of months after Bank of America lost similar unencrypted data on more than a million government workers. Other recent cases have involved the loss of 16,000 employee names and Social Security numbers that were kept on a firm's misplaced laptop. With the potential for fraud and identity theft so great, there is an obvious incumbent duty on those who profit from personal information to exercise due diligence in handling it.

· The duty to be forthright. If a firm provides a service, it should specify the possible down side. Many firms that implant so-called adware and spyware in programs bury the details in fine print in an "end user licensing agreement" (EULA) that may fill several screens and may in fact subsume several other EULAs not explicitly listed. Hiding unpleasant details in fine print isn't good business, either in high- or low-tech commerce.

· The duty to anticipate. Collated information assumes a life of its own, often at severe cross-purposes to its original intent. Some libraries now routinely purge their records on who checked out what books, now that such records can be routinely and secretly probed by law enforcement. Without judging whether this is in itself right or wrong, such an action demonstrates that mutations in the nature of the information have been anticipated and policy crafted. We need similarly proactive policies in records of Internet searches, online sources of personal information, and strategies involving data from purchasing habits -- even when it comes to my dog biscuits.

## CONCLUSION

The digital revolution is one of several great waves of mathematical innovation that has changed our society. The digital revolution not only changed our way of manipulating data, but gave birth to computer technology. Digital technology, in fact, is a new face on a very old concept -- making numbers work for us. Early automation used a primitive form of digital technology. Today's computers work at lighting speed but essentially perform an ancient function: using series of numbers to perform commands.

One problem with new media is that they must cope with a very old infrastructure. Old low-bandwidth telephone lines, for example, are not about to be replaced in their entirety any time soon.

A new media system almost always stumbles as it tries to find its way to viability and profitability. What is predicted for a medium often does not happen according to plan. Digital media are currently finding their own path, and their role in the future will be determined largely by what ecological relationships it develops with existing media and how the nation's and the world's communications infrastructure evolves. Remember, new media hardly ever kill off old media. They usually co-exist, with the older media re-adjusting.

The viability of the new media will also be determined in part by how efficiently we can measure its consumption by various audiences. This last point is also typical of the evolutionary path of any developing mass medium.

## Part 3: Media Industries Related to Journalism

## Chapter 10: Advertising

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

***What's Ahead***...We look at the history of advertising and how the art and craft has evolved into the digital era.

***Why it's Important...***Advertising is the engine that drives the mass media. Advertising has always had difficulty coping with technological change, though, and today's situation is no exception.

***Points to Keep in Mind While Reading...***Note how patterns repeat themselves, particularly in the ways that advertising has struggled to come up with new approaches to new technologies.

One of the more innovative advertising campaigns in recent history featured a nerdy museum curator, eating a peanut-butter sandwich as he sits amid his collection of memorabilia from a famous duel. The radio is playing classical music, and when the selection ends the announcer intones: "And now let's make that random call with today's $10,000 question: Who shot Alexander Hamilton in that famous duel?"

The phone rings. Triumphantly, the curator sees some meaning in the last few years of his life as he announces:

Awhwuh Buhhhhhhhh!

Which, of course, the radio announcer cannot understand. Panicked, the curator of the Aaron Burr museum grabs the milk carton in an effort to wash down the sandwich and un-cement his mouth.

But it's empty. Life without milk is difficult.

And that is precisely the point that the Goodby, Silverstone and Partners advertising agency in San Francisco wants to make in its "Got Milk?" ads, a series that has won almost all major advertising awards not only for its execution but for the strategic repositioning of the product.

Instead of following the lead of previous milk campaigns which featured milk as a beverage that "does a body good," Goodby Silverstone played on the absence of milk. The campaign focused on the perils of being milk-deprived, and always showed milk in relation to appealing foods, such as

peanut butter and cookies.  And instead of attempting to portray milk as a competitor for Coca-Cola or Gatorade, the advertisers tried to counter a slide in milk consumption by showing how frustrating it is when you run out of the stuff.

While the "Got Milk?" campaign seems like a whimsical spark of intuition, its planning and execution were carefully calculated, high-pressure projects involving great sums of money.  Very few aspects of advertising are left to chance, and what looks like spontaneous whimsy on the TV screen is the result of a business that -- while not always deadly serious -- is competitive and intense.

That will be illustrated as we follow the "Got Milk?" campaign later in this chapter.


## WHERE DID ADVERTISING COME FROM?

But first we'll examine the roots of an industry that has been called everything from "the life of trade" President Calvin Coolidge) and "the greatest art from of the 20th century" (communications scholar Marshall McLuhan) to "a black art" (Judge Learned Hand) and "the rattling of a stick inside a swill bucket" author George Orwell).

Obviously, the subject of advertising stirs emotions, and perhaps there is some truth in each of the above quotes.  A more measured assessment comes from Fairfax Cone, a noted advertising executive. "Advertising is what you do when you can't go see somebody. That's all it is."


### Advertising and the End of Exclusive Person-To-Person Selling

When the industrial revolution powered a geometric increase in the number of goods for sale, it literally did become impossible for salespeople to see everyone to whom they wished to sell.  Person-to-person selling had been the norm since trading and commerce developed, but with grossly expanded markets some mass-communication-based way of reaching clients had to develop.

The concept of advertising was not new. It existed in the earliest days of person-to-person selling; the first ads probably consisted of signs over shops.  In some cases those signs used symbols instead of words.  For example, the well-known barber pole with its red stripes is a  symbol dating back to the middle ages. Barbers used to cut all parts of the body -- and a pole with bloody rags wrapped around it indicated the parlor of a barber-surgeon.

Newspapers in the 17th and 18th centuries carried advertising, but the process of developing and selling the ads was usually half-hearted and done without any particular science or strategy. Many ads were "standing" advertisements, meaning that the merchant would simply buy a regular insertion in the paper and leave it lay for months at a time. The first advertising specialists, in the mid 1800s, mainly brokered space, and did not offer advice or guidance on the advertising content.

## Early Ad Agencies

The person generally recognized as the first advertising agent, Volney Palmer, started his business in 1843. He sold advertising space for a variety of newspapers. Later, other advertising specialists began writing headlines and copy for the ads. In the age of patent medicines and P.T. Barnum, it was not surprising that many of these claims were outlandish.

Early ad agencies, including N.W. Ayer and Son, J. Walter Thompson, and Lord & Thomas, began burnishing a sheen of respectability on what, in the mid-to-late 1800s, had become a rather evil industry. N.W. Ayer, a young man who added the "and Son" to his shingle to overcome the reluctance of patrons to deal with him because of his youth, and to provide a sheen of instant longevity to his enterprise, established the first "open contract' with his clients. This contract spelled out the precise terms of the agreement (leaving less room for secret deals and skullduggery). It also made the advertising agent a contractor for the advertiser. The ad agency placed the ads and made its money from a commission -- at the time, 12 1/2 percent -- on the price of the advertising.

The Ayer contract is more or less the norm today, although the commission rate has risen to 15 percent and most advertising agencies also charge some sort of fee for preparation of ads.

Ayer was a Sunday-school teacher would not handle snake oil and rejected ads for many patent medicines. He also refused to touch ads that might offend "a woman of refinement" or to handle products relating to "vile diseases, disreputable business or intoxicating drinks."

The birth of "modern" advertising is often credited to a copywriter and executive named Albert Lasker. Lasker worked at the Lord & Thomas ad agency in Chicago. He was a proponent of including some clear expression of the benefit of the product or service to the consumer. Lasker also advocated the "reason why" method of copywriting, in which a logical reason explaining the benefit of the product is presented. Lasker referred to his enterprise as "salesmanship on paper."

Market research became part of the advertising strategy in the 1920s. George Gallup, of Gallup Poll fame, made considerable contributions to advertising strategy by conducing surveys of consumer reading habits. During the 1920s and 30s, two "schools" of advertising competed: the type that relied heavily on market research, and the variety that put more credence in new concepts and intuition on the part of the designers and copywriters.

## Radio Advertising

Radio added a new dimension to advertising in the 1920s. But at first, advertisers and manufacturers had no idea how the new medium could carry a message. After all, this was a fleeting, ephemeral method of transmission, and the messages passed into the air after they were read. Would they have the weight and permanence necessary to persuade a listener? Moreover, this medium "talked" to people right in their living rooms; what were the proper bounds of dignity and decorum?

Early efforts to make money from radio were scattershot and abortive. Manufacturers initially tried to power the new industry through sales of sets, and started radio stations to fuel this particular type of commerce. One radio station in North Carolina was started when the owners of a hardware store that sold radios could not pick up a signal with which to demonstrate them. Historian Eric Barnouw writes that when a customer looked a radio, one of the brothers would run upstairs and start the station, turning it off after the sales pitch was finished. Professor Barnouw does not mention how customers reacted when they brought the set home and looked in vain for the station.

So-called toll broadcasting paved the way for advertising as we know it. The initial concept was pioneered by AT&T, which used the frame of reference natural to a telephone company and rented out blocks of time, usually in fifteen-minute intervals. This concept, not surprisingly, did not attract an overwhelming number of listeners, but it did demonstrate that advertising could work on radio. Other methods of advertising included indirect sponsorship of a program with the sponsor's name, perhaps, attached to the musical group. In other cases, sponsors would support a full program and have their name somehow attached to it. These two methods eventually melded into the style used today, where distinct "commercial announcements" are inserted into the programming.

Radio stations and networks were originally very choosy about what they chose to advertise. Toothpaste, for example, caused some soul-searching among radio executives who felt it was just too personal and distasteful.

Toothpaste, actually, is an interesting example of cause and effect in society and advertising. Believe it or not, Americans did not always pay much attention to their teeth in the early part of the century. Some people had never actually used (or seen) a toothbrush until they were issued one in one of the world wars. Many brought the habit home with them, and advertisers were more than happy to help sell them the necessary tools, powders, and pastes. While advertising is a popular target for critics, often with good reason, the field has also made contributions to public health and hygiene.

## Television Advertising

The invention of television opened the floodgates to a new style of visual advertising; this was actually part of an overall change in the process of advertising that began in the 1940s and 1950s. During this period, some of the shine had worn off the "reason-why" approach to advertising and agencies were eyeing an "image" style. The "image" was often a bafflingly indirect approach. An ad executive named David Ogilvy, for example, decided to sell Hathaway shirts without the traditional detailed copy extolling the benefits of the item. Instead, he hired a middle-aged male model, a distinguished man with a mustache who looked a little like a cross between Hemingway and Faulkner, and gave him an eye-patch.

Hathaway shirts flew off the racks, and it became obvious that customers identified with the distinguished but rakish image of the one-eyed man.

Image advertising became a staple of the new medium, television. In part, this was because television is not a particularly good conduit for logical, explanatory copy. Also, the new medium could transmit powerful sounds and images: Dancing cigarette packs, a singing couple who looked a lot like Clark Cable and Claudette Colbert seeing the USA in their Chevrolet. Images could also be combined with the catchy jingles perfected in the early days of radio:

> *"You'll where the yellow went,*
> *When you brush your teeth with Pepsodent."*

Although they were skeptical at first, advertisers soon flocked to television and the money spigot was cranked open. Advertising agencies became a powerful influence in the television of 1950s, choosing which programs to back with their accounts; some advertisers took in on themselves to actually produce the programming.

This arrangement (agencies taking charge of the program) worked particularly well with quiz shows. The ad agencies' producers had a good handle on what would captivate an audience. On one program, for

example, the producers would put the contestant in a glassed-in "isolation booth" (apparently so confederates could not whisper answers to him). The final question -- always extraordinarily difficult -- would be posed, and the contestant would visibly and literally agonize inside the booth. He would mop his brow, bite his lip, look heavenward for the answer, and at the very last second that answer would usually appear.

It was compelling television, so intoxicatingly suspenseful that it seemed too good to be true.

Of course, it wasn't true. The agencies sponsoring some quiz shows had supplied the most appealing contestant with the answers and dramatic coaching on how to look properly agonized. When the scandal broke, it became the subject of Congressional hearings. Strict regulations were adopted to keep advertisers out of the production business.

This was not the first time that advertisers had taken the lead in creating content; after all, many early magazines were created as advertising vehicles with the content as an afterthought. But the quiz show scandals provided a startling example of the power and influence of the industry.

## THE WORKINGS OF THE MODERN AD AGENCY

Advertising agencies exist in a variety of incarnations and locales. The "traditional" advertising agency, handling all media, all products and services, and performing a wide range of ad functions, is referred to as a full service agency.

Smaller agencies that handle only one type of product or service, and/or which specialize in one part of the advertising process, such as production of computer graphics, are called boutique agencies.

A large agency with resources to handle a national campaign is often known as a "national" agency, while smaller firms are called "local" or "regional" agencies. Sometimes local agencies work with nationals, and vice-versa, sharing parts of the task each is not equipped to do.

There is a corollary industry to the ad agency called a national sales representative, or "rep firm." The rep firm serves as a local medium's national sales force. Rep firms deal with national advertisers in major cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, places where local media (media not from those major cities) cannot afford to place a salesperson. The rep firm is not an advertising agency; it does not prepare advertising nor plan advertising campaigns. The rep firm acts an intermediary between local media and the big advertising agencies thatbuy time at stations across the nation.

**Functions Within the Agency**

While personnel duties vary from agency to agency, the "typical" agency has four major divisions: Account, Creative, and Research, and Media Placement.

**Account**. Account executives are the intermediaries between the purchaser of the advertising and the people who actually write and design the ads. Account executives are responsible for listening selectively to what they clients say they want, repeating the process with the advertising creators, and mixing the best of those two very diverse worlds to create an effective campaign.

**Creative.** The people in the creative department conceive and plan the ads. This is often an exceptionally abstract enterprise, because these people are given assignments such as, "describe what happens when the refrigerator door is shut and all the foods come to life."

A variety of creative people are called upon to supply their particular talents. The writers who decide what really does happen when the door closes (in this case, the refrigerator light stays on and the Jello comes to life) take their concept -- usually sketched out in panels on a storyboard, which looks like a color cartoon strip -- to an art designer or a TV producer, depending on the media to be used. As an example, the TV producer may call in several sub-specialists, including a jingle composer, who will come up with thirty seconds of music reinforcing the idea.

**Research.** This is the division of the agency that analyzes existing market data and sometimes compiles its own. Research staffers occasionally will conduct panels and "focus groups" to elicit responses to products and services.

**Media Placement**. Where to place these ads? The selection process is daunting, because not only must the agency determine which medium or combination of media is best suited for the campaign, but also the most effective newspaper among competing papers, the best radio station, and so on.

As you can imagine, this is a very complex process. Sometimes small, local agencies hand off the media buying to another firm that specializes in this task.

It used to be the case that most purchases were made on the basis of the lowest CPM (cost per thousand). The medium with the lowest CPM would usually get the order. However, many media buyers today place more weight on the total demographic picture of the particular media. Television, for example, almost always provides lower CPM than magazines, but for a campaign on health foods, will the broad, unsegmented audience of TV be the right mix? Perhaps a health and fitness magazine would be a better choice, even though the CMP is much higher.

If a media buyer compares two radio stations, he or she is likely to consider, as an example, that one station offering a very low CPM also has an album-oriented-rock format, which is thought to deliver an audience with lower incomes than an adult contemporary format.

## HOW ADVERTISING STRATEGIES ARE DEVISED

Advertising is designed to motivate a consumer to buy a product or service. That much is obvious; after that, very little in advertising is obvious. It is a business of skill coupled with intuition, of research mated with creativity.

The process of designing an advertising campaign often begins with identifying the problem. The next step may be planning the approach which defeats that problem, followed by implementation of the problem-solving strategy in such a way that the people who can solve that problem are reached.

We will use the "Got Milk?" campaign as a case study. It's more than a decade old, but remains one of the best examples available.

### Identifying the Problem

The genesis of the campaign dates all the way back to 1993, when milk producers in California didn't like what their spreadsheets were telling them: Milk consumption was declining. In February, a group of major dairy processors established a major promotion group, kicking in 3.5 cents per gallon of their sales to create a $23 million dollar "war chest." To oversee their effort, the California Fluid Milk Processor Advisory Board hired Jeff Manning 11.10), a veteran advertising executive.

The resulting campaign would become one of the most successful in U.S. Advertising history, but it began as a regional effort to solve a problem of

which most of us were certainly not aware.  As Manning told a magazine called The Dairyman, California Edition:

The genesis of the program is the continuously eroding per-capita consumption of fluid milk that has been taking place nationally and in California for many years.  Even though the dairy department may be delivering substantial profits for retailers, sales and consumption of fluid milk are both on the decline.  My guess is that yogurt and cheese are holding up overall dairy sales and profits.

Why was this problem evolving?  Manning identified four reasons:

The first is the tremendous proliferation of competitive beverages.  There's never been a greater choice of non-alcoholic beverages for the American public that there is right now.

The second reason is milk is not very portable.  That doesn't mean you can't carry it with you, it just means it won't taste very good by the time you get it someplace.

Third, over the last 25 years we've come to a point where over half of all the "meal occasions" are out of the home.  So once a person leaves the house to eat, milk automatically becomes a less competitive beverage.

Related to those two is flavor.  I don't mean that milk doesn't tale good, but people want more flavors. While milk delivers basically one flavor....[and] it's not controllable.

Consumers tell us their biggest problem is lack of refreshment.  What they mean is milk is not cold, it's not carbonated, and it's not in a portable bottle that they can knock down when they're thirsty.  There's really nothing much we can do about that either, because milk is what it is.


## Planning the Approach

Based with these and other data, Manning and a San Francisco advertising agency, Goodby, Silverstone & Partners, designed an approach that would not try to re-invent milk.  It was not and could not be sold as white Gatorade.  Spots extolling the virtues of milk as a health-inducing thirst-quencher were out.

The fact that statistics showed the majority of milk consumption takes place in the home led the ad agency to conduct a series of focus groups among home consumers to find out their likes, dislikes, and overall view of milk.

The eventual concept for the campaign emerged from this focus group, although it was not what anyone expected. Here's how the San Francisco Business Times reported it:

After initial focus group meetings, Carole Rankin, a former Goodby, Silverstone account planner who worked on the milk project, explained that she found that people only cared about and thought about milk when they didn't have it. [Co-creative director of the agency Jeffrey] Goodby said, "So what you're saying is that we should ask people if they've got milk?"

As Manning put it, the realization sunk in:

*Milk is only relevant when your cereal bowl is full or you've got a mouthful of chocolate cake or peanut buttee.*


## How an Advertising Strategy is Implemented

The initial campaign was planned to involve 80 percent television and 20 percent newspaper.  Television was chosen to carry the load because it is a medium people watch almost exclusively at home, and the research cited earlier indicated that is where most milk consumption takes place. (People do use all forms of media at home, but much radio listening is done in the car, and a good deal of newspaper reading takes place in transit or at work.) Television would reach these people when they would be most vulnerable to what Manning called "the deprivation strategy." -- being caught without milk.


## The Initial Campaign

Ads were first run in California only; they showed encouraging results. Survey research conducted three months after the campaign began showed milk consumption up substantially in California.  There was an additional two percent rise in consumption with the largest increase among children 2-11, a target the industry had initially thought was "maxed out."

Eyeing these results, milk producers from other states asked if they could use the spots, and soon the campaign went national.


## Follow-Up

Several new spots were created, using the same quirky humor and deprivation strategy as "Aaron Burr." In an episode entitled "Heaven," a snarling, smug, yuppie boss fires someone over his cel phone -- and is so

wrapped up in his plotting and scheming that he steps in front of a bus. He finds himself celestially transported to what appears to be the big kitchen in the sky, stuffed with milk cartons and giant chocolate chip cookies.

"Heaven," he muses, stuffing himself. And then, naturally, he reaches for the milk carton. But it's empty. And so are all the rest.

The realization is horrifying. "Where am I?" he asks -- as flames begin to engulf the Got Milk Logo.

The trade journal *ADWEEK* nominated "Heaven" and "Aaron Burr" as 1994's best campaign, citing the spots as "a "triumph" of ideas that "consisted of simple stories that rendered realistic the craving for the most ancient of beverages, milk. Forget smiley dancing people What we got instead was that rarest of commodities, truth in advertising. The truth about how frustrating it can be when you run out of milk." Time magazine picked Got Milk as the number 1 campaign of 1995, calling them "gems of sketch comedy." And the campaign won the Clio, the Oscar of the advertising world.

## Continual Evolution of the Campaign

The campaign continued to expand, including tie-ins with manufacturers of "co-dependent" foods, including Oreo cookies.

Working from this premise, other focus groups asked half their members not to buy milk for a week and keep a diary, recording how they felt about this deprivation. And after the focus groups concluded, ad agency staffers followed up with phone calls to see if participants' attitudes had changed after the meetings.

The results: Many people were made aware of the strong linkage between certain foods and started making more dual purchases. In other words, they bought peanut butter and milk. Or brownie mix and milk. This led the agency creative team to design a campaign focused around those "co-dependent foods."

Today, various incarnation of the Got Milk campaign still appear from time to time, and the original commercials remain a part of the nation's collective consciousness.

**ISSUES IN ADVERTISING**

The element of wry humor in the "Got Milk?" campaign was evidently very persuasive. I say "evidently" because despite the raft of statistical studies that accompany each campaign, no one knows for certain how, exactly, advertising works. Humor is a good example for this discussion, because for many years advertising journals and proprietary research claimed that humor in advertising was a distraction; people remembered the humor, the theory went, but forgot the product. But a series of funny and successful commercials in the 1980s showed that at the very least humor could be memorable. It is almost certain that you remember which firm sponsored the late Clara Peller driving up to a take-out window and demanding: Where's the beef?

Jingles have also come in and out of vogue. Some observers theorized that music was a distraction. In some cases this may be true, but jingles are exceptionally memorable, and again it is likely that you can remember several which have been off the air for five to ten years. Which company used the song, "The Heartbeat of America?" What is the conclusion of this jingle: "Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese... ?"

Such memorability raises related issues. First, are we exposed to altogether too much advertising? Does advertising clutter reduce the effectiveness of individual ads and in the process reduce our quality of life because of the continual bombardment of ads?

Along the same lines, is advertising becoming propagandistic and intrusive?

**The Advertising Environment**

We are exposed to hundreds of advertising messages per day, from billboards to commercials to slogans on the ball-point pens we write with. All this advertising certainly supplies us with a magnificent choice of goods and services. But critics note that somebody has to pay for all this advertising -- and that somebody is us. The cost of the advertising campaign is embedded in the good or service we purchase.

**Promoting Products We Really Don't Need**

And do we really need those expensive goods and services? Critics of advertising point to the abundance of cigarette advertising not only in magazines and newspapers but in peripheral attachment to sporting events: Tennis tournaments auto races, and other sporting events where the logo of the cigarette company is displayed on billboards. Cigarettes

not only cost money to buy but generate additional cost in medical treatment for smoking-related diseases.  While advertisers and the tobacco industry claim that the goal of their advertising is to induce current smokers to change brands, and not to create new smokers, it is undeniable that young people do begin to smoke -- about 20 percent of high school students smoke -- and the impetus must come from somewhere.  Whether it is from peer pressure or the direct or indirect effects of advertising is not clear.

Why don't we know for sure about advertising effects on smoking?  Research in media effects very rarely produces a clear-cut answer because life is not a laboratory.  Myriad effects and influences make real-life studies so messy that it becomes difficult to pinpoint specific cause and effect.  At the same time, we do realize that advertising has consequences, especially advertising that is deceptive or aimed toward vulnerable groups such as children

## The Blurring of Advertising and News

Advertising allows us to access low-cost media and essentially free television and radio.  Critics of advertising often charge, though, that the trade-off is not always worth it.  They argue that it cheapens the media, not only through incessant clutter but by forcing media to pander to the advertisers by obsessing on producing the proper audience.

For example, some programming is not only geared toward reaching a particular audience but is completely composed of advertising.  Insomniacs know all too well that late-night television is larded with program-length "infomercials" that blur the lines between news, entertainment, and advertising and relentlessly hammer their products.

Social observers point to the effect of advertising on television news as an example of the debasement of the culture. Communication scholar Neil Postman and Steve Powers, a former New York City television news producer, offer this critique in their book How to Watch TV News:

Why are there so few television stories about symphonies that have been composed, novels written, scientific problems which occur during the course or a month. Were television news to be filled with these events, we would not be frightened.  We would, in fact, be inspired, optimistic, cheerful.

One answer is as follows: these events make poor television news because there is so little to show about them.  In the judgment of most editors, people watch television. And what they are interesting in watching are exciting, intriguing, even exotic pictures.  Suppose a scientist has

developed a new theory about how to measure with more exactitude the speed with which heavenly objects are moving away from the earth.  It is difficult to televise a theory, especially if it involves complex mathematics.  You can show the scientist talking about this theory but that would not make for good television and too much of it would drive viewers to other stations.   In any case, the news show could only give the scientist twenty seconds of air time because time is an important commodity.  Newspapers and magazines sell space, which is not without its limitations for a commercial enterprise.  But space can be expanded.  Television sells time, and time cannot be expanded. This means that whatever else is neglected, commercials cannot be.  Which leads to another possible answer to the question "What is news?" news, we might say, may be history in its first draft, or the stuff of literature, or a record of the condition of a society, or the expression of the passions of a public, or the prejudices of journalists.  It may be all these things but it its worst form it can also be manipulative "filler," a "come-on" to keep the viewer's attention until the commercials come.  Certain producers have learned that by pandering to the audience, by eschewing solid news and replacing it with leering sensationalism, they can subvert the news by presenting a "television commercial show" that is interrupted by news."

## Advertising and Politics

And what of advertising's effect on the political process?  Are we well-served by ads that compress complex thought into a 30-second passage that either by default or intent distorts the facts and the record of the opponent?  Traditional advertising agencies are quick to distance themselves from political advertising, which is usually produced by political consulting firms in and around Washington.  Those ads are produced either for the candidate's official campaign or for political action committees (PACs). PACs are committees formed by interest groups to channel donations to candidates who support those interests.  A loophole in campaign finance laws allows them to make very large donations to campaigns.)

A PAC ad in the 1988 presidential election caused many critics of political advertising to call for a re-assessment of the process.  Currently, political advertising is almost totally unregulated because the government is allergic to compromising political speech and debate.  Television stations cannot refuse to run a political ad except if it is obscene. But the 1988 campaign -- considered by many to be the dirtiest in history -- re-kindled the debate. The telections since 1988 have been somewhat calmer in terms of their advertising, but political advertising is still unregulated and the ghost of Willie Horton could be revived at any time.

**Intrusive Advertising**

Finally, many critics charge that advertising is an unfair intrusion into our last bastion of privacy -- our minds. This view achieved some momentum in the 1950s with the publication of a book titled The Hidden Persuaders, written by Vance Packard.

Packard detailed the practice of motivational research, in which, he alleged, consumers' deep-seated desires are identified and exploited. Car manufacturers, according to Packard, found that men mentally identified convertibles with a mistress, and marketed them accordingly -- with plenty of sex appeal.

While Packard faced severe criticism from the advertising industry, and some critics challenged the validity of his claims, his work is regarded by many as both serious and thought-provoking.

Other critics of the advertising industry charge that advertisers use "subliminal" images to persuade consumers at a deep, sub-conscious level. While there is scattered evidence indicating that some "subliminal" knowledge is retained from messages hidden in the media, no conclusive body of knowledge shows that subliminal advertising actually works.

There is a new frontier in advertising that is also raising ethical concern: tracking your search habits to deliver customized ads. That issue is covered in depth in *The Future of News.*


**CONCLUSION: KEEPING PACE WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND GRABBING THE "LONG TAIL"**

Search technology and social media have clearly changed the landscape, and advertising is faced with no other option that to (at least partially) reinvent itself.

The ability of Internet advertising to reach small audiences at minimal cost changes the game for advertisers, and has created a new "long tail" economy.

"The Long Tail" is a consumer demographic concept coined by Wired editor Chris Anderson, who uses it to describe the concept that while a graph of the buying public would show a big bump where most buy a small number of major products, the graph would have a long, sloping tail that includes many more customers with more specific preference.

Amzon.com is an example of a "long tail" retailer. While it sells its share of blockbusters, it also sells millions of relatively obscure books, many sold

by independent contracts who use Amazon to sell their products and in return turn over a share to Amazon.

Long tail consumerism is possible because there is no shortage of supply of virtually anything in the digital world -- books, advertising space, or music content.  With computer-generated content, it is essentially just as easy to sell a million different items and a million copies of an identical item.   If, for example, ads are stored in a computer memory they can be delivered after a computer program compares them with the presumed characteristics of the listener -- not such a hypothetical calculation if you have gathered information on song, listener age and gender, preferences based on actions predicated by other ads, and so forth.

The long tail concept can apply not only to songs chosen by computer algorithms but to preferences for certain types of information served up by text messages or ads sent to applications, or "apps."

While the possibilities are still being sorted, placement of advertising by networks, such as Google, can provide new-media venues with a pre-fabricated advertising structure.

The way that much of Google's advertising works is that advertisers bid on keywords for searches or for what is known as "context-sensitive" advertising.  To use an easily grasped example and to oversimplify -- but not by much -- if an internet radio station plays music of the 50s, it can be an attractive venue for reaching customers in the 60s and 70s.  Any advertiser with a product geared toward that age group could find an easy access point to digitally serve up tailored ads.

In terms of total revenue, industry estimates say that about half of all advertising money spent on online media goes to search ads.

## Chapter 11: Public Relations

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

*What's Ahead*...We look at the growth of the industry that connects various constituencies with the media.

*Why it's Important*...As noted in the following chapter, public relations is a key element in the media system, one that is becoming more important as media change their thrust and scope.

*Points to Keep in Mind While Reading*...Not the importance of using media to sway public opinion when viewed through the long lens of history. From Columbus to American presidents, it is evident that PR is a pervasive and important profession

One of the most remarkable examples of swaying public opinion occurred about 20 years ago when Congress was debating the removal of the sweetener saccharine from store shelves. The public relations firm Hill and Knowlton was called in to sweeten up the image of the substance, which had been linked to cancer in laboratory mice.

A group of saccharine manufacturers named itself The Calorie Control Council and funded the campaign; it was a giant account for the environmental and consumer affairs division of Hill and Knowlton. Hill and Knowlton embarked on a dual effort, attempting to reach both the public and the Congressional representatives who would vote on the issue. Executives from the Calorie Control Council were "media-trained," meaning that they learned effective techniques to use while being interviewed. Op-ed pieces were written for the council ("op-ed" is the opinion page opposite the newspaper's editorial page, and is open to guest columnists).

"Lobbyists," professionals who attempt to convince legislators to vote a certain way, then became active in the effort. They buttonholed Congressional representatives and staffers, both in Washington and in their home states. And to cap off the campaign, Hill and Knowlton gathered a group of diabetic children -- children who could not eat sugar -- and lined them up outside the Capitol. As Jim Lichtenberg, a former Hill

and Knowlton staffer, recalls the incident, the children shrieked at the Congressmen: "Please don't take away our artificial sweetener."

The effort bought some time for saccharine, although other artificial sweeteners eventually took away the market. However, it soured the view of public relations for some who viewed the spectacle.

Such is the dilemma of this field. Public relations serves a legitimate and necessary function in the information age. Firms and individuals have an undeniable right to put their best foot forward when stepping into the public limelight. At the same time, citizens and the news media have come to distrust some aspects of the business, feeling that public relations practitioners are interested in "image" but not "truth."

This criticism is ironic when leveled by the news media because they are, as we will discuss later in this chapter, heavy consumers of PR-generated material.

## DEFINING PUBLIC RELATIONS

Defining not only the issues but the field itself is complex because PR has many faces. Someone seeking publicity for a shelter for the homeless can be in public relations, as can a press secretary for the President, or the publicity assistant for a movie star, or the woman who once told me she was enjoying her "position in public relations" as she handed out free cigarette samples in the Philadelphia train station.

Many definitions have been offered. What may have been the first comes from Edward Bernays, who is identified by many as "the father of public relations." Bernays devoted himself not only to a long career in public relations but also to establishing the field as a social science. His definition is succinct: Public relations is "a vocation applied by a social scientist who advises a client or employer on the social attitudes and actions to take to win the support of the public upon whom the viability of the client or employer depends."

Bernays's definition, while straightforward, does not include many of the functions performed in modern practice. Baskin and Aronoff, authors of a popular public relations textbook, propose a definition that focuses on what is achieved by public relations practitioners:

Public relations is a management function that helps achieve organizational objectives, define philosophy and facilitate organizational change. Public relations practitioners communicate with all relevant internal and external publics to create consistency between organizational goals and societal expectations. Public relations practitioners develop,

execute, and evaluate organizational programs that promote the exchange of influence and understanding among organizations' constituent parts and publics.

This definition moves beyond the advisory role that is the focus of Bernays's definition, stating that public relations people "develop, execute, and evaluate programs."

Cutlip, Center, and Broom offer a definition that is expressed in terms of the process:

Public Relations is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends.

A comprehensive definition for public relations was composed and agreed to in 1978 by practitioners from 34 nations at the World Assembly of Public Relations which met in Mexico City:

Public relations practice is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders, and implementing planned programs of action which serve both the organization's and the public's interest.

Public relations practitioner, author, and scholar Philip Benoit became as frustrated as you probably are now after reading this menu of definitions and created this workable summary:

Public relations is both a communications and a management function that uses the methods and principles of social science to plan and implement communications activities that provide information to designated publics in order to influence their behaviors in specified ways, and to interpret public attitudes and behaviors for the purpose of using that information in the management of the organization.

This definition will be used as a model for a discussion of public relations practice later in this chapter.

## HISTORY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

One reason that public relations eludes quick definition is that the field is relatively new.  While attempting to create and maintain a good "image" is a practice that probably pre-dates history, the application of media technology to the process did not emerge until the printing press. Christopher Columbus could probably be said to be engaged in some sort of public relations when he distributed pamphlets extolling the virtues of

his trips to the New World. Thomas Paine may have similarly joined the practice when he attempted to kindle and fan support for the Revolution.

## Press Agents

When the Penny Press began putting papers into the hands of the masses, the appetite of the masses dictated a menu of interesting stories. A brand of promotion known as "press agentry" emerged to fill that need and the needs of those who wanted publicity and stood to benefit from it. A press agent performed only one function, and that was to get publicity. Some press agentry was shameless; Circus magnate P.T. Barnum, for example, built an empire devising stories that the press found irresistible. But those stories were rarely true. For instance, Barnum attracted nationwide publicity with his promotion of Joice Heth, a former slave whom Barnum hired in 1835. Barnum maintained that Heth was 161 years old and was once a nurse to George Washington. After she died, an autopsy revealed that she was about 80.

What truly resembles modern public relations emerged in the mid-to-late 1800s. The same abuses that gave rise to the newspaper and magazine "muckrakers" gave birth to the practice of attempting to re-claim a company's good name. Standard Oil, for example, felt the sting of anti-trust legislation after Ida Tarbell exposed its practices. The meat industry endured new legislation and a period of consumer revulsion when Upton Sinclair drew on his experiences in the fact-based novel *The Jungle.*

## The Industry Seeks To Reform Its Image

As the turn of the century neared, wounded industries realized not only that they had better reform their ways, but also let the public know that they were doing so. Even industries that were guiltless of wrong-doing felt that the anti-corporate climate would erode their efforts to garner favorable public opinion.

What is usually considered to be the first corporate public relations department was established at Westinghouse. E. H. Heinrichs, a former newspaper journalist, was hired by George Westinghouse in Pittsburgh in 1889. With the help of Heinrichs' actions, Westinghouse ultimately prevailed in the effort to persuade the public that the electrical standard for the U.S. should be alternating current rather than direct current. Soon other corporations, as well as educational and political institutions, observed this early success and began to copy it.

## Growth Of Pr As A Profession

Although public relations emerged as a distinct enterprise, it did not yet have a distinct form nor was it regarded as a "profession." Through the early years of the 20th century, "publicity" remained the primary function. In 1900, former journalist George V. S. Michaelis established a business he called the Publicity Bureau of Boston. Michaelis represented clients who realized the value of newspaper exposure in gaining public support for their views. In 1906 the bureau was hired to disseminate information designed to raise public opposition to federal legislation that threatened the interests of the nation's railroads. The bureau used newspapers as its primary tool for dissemination of the information used to support the railroads' case, but the effort failed in its attempt to stem passage of the legislation. Harvard University and AT&T were other clients of the Boston Publicity Bureau as well.

Ivy Ledbetter Lee became well-known during the same period. Lee is regarded by many one of the "fathers" of public relations. Like Michaelis, Lee started his professional career in newspaper work. In 1904 he formed a publicity agency with George Parker, but the partnership soon dissolved. In 1908, Lee was hired to represent the interests of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Lee's major contribution to the development of public relations in its modern form came about shortly after he was hired by George F. Baer. Baer and his business partners were embroiled in a strike by coal miners. Lee's approach was characterized by a statement that explained to journalists just how the publicity for the mine owners would be handled. Called a "Declaration of Principles," it was mailed directly to newspaper editors.

This is not a secret press bureau. All our work is done in the open. We aim to supply news. This is not an advertising agency; if you think any of our matter ought properly to go to your business office, do not use it. Our matter is accurate. Further details on any subject treated will be supplied promptly, and any editor will be assisted most cheerfully in verifying directly any statement of fact.... In brief our plan is, frankly and openly, on behalf of business concerns and public institutions, to supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which it is of value and interest to the public to know about.

Lee's declaration was formal recognition on the part of those who sought publicity for a purpose that public relations, unlike press agentry, had become a two-way street. The declaration pledged not to use the news media to mislead or promote inappropriately.

## Bernays and the Academic Development of Public Relations

Edward Bernays is widely credited as the practitioner who moved public relations into the realm of profession and an academic discipline. Bernays was hired by presidents, governments, and commercial interests to help them shift public opinion to their benefit.  He tried to elevate the status of public relations beyond that of press agent by stressing the "public interest"  over short term financial advantage as an underlying motivation of its activities.

Bernays taught the first college course in public relations at New York University in 1923, and his book *Crystallizing Public Opinion* was the first to use the term "public relations counsel." Bernays originated the concept of "engineering public consent," which presents the process of persuasion as a constructive social mechanism.  His insistence that social science rather than skills be the foundation of public relations practice has been widely adopted by both the professional and academic communities.

## PR in Industry

Many histories of public relations understandably stress the role of the practitioners, but several major industrial figures also defined, refined, and advanced PR. Among them is Henry Ford. To enhance his public standing, Ford instituted a policy of being totally accessible to the press. He let it be known that he was willing and able to be quoted on virtually any subject. Also he was among the first to institute a periodical for employees.  Ford Times was first published in 1908, and is still published today.  Ford was also a pioneer in monitoring public attitudes about various issues, and conducting demonstrations of his automobiles for the press.

## Government Public Relations In World War I

As the first rumblings of World War I unsettled America, George Creel, a newspaper reporter, was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson to head the Committee on Public Information.  The committee was formed in 1917 to help gain the support of American public opinion for the war effort during the First World War.  Creel called on the talents of journalists, publicists, and advertising experts to promote the ideas that led to the involvement of the United States in the European conflict.

## Founding of a PR Association

In 1939, Rex F. Harlow joined Bernays's effort to establish public relations as a profession; he founded the American Council on Public Relations, the forerunner of the largest PR organization that exists today, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Harlow began his career in public relations as the publicist for Harlow's Weekly, which was operated by his older brother. One of the first to teach public relations at the university level, Harlow also gave formal presentations about the field through workshops and lectures. His newsletter, Social Science Reporter, was founded in 1952 as a further effort to improve the field of public relations through the sharing of information among practitioners.

John W. Hill moved PR firmly into the corporate arena, making the servant of big business a big business itself. Hill, a former newsman, started a public relations firm in Cleveland in 1927 which was one of the first commercial public relations firms in the nation. Hill teamed up with Don Knowlton in 1933 to form Hill & Knowlton. Hill & Knowlton eventually became the largest public relations firm in the world.

## Government Public Relations in World War II

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, war was declared and the need to mobilize public opinion to support the war effort suddenly became acute. To accomplish this, Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of War Information (OWI) in 1942. He selected veteran journalist Elmer Davis to head the office. Davis assembled a large staff made up largely of former journalists who were adept at the reporting and distribution of information. Their mission was to distribute information related to wartime activities to the public in as complete a manner as possible.

The effort was successful. The OWI operated a news bureau with a domestic branch and an overseas branch, with the mission of supplying information about the war to the public and to help explain why specific events were taking place. Film was used effectively by both the government and the film industry to create a general public atmosphere of patriotism. Celebrities and film stars were sent on tours to sell war bonds.

## PR in the Booming Post-WWII Economy

After World War II, a revitalized corporate economy and an increasingly influential mass media infrastructure continued to undergird the importance of public relations. At the same time, American colleges and universities began educating new practitioners. Boston University

established the first school of public relations in 1947.  Soon many academic institution included at least some coursework in public relations in their curricula, often as part of the offerings of the journalism departments.

The prevailing trends of post-war public relations include specialization and an increase in the number of persons involved in public relations. Colleges and universities are an illustrative example. Colleges in the 1960s often had only one or two people involved in public relations, if that, and they were often called on only to reactively respond to inquiries from the press.  Today, the PR effort is often several specialized layers deep.  Large colleges typically employ not only a public relations or "public affairs" director, but specialists in designing publications, writing for those publications, releases, selling story ideas to the press, staging events, preparing video programs, interacting with government officials, drafting speeches,  photographing events, and so forth.  Perhaps the major "product" associated with public relations is the press release, also called a "news release," which is written in journalistic style and is meant to either be published verbatim or used as the source for a news report.

Today, there are an estimated 200,000 to 500,000 people involved in many forms of public relations (the disparity in figures reflects the continuing problem of how we define public relations.  This of course is an exponential growth from not only from the days of Ivy Lee but even from the 1960s.  There are more people involved in public relations than in the journalism field that is often targeted by PR.

About 80 percent of major U.S. businesses today have some sort of public relations effort.


**MODERN PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE**

Public relations has as many different names as it has definitions.  In some organizations, PR duties are handled by a "public information officer." Sometimes the PR department is labeled as the "public affairs" department or "external relations." PR duties are sometimes handled by marketing personnel or in some cases by staffers primarily concerned with advertising.  Some advertising agencies also handle public relations; many firms bill themselves as "advertising and public relations" agencies.

In this information age of electronic cottage industries, many so practitioners have gone into the "public relations" business, often combining PR with marketing, advertising, or desktop publishing.

PR staffers may be within an organization or may be independent contractors selling their services on a per-project or per-hour basis.  An

organization may have a large PR staff but still contract with an external public relations firm for additional services, such as national media placement or research.

Almost all members of American commercial and civic life use public relations professionals in some manner, including businesses, churches, educational institutions, public broadcasting, major charitable organizations, government, political organizations, trade groups and associations, and labor unions.

A more useful perspective, perhaps, is to examine public relations by function rather than by title or hierarchy of the person or organization performing the function. In 1990, Philip Benoit and I published a function-by-function survey of public relations activities. This list is far from definitive, and it is not meant to be; it is intended to provide and overview of major roles.

Here are some major functions of public relations professionals. Note that they are not mutually exclusive. A public relations person may perform several of these functions.

## Promoting Goodwill

Many organizations seek to link themselves with worthy causes, such as safety, the environment, and quality television programming, even though they have no direct sales stake in the publicity. The reason for this is the same as corporations discovered in the 1890s: The public, and the public's regulators, can turn against organizations that do not seem public-spirited.

Goodwill is not only a commodity valued by large firms. Small businesses often seek this by appearing before Rotary clubs (which also provides business contacts) or donating to local charities.

## Releasing Information

Many organizations, such as police departments, retain public relations specialists primarily to fulfill an obligation to pass along information the news media -- and therefore the public -- is entitled to receive. The specialists are often refereed to as public information officers or PIOs.

**Counteracting Negative Publicity: The Most Famous Case History**

Every business, organization, and political candidate faces some adverse press. When that happens, the public relations person is in charge of damage control. The goal is to present the information in the best possible light, although sometimes there is no way to put a "good face" on the situation, other than swallowing hard and being forthright. This is the message that came through loud and clear in one of history's most successful damage control campaigns

In 1982 the Johnson & Johnson Company was at the focal point of public awareness because someone placed cyanide poison in a number of Tylenol capsules that had been sold to the public through retail outlets in Chicago. Several purchasers of the product died after taking the tainted capsules.

This naturally caused widespread alarm. There was no way to know how many capsules had been contaminated or where they were.
Johnson & Johnson acted quickly and decisively. The firm used all available communications media to alert the public to the danger, and recalled all Tylenol products from retail outlets. Consumers who had purchased the product were given explicitly instructions on how to turn in their capsules for a refund.

Johnson & Johnson's chairman, James Burke, took charge of the crisis personally, convening a company task force to deal with the crisis on a minute-by-minute basis. Within a few days after the recall there were no further deaths reported, and an investigation showed that the deaths all stemmed from tainted capsules sold at one store.

Johnson & Johnson immediately began to rebuild customer confidence in the Tylenol brand by providing a steady stream of information on the circumstances of the deaths and the investigation. New, tamper-proof packaging procedures were introduced, and the public soon regained faith in Tylenol. Today the brand enjoys a strong position in the analgesics market, and many consumers have forgotten the incident.

This classic case is often singled out as an example of how open and straightforward communication can defuse a volatile situation. It is often contrasted with small and large "cover-ups" in which organizations and people have blackened their public eyes by attempting to hide information.

Many analysts have noted, for example, that the bungled break-in at Democratic party headquarters at the Watergate apartment and office complex, exposed by the Washington Post in the presidential campaign of 1972, played a relatively minor role in bringing down the Nixon presidency. Instead the refusal to provide information and attempts at

deception fed the flames of controversy. Rather than preventing damage, the attempt to cover up the extent of White House involvement in the scheme, was damaging in itself. White House staffers assigned to "stop the leaks" of information, who became known as "plumbers," earned a place in infamy, and the man on whose watch the incident and the cover-up occurred resigned in disgrace.

## Creating or Reinforcing an Image

As an example of this function: Colleges and universities often seek general publicity about faculty research or the accomplishments of students or graduates. There is no direct product pitch here, but the publicity does reinforce an image of a particular trait the college wants the public to be aware of. Most colleges want to be considered centers of worthwhile research, and while publicity reinforcing this image will not produce massive enrollments the day the story appears it will pay in the long run.

## Directly Promoting a Product or Service

Straightforward publicity does have its uses. Authors often participate in "book tours," appearing on a slate of talk shows, in order to bring their work to the attention of the public. This tour is usually orchestrated by the publisher's PR department, which is usually called the "publicity" department.

## Persuading the Public or a Particular Constituency

When the saccharine manufacturers cited earlier in this chapter wanted to influence the public and the legislators, they went beyond simple publicity, goodwill, and image. The campaign also dispensed persuasive information about the issue. Parties involved were sometimes told to refer to the enormous amount of saccharine soft drinks a mouse would have to drink to get cancer; the mental image of a mouse surrounded by 600 empty soft drink cans was a powerful one!

This type of persuasion is designed to produce action, also a common characteristic of propaganda. What is propaganda, and is it different from public relations? That is addressed in an upcoming chapter.

## Reaching Internal Audiences

Employee newsletters are a good example of internal communications. They have, since the time of Henry Ford, generated internal good will, a feeling of community within an organization, and a pipeline for information.

Internal communications may also include in-house television, or in some cases a television network. (Many large firms lease time on satellites or microwave relays to transmit video programming to their various constituencies.)

Intranets are supplementing and in some cases replacing written publications in organizations where all or most employees have access to the computer network.

## Promoting and Planning Events

Press conferences, open houses, celebrity golf tournaments, and ground-breaking ceremonies are some of the events that often fall under the jurisdiction of public relations.

## ISSUES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

But what is the real purpose of planning a groundbreaking? Obviously, only to harvest publicity. While this may seem benign, some scholars and social critics argue that our publicity-intensive focus on creating events for the media has altered our view of reality. Others contend that we have blurred the line between news and publicity, and as a result skilled publicists dictate the content of the news.

## The Creation of Pseudo-Events

Daniel Boorstin, an historian and former Librarian of Congress, argues this point persuasively in his book *The Image: a Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. Boorstin's thesis is that when public relations was invented, in the days of Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays, the nature of news and information changed. This also came about, he writes, because of what he calls the "graphic revolution," -- the little-known revolution in the mid 1800s during which the ability to "make, preserve, transmit and disseminate precise images -- images of print, of men and landscapes and events, of the voice of men and mobs-- now grew at fantastic pace."

Our confusion between image and substance, and our occasional preference for the image, led to the rise of what Boorstin calls the pseudo-event, from the Greek "pseudo." meaning "false." Before the graphic revolution, he argues, a hotel owner looking to increase his clientele might have re-painted the lobby, or hired a new chef -- rational actions directly related to the quality of hotel service.  But after the graphic revolution resulted in a new   premium placed on image, the hotel owner might be more likely to hire a PR specialist and stage a "thirtieth anniversary dinner," inviting the press and local dignitaries.  The celebration of the hotel then becomes verification of its quality.  Image becomes substance, or pseudo-substance.

Or, as Boorstin puts it, the vivid and dramatic pseudo-event often overshadows the real thing.  The American citizen thus:

...lives in a world where fantasy is more real than reality, where the image has more dignity than its original.  We hardly dare face our bewilderment, because our ambiguous experience is so pleasantly iridescent, and the solace of belief in contrived reality is so thoroughly real.  We have become eager accessories to the great hoaxes of the age.  These are the hoaxes we play on ourselves.

Boorstin provides a four-part definition of a pseudo-event:
Boorstin's Four-Part Definition

> *1. It is not spontaneous, like a train wreck or some other legitimate "news." Someone has "planned, planted, or incited it."*

> *2. It is planned primarily, although not always exclusively, for the immediate purpose of being reported.  It is therefore managed for the convenience of the media.*

> *3.Its relation to the underlying reality of the situation is ambiguous, unclear.*

> *4. It is usually intended to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The hotel's thirtieth-anniversary celebration, by saying that the hotel is a distinguished institution, actually makes it one.*

We see Boorstin's framework in many of our daily activities and during our media surveillance of our environment.  Pseudo-events have also become a staple of American politics.  Many candidates, for example, conduct ceremonial train rides, evoking images of early candidates, among the Lincoln and Truman, who made "whistle-stop" tours.  But is there any specific meaning attached to the event?  Or is it simply intended to gain publicity?

## Political Pseudo-Events

The high point (or low point, depending on your perspective) of pseudo-events in American politics was the 1988 presidential election between vide-president George Bush and challenger Michael Dukakis, who was then governor of Massachusetts. Both candidates used a flurry of pseudo-events. One of the most well-known and effective was when Bush, stung by Dukakis's criticism of Bush's environmental record, staged a media event in Boston Harbor.

Boston Harbor, a few minutes' walk from the statehouse where Dukakis presided, is disgustingly polluted. Bush, accompanied by camera crews from the three major networks, held a press conference near the harbor and ridiculed Dukakis's claim that he (Dukakis) would be "the environmental president." pointing to the harbor, Bush asked if this was an example of what Dukakis would do as the 'environmental president."

It was a clear, persuasive victory for Bush. The story appeared near the top of all three network newscasts, with commentators analyzing the "spin" and noting that Bush had won in the "spin control" game.

This was also clearly a "pseudo-event."

> *1. George Bush's arrival was clearly not spontaneous. He did not happen to land in the harbor by accident.*
>
> *2. Clearly, the incident was arranged for the immediate purpose of being reported. That was, in fact, the only purpose.*
>
> *3. There was definitely some ambiguity as to the underlying meaning and reality. For one thing, Boston Harbor is a federal harbor. If anyone bore the responsibility for its condition, it was George Bush!*
>
> *4, The event was clearly intended to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Bush campaign wanted the populace to think, "well, it looks like Dukakis talks a good game about the environment, but he can't even keep his own city's harbor clean." And that is more or less what happened among many viewers.*

The Dukakis campaign was not so successful with its pseudo-events. One event was staged to deal with the fact that Dukakis was perceived as being weak on military issues. Also, George Bush was a decorated war hero, always a political asset. Dukakis's campaign advisers had their candidate ride in a tank on a military base. Unfortunately, Dukakis is not very tall and his helmet was a few sizes too big, and the effect was ludicrous.

Worse (for Dukakis) the Bush campaign seized on the failed public-relations event and used a clip from the ill-fated tank ride it pro-Bush advertising.

## Image Melt-Down

In politics, news and advertising often "melt down" into the same mixture. News events are used in advertising, and advertising becomes news. What may be the most famous political ad in history, the "Daisy" commercial used against Goldwater by Lyndon Johnson in 1964, ran only once. (It featured a little girl picking petals off a daisy, superimposed with a nuclear mushroom cloud; the intent was to indirectly portray Goldwater as a nuclear madman.) But it instantly became the subject of numerous news reports and talk shows, getting more publicity after -- and because -- it was pulled off the air than it probably would have received if it continued to run.

The latest wrinkle in this strategy is for political operatives to announce the existence of a particularly vicious "attack ad" but never actually run it! The ad might not even exist, but the publicity about the "coming" ad does the damage, playing up the charges in the "vapor" ad. This is the pseudo-event come full circle.

## Publicists Managing News

In addition to creating their own pseudo-meanings via such events, skilled publicists can sometimes dictate the news coverage by setting the agenda themselves.

To be realistic, when a presidential candidate does something, it usually by definition qualifies as news. But by covering such events, are not news organizations turning over the agenda to those who have something to gain from the coverage?

During the administration of President Ronald Reagan, many skilled publicists found that by providing compelling visuals they could set the agenda for that night's television coverage. Adviser Michael Deaver, for example, once staged an event where President Reagan would tour a framed-out house under construction in Texas.

Why would President Reagan put on a hard-hat and walk around the construction site? Because the economic news of the day indicated that housing starts (the number of new houses planned to be built) were up. That was good news for the President, because it reflected well on his claim that the economy was enjoying re-invigorated health. But economic

statistics often are afforded only a brief mention (if that) far down in the newscast.

By force-feeding shots of the president touring the framed-out house on the day that housing starts were reported up, the publicists created a much more flattering story.

Media consultant Bob Squier called this relationship "an evil minuet." And the unhygienic characteristics of this dance between those who report news and those who provide it has attracted a great deal of serious attention and research, including several studies by the sociologist Herbert Gans, who claims that in this dance, the sources lead.  They make themselves available, keeping in contact, put forth story ideas, and in practice "manage the news by putting the best light on themselves."

News management is not limited to politics.  Kathleen Hall Jamieson, former dean of the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, professor of rhetoric at the University of Minnesota, identified many instances involving business and entertainment:

> •Electronic publicity kits distributed to local television stations feature interviews with movie stars and allow local reporters to fit themselves into the piece in any way they see fit. While production of these kits is expensive, one movie executive noted that the kit itself cost  $125,000 but received airtime that would have cost more than   700,000 if the studio had to buy it.  (What he did not mention is the additional if intangible benefit accruing from coverage in the news rather than in advertising; for obvious reasons, people tend to believe news more than ads.)

> •Prepared editorials and feature stories are written by public relations firms and inserted into local newspapers.

> •Video news releases -- essentially news stories prepared by a public relations firm or in-house PR professional -- are distributed to local television stations, who use them as part of the newscast.

## Managing the Impact of New Technologies

The public relations industry has traditionally been quick to keep abreast with new technologies, and today the industry is a leader in the use of the World Wide Web.  Web pages are an excellent PR tool for many applications because they can be accessed from anywhere and updated frequently.

Internet communications, for all their advantages of speed, can backfire. The Web is a lighting-fast rumor-mill and some PR professionals find they spend the majority of their time squelching rumor and putting out other electronic fires.

Possibly the most difficult aspect of embracing new communication technologies is that the issues surrounding them sometimes develop before we know we have a problem. This chapter's In Depth offers my take on news and public relations problems we don't really know we have yet. What's your opinion?

**IN DEPTH: NEW TECHNOLOGICAL DILEMMAS FOR JOURNALISTS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS**

I was recently invited to give a talk to a group of professionals who work in various online media about "emerging issues in online ethics." The topic sounded about as interesting as watching paint dry, but when I began discussing the issue with some participants, it turned out that in spite of myself I was hitting on some areas that really were "emerging" -- causing particularly acute ethical headaches because they are, in fact, new dilemmas without much (if any) precedent.

Here are some issues that came from my discussions with a collection of people who work in online fields, including journalists, public relations practitioners, and e-commerce professionals:

- Digital records can live forever, requiring proactive ethical decisions about their lifespan. Here's a real-life example, recounted anonymously because the situation is not yet resolved: A young reporter uses some information from another source without proper attribution -- innocently, he maintains -- but his editors call it plagiarism and say so in the paper's correction column, along with their admission that inattentive editing was partially to blame. The reporter asks the paper to remove the plagiarism reference from the digital archives because he's afraid that his mistake will follow him for a lifetime. And it could, given the right circumstances. In ten years, will someone Googling his name get the plagiarism reference near the top of the results? In 20 years? The digitization of the paper's archives makes for a profoundly different ethical issue than the mere existence of some old paper copies in the storage room. There are hundreds of new dilemmas that could spring from this premise: For example, if Prisoner X is cleared of his crime by a DNA test after spending five years in jail, do we go back and correct all of the stories in the archive? Or make annotations to the old stories? Or remove the stories altogether?

- The speed of digital communication exponentially increases the chance for error. Speed -- and the expectation of speed in the age of the eternally hot connection -- not only causes error but magnifies it. The most recent example of technologically multiplied error was the January 2006 series of reports that 12 men trapped in a West Virginia mine were alive, when they tragically were not. Of course there were other multipliers in the mix, including broadcast and cable. But we increasingly encounter multiplied misinformation online, allowing rumor and false facts to spread literally at the speed of electricity. Add to that the pressure-cooker effect of digital communication, which affects almost everyone in every line of work. Think about how the acceleration of your working life due to the demands of your email and your Blackberry affects your performance and your state of mind.

- Data are dangerous when unsecured, creating an ethical obligation to play it safe. Several high-profile incidents have demonstrated that plain old slipshod handling can precipitate information-age debacles. Companies have left sensitive data unsecured, unencrypted, in a cab, or on a lost laptop. The fact that many people's security could be compromised by carelessness creates an ethical obligation on the part of anyone who handles data to guard against the technology-leveraged consequences of losing it. And this doesn't relate only to keepers of vast databases: Think about the possible consequences related to answering one of your emails if you hit the "reply to all" button when you meant to reply only to the sender.

- We're all engaged in cross-cultural ethics. The cliché about digital communications shrinking the world became a sudden reality in recent months when the fact that major U.S. Internet firms censor their content to gain entrée to the vast Chinese market showed up on Congress's radar screen. This is a clearly ethical problem, as opposed to a legal dilemma (we don't yet have laws to address the fact that any form of online communication is international communication, communication that perhaps some other country doesn't want). Should Chinese censors have the right to suppress communication within their country, even if it comes from outside their borders? Should the United States impose its moral view of free expression on another culture? Should U.S. firms play by somebody else's rules if the servers are based in that nation? Does it really make a difference where the computer is physically located?

- We are what we link to. Online news publications, including one I edit, were faced with an ethical dilemma recently when one of the

top stories involved a cartoon that many Muslims considered egregiously offensive. Almost all of the major U.S. papers did not run the cartoons (at least as of Feb. 5) and the Associated Press did not distribute them to member newspapers. But the online versions of news publications had an interesting dilemma: Should they link to the cartoons? At first glance, it seems like the best of both worlds: You could stand behind your ethical premise not to run a needlessly offensive cartoon, while still offering a means of access. But is there really a difference between publishing and offering a link? I thought not, and apparently so did most of the major news organizations' websites. Right or wrong, it's a problem that has little ethical precedent and needs some hard thought and discussion.

- Search results are presumed to be honest and impartial, but are they? This is a complex question. Some sites' search engines elevate certain results because they are paid to do so by advertisers seeking prominent placement. Most of the major independent search engines don't have "pay to place" search results, but that doesn't guarantee that their results can't be cooked from the other end. While the methods search engines use to rank their returns are proprietary, it is generally known that their formulas use a combination of search words found in websites coupled with weighting based on how many hits sites receive and how many other sites link to the site in question. A site that wants to rise in the rankings can load its pages with keywords that the public is likely to search for -- hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands of words masked at the bottom of the page -- and also can try to rise in the rankings by publishing many pages linked to the main page, or by creating an artificially high number of links. There's a slippery slope between healthy self-promotion and dishonest skewing of search results. Some would argue that loading your main page with search terms is no more unethical than the old-fashioned practice of giving your company a name starting with "A" to place it first in phonebook listings. But others contend that in a world where the Internet search has become a primary method of information gathering, tampering with results is fundamentally dishonest.

- Technology enables rampant plagiarism. The Internet is the world's greatest copy machine. Schools and colleges worldwide are facing an epidemic of plagiarism, and there are even websites specifically designed to help teachers catch plagiarists. But the problem has mutated beyond the high-tech version of a transgression that probably began with chisels or at least with quill pens. Today, we are encountering entirely new views of the nature of original information. Is a paper that cobbles together cut-and-paste selections from ten different sources plagiarized, even if it is

properly footnoted? Some would argue no, while others contend that a work with no original thought invested into it, relying entirely on snippets of work from others, constitutes "global plagiarism." And when we examine the fundamental definition of plagiarism, professors may not be immune from scrutiny either. Several recent cases where too many words were lifted intact from another source have tarred the reputations of high-profile academics and authors. Recently a celebrated professor was called to task for allegedly "plagiarizing" from himself -- dropping several paragraphs from an old book he wrote into a new book. Was what he did some form of plagiarism? Was it even wrong? On the one hand, his publisher and his readers probably through they were paying for an entirely new book. On the other, they were his words, and if repeating yourself were a crime then all professors would be in jail -- and I'd get the electric chair.

## CONCLUSION

Public relations has clearly distanced itself from the days of the old fashioned press agents who would shamelessly shill their product or service.   But the increasing professionalism and technical sophistication PR is also something of a public relations problem for the industry itself. Public relations professionals provide invaluable services, including given the media and the public access to vital information.   But they also in many cases strongly influence not only public opinion but the gatekeepers of public opinion -- journalists.

In 2011, it is clear that the gatekeeping function of journalism has changed, and it is possible today for individuals and companies to use social media to directly reach media consumers.  This, however, creates a whole new set of problems directly related to the practice of public relations, including reputation management.

But what of the practice of influencing public opinion?  Some characterize this as a democratic influence on the mass media and social media.  Others paint a picture of a powerful media seeking audience and revenue, and in turn being manipulated by insiders who provide material appealing to that audience -- good television visuals, for example -- in return for controlling the news and opinion  agenda.

## Part 4: Journalism, Society, and You

### Chapter 12: Laws and Regulation

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

*What's Ahead. . .* This chapter gives some background in law and regulations, where they came from and whey they exist, and then details their application in today's journalism and media.

*Why it's Important.* . . Our free press system is as much a product of regulation as anything else.  Understanding the limits, and how the limits were derived, provides a profound understanding of the process.

*Points to Keep in Mind While Reading...* Note that freedom of expression is one of our strongest drives – one that we're literally willing to risk death to preserve.

Mrs. Rose Pastor Stokes wrote a letter to the *Kansas City Star* newspaper during World War I.  She contended, "No government which is for profiteers [people who make huge profits from war] can also be for the people, and I am for the people, while the government is for the profiteers."

Because of this letter, she received a ten-year sentence in federal prison! Her sentence was reversed in 1920, but the case remains a graphic example of how government, facing a threat to security, can drag out the heavy artillery when criticized with rhetoric that seems, by today's standards, almost gentle.

This law was the Sedition Act of 1918, a law passed by Congress and signed by President Woodrow Wilson.  The sedition act made it a crime to "publish any disloyal, scurrilous or abusive language about the form of Government in the United states, or the Constitution, military or naval force, flag, or the uniform" or to use language holding these things up to "contempt, scorn, contumely, or disrepute."

But doesn't the Constitution guarantee that Congress shall "make no law" abridging freedom of speech, and of the press? Yes it does.  It also prohibits Congress from making any law that prohibits the free exercise of religion.  However, if I were a Mormon, a religion that allows marrying multiple wives, I would find many laws both state and federal abridging

this practice. Should I wish to assemble a large group of protesters, another First Amendment right, and march across the Brooklyn Bridge, I could be arrested if I did not secure a parade permit from the City of New York.

And there are many other laws restricting speech and press. You and I cannot in most cases scream obscenities at someone, make harassing phone calls, incite a riot, use obscenity in a radio broadcast, falsely accuse someone in print or broadcast of being a criminal, or place a false advertisement in a magazine. The list of prohibited activities goes on. In some cases we will be stopped by police on the spot; in others, we'll be allowed to print our false and defamatory article and be hauled into court later.

Law and regulation generally makes a compromise between those rights guaranteed under the Constitution and the practical problems of trying to run an ordered society.

We will examine that balancing act shortly; first, though, some definitions and history will add context to the discussion.


## WHAT ARE LAWS AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

Law is the entire set of rules by which we govern ourselves and formalize the business and personal relationships among us. In the United States, the highest, most basic, and fundamental type of law is Constitutional law. The Constitution of the United States was the tee shot in our present lawmaking process. The document created the basis for the federal system, and gave each branch of government -- executive, legislative, and judicial -- the power to make certain kinds of law.


### Constitutional Law

The law created under this power cannot violate the basic principles of the Constitution. The only formal way to change the principles of the Constitution is to amend it, an intentionally long and difficult process. Most of the States also have constitutions, and a number of them have constitutions that predate the federal Constitution.


### Statutory Law

Acting under the authority of its constitution, the legislature makes a type of law known as "statutory law." The legislature can create administrative agencies through this statutory law making, and each agency can create

another kind of law.  For example, the U.S. Congress in 1934 created the Federal Communications Commission, and gave the Commission the power to set rules controlling the use of national airwaves.  Such administrative rules are usually referred to as "regulations" and the rule making power is known as "regulatory authority."

## Administrative Law

Administrative law is not the collection of these rules, but rather another set of rules ordering the way in which people deal with the regulatory authority, interpret the regulations, and interface with the administrative agencies Most administrative agencies make these kinds of rules:  town zoning boards make zoning regulations; the Federal Trade Commission sets standards relating to commerce and advertising; the New Jersey Turnpike Authority governs the way in which that major highway is used; and so forth.  At the municipal, state public authority, and federal levels, a variety of related regulations are collected together into "codes."  For example, all federal regulations are contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, known to lawyers, legislators, and administrators as the "CFR."  The Federal Register is a daily publication containing all new and amendatory regulations.  Most states and many municipalities have similar collections of regulations and publications with differing names.

Usually the scope of a set of regulations is controlled by the statutes that created the administrative body.  In other words, the Federal Communications Commission cannot decide to make rules about zoning, and a zoning commission cannot restrict radio broadcasting.  However, the FCC can set standards within which local zoning regulations can control radio transmission antennae and reception dishes, and the local zoning body can regulate these facilities in terms of safety, appearance, and impact on neighborhoods.  Where the two sets of rules conflict the local rules generally must accommodate themselves to the federal principles found in the FCC regulatory scheme.

## Executive Orders

The executive branches of government also create another kind of law generally known as "executive orders" which are really a form of regulatory law.  At the federal level, the executive also enters into treaties, and at the state and local level makes compacts.  In most cases compacts must be ratified by the related legislature, and in all cases treaties must be ratified by Congress.   But the federal and state constitutions, and the legislation that flows from them, are not the only source of law.

**Common Law and Case Law**

An important body of law is known as common law, and consists of rules, decisions, customs, and traditions that originated mainly in England prior to the formation of the United States.  Another significant body of law, a large portion of which can be found in the common law, is case law, which is the collection of judicial decisions made to resolve disputes and controversies.  These sources of law fill in the blanks that legislation and regulations leave open.  In many instances, the expressions "common law" and "case law" are used interchangeably, but in fact, these classes of law overlap

In both classes of this kind of law, however, decisions were made by judges, chancellors, nobles, and administrators based on the findings and intent of previous decisions by their peers.  For example, if one farmer dammed up a river and caused a restriction in water supply downstream, a deprived farmer below would appeal to the appropriate authority.  More often than not, the judge or noble would look back on similar rulings in the past   to solve the problem then before him.  In that way, even if there   was no previous rule in written form against damming up a river to another's distress, a collective series of decisions finding   this prohibition became a standard element of common law.

Likewise, where custom had evolved into a set of rigid rules  -- real estate was especially burdened by them the chancellor in equity could modify the rules "at law" to do justice in a particular set of circumstances.  Common law also allowed the decision maker to adapt the spirit of a prior rule to new circumstances:  Suppose smoke from a farmer's fires drifted into someone else's field, driving the cattle away from their grazing land?  The smoke would be treated like a human trespasser, and a fine for damages set against it. The concept of case law extended these principles to the formal collection of written opinions evolving out of common law dispute resolution.  Old decisions were used as a basis for new ones, and the new written rulings also drew on centuries-old principles of English custom as well as early commentaries and analyses. Our application of common law is based on the vitally important principle that decisions should be guided by precedent.

**Precedent**

This principle is central to the doctrine of stare decisis (starry de  - SYCE – is), Latin for "let the decision stand." This principle was adapted to the rest of the body of law in the United States.  Judges must often make substantial interpretation of legislation because statutes cannot be written to cover every conceivable possibility.  When making such interpretations,

judges look back to case and common law for guidance on how the statutory law has previously been interpreted.


## Judicial Review and Interpretation

The U.S. Supreme Court has the final say in interpreting laws and the Constitution.  In turn, its decisions will become precedent for judges at all other levels.  (State high courts have a similar function for local law.) Moreover, the Supreme Court also decides whether certain laws are unconstitutional.  This was a prerogative it assumed in 1803 in the case Marbury v. Madison.

Interpretation of the Constitution, and how far to go in that interpretation, sometimes splits the court itself. Some members, past and present, are "strict constructionists," believing that the document says what it says and not much more. The problem with that approach is that the Constitution is very  narrow in scope and thus difficult to apply directly to many  modern situations.

Some strict constructionists, however, do allow for some interpretation of the Constitution based on the  "original intent" of the framers of the document.   The problem here, of course, is the difficulty in deducing what someone's original intent was when  that person has been dead for 200 years.  And this is compounded by the fact that in those simpler days, people published less, were interviewed by the media hardly at all, and left a small  paper trail.

The third school is the broad constructionist, who holds that the beliefs and social conditions of the present can be considered  in interpreting the Constitution.  The  "broad constructionist and the  "judicial activist " are more or less the same thing, although the latter term is often used pejoratively.  The most famous  "broad constructionist " on the Supreme Court was probably  Earl Warren, who was named Chief Justice in 1953 and stayed on the  bench until 1969.  He was noted for broad interpretations of the Constitution, using court decisions to benefit what he felt were  under-served parts of society.  Brown v. Board of Education (1954) of Education was one such decision; in it, the Warren Court ruled that segregation in schools was unconstitutional.  The reason the decision was ground-breaking was that the court considered much  contemporary evidence from social scientists in rendering its opinion that  "separate but equal" schools were not equal.

All three approaches to interpreting the Constitution are seen in decisions that affect media.

**APPLYING LAW TO JOURNALISM AND MEDIA**

Sometimes we compromise because of a need for public safety and security.  In other cases, scarcity is the reason: if there is not enough spectrum space to allow unlimited numbers of radio stations, we enact laws to cap that limit.  Often, we also enact regulation that protects the public from what we deem to be corrosive influences, such as obscenity and false advertising; when we do this, we make the broad assumption that society in general "knows best" what is right for individuals, including what will hurt them and what will help them. Finally, we build ancient concepts of simple justice into the law, holding that someone who is embarrassed by the news media because of a false accusation has a right to collect monetary damages.

This chapter will use the above-stated framework:

· Safety

· Scarcity

· Protection and Improvement of Society

· Justice

...to examine the laws and regulations that govern our media system.  Note that these categories are not mutually exclusive.  The Telecommunications Act governing broadcasting actually includes attributes of all four.   Breaking the discussion down into these categories, though, allows us to examine the intent and the history of media regulation.

**LAWS THAT STEM FROM CONCERNS OVER SAFETY AND SECURITY, AND THEIR IMPACT ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

Press freedom was tested almost immediately after the America. won independence from Britain.  George Washington tolerated the press, even though it attacked him, sometimes viciously.  But the nation's second president, John Adams, was overwhelmed with tensions; the nation stood at the threshold of war again, this time with France.  Adams was in no mood to tolerate such sniping.

**Sedition Acts**

Adams and Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. The "alien" part of these acts was designed to make it easier to harass and

deport aliens  --  notably, the French.  In addition to rumblings of war, there was pressure from the French inside the newly formed United States. French radicals within the U.S. borders often sympathized with the goal of the French Revolution.  That goal, at this time in history, was primarily beheading members of the ruling class.

The  "sedition" portion of this act was aimed not only at the French but at political enemies of Adams's political party. In part, the law called for a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars and imprisonment not exceeding two years for any person who would write, utter or publish any false, scandalous, and malicious writing "against the government, congress, or president, or "excite against them" the hatred of the people.

There were about a dozen indictments during the two years the laws were enforced, and it became clear that the legislation was being used as a political club.  Many Americans hated the laws, and one of them was Thomas Jefferson, who won election in 1800 and became the third U.S. president.  Jefferson, though no fan of the  press, was a defender of press freedom, and he allowed the laws to lapse.

Similar laws were enacted more than a hundred years later, during World War I.  President Woodrow Wilson and Congress were concerned about criticism of the government's involvement in World War I, as well as threats from Communism.  Three laws limiting freedom of expression were passed: The Espionage Act of 1917, the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917, and the Sedition Act of 1918.

The Espionage Act allowed prosecution for  "false reports "designed to undermine the war effort.  The Trading with the Enemy Act allowed censorship of communication moving in and out of the U.S.  And the Sedition Act made it a crime to publish  "profane, scurrilous, or abusive" language about the U.S. or the war effort; this was the law under which the unfortunately Mrs. Stokes was prosecuted.  These laws were also eventually allowed to lapse.


## Wartime Censorship

The government has also, at various times in U.S. history,  put official censorship laws and mechanisms in place to directly control reporters ' access to information and their ability to  transmit it.   During the Civil War, President Lincoln prosecuted several newspapers for printing stories critical of the war, in particular of the draft.  Both sides also exercised some control over transmissions on the nation 's telegraph system.

Censorship was heavy during World War I, although for the first time the government set up a large, official bureau that not only censored but

provided detailed information. George Creel, a respected reporter, headed what was called the Creel Committee; this committee oversaw censorship and distributed information and propaganda.

The censorship and information - distribution functions were split during World War II. In addition to a censorship office that employed thousand, an Office of War Information headed by another respected journalist, Elmer Davis, distributed government-sanctioned reports to journalists and news organizations.

Less restrictive policies were in place for the next war in Korea, from 1950 to 1953. (Formal "war -was never declared by Congress.) The conflict in Vietnam began so gradually, with initial placement of "observers" in Vietnam in the late 50s, that once it developed into a full-scale shooting war in the mid to late 1960s, there was little that could be done to impose censorship. Also, improved technology made transmission of stories and pictures much easier than it had been in World War II.

Popular opinion turned sharply against the Vietnam War, largely because of critical coverage by the press. Some observers theorize that the military -- stung by this reversal of public support -- vowed not to let it happen again in the series of smaller wars and battles that followed Vietnam. The American press was kept under strict controls in invasions of Grenada and Panama, both of which took place in the 1980s. Media coverage of both conflicts was effectively controlled by the government; while the press was critical of its treatment, the government appeared to achieve its goals of restricting access and putting its best foot forward in the coverage. The Persian Gulf War in 1991 was virtually stage -- managed. Citing national security and the safety of reporters, the U.S. government sharply limited reporters' access. First, the number of journalists was limited, with news organizations instructed to elect members from their ranks who would feed information to the larger "pool -of journalists. Second, news organizations were under tight restriction regarding whom they could interview, where they could travel, and what they could see.

## Prior Restraint

There is good reason why a line must be drawn somewhere in allowing reporters to access and repeat information that could have an impact on national security. Movement of troops is one example; if the media, either by accident or intent, were to report where troops were headed, the enemy could stage an ambush.

On rare occasions, the government takes court action to stop publication of sensitive material. The most widely known case was that of the so-called Pentagon Papers. These papers were classified material about the Vietnam

War, and they painted a discouraging and unflattering picture of how the war was being fought. Daniel Ellsberg, a defense department employee, leaked the papers to the Washington Post and the New York Times. The Nixon administration was furious and claimed that national security was threatened; Nixon 's justice department asked for, and received, an injunction to stop publication. However, the cat was out of the bag and injunctions proved futile; moreover, the Supreme Court eventually upheld the right of the papers to print the material.

The Pentagon Papers case was one of the few times that the government has exercised prior restraint, stopping publication in advance. Because of our national dislike of the concept of licensing or restricting freedom to publish, this option is used very rarely; the only other major recent cases of news -based prior restraint were an injunction against a magazine that planned to publish plans for a hydrogen bomb, a business magazine that was  allegedly divulging proprietary business information, and recordings of General Manuel Noriega's communications while in prison in the United States. (Prior restraint is frequently invoked  in copyright cases, but that is not the same thing as restricting information because of its content.)

## Free Speech and Clear and Present Danger

The limits of freedom of the press and linked to limits of freedom of speech. Court decisions treat the two categories almost as the same thing. The particular way the courts treat freedom of speech and press in important because it illustrates the way we legalistically avoid the problem of passing laws that restrict speech and press when the Constitution specifically Congress shall make no law restricting them

Here is how it works: We divide speech (from now on, we will use "speech" -to mean "speech and press") into two categories, protected and unprotected. Protected speech is that which is expression. Unprotected speech is more like a weapon. Unprotected speech is meant to cause harm, and ideas are unimportant or secondary. Protected speech is allowed under the Constitution. Unprotected speech  -- because it is more of a "weapon"- --  is not really speech at all, and therefore laws can be passed against it

The Supreme Court has defined "unprotected speech " -very narrowly so that expression of ideas can be given the widest possible latitude. Here is how Harvard University Professor of Law Arthur R. Miller explains the concept:

One of the clearest examples of unprotected speech, an example used by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in defining the limits of First Amendment

protection, is falsely shouting "Fire!"- in a crowded theater. At least three factors go into pushing the word "fire" -in this context into the area of unprotected speech. The first is that the speaker does not intend the word to communicate any idea. Rather, it is said in order to cause a panic; it is more a weapon that speech. (It is like sneaking up and screaming "Boo!" -at someone you know has a weak heart.) Of course, if there really was a fire, we certainly would not punish someone for pointing that out, even if a panic ensued. Yelling "Fire! "-in that situation would be communication. Indeed, if someone honestly through there was a fire when there wasn't, we wouldn't want to prosecute him for trying to help.

The second factor is that shouting "Fire!" -is quite likely to lead to serious harm as the audiences rushes for the exists. If there is a fire, we'll take that chance rather than leave the audience to burn in their seats. But even if there isn't a fire, the risk of people being crushed or trampled as a result of yelling "fire!" -is unacceptable. If we can be fairly sure that no one will be hurt, the situation is very different: You 're not going to land in jail for shouting "Fire!"- – no matter how falsely -- in the middle of a forest where no one can hear you.

The immediacy and unavoidability of the speech's harm is the third factor. There is no time to debate the question of whether or not there is a fire before the panic starts. If there was, then the spirit of the First Amendment calls on us to discus the matter freely. Since shouting "Fire!" -cuts off the discussion, it is contrary to that spirit and the freedom to shout it itself can be cut off.

This test of unprotected and protected speech was precisely what was applied in the case we cited earlier of the magazine planning to publish plans for an H–bomb .In 1979, a United States district court granted an injunction against The Progressive magazine because it planned to print plans that the magazine claimed came from documents already available to the public. As happened with the later Pentagon Papers case, the information eventually found its way to the public regardless of the injunction, and further immediate court action became unnecessary. But initially the judge in the case felt that the potential danger of unleashing H-bomb secrets, the immediacy of the problem, and the fact that the publication seemed intended to cause harm moved the article to the realm of unprotected speech.

The popular phrase used to sum up this idea is that unprotected speech poses a "clear and present danger." Justice Holmes used this phrase in the 1919 case Shenck v. the United States. Shenck had urged draft resistance in World War I, and the jury in the first trial convicted him on the ground that his words were likely to damage the war effort. The Supreme Court upheld the ruling, citing the clear and present danger to a nation at war

when someone attempts, through his words, to interfere with the conduct of that war.

In a case the same year, Abrams v. The United States, the Supreme Court found that Abrams had indeed posed a "clear and present danger "-when he protested President Woodrow Wilson's policies and urged a strike. But the same justice who forged the clear and present danger" -test dissented from the ruling, arguing that advocacy of a political position must be given some freedom to compete in the marketplace of ideas. This was a very similar notion to the writings of Milton: If truth and falsehood are allowed to compete, truth, Milton argued, truth will ultimately win out.

The clear and present danger test was later refined several times, and changed completely 50 years later in the case Brandenburg v. Ohio. Brandenburg was a Klu Klux Klan leader who gave a speech urging his listeners to "bury" and "send back" racial and ethnic minorities.

The Supreme Court ruled that in addition to providing a clear and present danger, speech which is deemed to be unprotected must also be directed at causing "imminent lawless action " that is "likely to incite or produce" -such action. It was deemed not likely that any immediate harm would come from Brandenburg 's speech, and he was acquitted.

## The Brandenburg Decision

The Brandenburg decision gave more latitude to advocacy, even advocacy that could be dangerous. The Schenck case held that speech was unprotected if it was likely to cause a clear and present danger. But Brandenburg said that in order for speech to lose its First Amendment protection, it also had to be advocating a lawless act that would occur imminently (any minute) AND that was likely to occur.

A speaker or writer today would have to meet all these conditions before his or her expression could be curtailed, either at a speech, or in a publication, or in broadcast.

## LAWS THAT DERIVE FROM SCARCITY, PARTICULARLY SPECTRUM SPACE

What would happen if everyone could own an electric power company? The idea is not as fanciful as it seems, because when cities were first being wired for electricity there was stiff competition between competing companies. One, led by Thomas Edison, wanted to wire cities with direct current. Another, under the technical guidance of Edison's former protégé, Nikola Tesla, favored alternating current. Alternating current proved more

effective, and after a major shakeup (involving a public relations battle during which Edison called AC the "death current ") it finally won approval.

But initially the situation was a mess, and it became immediately apparent that electricity had to be offered as a limited monopoly, meaning that one firm or agency was granted the right to all of a city's power needs. There is only so much room on utility poles or in underground channels for power lines; ditto for telephone lines, cable TV wiring, gas pipes, and so forth.

When radio was invented, regulators did not fully understand the growth potential in the new medium. It was a novelty at first, a near-exact parallel to the World Wide Web, where experimenters pieced together their own systems.

## Radio Act of 1912

Soon, though, it became apparent that some sort of regulation was necessary, and the federal government instituted the Radio Act of 1912. Interference between and among stations was not yet a problem, but the government realized it should have some plan for the allocation of frequencies and licenses. Under the Radio Act of 1912, the Secretary of Commerce was designated as the responsible party for radio station matters.

This legislation was not particularly effective, because it did little more than require that a radio operator be on duty at all times on American ships. That requirement came from the disastrous sinking of the Titanic, where a distress signal went unheard by a ship fifteen miles away. New legislation and practices would require not only an operator on board, but a halt to the monopolistic practice of the Marconi company, which dictated that only an staffer from its firm could operate a radio.

Missing from the Radio Act of 1912 was a provision that would allow the secretary of commerce, then Herbert Hoover, to refuse to grant a license. Any American citizen was entitled to one. Moreover, a court ruling in 1926 held that the Secretary could not under the existing legislation specify frequencies for broadcasters.

## Radio Act of 1927

Hoover held a series of conferences trying to straighten the mess out. Interestingly, Hoover wanted the broadcasters to engage in some sort of self-regulation, but most broadcasters wanted the government to issue

more regulation. The result of these hearings was a set of recommendations that eventually became the Radio Act of 1927.

Under this act, Congress asserted its authority to regulate broadcasting, citing the commerce clause in the Constitution that allowed Congress to regulate interstate commerce. Because radio waves knew no borders, the industry was deemed to be subject to federal regulation. The Radio Act of 1927 was a well-crafted document, not unlike the Constitution itself in that it did not attempt to dictate myriad solutions to complex problems.

Instead, the act set broad parameters and authorized a five-person panel to implement the law and apply it to specific circumstances as necessary. Known as the Federal Radio Commission (FRC), this group was appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The FRC was charged with implementing rules and regulations that would legislate broadcasting in accordance with the public "interest, convenience, and necessity. " This phrase came directly from public utility law, and indicates that lawmakers now regarded radio as a similar entity to electricity and telephone companies.

## Communications Act of 1934

The Radio Act of 1927 was modified several years later and re-emerged as the Communications Act of 1934, which in large part is still the law of the land today, although many of its provisions were changed in 1996. The Communications Act of 1934 added two commissioners to the FRC, and changed its name to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Provisions of the new act were far-reaching, and allowed the FCC to regulate telephone communication, communication over other types of wires, and television, which was then in its experimental infancy. The Communications Act made it clear that networks and other program suppliers could not exercise complete control over member stations. At the same time, it was clear that stations, and not networks, would be licensed by and accountable to the government. The intent of this provision was to insure that local stations -- which had to prove that they were of service to their communities when applying for license renewal -- remained of service to their localities. In other words, radio stations had to serve the interests of their community of license, not their networks.

## FCC Rules and Regulations

Other provisions related to programming content, obscenity, fairness in news coverage, and technical regulation. Under the provisions and interpretations of the act, the FCC limited the number of individual

ownership of individual stations one person or corporation could own, as well as cross-ownership of different types of media. The purpose was to keep control of broadcasting diversified, so that powerful interests could not monopolize an industry.

In the 1980s, the Reagan administration appointed many administrators, including an FCC chairman, who promulgated the conservative view that that government should limit itself in its regulatory power and that the marketplace should be reasonably free to sort itself out. As a result, license renewal was simplified and stations no longer had to prove a detailed record of public service. The rules for station ownership were relaxed. Before, an individual or corporation could only own a total of seven each of AM radio stations, FM radio stations and television stations.  That rule was raised to twelve in each category. Democratic administrations in later congresses and the presidency took a different approach to deregulation: Allowing firms from different types of communication to enter  each other's markets. The goal is to let the converging media merge according to the wishes of the market, and in the process provide breakthroughs in merging technology.


## The Telecommunications Act of 1996

On February 1, 1996 the Telecommunications Act of 1966 was passed by both houses of  Congress.  President Clinton signed the act on February 8, and its provisions became effective immediately.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was the first major rewrite of the Communications Act of 1934, and it changed the ground rules for almost all part of the communication industry, including telephone service, cable, broadcasting, and the manufacture of equipment.  In effect, the current Communication Act of 1934, as Amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, allows more players in the communications business. Before 1996, for example, cable television companies were given an exclusive monopoly for their coverage area. Now, owners of other wires  --  notably, telephone companies  --  are not only permitted but encouraged to provide competing program service. Broadcasters are also allowed to provide video services in other forms other than standard broadcast.

Perhaps the biggest change is in telephone service. Previous legislation and court rulings strictly separated the roles of national telephone services, such as ATT, MCI, and Sprint, and regional telephone services, such as the local Bell companies.

Remember: One company, AT&T, used to provide almost all national and local telephone service. In the 1980s, a federal court ruling caused AT&T to break itself up; the court said that the giant firm had a stranglehold on

telephone service. As a result, AT&T was restricted to long-distance service, and had to compete with other long-distance companies allowed to enter the long-distance business as part of the court ruling. Smaller units of AT&T, called "Baby Bells"- were split off from the company and allowed only to provide local and regional service

Now, under the Telecommunications Act of 1996:

> · Baby Bells can offer long distance.
> · AT&T and other long-distance carriers can offer local and regional service.
> · Cable TV companies can get into the telephone business.
> · And phone companies can get into the cable TV business.

In theory, this cross-pollination of technologies and services will increase competition, lower prices, and stimulate the development of new technologies. It is in recognition of the fact that there is no longer a true "scarcity" -of space because technological improvements allow transmission on smaller frequencies, and virtually a limitless amount of fiber-optic cable, which is small and relatively cheap, can be strung in the near future.

However, to accomplish this goal the FCC has become increasingly merger -friendly, and some industry observers worry that this will eventually lead to increased market domination by a few large players. There is also concern among civil libertarians that provisions in the Telecommunications Act will have a chilling effect on free speech.

## LAWS THAT STEM FROM THE DESIRE TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE SOCIETY

One provision of the act, which was eventually partially overturned, called for the introduction of the "V-chip," microcircuitry installed in televisions to allow parents to block programming containing a certain level of sex or violence. In order for the chip to work, programs will have to carry electronically coded ratings that are determined by some sort of review board. Network executives promise to challenge this plan, arguing that an objective measure or program objectionability is impossible, and that national censors will violate the rights of individuals to make their own decisions.

A court ruling felled another provision of the Telecommunications Act, the so-called Communications Decency Act. This provision applied primarily to the Internet, and would have imposed penalties for indecency. A three-judge panel struck down the provision as too vague and too intrusive, but this did send a chill through some internet users who saw that the

government intended to regulate the internet much as it does broadcasting.

## Decency and Obscenity

"Decency" -is a very difficult word to define, as is a related term, "obscene." Though this is not for wont of trying because thousands of cases at the local, state, and federal level have cobbled together a loose mechanism of laws and regulations. Those regulations are generally stiffer for electronic media than for print. Some electronic media, such as television and radio, are licensed in the public interest because they operate over scarce spectrum space deemed to belong to the public. Therefore, there has been little resistance to a variety of federal legislation that enforces standards of "decency." However, there still is considerable debate over whether the Internet is a print medium or an electronic medium, and how it should be regulated. That dilemma, in part, was responsible for the demise of the Communications Decency Act.

Print media usually is censored only in extreme cases, and sex, rather than violent content, is usually what draws attention to the publication. (Although a recent case involving plaintiffs suing a firm for publishing a book on "how to be a hit man" -may set some interesting precedent. The plaintiffs allege that one of their relatives was shot by a man who learned his trade from the book.)

There is a long history of censorship of sexually oriented communications. The first obscenity case in the United States was probably in 1815 in Philadelphia, where a man was convicted of exhibiting a lewd painting of a woman. The judges found him guilty, and during the trial they looked away from the painting to avoid "wounding" -their eyes. Six years later, a judge found the novel Fanny Hill obscene; he, too, protected his morals by not reading the book. In 1873, Congress enacted the Comstock Law, named after Anthony Comstock, who began his career as an official of the New York League for Suppression of Vice and moved on to the U. S. Post Office. Comstock was a zealous crusader against what he deemed immoral, and his views fit will the reform period of the era.

The Comstock Law prohibited mailing any "obscene lewd, lascivious, or filthy book, pamphlet, picture, paper, letter, writing, print, or other publication of an indecent character

That is a very broad definition. Each descriptive word – "lewd," "filthy" -- means different things to different people.  Rulings in obscenity cases varied widely, and courts generally looked to a 1868 case in England, Regina v. Hicklin.  The "test of obscenity became whether the publication

would have a detrimental effect on" those whose minds are open to. . . immoral  influences.

Courts also got around the First Amendment question by the same technique used to outlaw dangerous speech: Obscenity was not "protected" -speech.

The Supreme Court first became involved in censorship in 1957. The decision in Roth v.  The United States put the Supreme Court 's official stamp on the idea that obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment. In addition, it modernized and clarified  the "test " -for obscenity. Authorities could ban material if  "the average person, applying contemporary community standards. . . [finds that the dominant theme] of the material, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest."

"Prurient "- (PRUR  -- ee  -- yent) is as hard to define as it is to say. It comes from the Latin word" to itch" -and is often defined as dealing with a compulsive, driving, burning obsession with sex.  Prurient interests are those that are abnormally concerned with sexual matters, and prurient material is lewd and lascivious.

Confused about the definition of "prurient?" -So was the Supreme Court. For one thing, if "prurient" -means what we think it means, then "prurient interest" -means an interest in obscenity, and we find ourselves back to square one. They also were unclear as to what the "community standard" -was and how it would be determined.  As a result, in later cases the court added to the definition, including the statement that obscene material is "utterly without redeeming social value." -But "redeeming value"

In another case, an apparently frustrated Justice Potter Stewart admitted that he could not define hard-core pornography, but "I know it when I see it."

The latest test of obscenity comes from the 1973 case Miller V.  California: "Whether an average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest; whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct, and whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."

Miller is clearer than Roth. The vague "redeeming social value"- is re-defined. The court in Miller stressed that the community standard was the local and not the national standard, and therefore towns and cities could now decide for themselves what was obscene based on their own values.

**Honesty**

The same spirit of that triggered a reaction against widespread indecency also had an impact on false advertising. Congress passed The Food and Drug Act in 1906, party on the crest of a wave of public revulsion against the patent medicine ads. This act applied primarily to labeling, and said nothing about advertising. The Federal Trade Commission was established in 1914 with the power to stop deceptive practices in business and in advertising.

Neither measure proved particularly effective at stopping the abuses in the advertising industry, and under the Roosevelt administration, the federal government began to heat up. Roosevelt's "New Deal" -in the 1930s attempted to counter the paralyzing effects of the Depression by instituting many social programs and massive public projects that were primarily aimed at creating jobs. Also, the New Deal created several consumer councils to help people spend what money they had wisely. An adviser to President Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins, speculated that it might be a good idea "for the federal government to take over the advertising business."

As you can imagine, this caused a near -panic in the ad business, along with several attempts at self-reform. The federal government never did "take over"- advertising, but a bill to increase the power of the FDA did pass in 1938. A number of amendments to the Federal Trade Commission Act strengthened it somewhat, allowing the FTC to issue injunctions (an order to cease and desist), which the agency does with some regularity. Recently, for example, the FTC forced a margarine manufacturer to stop advertising that the spread prevents heart disease. In another ruling, the FTC forced a California tanning products company to not only stop advertising the "health benefits" -of tanning but to run $1.5 million in corrective adverting to alert consumers to the hazards of UV radiation.

Numerous federal agencies, including the Post Office and the Environmental Protection Agency, also regulate advertising to a smaller degree. The Federal Communications Commission has the power to regulate advertising on broadcast media, and will occasionally force the removal of a product ad that is misleading or in poor taste. However, political advertising is virtually unregulated because it is deemed free and protected speech, and is given wide protection because we as a society value open and vigorous political debate.

Under Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, a broadcast station must provide equal opportunity to all legally qualified candidates to air their commercials. This is sometimes known as the " equal time" -regulation (although the wording of the section actually says "opportunity "). The spirit behind the equal time provision was to ensure that a station

owner could not sell many commercials to the candidate he or she supports and sell none to another qualified candidate. The station is also not allowed to censor the commercial, since this would have the effect of the station manager imposing her views on the candidate 's political speech. Only if the commercial is "obscene" -(meaning showing sex) or does not meet technical standards can it be refused.

In practice what sometimes happens is that misleading or offensive commercials are aired, stations can do nothing about it other than to analyze the ad in their news broadcasts. As campaign advertising scholar Kathleen Hall Jamieson notes, "if an aspirin ad says that it reduced headache pain more quickly than its competitors, the viewer can fairly assume that the claim was not fabricated in a Madison Avenue backroom. And if the accuracy of a product ad is question, the Federal Trade Commission can look into it, requiring corrective advertising if needed. Not so with political ads" -She points out that when the press is asleep at the switch," -the viewer must hope for the analysis of an investigative reporter or fall back "on a lifetime's worth of judgment calls."

The Federal Communications Commission also legislated fairness in news coverage. In 1949, the FCC adopted a doctrine that required broadcasters to present a wide, representative range of viewpoints in their coverage controversial issues. The "Fairness Doctrine " -was the focal point of a battle between the Reagan administration and Congress in the 1980s. In 1987, Congress insisted that the FCC enforce the doctrine, but President Reagan vetoed the measure and the Fairness Doctrine has been dead since. However, there are still occasional rumblings about resurrecting the fairness doctrine; some legislators have even hinted that it should also be applied to print media.

## LAWS THAT STEM FROM THE DESIRE TO SEEK JUSTICE

When someone is wronged, he or she is entitled to some action that makes things right. That concept goes back deep into many cultures -- at least to biblical times, when "an eye for an eye " was the prescription for redress.

### Tort Law

In mass media, we have no way of giving someone a new reputation, so when a reputation is lost or damaged we make do with the best substitute available, money. There is a large body of law known as "tort " -law -- tort means claim of damage -- that exists to implement such actions. Tort law is part of civil law, meaning the branch of law that involves private persons acting against other private persons in a court of law. Criminal

law is part of "public law," -where the government brings charges against an individual and prosecutes that person.

In many cases, the damage that is addressed and compensated for in court is physical, such as the loss of a leg during a car accident. Sometimes, the damage is monetary, such as loss in business earnings if a firm is unfairly given bad publicity. In many cases tort law provides monetary damages for emotional distress. Finally, judges and juries may sometimes award "punitive" -damages in addition to compensation for loss. Punitive means "for punishment."

There are two types of claims that are common in tort law as it relates to media, libel and invasion of privacy.

## Libel

Libel is a false published statement that damages someone's reputation, holds that person up to scorn or ridicule, or damages that person in his or her occupation. Libel applies to the written word and statements transmitted over a mass medium. Slander is similar to libel but it deals with statements made orally and not through media.

There are four discrete requirements, or elements, that must be met for a statement to be libelous, and there are four basic defenses.

These elements are identification, publication, damage, and fault.

> *Identification.* Someone must clearly be identified in order to sue or libel. Someone can be identified even if he or she is not named or pictured, as long as the audience can infer who it is. But the identification must be narrow enough so that a person or organization can actually claim to be singled out. If someone writes "all lawyers are crooks," that is too broad a statement for an individual lawyer to claim identification.

> *Publication.* A libelous statement must be communicated to a third party. A person-to-person letter, no matter how nasty, cannot constitute libel. It must be published in such a way that it reaches others. "Publication" -also means airing over a broadcast station.

> *Damage.* Some harm must come from the communication in order for it to be libelous. If a reporter writes that you are 5 ' 5 " -when you are really 5 ' 10", he is clearly wrong but no harm comes except in some extraordinary case where you are, perhaps, a fashion model who must be tall to be employed. But if a reporter writes

that you are a convicted embezzler, and you are not, there will be obvious damage.

***Fault.*** It's perfectly OK for the reporter to call you a convicted embezzler if it is true; only if it the charge is wrong is the reporter exposing herself to libel charges.

## Defenses Against Libel

***Truth.*** Provable truth is an absolute defense against libel. But the truth and "provable truth"- can be different things. For example, if you as a reporter call a physician "incompetent"- you will have a difficult time "proving" -that, because the word incompetent is broad and nebulous. That is why reporters try to stick to the known facts: "Dr. Frank Hypothetical has five pending malpractice suits, has had his license suspended in Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, and has seen his last five patients die on the operating table."

***Privilege.*** Statements made on the floor of a legislative body while that body is in session, or in court when court is in session, are given absolute protection against libel judgments. A Congresswoman can say anything she wants during floor debate without fear of legal repercussions, as can a district attorney when he makes his closing remarks about the defendant. The reason behind this defense is that we value free and open debate in our government that we are reluctant to make any law that will stanch that debate. And as a practical matter, if a criminal defendant found innocent had the right to sue the district attorney who prosecuted the case, we would have no district attorneys because they would be spending all their time in libel defenses.

When a journalist repeats, fairly and accurately, remarks made in the scenarios described above, the journalist is afforded what is called qualified privilege

***Fair Comment.*** You have a right to express a reasonable opinion. If you don't like a singer, you can write a negative review. But if you venture into extreme personal attacks, you have probably lost your fair comment protection.

***Public Figure.*** Someone who actively courts public office or fame loses some protection against libel. The public figure defense stems from a hugely important 1964 court case, Times V. Sullivan. L. B. Sullivan was a Southern public safety commissioner who sued the New York Times over an advertisement carried by the paper. (A publication is responsible for its advertising as well as for its

reporting.) The advertisement, headlined "Heed their Rising Voices," implied that Sullivan was a racist and accused him of brutality. There were several factual errors in the piece, including the contention that Sullivan was ultimately responsible for locking black students out of their dining hall. In fact, that action did not occur.

Sullivan sued in an Alabama court and won; the jury took two hours and 20 minutes to return with a verdict awarding a half-million dollars to Sullivan. The Times appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court in the case now known as Times v. Sullivan (the party that brings the case is identified first) on the basis that a public figure brings upon him- or herself exposure to public criticism. In other words, it comes with the territory. And because we value free and open debate, public figures have to take this criticism.

The Supreme Court left only one avenue open for a public official to win a libel case: He must prove all the four elements of libel and also prove that the medium published the statement with knowledge it was false and published it anyway with intent to cause harm.

As you can imagine, public figures have a great deal of difficulty proving these two additional elements. It requires not only a good deal of time, money for legal fees, but also luck. Someone who possessed all three was the comedienne and actress Carol Burnett. Burnett, was portrayed in a National Enquirer article as being drunk and out of control in a Washington restaurant, engaged in a shouting match with, of all people, Henry Kissinger. None of this actually happened, and Burnett was able to prove it because many people witnessed the absence of an incident at the restaurant.

Through exhaustive and expensive legal action, she was also able to prove malice and intent. Carol Burnett is a television star, and not a public official; why does the Times V. Sullivan rule apply to her? Because a series of court decisions after Times v. Sullivan broadened the definition of public figure to include people who seek the limelight. The theory here is that someone cannot actively seek positive publicity, and make a great deal of money in the process, while at the same time claiming shelter from negative publicity. However, recent court decisions have narrowed the public figure defense somewhat and given more protection to famous people who are not public officials.

While almost everyone can see the "justice" lurking behind libel law, there are some unintended consequences attached to it, as detailed in this chapter's "In Depth" feature.

IN DEPTH: THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF LIBEL LAW

Parties on both sides of the debate over libel law criticize the effects of the laws. Times v. Sullivan, for example, is not universally favored in the press because it places a reward on ignorance. Essentially, if a reporter claims he didn't know that facts, that is a defense.

Jurists criticize libel law too, often for its complexity. Former Philadelphia Supreme Court Judge Lois Forer once noted that .the laws of libel are different in all fifty states, meaning that plaintiffs "jurisdiction shop," trying to find the venue that is most favorable. She claimed that now, "almost every major publisher and electronic media has a lawyer sitting in the offices  -- editorial offices -- vetting the news. There is this cautiousness that is preventing the public from getting the information it needs. "

That concluding view is often shared by journalists, who feel that reporters are being scared off of legitimate stories by the fear of libel actions. A group called the Investigative Reporters and Editors found that more than half of respondents in a survey of its members claimed that concern over possible litigation had affected their journalistic decision-making.

However, plaintiffs, as you can imagine, do not always share this view. Carol Burnett noted that in many cases only someone with a great deal of money and time can pursue a libel action.  Interestingly, she won her action against the Enquirer and donated most of the money to journalism education.

Another problem is global in nature: With the pervasiveness of mass media and social media, is so-called libel tourism. British libel laws, which were recently revamped and made much tougher on the media, are stifling free speech — not only in Britain, but also around the world, according to a report from the United Nations' Committee on Human Rights. The London-based Independent reports that a study from the committee says that U.K. defamation law has discouraged critical reporting on subjects of public interest, and also has prompted plaintiffs to engage in "libel tourism," where foreigners use the High Court in London to sue publishers. The report cites the case of a U.S. author who was sued in London by a Saudi businessman over a book that was not published in the United Kingdom. Twenty-three copies however were sold into the jurisdiction via the Internet.

The issue became such a headache that it reached the U.S. Congress and in 2010 President Obama signed into law a bipartisan bill aimed at ending libel tourism by permitting Americans sued from overseas to clear their names by getting a declaratory judgment in the United States.

**Privacy**

We have no clear heritage of law relating to privacy. Libel law clearly dates back many centuries, but privacy has only surfaced as a legal "right" in the past century, and it is an ill-defined right at best. In fact, what many legal scholars regard as the first sustained discussion of the right to privacy was an article of that title written by Samuel Warren and his young partner, Louis Brandeis, who would of course later become a justice of the U. S. Supreme Court.  The article, published in 1890, was inspired by intrusive reporters who crashed a party at Mr. Warren's house.  Since then, a body of law has evolved around privacy, but the  law has had a difficult time keeping up with technology. In Mr. Brandeis' day, the mass media were in their infancy, at least in their ability to shred someone's privacy. And just to illustrate the continuing problem, courts are still attempting to play catch-up with new technologies that can mix and match computer records, for example.

There are four basic types of privacy torts: Misappropriation, embarrassment, intrusion, and false light.

> ***Misappropriation.***  Using someone 's image without his or her permission for advertising or commercial gain.  In almost all cases, a reporter is not required to obtain permission for use of a likeness in news.

> ***Intrusion***. Taking unreasonable measures, such as trespassing or continual harassment, to invade someone ' s privacy. Note that journalists have no more right to trespass than anyone else.

> ***False Light.***  Characterizing someone in a false way. One example is a photograph that appears to show a man and a woman holding hands in a stroll through a park, when in fact, she is actually a business associate handing him a pen. You cannot use an otherwise "true" -photo to make a false implication

> ***Embarrassment.***  Embarrassing personal facts are not fair game for  journalists if they are not newsworthy. For example, running details of a drunk -driving arrest 20 years ago probably is "newsworthy" -if that person is a politician seeking office. But if that person is essentially a private person, the publisher of those unearthed facts may be liable for invasion of privacy.

Newsworthiness is a standard defense against privacy actions. Consent of the subject to public exposure diminishes the subject's protection, too. (In other words, if you appear on my television talk show voluntarily you will have a much more difficult time winning a privacy judgment against me if I expose embarrassing facts about you.)


**CONCLUSION**

Our concluding topic -- privacy -- is an excellent example of how technology outpaces our ability to keep up with it, legally or ethically. Privacy was of very little concern a hundred years ago, because mechanisms for invading that privacy existed only on a small scale. In fact, people had very little expectation of privacy. A visitor to an inn in the early 1800s, for example, might have to share a bed with a stranger!

Technology -- good housing, buildings with central heating and hallways -- gave us the expectation of privacy. Later on that expectation broadened as we became accustomed to privacy and angered at the evolving media's capability to erode that privacy. Looking back at this chapter's discussion, we can see that almost all law and regulation dealing with expression came about, in some manner, because of advances in technology.

## Chapter 13: Ethics

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

***What's Ahead.*** . . This chapter will de-mystify ethics. We will define what we mean by "ethics" and examine the process of making an "ethical decision. " The chapter will not dwell heavily on case histories because we have presented many throughout the book. Rather, it is about basic ethical ideas and principles you can use to further analyze the case histories in the book and those that you encounter in work and daily life.

***Why it's Important***. . . Just about every decision you make in some way involves "ethics. " If you pursue a career in media, it is likely that you will reach several crisis points in which you must make a decision based on your personal view of ethics, a decision that may set a path for your career. And irrespective of your job, you will always use media, and you will utilize an ethical framework to interpret what you see, read, and hear.

***Points to Keep in Mind While Reading...***Remember that philosophy is like Shakespeare -- it is written in old-fashioned language because most of it was written a long time ago. But while the language (even in modern philosophy) may sometimes be off-putting, the concepts are usually straightforward. Also, remember that there is nothing "sacred" about ethics; it is a field where imperfect people try to come up with solutions to dilemmas in an equally imperfect world. No "philosopher" has a corner on right and wrong, so don't hesitate to disagree with what you read. You will usually have lots of company.

Having said that, let me note that the process of examining something through the lens of ethics is extraordinarily enlightening in and of itself. While you may not come up with a "perfect" answer, you will have a reason for your decision, based on a clear and explicable reasoning process. Sometimes, that's the best you can do.

Speaking of which, what's your best option in this case? Here's the situation:

> *You are the editor of a daily newspaper in a medium-size U.S. city. A teenager in a local school has just committed suicide in a building owned by the school system but not actually part of the school itself.*
>
> *And this is not just any teenager. He is captain of the football team, a Merit Scholar, and by all accounts the most popular guy in*

*school. According to the sources you interview, the victim he had recently told friends that he was depressed and thinking about suicide.*

*But nobody took him seriously. After all, this was the kid who had everything going for him.*

*Your newspaper, like most, does not publish that suicide was the cause of death unless the act involved a very public person, such as a politician. Your policy holds that you should run an obituary but not list a cause of death.*

*You are about to ask your obituary writer to do exactly that when your deputy editor knocks at the door. "I know something about teenage suicide," she says. "And I know that a lot of these suicides happen because nobody pays attention to the kid when he exhibits the first symptom -- talking about it. That's what happened here, and I don't think we should keep sweeping it under the rug. I want to name names, tell the whole story. We'll save lives."*

What do you do? We'll come to some possible conclusions by the end of this chapter. First, though, let's establish some common vocabulary and ground rules.

## DEFINING ETHICS AND PHILOSOPHY

Ethics is a branch of philosophy. Philosophy literally means "the love of wisdom," Typically we think of philosophy as a structured way of viewing the world and of interpreting our beliefs. Philosophy also involves the study of human nature and conduct. In broadest terms, everything is "philosophy" because almost every act involves studying the world around us.

### Philosophy

When the concept of studying human nature began, "philosophers" were scholars and teachers who studied anything and everything. During medieval times, the range of philosophy was narrowed a bit to mean the study of anything except law, medicine, or theology. That is the main reason why academics receive a doctor of philosophy degree, a Ph.D., regardless of whether they study philosophy, astronomy, or mathematics. It is a tradition based on medieval concepts.(Medieval traditions in academia die hard, and that is why we wear robes and mortarboards at academic ceremonies such as graduation. The garments once served the

purpose of keeping scholars warm in dank stone buildings and protecting their heads from dripping water.)

Philosophy as a modern discipline has further narrowed to focus mainly on study of ideas and beliefs. There are several branches of philosophy, including epistemology, the study of how he know what we know; and logic, an examination of how we make decisions and the accuracy of the decisions and the factors we used to make them, and ethics.

## Ethics

The word "ethics" really has two meanings.  First is the branch of philosophy that deals with questions of determining right or wrong. Making such decisions may seem highly judgmental, but that is the name of the game.  In fact, a philosopher named John Dewey noted that it is precisely "the business of ethics" to judge.

Ethics also has a less formal meaning, identifying ethical behavior with good behavior: "He did not behave ethically when conducting his campaign for senator."

## Ethics versus Morals

The word "moral" is sometimes used synonymously with "ethical," although morality usually refers to prevailing customs rather than broader questions of right and wrong.  We have a tendency to use "moral" in matters detailing with sex.  We would be more likely to describe someone who commits adultery as "immoral" rather than "unethical." Ethicist Jay Black of the University of Florida has a clearer definition:  ethics takes place above the neck, morals below.

Another distinction relating to word usage: Ethics, when used to refer to the branch of philosophy, is treated as a singular noun, for example, "ethics has fascinated me for years." When referring to collections of ethical principles -- "my ethics vary from situation to situation" -- the word takes a plural form.

**IN DEPTH: THE HEAVY HITTERS IN ETHICS**

While this is obviously nowhere near a complete guide to ethics and ethicists, it may help you link some familiar (and not-so-familiar) names with the ideas and works for which they are known.  Also, you may be able

to connect many of the ideas summarized here with views on ethical issues expressed in this and other chapters.

## Plato (c. 427–347 B.C.)

Plato chronicled the thoughts of his teacher Socrates, and produced the Dialogues. The Dialogues are not specific discussions of ethics, but rather exercises in exposing shallow thinking, demonstrating the dangers of applying overly broad thought to specific ideas, and challenging accepted ideas. On a broader level, the Dialogues espouse the idea that everything in the universe has a purpose and fits into an overall scheme.

Plato maintained that these ultimate ideas, or "forms," are formed previous to experience and are independent of experience. As an example, in the grand scheme of things we know what an absolutely perfect circle is even though we cannot physically draw it.

## Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

Aristotle was a pupil of Plato, but he did not idolize and chronicle Plato like Plato idolized and chronicled Socrates. In fact, some biographers suggest that Aristotle and his teacher Plato did not like each other.

In any event, Aristotle's philosophy was more strongly based on observation than was Plato's. Aristotle did not feel that there was an independent "good," or an abstract "form" of virtue. He believed that basic morality could and should be studied by examining the workings of our everyday lives.

Aristotle was an important figure in ethics because he wrote one of the first works on the subject: Nicomachean Ethics, which examined those aspects of everyday life and recommended the path toward virtue. The Nicomachean Ethics, the first, as far as we know, Western system of ethics, is best known for its advocacy of "the golden mean," that point which is halfway between two extremes of behavior. This is an important point because it will recur several times in this chapter.

## Epictetus (c. 50 A.D. to 150 A.D.)

Epictetus was a Roman who imported the thoughts of an Athenian philosopher named Zeno. (Romans, as you remember, were quick to appropriate Greek property, citizens, ideas, and even gods.)

Epictetus either wrote very little or had all his writings lost; however, Epictetus' lectures on ethics were transcribed and edited by his pupil Arrian.

Those lectures formed the basis of stoicism, which remains a familiar concept to this day. Stoics (the word derives from the Greek Stoa Poikeile, "painted porch," the school of Greek philosophy founded by Zeno, who presumably held court on that painted porch, were known for their rigorous self–discipline.

The stoic ethic held that humankind is self–sufficient and must hold itself indifferent to life's vagaries and troubles. It is your attitude toward your toothache, Epictetus contended, that determines your happiness, not the fact that your tooth is aching. (The legend, and it probably is legend, is that Epictetus "proved" his theory by allowing a pupil to break his leg. Epictetus reportedly wasn't at all bothered.)

Above all, the stoic philosophy as put forth by Epictetus is significant in that it holds the good and ultimately happy person is the person who values virtue for the sake of virtue. This is an important concept in ethical reasoning.

## St. Augustine (354–430)

St. Augustine was a follower of Plato, and as such was committed to the idea that the universe has an overall purpose and our actions fit into a predetermined scheme –– concepts independent of experience. Augustine, though, believed that this was an entirely Biblical framework, a chain of events based in theology.

His most noted works are Confessions and The City of God. Confessionsis the more readable of the two works. It goes into great detail about Augustine's personal ethics and how those ethics flowed from his previous transgressions.


## St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)

Nearly a thousand years after Augustine interpreted Plato in terms of Christian doctrine, Aquinas would resurrect the ideas of Aristotle in Christian terms.

Summa Theologica is Aquinas' most noted work.

Incidentally, Aquinas' influence in ethics extended beyond the realm of pure Christian ethics. He wrote extensively about the law, and was one of the first ethicists to argue with rigor that the law should aim at "the common good."

### Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527)

The name of Machiavelli became synonymous with the ethical concept that the end justifies the means, a theory that will resurface later among a group of philosophers called "utilitarians."

The Prince is a straightforward examination of a ruler's ethics or lack of same, sort of a "how to get ahead in business" book for the 16th century. Machiavelli was really not as evil as some accounts make him out to be; he wrote the book in order to impress and flatter an Italian royal family in hopes of getting a job. But his name will always be linked with a ruthless disregard of the means as long as the appropriate end is secured.

### Francis Bacon (1561–1626)

Bacon was a pioneer in the Renaissance philosophies which integrated politics, hard sciences, and psychology. An astute politician, Bacon was a devotee of Machiavelli (even though Bacon professed adherence to Christian ideals).

Bacon wrote a famous line that is a good definition of philosophy and to an extent ethics. Philosophers, he contended, must "diligently inquire into the powers and energy of custom, exercise, habit, education, example, imitation, emulation, company, friendship, praise, reproof, exhortation, reputation, laws, books, studies, etc.; for these are the things that reign in men's morals; by these agents the mind is formed and subdued."

### Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)

A contemporary of Descartes (see next entry), Hobbes (who was British; Descartes was French) shared a fascination with the certainty of mathematics, and attempted to apply 17th–century scientific method to the ethical and governmental problems of the era. An avid reader of Copernicus and Galileo, Hobbes attempted to apply a mechanistic rigor to philosophy. He developed strict measures for ruling people via a formula of so many parts desire to so many parts aversion.
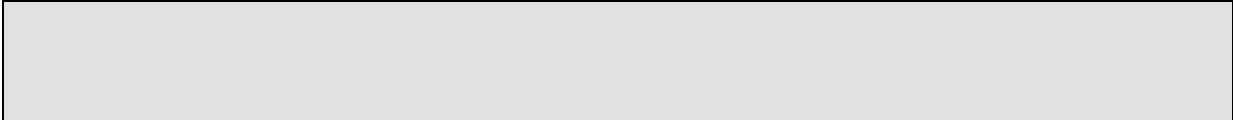
Hobbes was a defender of the concept of absolute monarchy, maintaining that only a supreme ruler could dispense those mathematically correct doses of desire and aversion.   His works De Cive and Leviathan reflect his theory that ultimately, morality is based on social authority, an authority which stems directly from the sovereign.

He also planted seeds of utilitarianism with his view that a successful member of society acts from self–interest and not from altruism.

### Rene Descartes (1596–1650)

In much the same way as Bacon moved philosophy and ethics toward social psychology, Descartes , a mathematician by training and temperament, pushed philosophy toward "the scientific method;" see Discourse on Method.  While not usually considered a major figure in ethics, per se, Descartes was influential in developing concepts which today play a role in ethical analysis, including epistemology (the branch of philosophy which investigates how we know what we know).  Cogito ergo sum –– "I think, therefore I am," now a familiar catchphrase –– was Descartes's entry into epistemological inquiry.

### Benedict Spinoza  (1632–1677)

Born Baruch Spinoza, Benedict Spinoza  changed his name to the Latin equivalent when he was expelled from his Jewish community because of his radical views.

Spinoza's Ethics is considered one of the more important works in the field, despite the fact that it is extraordinarily difficult to read.  Some scholars theorize that Spinoza was hampered by the fact that he wrote in Latin, and that Latin, long dead as a living language, had not evolved to the point where it could express Renaissance ideas.

In any event, Spinoza's Ethics defies capsulization, except to describe it as an interconnected system of theorems which attempt to bring, a la Descartes, an overall mathematical order to an obviously ethically disordered world.

### David Hume (1711–1776)

Hume is perhaps the most noted skeptic in the field of ethics, but although his writing carries the tone of intellectual mistrust of conventional thinking, it is invariably good–natured. (His skepticism was not entirely born of simply a phlegmatic nature; many of the "enlightened" scholars of the era produced what might, in modern vernacular, be termed "crackpot" ideas, so Hume's skepticism might have been entirely healthy.)

Of particular interested to a reader pursuing the subject of ethics is An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, in which Hume made a heroic effort to attach accurate definitions to all the psychological attributes being used, he felt, rather loosely.  An Enquiry... was a follow–up to an earlier failed (in terms of public acceptance) effort titled On Morals, which also attempted the same systematic definition of value judgments.

Much of Hume's writing is categorized as epistemological because he investigated not only morals per se but why we feel actions are right, how we know actions are right, and –– in the extremes of skepticism –– how we really know we know anything at all.

### Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

Kant  was the champion of a priori ethics. The phrase means that he held that ethics are derived from universal principles and are not based on empiricism.  In other words, the basic principle exists in nature; you can deduct it by pure logic and you do not need to observe the principle in action to verify it.  Hence the famous categorical imperative, a contention that good can only stem from a good will; hence, motives, not consequences, are the important factors in making moral judgments. According to the categorical imperative, we must act on that good will always, acting as if "the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature."

Kant and Aristotle are often considered the tallest historical figures in ethics.  Kant's writing is neither overly abstract nor difficult, although it can become tedious.  Kant has an undeserved reputation for obscurity, based, perhaps, on poor translations; in any library you will find numerous translations of all Kant, so if you are interested try to find one that is not

deadly dull.   Anything translated and annotated by T.M. Knox is likely to be fairly readable.

## John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) and Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832)

A British utilitarian, Mill  championed the "pleasure and pain" formula for determining the greatest good.   J.S. Mill's most relevant work is Utilitarianism.   Mill and the other famous utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham , differed on some minor points, but their thrust was essentially the same. One difference worth noting is that Bentham was less concerned with philosophy and more interested in practical implementation of social policy.

It might be misleading to dismiss Mill and Bentham as sharing the same thoughts and differing only on matters of application of theory and other "minor points," so here is a simplified and probably simplistic explanation of what those minor points are: It is usually held that Bentham stressed quantity of pleasure rather than quality in determining the utilitarian scheme of things; Mill was a bit more concerned with defining the quality of pleasure.   Bentham was an act utilitarian, believing that the ethical worth of each act should be judged by the good of its consequences.  While the jury is still out on this one, Mill is usually thought of as a rule utilitarian, meaning that the judgments of acts should be based on how those acts conform with certain tenets of the utilitarian doctrine.

### John Dewey (1859–1952)

A uniquely American thinker, a Vermonter by birth, a Midwesterner by transplantation, Dewey concerned himself with the practical application of thought and ethics to everyday life.  He clearly espouses the notion that philosophy and ethics are methods of understanding and managing life –– not merely mental calisthenics.

Dewey is eminently readable, and in addition to his own philosophy he makes earlier works much more understandable through thoughtful analysis.

### G.E. Moore (1873–1958)

Moore's Principia Ethica is not only a statement of a theory of ethics but a lucid explication of other theories.   Moore is important in the "analytical"

movement in ethics, where fundamental assumptions are re–examined. Moore offers some very practical advice in the preface to Principia: "In ethics," he maintains, "as in all other philosophical studies, the difficulties and disagreements, of which history is full, are mainly due to a very simple cause: namely to attempt to answer questions without first discovering precisely what question it is which you desire to answer."

**Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951)**

Wittgenstein was important in the areas of linguistics, epistemology, and logic; by extension, his work has had important ramifications in modern ethics.

Essentially, he held that many disputes evolved from the fact that we simply misuse and misunderstand language –– a powerful and reasonable argument in an era of widespread mass communications.

Reading Wittgenstein's intensely thorough examination of "language–games" requires some fortitude, though.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ETHICS AND LAW

A final distinction, and an important one: Ethics is not the same as law. Law is a system of written or commonly accepted prescriptions (what you should do) and proscriptions (what you should not do) that are backed by some sort of enforcement power.  You go to jail or pay a fine if you break the law.  But if you commit a breach of ethics, there may or may not be any punishment.

Ethics involves what author and ethics scholar Rushworth Kidder calls "obedience to the unenforceable." If you are driving down an isolated country road with a front-seat full of food wrappers, what is it that prevents you from chucking them out the window?  You know that there is no possible way you can be ticketed for littering, but some internal, unenforceable dictate compels you not to bespoil the landscape.

Ethics also involves weighing conflicting claims of what is right.  There is a misconception about ethics that assumes there is one "right" or "ethical" choice, and the rest is "unethical" and "wrong." In some easy cases, that is true.  Lying in a news story or advertisement in order to sensationalize the story or sell more product is clearly wrong and unethical.  But what about invading the privacy of a man dying of AIDS by printing the story in a newspaper, against his will, in the belief that the public must more

thoroughly recognize the scope of the AIDS crisis? Clearly, there are "right" claims on both sides: the man's wish to keep his privacy, the media's desire to inform the public of a crucial story. These are the types of cases that involve what Kidder calls "right versus right" dilemmas. We will explore the right versus right aspects of the teenage suicide case as well as the AIDS case involving the late tennis great Arthur Ashe later in this chapter.

## CODES OF ETHICS

There are, of course, many written codes of ethics. These codes are sometimes backed with certain enforcement measures, such as suspension or firing. In many cases, what is written in ethics codes is not so much ethics but rules of conduct and standards of operation.

There are codes of ethics in many media professions, including not only journalism but advertising and public relations. Journalism, though, seems to provide the most active and interesting hotbed of controversy about ethics and ethics codes.

### Who Uses Ethics Codes?

In 1923, the American Society of Newspaper Editors adopted an ethics code, and three years later Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists, did likewise. The codes and the name of one organization (the name "Sigma Delta Chi" was recently dropped and now the group is known simply as the Society of Professional Journalists) have changed, but much of the intent remains the same: They are voluntary sets of rules aimed at proscribing certain types of conduct deemed unethical, thereby increasing the stature of the craft or profession (whichever we choose to call it).

Other national codes exist; among them are the code of ethics of the Radio-Television News Directors Association and the Associated Press Managing Editors association Code of Ethics. There are also many individual codes at local newspapers, radio and television stations. While no one has tallied the precise figure, statistically reliable surveys, such as a study sponsored by the American Society of Newspaper editors, indicated that nearly two thirds of newspapers have some sort of written codes.

A later study on sample consisting of print and broadcast newspeople produced a roughly similar figure.

A fairly recent study by Jay Black and the national ethics committee of the Society of Professional Journalists indicated that 42.5 percent of newspapers and 31.3 percent of TV stations relied on written codes. No

reason for the discrepancy between this figure and the percentage cited in earlier studies was noted.

## What Happens When There Isn't A Formal Ethics Code?

Of survey respondents who did not have formal written codes, many noted that they used a patchwork of "piecemeal verbal and memo-published") codes, often referred to as memo-and-meeting codes.  It is reasonably safe to assume that most informal verbal codes exist at small organizations where presumably lines of communication are more clear and direct than in a larger news organization.

"Memo and meeting" ethics approaches appear to be widespread.  A survey undertaken by Douglas Anderson of Arizona State University indicated that three-fourths of newspaper managing editors who responded had issued memos on ethical issues, and two-thirds had held seminars.  When formal codes existed, about a quarter of the editors responding said that the codes were posted somewhere in the building, while about half said codes had been circulated to staffers.

## From Where do these Codes Come?

Jay Black's survey says:

·     The majority of written codes are produced in-house, most written by management.

·     About one-quarter of the newspapers and TV stations borrowed them from parent corporations.

·     Just a few directly adopted national codes.

However, Black noted "Notwithstanding where the codes came from, there's a remarkable amount of similarity in how news-media codes are worded.  Most devote the bulk of their energies to defining conflicts-of-interest.  Other popular subjects include accuracy and fairness, relationships with sources, and deception/misrepresentation.  A few discuss plagiarism, invasion of privacy, photo ethics (including digital manipulation) and obscenity.   Some begin with lofty philosophical statements about the role of journalism in society; others jump right into the subject by listing journalistic 'no-no's.'"

## Content of the Written Ethics Codes

Some codes are quite brief, no longer than a few paragraphs. Others, such as the code of practices for CBS News, are book-length, and contain precise guidelines on outside employment ("occasional" feature articles or books are acceptable; any hard news reporting for other organizations is prohibited), coverage of civil disturbances, trials, and even the reporting of poll data.

Some codes address certain issues with great clarity; the Louisville Courier-Journal's policy on use of anonymous sources, for example, spelled out a balanced and common-sense viewpoint that has been used as a model by other news organizations. (In a nutshell, the code says that sometimes use of an anonymous source is unavoidable but on the whole it is a case in which one must exercise "extreme caution.")

Because of the similarity of codes, I believe that an examination of the four major national journalism codes can offer a snapshot of what is on code-writers' minds.

I have summarized the basic tenets of the four major national journalism codes, and followed that with an analysis of factors common to each.

**The Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists**

This code was adopted in 1926, and revised in 1973, 1984 1987, AND 1996. The 1987 revision was a hotly contested one because that revision removed a self-censure clause from the code. The previous code ended with a pledge stating, in part, that "journalists should actively censure and try to prevent violations of these standards, and they should encourage their observance by all newspeople." The 1987 revision modified the comparable portion of the pledge to read: "The Society shall -- by programs of education and other means -- encourage individual journalists to adhere to these tenets, and shall encourage journalistic publications and broadcasters to recognize their responsibility to frame codes of ethics in concert with their employees to serve as guidelines in furthering these goals."

Other sections of the SPJ code are grouped under five headings: "Responsibility," "Freedom of the Press," "Ethics," "Accuracy and Objectivity," and "Fair Play." Entries under the first two headings make reference to "the public's right to know of events of public importance and interest," and the "inalienable right" of press freedom.

There are six entries under the ethics heading; many restate the obvious ("plagiarism is dishonest") but others are quite specific. Point #2 of the ethics section, for example, advises that secondary employment, political

involvement, holding public office and service in community organizations should be avoided if "it compromises the integrity of journalists and their employers."

The ethics section also cautions reporters to avoid freebies. "Nothing of value," the code flatly states, "shall be accepted."

The accuracy and objectivity heading stresses the journalist's responsibility for telling the truth, obtaining information from reliable sources, and ensuring that "newspaper headlines should be fully warranted by the content of the articles they accompany. Photographs and telecasts should "give an accurate picture of an event and not highlight an incident out of context." Reporting and commentary, the code advises, must always be clearly separated and commentary must be labeled as such.

Under "Fair Play," SPJ members are advised that they will at all times show respect for the "dignity, privacy, rights, and well-being of people encountered in the course of gathering the news." Also, there is a specific mention that newspeople should not communicate "unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without giving the accused a chance to reply."

In an entry on fair play, it is noted that journalists should be accountable to the public and the public should be encouraged to voice grievances against the media.

**The Code of Broadcast News Ethics of the Radio Television Digital News Association (Formerly known as the Radio-Television News Directors Association**

This document is briefer than the SPJ code, listing seven fundamental points, the last of which is another admonition to "encourage" observance of the code by all journalists. There are many similarities to the SPJ code in respect to integrity (declining gifts) and respecting the dignity, privacy and well-being of people with whom broadcasts journalists deal.

The first point in the credo (there are no headings) implores members to be accurate, keep news and commentary respectably compartmentalized, and not mislead the public into believing that something which is staged and rehearsed is spontaneous.

The RTNDA code calls for members to respect the confidentiality of sources. The code also advises members to promptly acknowledge and correct errors.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) Statement of Principles

The Statement was adopted in 1975, and replaced the 1922 code of ethics which was originally titled "Canons of Journalism."  It contains six "articles," dealing, respectively, with responsibility, freedom of the press, independence, truth and accuracy, impartiality, and fair play.

It reads very much like a shortened version of the SPJ code, and calls for the standard virtues of separation of commentary and reporting, freedom of the press (warning that the "press must be vigilant against all who would exploit the press for selfish purpose").  The Statement of Principles also cautions journalists not to give even the impression of impropriety, and includes a mandate that all persons "publicly accused should be given the earliest opportunity to respond."  The Statement also urges that pledges of confidentiality be honored "at all costs."

## The Associated Press Managing Editors Association Code of Ethics

The AP code is roughly the same length as the ASNE Statement, and is similar in focus.  There are four major headings:  Responsibility, Accuracy, Integrity, and Conflicts of Interests.  The code is similar to others examined so far, but has an admonishment found in the ASNE code but not RTNDA or SPJ that news sources should be disclosed unless there is a "clear reason not to do so." (In other words, don't use unidentified sources if you can possibly avoid it.)  When it is necessary to protect the confidentiality of a source, the code instructs, "the reason should be explained."

The AP code concludes with this observation, unstated and not implied in the three other codes:  "No code of ethics," it reads, "can prejudge every situation.  Common sense and good judgment are required in applying ethical principles to newspaper realities."   Individual newspapers are encouraged to augment these guidelines with locally produced codes that apply more specifically to their own situations.

## What the Codes Have in Common

After examination of the codes, it becomes obvious that certain principles are commonly stressed among most or all of the documents:

1. Conflict of interest.  All four of the major codes admonish newspeople not to put themselves in positions which compromise their integrity or

appear to compromise their integrity. "Gifts" are directly prohibited in three of the codes (SPJ, RTNDA, AP Managing Editors) and indirectly in the ASNE Statement, which prohibits accepting "anything of value." The codes also make reference to other compromising activities at various levels of specificity.

2. Accuracy. The words "accurate" and "truth" are mentioned in all four major national codes. "Objectivity" and similar concepts appear throughout the codes, also.

3. Constitutional privilege is mentioned directly by SPJ ("our Constitutional role to seek the truth"), and the ASNE. An extensional privilege, the "public's right to know," is mentioned by the SPJ code, The AP code, and indirectly ("guarantees to the people through their press a constitutional right") by the ASNE code.

4. Protecting confidential sources of information is mentioned explicitly in all four codes. The AP and ASNE codes mention that anonymity of sources should be avoided if possible; SPJ and RTNDA make no such mention.

5. Recognition and correction of errors is explicitly mandated by all four codes.

6. Issues of context are recognized in all codes. The RTNDA code and the SPJ code get into specifics about the use of video (for RTNDA and SPJ) and headlines and photos (SPJ); the codes mandate that such elements be used in a way that does not mislead.

7. Separation of news and commentary is mandated by all four major codes. Interestingly, some codes indicate an obligation to provide commentary, or at least some type of advocacy journalism. The AP code goes so far as to claim, "The newspaper should serve as a constructive critic of all segments of society. Editorially, it should advocate needed reform or innovations in the public interest. It should expose wrongdoing or misuse of power, public or private."

8. All codes have various allusions to broad principles of respect for the truth, the reading/viewing/listening public, and all prominently mention the word "responsibility." All codes explicitly or implicitly recognize an individual's right to privacy.

Of particular interest in this analysis is Point #6, the context issue. The AP code gives the strongest recognition the role of complete context in presenting a fair picture -- and invents a verb in the process -- when it advocates that, "The newspaper should background, with the facts, public statements that it knows to be inaccurate or misleading." (In other words, don't print a statement out of context when you know that simply printing

the statement will mislead; use background material to paint a full picture.)

RTNDA advises that the viewer must not be misled by video, an interesting sidelight to the current "news simulation" controversy, an issue upon which the jury is still out as of this writing. Some critics and practitioners feel that simulation, having actors portray news events within the context of a news-type report, it is a harmless practice. Others believe it oversteps the boundaries of news coverage.

Increasingly, codes for many news organizations stress caution in activities involving social media, noting that journalists can erode their credibility if they appear to be less than objective judging by the social-media posts.

## Who Enforces These Codes?

Usually the managing editor or the news director. On rare occasions, a team makes a decision, and in even rarer cases, the staff makes a decision.

## How Are The Codes Enforced?

Usually on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes, hearings are held. Black reports that about one in ten respondents noted that they had some sort of "progressive" enforcement system that starts with an oral warning, progresses to a written letter for the file, and then progresses to other penalties including termination.

As a strictly employer-oriented form of accountability (although it may be brought on by a breach of accountability to the public) internal discipline is difficult to describe and measure for the obvious reason that it is typically carried on behind closed doors.

But in the end, ethics means obedience to something other than a written set of rules. As we all know, you can quite easily stay within the written rules and not be ethical: swindlers often specifically look for areas not covered in written law and use those loopholes to exploit others.

With these distinctions in mind, let's construct a framework of ethics and relate what is sometimes called "classical" ethics to modern problems.

## PUTTING ETHICS INTO PRACTICE: THE TRADITIONAL DIVIDING POINT

Philosophers tend to fall into two camps when discussing ethics: consequentialists and non-consequentialists. Some take a middle ground, advocating an approach that adds up the pluses and minuses and produces an average, or mean, that is between the extremes.

## Consequentialist Ethics

Consequentialists believe that instead of attempting to judge whether an act itself is right, the judgment should be based on the expected outcome of the action. John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham both advocated a type of consequentialism called utilitarianism -- the course of action that produces the greatest good for the greatest number, or as Mill put it, the greatest happiness.

Consequentialists like Mill and Bentham will argue that the ends justify the means, and that motives are not a particularly important factor in ethical analysis. If I am drowning and you save me, a consequentialist would argue, your motive does not matter one bit. I'm alive, and I don't care if you saved me out of the goodness of your heart or if you just wanted to get your name in the paper.

## Non-Consequentialist Ethics

Non-consequentialists, though, argue that results are not the standards by which we should judge an act. Motives are. Immanuel Kant was the most widely recognized non-consquentialist, and his philosophy is probably familiar to you: Act on a categorical imperative, as if your "maxim would become a universal law."

Kant would argue that stealing is wrong. It is always wrong. Therefore, even if you are lost and starving, breaking into someone's cabin to steal food is still wrong, regardless of the mitigating circumstances. Stealing, a wrong, cannot become right when it proves convenient, because if everybody adopted such a conveniently elastic set of ethics, everyone would become a thief as they bent the rules to fit their particular situation.

## Golden Mean Ethics

Some ethicists take a middle ground and put their trust in the individual's judgment -- aiming for a point halfway between excess and deficiency. Aristotle called this the golden mean. He claimed that it is the quickest path to excellence, and that virtue is the mean between extremes, a mid-point that cannot be determined by blind adherence to consequences, or to motives, but only to rational principle, that principle by which a man or

woman of practical reason -- someone who shows common good sense -- would made a decision.

The three principles described so far -- consequentialism, non-consequentialism, and golden-mean thinking -- are not as abstract or dusty as you might suspect. We use them every day in attempting to sort through dilemmas. Sometimes those dilemmas have high stakes, such as the story of the high school football captain who committed suicide...

## Applying Ethical Reasoning to a Suicide Story

TO RECAP THE SITUATION: A teenager, the captain of the local football team and the president of his high school senior class, commits suicide by hanging himself inside a school building. It is the unwritten policy of the Hypothetical Herald not to publish the names of suicide victims who are essentially private people (as opposed to public figures or officials). However, there is no law prohibiting the publication of the name and details of the suicide, and three editors are considering the possibility of publishing full details of the incident. You must make the decision whether to publish or not, and you have three of your editors making persuasive cases:

Editor A is a consequentialist. Her argument: "You know, for years we've swept teenage suicide under the rug. We've pretended that it doesn't happen, or maybe it just happens to really messed-up kids who are runaways or strung out on drugs. But here's a kid who had everything going for him, and he still killed himself. I'm sorry -- I know it will cause his family terrible pain -- but think of all the lives we might save if we give this full coverage! Let's hammer home the idea that even a kid who seems happy and successful can be a suicide victim. Let's use his name. Everybody in town knows him. This might wake a few people up. And to be honest, we can't let the other papers in town kill us on this. You know they're going to run the whole story, and they're going to run it page one. We're under the gun from marketing already, and if we blow off this story we're going to be buried."

Editor B is a non-consequentialist. His argument: "We can't just apply the rules to the easy cases. Sure, it's tempting to run his name -- the word will probably get around, anyway -- but we've had a policy of withholding names for years. Why should we violate our own rules now, just because we think we can do some good and maybe boost circulation? Aren't we exploiting this poor kid? Look, we don't know that we're going to save any lives. All we know is that we're going to put the family through hell. That's why we have the rule in the first place. Let's stick to our own policy. If we don't, what's the point of having a policy?"

Editor C wants to follow the golden mean.  Editor C's determination is largely an individualistic judgment which represents, in his or her mind, the virtuous decision -- the decision which is neither irresponsible nor exploitative, the decision which does not cater to an extreme position but balances the two positions.   Indeed, a golden mean decision, can be every bit as painful as a consequentialist or non-consequentialist decision.

But ideally, the golden-mean decision, the virtue judgment, will balance the consequentialist and non-consequentialist reasoning and take into account why that reasoning has taken place; again, more on that will come in the final section.

## Why Compromise Does Not Always Work

Note that a golden mean decision does not necessarily translate to a compromise.   An editor who believes only in compromise for the sake of avoiding the hard choices on either end of the consequentialist-non-consequentialist spectrum could produce what we might colloquially call a no-pain-no-gain statement.  Let's assume Editor D, a strong proponent of compromise, wanders into the room and proposes just such a settlement:

Editor D: "Can't we compromise on this?  We've got an untenable situation either way.  We really can't ignore the suicide; we're committing a disservice to our readers.  But we shouldn't violate our own policy and run the name.  Why should we suddenly pick this kid to make an example?  I think we should run the story but not use the name.  Give the basic information, enough information to make the point about the prevalence of teenage suicide, but withhold identification."

Let's dispose of Editor D's case right away, since he represents no particular "philosophy" other than avoiding trouble.  What he wants just won't work, as is the case with many easy answers.  Running a story that an unidentified young man at Hypothetical High killed himself might start a panic among every member of the community who has a friend,or relative at Hypothetical High.  And the alternative, "...the captain of Hypothetical High's football team and the president of the senior class, whose name is being withheld..." is silly.  Now, some compromise can certainly work, but not this one.

Let's work through each scenario and explore the pros and cons of each ethical framework. Remember: These are not foolproof formulas, nor are they formulas, anyway.  The following are simply ways to view a problem and illuminate our thinking patterns.  Once we understand how we are thinking about a problem, and why we reason that way, and how others

opposed to us rebut our argument, we can step back and gain a clearer perspective of our thought process and search for flaws in our reasoning.

**Non-Consequentialism: Pro and Con**

Pro: Non-consequentialism offers a stable and very persuasive framework. Why should we decide to violate our rule (not using the name of the suicide victim) because we think it will provide some benefit. What proof do we have that using the name will prevent further suicides? When did we become the Amazing Kreskin? We can see the future now?

Another point: If we are not going to stick to a rule, why bother having the rule? You can't choose to follow the rules just in the easy cases. Rules are made for tough choices.

These are the arguments that non-consequentialists use to strengthen their case. Now, here's how those arguments are typically attacked by the other side...

Con: Critics of non-consequentialism argue that following a categorical imperative is logically inconsistent. Why? Here's a sample argument:

> *Consequentialist: So your claim is that consequences don't count because we can't predict outcomes. Correct?*

> *Non-Consequentialist: That's right.*

> *Consquentialist: In other words, you're saying that I cannot predict an outcome?*

> *Non-consquentialist: That's right.*

> *Consequentialist: And you can't predict an outcome either?*

> *Non-consequentialist: Of course not.*

> *Consequentialist: But when you say I can't predict an outcome, aren't YOU making a prediction?*

> *Non-consequentialist: Well...I...uh...*

So in this case, it could be argued that assuming all these dire consequences if we break the rule -- causing pain to the family, glamorizing suicide, etc. -- is illogical on its face. Also, don't we need the ability to change a rule when circumstances dictate? Back in 1930 the

speed limit on Main Street was five miles per hour, about as fast as any car could go.  Should we keep that rule?

## Consequentialism Pro and Con

Pro: Consequentialist makes intuitive sense, especially when we look at the arguments made above: It is pointless to bind ourselves forever to an inflexible rule.  We can look past the immediate situation and do what will provide the greatest good.  And finally, we don't anticipate consequences while attempting to ignore them.

Con: There are some flaws in non-consequentialist thinking, too.  The notion that you cannot predict consequences is quite valid because at the extreme, no one can predict the future with 100 percent accuracy.   Will breaking the rule deter teenage suicide?  Maybe, and maybe not.

Doesn't it make sense to base our decision on premises of which we are sure: That we want to protect the privacy of families who are confronting a terrible tragedy?

## Golden Mean Pro and Con

Pro: Golden Mean thinking is attractive because it makes intuitive sense to attempt to make a decision based on what we know.  Instead of trying to predict outcomes, instead of clinging to an inflexible rule, let's add up all the pluses and minuses and come to a reasonable decision halfway between the extremes.

Con: Even Aristotle realized that there are severe self-reference problems involved in Golden Mean reasoning.  If you are making up the rules, and are determining the extremes, you can skew the point between the extremes.

How many students should I murder today? I'm in a bad mood...so I'll kill ten.  No, I really should control myself and only murder one.  Oh, what the hell, let's be reasonable.  Five.

On a more realistic level, let's also note that pure compromise does not always produce a viable alternative, as we illustrated with Editor D's solution.

## The Resolution

So what's the answer?  There is no right answer, of course. More on that in a second, but first a note that the case really isn't hypothetical.  A similar case occurred in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.  Some news organizations stuck to the rules and did not, at first, run the name.  Others used the name and the full circumstances, justifying what they did with consequentialist reasoning involving deterring suicide.   Some news organizations, when confronting similar situations, opt for reasonable compromise, such as not reporting the name or the suicide at first but running a story on teenage suicide a few weeks later.

How would you decide the case?  Personally, I would run the name and the details, something I have done in the past when confronted with similar situations.  I have no desire to hurt the family, but when I was high school two classmates committed suicide -- and I believe the contention that everyone around them ignored the "symptoms," believing that popular students would never find a reason to kill themselves and were "just talking." But that's not true: Suicide is a major cause of death among teenagers.

You may disagree, and you may be right.  In fact, more people disagree with me than agree on this case, including some experienced editors.

In any event, finding a universal "right answer" is not the point. Journalists know that there is no pat "right" answer, but they also realize that what they report has consequences, and the affected public wants to know why they did what they did.  The public -- and the journalist's conscience -- is usually satisfied by a reasoned answer.

But increasingly, "we did it because we can -- the First Amendment says so" is not an acceptable answer.


**PRIVACY**

One of the concerns you may have expressed about releasing the name in the above case is violating the right to privacy of the suicide victim or of his family.  That is a legitimate concern, but unfortunately there are few hard-and-fast rules about the right to privacy versus the public's right to know.

In fact, those two commonly used terms muddy the issue even further. The "right" to privacy is not mentioned anywhere in the Constitution.  The closest that document comes to protecting your privacy is in Article 6 of the Bill of Rights, which limits police powers of search and seizure.  Some federal statutory and common law protects us from certain uses of records maintained by federal agencies, and from unauthorized use of our likeness, embarrassment brought on by reckless and unnecessary media coverage, and unreasonable physical intrusion in our lives by a reporter or

anyone else. A few states have laws prohibiting the naming of sex-crime victims, although those laws are not usually enforced.

## A Troubling Case that Resonates Years Later

Privacy laws only apply in the most extreme cases, and we may still wind up the subjects of unwanted media attention.  This is particularly true in the case of public figures, because the courts have decided that "newsworthiness" outweighs anyone's presumed right to privacy.  When tennis star Arthur Ashe
learned that he had contracted the AIDS virus, he felt that it was within his rights to keep that news to himself.  But USA Today and other publications and news organization went ahead with the story, against Ashe's wishes.

The news media and the public were sharply divided over the issue.  Some maintained that people's health is their own, private business.  Others contended that it was necessary to tell the story to document the extent of the threat from AIDS.  That is a highly consequentialist argument, and it does make some sense.  (I must note that when I started reporting 25 years ago families would often ask that I not mention cancer as the cause of death for their loved ones; cancer was for some reason considered a "dirty" disease and there was a stigma attached to it.  If the practice were widespread, it would certainly have blunted the impact of cancer on communities and society in general.)

Ashe never went so far as to concede that what the media had done was right, but he did once note that he understood the value of a free press and if a few people like Arthur Ashe had to be trampled in order to maintain that freedom, there was a certain logic in it.

And that is a good summary of why we tolerate the sometimes painful intrusions by the media.  As far as "the right to privacy" goes, it remains a fairly general and un-enforceable concept -- more an appeal to ethics than law.

## Does the 'Right to Privacy' Have a Foundation?

It is also a young concept, about a hundred years. The well-known phrase "the right to be let alone," was made famous in an article that is often regarded by legal scholars and philosophers as the first truly sustained and explicit discussion of the legal and ethical dimensions of privacy.  Titled "The Right to Privacy," the article was co-written by Justice Brandeis in an 1890 edition of the Harvard Law Review.

The article was in response to reporters crashing a party at Mr. Warren's house. (Warren and Brandeis were law partners.) Intruding on a person's home was a serious breach of etiquette in 1890, because private parties were considered just that -- private.  In fact, people of a certain social standing at the turn of the century felt violated just by seeing their names in print.

The fact that a newspaper would even consider sending reporters to cover a party at a lawyer's home was a direct outgrowth of an unanticipated effect of technology.  The refinement of rotary presses had made newspapers inexpensive, and made it possible to produce a lot of them with great speed.  As a result, there was a lot of space to fill, and journalists rushed to fill it.  But with what did they fill it?

Brandeis put it this way: "Gossip is no longer the resource of the idle and vicious, but has become a trade, which is pursued with industry as well as effrontery."

In fairness, this was an isolated case in which the press pushed too hard and Justice Brandeis retaliated with a bit too much artillery, but the point is that Brandeis realized that new rules needed to be drawn up because an evolving technology (the mass-circulation newspaper) had changed the game.


## The Public's 'Right to Know'

So what about the "public's right to know"?  That particular "right" entered the popular lexicon  after World War II, popularized in part by Kent Cooper, then general manager of the Associated Press.  This view, as paraphrased by media scholar Conrad Fink, maintained that "while the First Amendment gives the press the right to freely print the news, the people's right to know gives the press the duty to print it.  Thus developed the idea of a press serving as surrogate of the people and demanding access to news, as well as freedom to print it, on behalf of the people."

Right to know" arguments carry considerable weight when dealing with public affairs and tax dollars, but as the issue becomes further removed from public affairs (perhaps a poor choice of words, given the context of tabloid journalism), the basically unresolved "right to know" argument becomes a bit more shaky.

In a book titled Secrets, Sissela Bok argues that such a "right" is clearly far from self-evident.

Taken by itself, the notion that the public has a "right to know" is quixotic from an epistemological as from a moral point of view, and the idea of the

public's "right to know the truth" even more so.  It would be had to find a more fitting analogue to Jeremy Bentham's characterization of talk about natural and imprescriptible rights as "rhetorical nonsense -- nonsense upon stilts."  How can one lay claims to a right to know the truth when even partial knowledge is out of reach concerning most human affairs, and when bias and rationalization and denial skew and limit  knowledge still further?

> *...So patently inadequate is the rationale of the public's right to know as a justification for reporters to probe and expose, that although some still intone it ritualistically at the slightest provocation, most now refer to it with a tired irony.*

## CONCLUSION

It is intoxicatingly easy to label actions "ethical" or "unethical," "moral" or "immoral," depending on our personal set of beliefs.  A British dramatist and poet named Oscar Wilde once maintained that morality "is the attitude we adopt against people we dislike." H. L. Mencken, a newspaperman and social critic, adopted a similar view when he wrote that deep in the heart of those overly concerned with morality was the consuming fear that somebody, somewhere, was having fun.

There is nothing wrong with viewing the world through the lens of your personal beliefs -- after all, how else would you do it?  The value of reading and studying ethics, though, is the ability to adopt a new framework for sifting through conflicting claims, a structure that allows us new views and vantage points.

And that is the point of this chapter.

## Chapter 14: Economics of Media and Journalism

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

***What's Ahead...*** This chapter examines basic economic theory, particularly theories that relate to the media industry.  Then discussion moves to the particular nature of competition and monopoly that affect media.

***Why It's Important...***The economic factors that guide media have significant cultural impact.  A surprising number of aspects of media operations relate directly to the economic structure of the industry and how we chose to regulate that industry.

***Points to Keep in Mind While Reading...***Regulation is often  an outgrowth of economics, and many media industries, as discussed in previous chapters, are virtual creations of regulation.   Also, note how strongly money -- and the way media industries make money -- influences content.

Media industries are peculiar businesses because their fates are often inextricably tied to such regulation.  In turn, media regulation is created because of the unusual economic circumstances in which media operate.

This chapter will first examine the economic arena where media compete, drawing links between the general nature of economic structure and the way media work and are regulated.  Next, we'll discuss ways in which the evolving media economic structure affects our culture and media environment, with a special focus on media "conglomeration," and how the drive for audience effects quality of media.

**THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF MEDIA AND OTHER INDUSTRIES**

The United States operates under what is called a market economy, meaning that prices are determined by supply and demand.  Sellers and buyers interact and eventually negotiate the deal that most benefits both parties.  A non-market economy is controlled by the central government, which determines the prices of goods and services and also controls the supply of goods and services. Non-market economies have declined lately. The U.S.S.R. went from a centrally planned non-market economy to a

partial market economy under Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika (restructuring) to a virtual economic free-for-all under the new Russian government.

## The Role Of Competition in an Economic System

Russia's current economy is illustrative of economic principles because it shows the pluses and minuses of extreme market economies. Today, there are many rich people in Russia, where there were few rich under the non-market economy. At the same time, there are many more poor people; those who lost pensions or guaranteed government jobs sometimes found themselves with nothing. Corruption and crime (at least the more visible, non-government-entrenched aspects) are rampant because there are few controls on the flow of money. In short, the new, market economy is something of a shambles.

But the old, non-market economy was about to collapse of its own weight. First of all, the centralized government did a terrible job of planning regional economies. Controls on how much food each region of the vast Russian continent could produce, for example, led to starvation. The theory was logical: Do not over-produce food; if we produce just the right amount farmers will not have to compete with each other, lower prices, and lose money. By not over-producing food and causing a price war, farmers will stay in business and therefore we will prevent future shortages.

In practice, though, this was a disaster. The nation is too big, transportation is too complex, and variables such as weather and crop yields are impossible to predict. Also, the theory of economic distribution that took money from those who had an over-supply and distributed to those who had an undersupply, often in the form of creating government-paid jobs, produced a lackadaisical, un-motivated work-force and a crushing payroll.

What happened in Russia -- the hardships under two economic extremes of market and non-market economies -- is a graphic illustration of why most nations choose an economic philosophy that is somewhere in the middle.

## The Market/Non-Market Compromise

In the United States, we lean heavily toward market economics but do utilize many non-market controls. Finding the point at which we compromise is often controversial. Some favor "let-do" economics, meaning let the people do what they want free from government

interference. This is known as "laissez-faire" (lez-ay-FAIR) economics, "let do" in French. Those who favor laissez-fair approaches often point to the self-correcting nature of a free market. Adam Smith, who published a classic work called The Wealth of Nations in 1776, argued this view compellingly, Smith contended that an "invisible hand" would set things right. If the price of pins were too high, for example, more manufacturers would enter the pin market, driving prices down to where they ought to be. If there were an over-supply of pin-makers, the lack of demand would force some out of business and return us to the perfectly balanced marketplace.

## Efforts to Address the Problems of Laissez-Faire Economics

The strength of this theory is also one of its two main problems. First, another economic principle called economies of scale dictates that if you make a million pins a day your per-pin cost will be much lower than the small cottage industry that makes a thousand pins a day. If two million-pin-per-day firms merge, their costs continue to go down, and the savings will be passed along to the consumer. But when all the big pin factories merge, there will be no competition because the smaller factories cannot compete and have gone out of business! Now, the pin conglomerate can raise prices. In theory, new pin-manufacturing companies will emerge to challenge them, but in practice it will be very difficult for any entrepreneur to break into a market dominated by one or two huge firms. The second problem lies in our compassion for the small pin-makers and their families. In a country of such abundance, we cannot let them starve.

In response to this problem with totally free markets, they United States adapted many principles of government involvement. The two most important, at least for the sake of this discussion, are anti-trust legislation and Keynsian theories of economics.

## Anti-Trust Laws

These laws, most of which were passed in the reform era of the late 1800s to early 1900s, were aimed at stopping large firms from gaining complete, or monopolistic, control of the markets. This was in response to unfair business practices and price-gouging by huge conglomerates, which were called "trusts."

This body of law holds that no firm can have a monopoly except when a justifiable "natural" monopoly exists, such as a power company serving a city. There can be no real competition in this case, because there is a shortage of space to string electric wires. When a natural monopoly exists, though, anti-trust law holds that it is subject to strict regulation.

The significance of anti-trust law to our discussion is that it introduced the principle of the government regulating the formation of monopolies, and tightly regulating the operations of monopolies that have to exist.

## Keynesian Economics

Another economic crisis, more severe than the domination of the trusts in the 1890s, befell the U.S. in the 1930s. It was the Great Depression, a desperate time when many lost their savings and could find no work.

John Maynard Keynes (KAINZ) was an economist who influenced President Roosevelt during the Great Depression. Keynes argued that the fluctuations of the free market were too destructive to tolerate. Righting the economy, he theorized. depended in part upon balancing the supply of money and income available for spending (which he called "aggregate demand") with the value of all goods and services available. To (over)simplify, Keynes advocated jump-starting the free market by injecting extra money into the economy. Since the government does not have unlimited supplies of money, it borrows it. The government often sells bonds as a way of borrowing money.

The acceptance of Keynsian economics firmly entrenched government as a player in setting economic policy.

## The Policies of John Kenneth Galbraith

One other economist whose theories are relevant to this discussion is John Kenneth Galbraith. Galbraith argues that the free market is no longer a self-correcting machine because the rise of the giant corporation has unbalanced the mechanism. These corporations, he contends, have gotten into the business of creating market demand rather than responding to it, and have also imposed their own set of rules on the free market.

Corporations have undoubtedly changed the landscape of a "free market," and corporations may sometimes impose, or attempt to impose, their best interests on the market. Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich summed this point up well when testifying before Congress about corporate layoffs; he pointed out that "corporations do not exist in nature" as he argued that it is feasible to regulate corporations without destroying the free market. His theory was that the American legal system created corporations, giving them tax and liability advantages that do not exist "naturally," and therefore there is no inherent danger of corrupting the free market if corporations are regulated.

## COMPETITION AND CONGLOMERATION IN MEDIA INDUSTRIES

The discussion above lays an immediately accessible structure for understanding the current state of media economics. As you have already deduced, the role of competition is key to the function of any economic environment, and critical to media economics. Further, it becomes apparent that in the absence of a truly self-correcting market, the government provides the guidelines for competition; this is clearly the case with media. Finally, the role of the corporation has altered the playing field for competition among businesses -- a matter of some current controversy among media industries and their critics.

## Media Monopolies And Oligopolies

Many economists view the sum total of these factors as a continuum ranging from "perfect competition" to "monopoly." Other common landmarks along the spectrum include monopolistic competition and oligopoly, such as the model proposed by media economist Robert Picard. Read it from left to right:

Perfect Competition - Monopolistic Competition - Oligopoly - Monopoly

In a market characterized by perfect competition, there are many sellers of product, and no company dominates the market. Monopolistic competition usually refers to a market where there is a limited number of suppliers, but those suppliers are in direct and open competition.

An oligopoly is a market situation where the landscape is dominated by a small number of suppliers who, while in theoretical competition with each other, are competing in such a small arena that they can monitor their competitors and adjust accordingly. Media economist Douglas Gomery explains an oligopoly this way: "The essence of an oligopoly is that the number of firms is small enough that it can be cognizant of the actions of rivals and react accordingly. Take the case of the three networks. When NBC offers a new comedy at a particular time of particular day, its rivals, ABC and CBS, counter-program."

Oligopolies thus find themselves in a unique position to control the market while still jockeying for a greater share of it, playing within certain rules. "But in the end the product they hype seem strangely alike...in essence, all three "agree" on the rules of the competition and then seek to differentiate their products to make the most money, always know what their rivals are up to. The goal is the most profit...within the rules of the game."[2]

A monopoly is just what the strategy in the board game implies: owning and controlling everything.

**American Media on the Monopoly/Free Competition Spectrum**

Various media fall along this spectrum at different points, and those points change according to technology, regulation, and other market conditions. For example, television programming is moving from an oligopoly to a state of monopolistic completion. While the big three networks continue to dominate the market, their share is diminishing as more cable stations enter the arena. The oligopoly described by Gomery (in 1989, when the article from which he was quoted was written) is loosening; there is no more visible sign of this that the increasing lack of importance of counter - programming. Counter-programming means strategically placing a program opposite a competitor's, often to drain off the part of the audience your competitor is not reaching.

Books reside near the monopolistic competition landmark on the spectrum, although the ability of an individual to publish and market an e-book is eroding that control. Newspapers often have near monopolistic control over their local markets, especially since the decline of two-paper cities. Blogs and other types of smaller media, of course, are eroding the traditional concept of a newspaper monopolyMagazines exist somewhere between the perfect competition and monopolistic competition ranges. The market is usually national, meaning that location does not necessarily impose a monopoly. The magazine industry is unregulated and open to all, but placement on newsstands is a difficult market to crack and it helps if you are a large corporation. (This latter statement can, of course, be universally applied to almost any business situation.) But webzines are another story. Almost anyone can put up a web page, and in highly innovative businesses being big is not always an advantage; webzines, therefore, come close to approaching perfect competition. The recording industry tends to locate near monopolistic competition, while radio and television are in the oligopoly neighborhood. Cable is traditionally a monopoly, but under the provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 that will change, with other providers, such as phone companies and broadcasters, delivering content over wires.
The Telecommunications Act and its Effect on Monopolies

In fact, the Telecommunications Act is intended to reduce government-imposed monopolies in all communications. This will, proponents maintain, produce a near-perfect state of competition in which the marketplace can operate efficiently. (Shades of Adam Smith!) The government is not only deregulating but putting in place policies that are intended to encourage the growth of the telecommunications industries. (Exactly the type of pro-active government intervention that would only be possible after Keynes.) But some critics argue that the presence of giant corporations has rewritten the rules and de-regulating to increase competition will not work because the corporations, merging compulsively

to provide themselves the most powerful economy of scale and control of the marketplace, will form monopolies and drive the competition out of business. (Echoes of Galbraith.)

## MEDIA AND MONOPOLIES: SOME UNIQUE PROBLEMS

The existence of media monopolies or restrictive oligopolies,or the promise of new ones forming, is a highly controversial topic in the communications business.

Concentration of ownership is increasingly visible in the 175 billion per year media industry. The ten largest newspaper chains, for example, own more than a third of the nation's dailies. More than half the revenue of American radio stations goes to a total of ten corporations. A little more than two dozen firms, in total, control more than half the media business in the Unites States, according to critic Ben Bagdikian, author of several books about this issue, including The Media Monopoly.

Bagdikian and other critics generally cite two problems when they argue that over-heated media concentration is detrimental to the industry:

1) That buying and selling of media as profit centers increases expectations of profit to unreasonable levels, and in the process forces those media to compromise themselves -- producing more money but providing less public service.

2) That ownership of many media by a few giant conglomerates shrinks the marketplace of ideas.

## Problems With Expectation of Profit in Media Models

Any business must make a profit. No one in a market economy begrudges that. But the severest critics of media note that the intrusion of giant corporations in to the industry has increased the expectation of profit unreasonably. Those corporate owners, the theory holds, view media businesses as nothing more than profit centers and wring out every last drop of income.

Bagdikian contends that the expectation of profit for newspapers and network-affiliated television stations has doubled in the past 20 years, so that now a newspaper is expected to earn 20- to 40-percent pre-tax profits, and a television station 20- to 50-percent. (Without getting into the intricacies of reporting "profit," be assured that these margins are very large in comparison to most businesses.)

The complexion of media ownership patterns has changed considerably in the last three decades. One reason is the relaxation of FCC regulations that required broadcast stations to devote a certain amount of time and resources to sometimes unprofitable public service. Another reason is the fact that corporate America discovered that media business, like other acquired firms, could be highly profitable. The particular media business, perhaps a radio station, could produce considerable revenues if overhead expenses were cut and costs amortized, perhaps across a chain of radio stations.

## Why is Chain Ownership Beneficial to the Bottom Line?

Amortization of costs is an important factor in the efficiency of chain ownership of all media. Here's why: If one radio station is owned by one company, the costs of accounting, the health plan, the personnel paperwork -- the list goes on -- must be borne in total by the one company. But if the firm owns ten radio stations, much of this work can be centralized, and the chain's accounting department can apply its expertise to all ten stations. Instead of ten accountants, the chain may only need two or three. The conglomeration of revenues to the chain owner will, in turn, allow that company to make terrific deals when buying goods (such as equipment) and services (health plans for 300 people rather than 30).

The chain, if it generates a large amount of money, can also hire top management talent and use those managers to supervise operations at all stations.

There is another important reason why chain ownership is so attractive: If a company owns a variety of businesses, its fortunes do not ride on the ups and downs of one of them. Steady income softens the bumps.

## Arguments Opposed to Chain Ownership

Do these expectations of profit change the product? Bill Kovach, curator of Harvard University's Neiman Foundation, an institute that studies the press, and the former editor of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, says that many newspapers have indeed abandoned journalistic responsibilities in favor of turning a profit. Kovach cites a letter from a president of a newspaper division of a chain-ownership corporation, (he does not identify the person or the corporation) threatening that there is "no room any more for editors who fill up the front pates with serious stories, stories about government and its convoluted work...what we need are more stories about puberty, about sex, about marriage, that's what people want to read and that's how you increase circulation." That, Kovach contends, is the attitude you get when "market forces drive editorial decisions."[

## Arguments in Favor of Chain Ownership

Not every observer decries the influence of corporate money, however. Benjamin Compaigne his book Who Owns the Media?, reports on many cases where editors who work for papers taken over by chains claim the takeover benefited the product. Improved salaries, more resources for investigative reporting, increased financial stability, all can have positive effects.[4] The acquisition of the Philadelphia Inquirer by the Knight-Ridder chain, Compaigne writes, is generally acknowledged to have improved the quality of the paper.

Chain ownership is sometimes credited with affording local news organizations more insulation from market influence. It can be difficult for local news organizations scraping by on razor-thin profit margins to resist pressure from advertisers to influence the news. For example, a local television station manager once told me, with complete sincerity, that the key to operating a successful news division was to give favorable coverage to local business events, such as store openings, to attract and please sponsors.

## Conglomerate Ownership and The Marketplace Of Ideas

"When you have a relatively small number of corporations that own most of the media that go to most of the public," says Bagdikian, "even if they were all enlightened, unselfish, moderate in their desire for profit, respectful of opinions different from theirs, even if that were true, that's too much power in the hands of a small group." But, he adds, "it's a small group that does not necessarily have all of those encouraging qualities."

Centralized ownership does change the complexion of the media business, in particular the news business. For one thing, amortization of money is not the same as amortization of ideas across a chain of outlets. Critics charge that conglomerate ownership shrinks the marketplace of ideas, and they cite studies showing, for example, that chain-ownership papers tend to endorse presidential candidates as a bloc, and that editorials sometimes are written by one paper and distributed to others in the chain.

## The Gannett Example

Others claim a deeper, more systemic problem. The Gannett company, for instance, has been criticized in some quarters for imposing its world-view uniformly from market to market. Philip Weiss, in an article titled "Invasion of the Gannettheads," charged:

> *"The problem with Gannett isn't simply a formula or its chairman, but the company's corporate culture. The product is the company -- cheerful, superficial, self-promoting, suspicious of ideas, conformist, and implicitly authoritarian. But the Gannett story is more, too. For as man as six million daily readers, most of them in one-newspaper towns, Gannett serves as chief interpreter and informer about society -- and does so unsustained by ideals of independence or thoroughness."*

The notion that oligopolistic information industries shrink the menu of ideas from which to choose is also cited by critics of the constriction of book publishing. Organizational sociologists Lewis A. Coser, Charles Kadushin and Walter Powell discussed this in their study of the publishing industry:

## The Book Publishing Example

Given the built-in uncertainties of the market for many types of books, the book trade, like the fashion business or the movie industry, often operates on the shotgun principle. As one Hollywood mogul is said to have told an inquisitive reporter, "one of the films on this list of ten will be a big success"; but when the reporter queried "which one?" the producer answered "I have no idea.

Publishers attempt to reduce such uncertainly...through concentrating on "sure-fire" blockbusters, through large-scale promotion campaigns, or through control over distribution.

Another factor the authors cite is the growing influence of large chain bookstores.. These chains buy in huge quantities, and can receive discounts up to 17 percent higher than individual bookstores. "It does not pay for such chains to clutter their shelves with books that can only be expected to reach a limited public. Hence, as the present symbiotic relationship between publishers and book chains is further strengthened, publishers have an additional incentive to neglect books that are not likely to have mass appeal. New technologies promise to invigorate the "long tail" aspect of book marketing (as discussed previously in this book and in *The Future of News*).

Again, no one can reasonably argue that mass media industries should not be profitable. However, as we have seen so far in this chapter, there is considerable debate over just how vigorously media should pursue those profits, and how much attention should be paid to the bottom line.

Other questions, also alluded to above, have surfaced regarding media's adaptation of their content to serve as efficient advertising vehicles. The chapter will conclude with a more detailed examination of that issue.

**RATINGS, THE DRIVE FOR AUDIENCE, AND THE EFFECT ON THE MEDIA**

An important factor differentiating media from many other industries is that media serve what is called a "dual market." Media "sell" two products:

> 1) content to consumers
> and
> 2) consumers to advertisers

In order for media to sell their audience (their consumers) to advertisers, that audience must in some way be defined and measured. Before an advertiser buys time or space in a particular medium, he or she must know how many people will be reached and whether those people have the ability and willingness to buy the particular product or service advertised.

In previous chapters we have explored the relationship between the type and amount of advertising carried by a medium and that medium's program content. Chapter 3 examined how the amount of advertising determines the "newshole" in most newspapers. Chapter 5 demonstrated how niche marketing with highly focused articles provides magazines with one of the mass media's highest CPM (cost-per-thousand advertising rate). Chapter 8 scrutinized the way in which radio's narrow formats seek to capture a narrow, easily defined demographic.

And as noted earlier, television typically serves an audience that is characterized by vast numbers. While audience characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and income are measurable and important to television, it is the sheer magnitude of the TV audience that makes this such a powerful medium. Arguably the most powerful of the mass media.

As such we will focus the remainder of this chapter on "ratings" and their effect on television.

## Where Ratings Came From

Like mass media themselves, ratings and audience research are relatively new disciplines. Statistical sampling, for example, really did not become a major social and economic force until the 1930s and 1940s.

Early sampling tended to be problematic. In 1936,a magazine titled Literary Digest conducted a poll and predicted with weighty certitude that

Alf Landon would be elected President of the United States. The poll, of course, was wrong; Landon was thrashed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

What went wrong? *Literary Digest* had used a contaminated sample: It conducted the poll by telephone. In 1936, not everyone had a telephone. The new devices were expensive and tended to be found in the homes of affluent people, who tended to be Republican. Landon was a Republican. Those who were not affluent -- a sizable share of the population in Depression-era America -- did not have telephones and tended to vote Democratic, the party of FDR.

This does not mean that telephone research is inherently unreliable; such research is used today with a great deal of confidence. But this example does demonstrate that a sampling method can carry a built-in bias. A British scientist named Sir Arthur Eddington captured the nature of sampling bias in a clear and vivid analogy: If you fish using a net with a mesh wider than six inches, you'll assume that all fish are bigger than six inches. In other words, you'll never see the ones that got away. This is why sampling error is so tricky: You cannot always "see" your mistakes.

## The Early Ratings Methods

In this era of the late 1930s, radio advertisers needed a fast and large-scale method to measure listenership. A firm called C. E. Hooper, Inc., began wide-ranging research into the habits of radio audiences. Hooper, mindful of sampling error, including faulty memory on the part of the people being sampled, would call homes and count the answer only if the respondent was actually listening to the radio at the time of the call. This is called coincident sampling.

Hooper and advertisers were also aware of the limitations of the telephone itself as a collection tool, the problem that haunted Literary Digest. But until 1941 the telephone was the most practical and reasonably reliable method available. In 1941, a firm called The Pulse began using sophisticated personal interviewing as a data-collection system. A personal interview did not inject the sampling error induced by quizzing only people who owned telephones. But while the specially trained interviewers did their best to discriminate between what they thought was a respondent's reliable recall and an outright guess, people can only remember so much, and faulty memory became a confounding factor in the results.

## Arbitron Introduces the Diary

A compromise method was developed by a firm called the American Research Bureau, which was established in 1949. The firm is now known as Arbitron. Arbitron pioneered the use of a pocket diary, first used in wide-scale audience research in the 1960s, to record listening habits. The diary method solved a number of problems. First, listeners' memories were aided by use of a diary that they filled in while listening. Second, the listeners could record their out-of-home use, such as listening in the car or at the beach, popular spots for radio after transistor technology made radios portable. Third, audience members did not have to have telephones in order to be included in the sample.

Arbitron became the leader in radio ratings. The diary system was never foolproof, though. Some people are negligent in filling out the diary, and they make mistakes in recall. But for measuring radio listenership, the method is the best compromise between accuracy and cost-effectiveness.

## Nielsen and Modern People-Meters

National television viewing habits, as well as a variety of local television research, is the specialty of the A.C. Nielsen Company. Neilsen is now in its fifth decade of television audience measurement.

Neilsen once used an extensive diary system, but given the amount of television viewing during a typical day and the existence of multiple sets, diaries eventually became too cumbersome and time consuming. Neilsen now automates most of its data collection with meters attached to all television sets in a home. to monitor use. The meters, dubbed "People Meters," record not only when the TV sets are in use but who is watching them. Each member of a "Neilsen Family" has a code which he or she must enter into the machine.

## Gathering a Sample

Nielsen picks approximately 4,000 sample households based on U.S. Census data. Those data are used to identify a "typical" household to add to the mix and produce a sample that resembles the whole of American population.

Once the statistically representative household is identified, representatives from Neilsen make an in-person visit and attempt to

convince the householders to become Neilsen Families. The families are provided with a brochure explaining the process The Neilsen representative also ascertains whether the household is somehow disqualified from being in the sample -- for instance, if one of the householders is involved in network television production.

Neilsen families must keep their identities a secret and must live with the intrusion of people-meters into their lives. Brian Fischer, his wife and children, residents of Olney, Maryland, were a Neilsen family who received a call the day after the parents took the TVs out of the children's rooms as punishment. Nielsen was watching, and knew something was up. The company asked the Fischers to disconnect the meters during the punishment period so that the readings would not be skewed.[9] And when the Fischers visited Hollywood, they admit they were sorely tempted to drop just about the most powerful name in the business. They were denied admission to the taping of a soap opera; Brian Fischer says he wanted to let the guards know "we made you what you are."[10] But they did not succumb to temptation, and only discussed their connection with Neilsen after moving to a different home and becoming statistically irrelevant to Neilsen.

## What Happens To Neilsen Data

Data from People-Meters are automatically fed from the boxes at 2 a.m., when the meters call Tampa, Florida. In Tampa, the figures are tallied and "overnight" ratings are fed to networks and stations in several large markets. A variety of other reports are fashioned from this data, including estimates of nationwide viewership, special reports for cable and home video, and breakdowns of viewership by demographics.

Local Nielsens are also prepared in a variety of formats. During February, May and November, Nielsen conducts highly detailed local-market ratings, known as sweeps. July is also a sweep month, but less importance is attached to July results because so much of the audience is vacationing or involved in outdoor recreation during the days of long daylight.

## The Effect of Ratings on Television Programming

The effect of ratings is apparent in many ways. For example, television stations engage in vigorous promotion during "sweeps" week. The local news is often peppered with appealing and easily promotable items about such topics as dating and prostitution.

Syndicated talk shows live and die by ratings, and as such choose their topics with "the book" in mind. Former talk show hosts such as Phil

Donohue and Sally Jessy Raphael are straightforward about the fact that when they attempted to cover "serious" issues, such as Bosnia, ratings plummeted.  In the wake of several recent scandals involving talk shows, some producers are attempting to moderate the salaciousness of the content, but ratings suffer when the content turns "serious."

**Ratings and News**

News programs are under increasing pressure to produce viewers, and as a result, revenue.  Network television in recent years saw the size of its news audience decline. At the same time, all three major networks were purchased by new corporate owners, which expected growing profit. The news divisions have, in general, "softened" up their programs, offering more news that is oriented toward personal finance, for instance, and less news about international affairs.

But is this necessarily a negative effect of ratings?  Some say yes: Pandering to the most profitable lowest common denominator denigrates the overall quality of programming.  Others disagree: Television is among the most democratic of institutions, giving its viewers exactly what they want.

**Online Measurement**

The discussion of how ratings evolved points up the fact that a difficult aspect of the whole process is deciding not only how to measure but *what* to measure.  Do we, when gauging popularity of website, measure how many clicks are registered on the site?  How much time is spent on the page?  This is a vital issue for the future of all media and news in particular, and is examined in some length in *The Future of News*.

**Do Media Owe an Obligation to the Public?**

This is not a new argument.  In 1934, William S. Paley, the founder of CBS, spoke about the idea of "pandering." According to author Joseph E. Persico, Paley felt that radio had too much power for good to simply seek the biggest audience at the expense of content.  Radio, Paley said, "ought to reserve some program space to offer what the program director believes people would like if the had an opportunity to know about it. In these periods, for instance, go cultural programs supported in the beginning by minorities--with a view toward educating majorities to wider appreciation of their excellence."

Later, Paley's network expanded to television, and both networks went public. While Paley was never one to be guided by profit motive alone, he

did have shareholders to satisfy and he was not one to lose a ratings war gracefully. Programs such as Edward R. Murrow's See It Now would fade away when it became obvious that despite their journalistic merit, they could not produce enough audience to sustain them. This disturbed Murrow, and he made his feelings known in a speech that is still talked about today. This chapter's "In Depth" feature provides some background.

### IN DEPTH: MURROW SPEAKS OUT ABOUT NEWS AND PROFIT

Murrow was disturbed by the growing worship of profit. In a speech to the Radio Television News Directors Association in 1958, he was visibly nervous as he warned his peers that many would accuse him of "fouling his own comfortable nest." But he continued:

*There is no suggestion here that networks or individual stations should operate as philanthropies. But I can find nothing in the Bill of Rights or the Communications Act which says they must increase their net profits each year, lest the Republic collapse....I am brightened by the imbalance, the constant striving to reach the largest possible audience for everything; by the absence of a sustained study of the station of the nation....I would like television to produce some itching pills rather than this endless outpouring of tranquilizers....Let us have a little competition. Not only in selling soap, cigarettes and automobiles, but in informing a troubled, apprehensive but receptive public. Why should not each of the twenty or thirty big corporations which dominate radio and television decide that they will give up one or two of their regularly scheduled programs each year, turn the time over the to networks and say in effect, 'This is a tiny tithe, just a little bit of our profits. On this particular night we aren't' going to try to sell cigarettes or automobiles,; this is merely a gesture to indicate our belief in the importance of ideas.'*

Murrow's words were indeed unpopular, and certainly tarnished his star at CBS. He would eventually leave the network for a government job.

Was this stinging assessment on target? Much of it rings true. It is hard to deny the appeal of a corporation "tithing" some of its profits and making a gesture to indicate the importance of ideas. But Murrow was also correct when, at the conclusion of his speech, he sounded a hopeful note about television and the ability of mass media to enlighten:

*This medium can teach, it can illuminate; yes, it can even inspire. But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise, it is merely lights and wires in a box.*

**CONCLUSION**

The 2005 film Good Night and Good Luck prominently featured Murrow's admonition. His speech offended many, who felt it was an unfair condemnation of a business that had to make a profit to exist in a free enterprise system. There are merits to both arguments, and this is a dilemma that Murrow probably would have advised, to borrow one of his phrases, that "should be argued about endlessly."

## Chapter 15: Studying Journalism and Its Effects

**ABOUT THIS CHAPTER**

***What's Ahead…***This chapter provides an overview of research into mass media.  We will explore the types of research conducted, the reasons for that research, and what, in broad terms, researchers have discovered about how we use media and how media affect us.

***Why it's Important…***Media are pervasive in our lives and affect our perception of the world and, to an undetermined degree, media also affect how the world works.  The more we understand about how these effects are studied, the more critically we can analyze the role of media

***Points to Keep in Mind While Reading…***Media research is a sprawling subject, and in one chapter (or even one book) we could only hope to scratch the surface.  Having stated that, there are several important and consistent points that will emerge.  One prominent point to keep in mind is that real life is inherently messy.  We are exposed to thousands of messages, stimuli, and contacts daily, and it is difficult to apply research techniques and results to this confoundingly complex society.  That is why it is necessary to keep repeating that most research does not "prove" anything, nor do results typically apply in every case.

On October 30, 1938, listeners who tuned in to CBS radio heard an announcer interrupt a music program with a bulletin: An unusual cloud of gas had been observed on the planet Mars.

That was interesting, but not earthshaking, and the announcer returned the audience to the concert.

A little later, another bulletin interrupted the music, and the announcer implored observatories to watch the situation carefully.

More music…and more bulletins.  A "meteorite" had landed in New Jersey.  But reporters at the scene saw that it was no mere piece of stone.  The top opened up.  As a radio newsman reported this, death rays suddenly cut down the observers standing by the impact site.

Martians marched from the spaces-ship.  They devastated the U.S. military sent to stop them.  War machines sliced through the cities.  Reporters were

cut off in mid-sentence by death days. At last, only the choked and quavering voice of an amateur radio operator remained on air.

"Isn't anybody there?... . Isn't anybody... ."


## THE BEGINNINGS OF MEDIA RESEARCH

As you certainly have surmised, that was fiction, a radio play based on an H.G. Welles story.  But here is an true account of what happened next. You might find it stranger than fiction.


RADIO LISTENERS IN PANIC,
TAKING WAR DRAMA AS FACT

Many Flee Homes to Escape 'Gas Raid From Mars' –
Phone Calls Swamp Police

A wave of mass hysteria seized thousands of radio listeners throughout the nation between 8:15 and 9:30 o'clock last night when a broadcast of a dramatization of H.G. Welles's fantasy, "The War of the Worlds," led thousands to believe that an interplanetary conflict had started with invading Martians spreading wide death and destruction in New Jersey and New York.

The broadcast, which disrupted households, interrupted religious services, created traffic jams and clogged communications systems, was made by Orson Welles, who as the radio character, "The Shadow," used to give "the creeps" to countless child listeners.  This time at least a score of adults required medical treatment for shock and hysteria.

-- The New York Times
Monday, October 31, 1938


Why did people believe a radio play recounting, of all things, an invasion of Martians armed with Death Rays?  One fundamental factor was that radio was a relatively new medium, and at the time it had been reliably bringing to a stunned United States reports about the advance of Hitler in Europe.

Problems seemed much more distant and less immediate in the days before electronic mass communications.  In 1938, the sound of war being

imported into your living room was improbable, but nevertheless it was real.

So the Martian story came over an unfamiliar conveyance that had, up until this time, provided a quite reliable new view of events in Europe -- which, in 1938, seemed about as far away as Mars.

But what truly puzzled observers was that fact that many of the listeners who panicked ignored several explicit announcements by Orson Welles that this was, in fact, a prank and a work of fiction.  Nor did they bother to check other radio stations to confirm the incident.  What made the incident particularly troubling at the time is that the world was on the verge of war, and the power of the media to persuade was a topic heavy on the minds of those who viewed the success of Hitler's propaganda films.

So, why did this happen?  What did it say about the effects of media on the populace?  The answers are part of a chain of events in media research, the search for answers about the power of media, and will be discussed later in this chapter.


**WHAT IS RESEARCH?**

First, a definition of terms. As we use the word, "research" means a systematic investigation of a problem or issue, done in a way that can be publicly reported to other interested observers, using methods that other investigators can reproduce.   By making the research "reproducible," other investigators can test its validity, and use what was learned from one research project to implement another follow-up.  We say that research conducted in this manner follows the "scientific method."


**The Scientific Method**

This term is fairly broad, and it has differing meanings in various fields, but in many types of research it involves the testing a hypothesis. A hypothesis is a statement that may or may not be true, but it put forth for the sake of argument.

("Hypothesis" comes from two Greek words, "hypo," meaning "under," and "thesis" (which is a form of the word "tithenai") meaning "lay down" or "put in position."   In other words, a hypothesis is the position you lay down under your assumption.  You certainly recognize the common "hypo" from words such as "hypodermic," meaning "under skin.")

Next, the researcher tests the hypothesis using experimentation, observation, or other methods (we'll describe them presently), and makes public the results.

## Validating Research

When research is published, it generally must meet certain criteria. Before finding its way into print, a study is generally evaluated by a group of the researcher's peers. A journal that engages in this type of review is said to be "refereed." In almost all cases, refereed journals submit the article to reviewers with the writer's name omitted or obliterated, so that the journal editors will be safe from charges of cronyism. This is called a "blind review" process.

## THE GROWTH OF RESEARCH IN MEDIA, JOURNALISM, AND THE "SOCIAL SCIENCES"

It would seem fairly straightforward to do this experiment:

· run an electrical current through one wire
· note that this produces an electrical current in a wire two inches away from -- but not touching -- the first wire
· write an article detailing the experiment, including the types of wires, their composition and lengths, the measurements of the currents, and so forth -- allowing other scientists to repeat and verify the experiment

But how does one apply the "scientific method" to the behavior of humans -- who do not respond with the precision of electrical conductors?

The answer is: With some difficulty.

## The Problem of Testing People

In fact, we did not always operate under the assumption that human behavior was particularly measurable or predictable. But after the Renaissance -- literally, "re-birth" -- of culture from the 14th to the 16th century, society had a renewed interest in the potential of humans. In addition, we had developed an interest in how human behavior fit into the "scheme of things" -- the scientific patterns that somehow govern the universe.

We can trace much of the application of scientific methods to social issues to a lawyer and philosopher named Francis Bacon (1561-1626). Bacon was

among the first to argue convincingly that, in effect, experience was the best teacher and the best predictor.

The business of science, he argued, was to observe, test, and predict. Sometimes, these predictions would go beyond what is actually observed, because we can safely make generalizations about the future by the process of induction. Induction means the process of gathering information, testing it, refining it, and drawing conclusions from it -- conclusions broader than the original scope of the investigation.

## Generalizing Knowledge

A great deal of what we know comes from generalizations that go beyond the facts that we can see. The existence of planets very distant from our sun, for example, was predicted long before those planets were actually observed. The existence of other, unseen, planets was based on the fact that planets we could see orbited in erratic ways. Those permutations in the orbit could only be explained by the effect of gravity from other planets. Likewise, we've never actually seen an atom and its component parts. The existence of atomic structure is largely theorized from the behavior of the physical structures we can see.

Drawing such conclusions -- predicting what we cannot see based on what little we can -- is risky, because we're frequently wrong. But this is sometimes the only way to investigate a problem.

While the process is not identical, we make broad conclusions about the behavior of people, and the effects of media, based on small samples that see, count, and report.

## Trying to Generalize Knowledge About People and Society

The birth of the scientific method excited many "philosophers." (The purpose of the quotation marks is to note that "philosopher" did not, hundreds of years ago, have the meaning it does today. At one time, a philosopher was thought of as one who studied knowledge, and he or she may have been thought of a s a "scientist" as well. Today, we tend to think of philosophers exclusively as those engaged in branches of philosophy such as ethics or epistemology.) In fact, many post-Renaissance philosophers were deeply interested in mathematics, and attempted to apply a mathematical model to human behavior.

Much of their vocabulary is already familiar to you. For example, you have heard people argue for various policies claiming that they will produce "the greatest good for the greatest number." This concept and that phrase

(word-for-word, in fact) comes from a type of philosophy called "utilitarianism." Its main proponents, including John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) Thomas Hobbes (1588-1697) were inclined to use mathematical formulae to analyze behavior. Hobbes, who was an avid reader of Galileo and Copernicus (scientists who explained the physical properties of the universe), believed that similar mechanistic rigor could be applied to human behavior. Hobbes developed a formula for government involving imposition of pleasure and pain in precise ratios.

## Descartes and Mathematical Analysis

A contemporary of Hobbes, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), also believed that human affairs could be analyzed mathematically. Descartes, in fact, was a mathematician by training. Incidentally, Descartes was instrumental in the development of epistemology, the branch of philosophy dealing with how we know what we think we know. "Cogito ergo sum" -- "I think, therefore I am" -- now a familiar catchphrase, was Descartes's entry into epistemological inquiry.

## Adam Smith

The notion that the very complex forces at work in the world could be quantified also had enormous appeal to political philosophers and economists. A Scots named Adam Smith (1723-1790) put forth the notion that the world's economies were governed by an "invisible hand" that mechanically would set things right even when humans had done their worst to muck up the situation via rules, regulations, and tariffs.

## Sociology

Assumptions that mechanical forces were in work in human nature took root in France, where a philosopher named Aguste Comte (1798-1857) constructed a theory called "positivism," which held that society could be studied scientifically, using universal scientific principles. Compte is usually credited with inventing the term "sociology." Some people also refer to Compte as the founder of sociology, the study of human societies.

## Darwin

This blending of philosophy and "hard science" opened up new avenues of exploration. Charles Darwin (1809-1822) was a scientist specializing in natural history, although he had contemplated careers in both medicine and religion. Darwin studied the plant and animal life of the South

Pacific, and used his observations to construct a two-part theory: the number of plants and animals in certain species generally stays constant even though the numbers of species born exceeds the number needed to sustain that population; and there are slight variations among plants and animals in the same species. Darwin's conclusion: hose The members of the species which exhibit variations that make them somehow superior are more likely to survive, and therefore we will se a "survival of the fittest" in evolution.

One of Darwin's followers, Francis Galton, argued that intelligence was one of these characteristics inherited by the "fittest," and he set about to develop new ways to measure mankind. Galton's innovations included fingerprinting and intelligence testing.

## Psychology

The fact that the mind itself could be studied was fascinating to many who moved this new scientific age forward. An Austrian psychiatrist named Sigmund Freud (1856-1839) developed the theory that there was a "subconscious" mind that operated at a deeper level than the conscious mind -- and that many of our problems stem from early bumps and bruises to our subconscious, even though we may not explicitly remember those incidents.

Freud's discipline, psychology, was initially one and the same with sociology, but the two disciplines would eventually separate, in large part due to the efforts of a French sociologist named Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). Durkheim believed that societies were more than collections of individual minds; a collective society assumed a life of its own. Durkheim further believed that statistical sampling and mathematical measurement were essential to illustrate the workings of those societies. He produced one of the first major works of social science that made extensive use of statistics, a book titled Suicide. A German sociologist named Max Weber used innovative research methods to study the ways in which economies developed -- linking economic patterns to such underlying factors as religion.

## The Revolution in Exploring Human Behavior

The mixture of the three factors described so far:

•The belief that there was some scientific and numerical consistency to human behavior...

•The expectation that the workings of the mind could be explored, yielding results that helped explain the way we live...

•And the notion that measurement of factors in society as a whole could cast light on the human condition...

changed everything.  We now came to view society not as some random occurrence, but an explainable and explorable phenomenon.  By the turn of the century, sociology had become a recognized discipline and prominent sociologists continued to apply the research model to understanding human society.

## THE STUDY OF MEDIA EFFECTS

Into this changed world came media.  At first, media were not major factors in the culture; therefore, research about media is a relatively new field.

## Walter Lippmann and Some of the First Studies of Journalism

There is no definitive date when research into media effects began, but one significant event occurred during World War I. Walter Lippmann was a propagandist during that war. His assignment was to write pamphlets to be dropped over enemy lines.  The pamphlets urged the enemy to surrender, and promised soldiers they would be well-treated. Lippmann instructed any soldiers who planned to surrender to bring the pamphlet with them.  Lippmann, you see, had written several versions of the pamphlet -- and he used the results to determine which was most persuasive.

It took two more decades for the academic community to become interested in applying the methodology of social sciences on a wide-scale basis to media.  When the attention of serious researchers did turn, it was because society had become more than a little worried about how media could be used to influence people.

## The Payne Fund Studies

Case in point:  There are many stories about movie-goers who were simply dumfounded to see events unfold, bigger than life, before their eyes. It was widely reported that when motion pictures were first shown in a rural area, first-time movie-goers shrieked in panic and clamored out of the theater when a stampede of cinematic horses thundered toward them.

That story is probably apocryphal. And that is a perfect illustration of the need for communications research! First of all, we needed to know if such events really occurred; secondly, whether motion pictures really could so profoundly affect people's grasp of reality.

Such investigation began in earnest in 1929, when a series of research efforts called the Payne Fund studies were undertaken. The Payne Fund studies attempted to gauge how powerful movies really were, and that research indicated that they had enormous power.

But there was a flaw in the Payne Fund studies. Investigators simply asked teenagers if movies had a powerful impact on their life, and the teenagers, possibly wanting to accommodate the researchers, said yes. In hindsight, we can laugh at such mistakes, but hindsight should also allow us to be a bit charitable in our evaluation of past efforts. Social science measurement techniques were then in their infancy, and the notion that the way a question was asked could drastically influence the outcome of the response was not yet clear in investigators' minds. Today, we have a better (but not yet perfect) grip on the critical thinking skills that are involved in framing a research question; this chapter's In Depth feature, at the end of this section, discusses the issue.

The Payne Fund studies led researchers to believe that movies were so powerful that they figuratively pierced into the psyche of the person watching and listening. This notion became known as the "magic bullet" or the "hypodermic needle" theory of media effects. The "hypodermic needle" phraseology reflected the idea that a media manipulator could "inject" beliefs into unwilling subjects.

But do media really have such targeted and powerful effects? Would anyone be vulnerable to a magic bullet? Those questions were important for a number of reasons, not the least of which that behavior of the masses -- if the theories were true -- could be manipulated by Svengali-like media-masters who would overtake the evolving media.

## The Cantril Studies

Communications scholar Hadley Cantril set to work on the study of media effects, to see if the magic bullet theory held true. His subject was not movies, but the Martian invasion recounted in the chapter opening.

Orson Welles' Halloween night broadcast was a dramatization, a radio play presented by the Mercury Theater of the Air, a collaborative effort of Welles and producer John Houseman. As mentioned earlier, The War of the Worlds radio play used the technique of a "newscaster" interrupting normal programming to report that strange gas clouds had been sighted

on Mars.   Later, the music was interrupted again to inform listeners that a strange craft had landed in Grovers Mill, New Jersey.  (That was a quite a departure from the original British setting of H.G. Welles's story, but Orson Welles -- no relation to H.G.-- had been driving through New Jersey a day or two before the show and randomly picked Grovers Mill from a road map.)

Even though there were frequent reminders that this was a dramatization -- reminders that carried something of an urgent tone after panicked listeners started calling the radio station  -- many people still assumed that events were real.  Indeed, a fabric of believability was woven into the narrative; the "newscaster" would conduct a breathless interview with an "expert" and then return the program back to the network...only to return moments later, agitated, with reports of Martian war machines on the rampage.

Actually, the vast majority of listeners did not for one second believe that Martians were invading the earth.  But why did some people see through the thinly disguised ruse while others disintegrated into a panic?

Cantril found that the War of the Worlds scare was a living laboratory for his studies of media effects.  After extensive  interviews and data collection he theorized that it was level of education and critical thinking skills on the part of the audience that separated the believers from the nonbelievers.  Cantril would later theorize that those skills also enabled people to resist propaganda.

Catril's studies refuted the magic bullet theory (the conclusion of the Payne Fund studies).  Where earlier it was believed that media could be used to precisely target anyone, Cantril stated that the effects of media were weaker than first thought, and that media manipulation was effective primarily on the unsophisticated and unintelligent.


## The People's Choice Studies

Given that media affected some people some of the time, how much did it affect them and how did media go about insinuating these effects?  The next major study to examine media effects tackled precisely these questions.  Called "The People's Choice," the study was conducted by a team of researchers led by Paul Lazarsfeld.

In 1940, Lazarsfeld's researchers studied voter behavior in Erie County, Pennsylvania.  The goal was to determine how media affected the way people decided for which candidate to vote.  Specifically, the researchers tracked change in voter preference over a six-month period.

The results:

•Political advertising converted only 8 percent of voters from their original positions.

•The major effect of media appeared to be reinforcing beliefs originally held.  In other words, advertising was more likely to get a committed voter to believe more strongly in his or her original choice than to change his or her mind.

•In many cases, advertising did not have a direct effect.    Instead, voters were influenced by opinion leaders -- powerful people whom they respected -- within their community. Media often worked indirectly by affecting opinion leaders who in turn affected other members of the community.

Lazarsfeld's study concluded that media had minimal effects, and that many of those effects were indirect and difficult to measure.  Many scholars today continue to believe in the minimal effects theory.

However, later researchers re-examined strong media theories, and contended that media do have a strong influence, but a difficult-to-measure strong influence.  Among these investigators was Wilbur Schramm, a scholar who was interested in the effects of television on children.  He and his colleagues found that there was a correlation between children who experienced problems in interaction with peers and parents and the amount of TV they watched, but his group stopped short of concluding that TV caused antisocial behavior.  But Schramm's work did start the pendulum swinging back from a perception of "weak" to "moderately powerful" effects.

## Explorations of Exposure Over the Long Term

Other researchers built on this premise, and argued for strong media effects based on their belief that long-term exposure to media changes people's beliefs and attitudes:

•George Gerbner, a researcher from the University of Pennsylvania, contends that over time, heavy television viewers tend to have their views of the world powerfully shaped by TV.  For example, viewers see more violence depicted on TV than they could possibly confront in most real lives, and confuse TV with reality... developing an unnatural fear of the world.  Some people call this the "mean world" syndrome.

•Sociologist Todd Gitlin rebuked the notion that short-duration studies could gauge the true impact of a lifetime's worth of exposure.  A European researcher, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, made roughly the same assertion, and added the contention that the presence of the media reinforced widespread, ubiquitous beliefs but figuratively muzzled those who did not agree with the beliefs portrayed in the media world.

## Examination of Agenda Setting: An Indirect Effect

In addition, other researchers and theorists have concluded that the media are powerful because they "set the agenda" for our efforts to perceive the world. In other words, the media shape our base of knowledge by choosing what to portray and cover.  These items are therefore thrust into our consciousness in ways we might not even perceive.  We don't know that certain views are left out, because we have no way of knowing what the media do not include.

## Study of Systemic Media Effects

Some researchers and critics assert that media have insinuated themselves so deeply that it is almost impossible to measure their effects.  We can, though, see with our own eyes what is happening.  Prominent scholars who have put forth this theory include:

•French researcher and critic Jacques Ellul feels that media are very powerful because they have worked their way into our everyday existence in ways we cannot even realize.  In one of his most famous works, a book about propaganda, Ellul theorized that propaganda is part and parcel of a society based on technology, and cannot be extracted from society nor can it be measured with accuracy.  Ellul rejects most weak-media theories (and is not so keen on media research in general) because he believes media effects simply cannot be measured in "a test tube."

•New York University professor Neil Postman argues that the form and content of media, particularly television, have changed the way we express and conceive ideas.  He further maintains that technology carries its own "agenda" -- meaning that it imposes changes on the culture and in some cases forces us to surrender our culture to the structure of the technology.  For example, he argues, we have come to equate "news" with the slickly packaged content of a TV news program -- which, he argues, is essentially a device to attract audiences and keep them tuned in so that they view the commercials within the newscast.

•Marshall McLuhan argued that media are more powerful than we realize because the channel of communication becomes more prominent in our awareness and perception than does the actual content carried by the channel.   The medium "becomes the message."

•Joshua Meyrowitz feels that mass media, particularly television, pre-define people's roles and we subconsciously start fulfilling roles in a TV-driven "drama" that has become real life.

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## IN DEPTH: WHAT IS THE INTERNET DOING TO US?

*A commentary about new trends in media research:*

I met myself online two years ago and have gotten to know myself pretty well since then.

When I was ordering a book from Amazon.com, I discovered that the site "recommended" books and music based on my previous buying and browsing records. I got hooked. The more customized suggestions Amazon.com offered, the more I snapped them up.

Looking back at my purchase history, I've learned a few things about myself. In some ways, I seem like a fairly normal if eclectic person: My musical tastes run toward an odd mixture of Mozart and 1970s nostalgia, and to books about politics, the Internet, and media history.

But lurking in the Amazon.com list is what seems to be evidence of a sinister obsession with true crime. On further reflection, I noted that in a typical week I also gravitate to a dozen cable-TV crime shows that involve increasingly inventive examples of antisocial behavior.

I'm not sure I like the picture that's emerging — a media system that not only knows my tastes but feeds and solidifies them. Given the current pattern, will I, in 2019, have anything on my media menu other than disco, Mozart, and murder?

Luckily, one of the books I ordered recently might head off this fate. Republic.com 2.0, by University of Chicago law professor Cass Sunstein, examines the practical and ethical effects of media echo chambers on public discourse.

What I've done, according to Sunstein, is create my prototype "Daily Me" — an electronic diet of media consumerism tailored to my tastes. But mine is in its infancy and limited primarily to my interests in entertainment. A

true Daily Me allows the user to completely retreat into a world where all of the day's news corresponds to a particular interest or point of view, making the user become at once connected (with others who share a view or a lifestyle) and isolated (from unexpected encounters with different cultures or dissenting opinions).

The outcome of the Daily Me is polarization: Studies show that groups adopt more extreme views when they communicate only with like-minded people.

Such polarization is by no means a distant threat. Blogs, which in many cases have evolved into magnetic forums for like-minded people talking exclusively to each other, have become the new frontier in U.S. presidential politics. Social networking sites, where users can wall themselves up in identity-based communities, are becoming as "real" to some users as real life. Websites for those with extreme and insular views have become media forces that cohere public opinion, sometimes along extreme tangents. Extremists and a variety of conspiracy theorists regularly reinforce their views with "facts" that have become reality only because they are echoed so often and "reporting" that looks like journalism but isn't, in the sense that a journalist seeks balance or contrary opinions, or presents alternative explanations.

What's the ethical issue with the Daily Me? I have no problem with customized news. After all, you are reading this on a custom-news site where we view news items of mutual interest. But in the news summaries we gather, we make a good-faith effort to include publications and venues from differing ends of the political spectrum — reliable sources that you might not necessarily agree with, and which you might not encounter unless you went looking for them.

But I do take ethical issue with industrywide trends that lean toward a product designed to polarize, to repackage the output of the echo chamber as "journalism" or "news."

"News" that isolates us from the unexpected or unpleasant or unfamiliar isn't really news at all, and it's a poor diet for people who need a comprehensive worldview in order to feed a deliberative democracy.

I'm 54 years old and formed my news consumption habits by watching Walter Cronkite, who occasionally force-fed me a story about a remote area of the world that I should care about even if I'd never heard of it before. A generation ago, my family, like most in our working-class neighborhood, subscribed to not one but two daily newspapers, vehicles that presented an array of stories at a single glance and cultivated the habit of getting hooked on stories we didn't go looking for.

As a result, I've probably been inoculated to some extent. I'm able to tell when I'm overdosing on forensic shows and documentaries about bank robberies, grab myself by the lapels, and shake myself back to reality. But I'm not sure if younger people, raised on customizable and increasingly narrow media menus, have built up similar resistance.

The bottom line:

> Media organizations, especially those that present themselves as news suppliers, have an ethical responsibility to be something above and beyond that of profit-centered echo chambers.
>
> Media consumers — and that's all of us — have an affirmative duty to monitor our own habits and stay engaged with a broad variety of opinions and perspectives, even if they don't always make us comfortable.
>
> Parents, teachers, and other responsible adults have a moral responsibility to let younger people know that there are alternative universes outside of their customizable media-saturated universes. Issues like this tend to creep up on us like quiet jungle cats, and we tend not to notice them until they're upon us. Think back to 1992, when Bruce Springsteen poked fun at the infinite but vacuous media universe with his song "57 Channels and Nothing On."

I don't know about you, but I get about 350 channels, and that's with the basic package.

57 channels? How quaint.

--Carl Hausman

### WHAT IS A "RESEARCH STUDY?"

But how do researchers draw these conclusions?  What follows is a basic introduction to research methods.

### The Basic Premises of Research: An Example

Earlier, we mentioned that much of what we call "research" must meet at least two basic requirements:

•The method used to conduct the study must be described so that others may reproduce it.

•Whatever happens must be shown to be something other than chance, coincidence, or some other effect other than the one you are trying to measure.

The second point it tricky, but worthwhile to consider at some length. Understanding cause and effect is important not only for evaluating research but for critical thinking in general.

Here is an example of a possible experimental research study. We will define "experimental" more fully later in the chapter, but for now consider it simply a laboratory-type situation where you perform an action and measure its effect on people.

You want to test how well a new multimedia training program works. The program, which consists of video and interactive computer-based exercises, is designed to help office personnel workers learn the details of new immigration law. You test your personnel director with a 12-question true-false test to ascertain his ability to apply the law to workplace events. He only gets half the questions right. Then, after a month at training with the new multimedia gizmo, you administer another test.

The result: This time, he gets nine out of 12 questions correct.

Congratulations! Your training program is a success.

## Problems with the Numbers

Or is it? What are the odds that on any given day the results could not have occurred purely by accident? It is up to you to determine that. While the math can be complex for many large-scale studies, it is fairly straightforward in this case; so if you knew the proper statistical formulae, you would find to your chagrin that the odds of scoring nine questions correct out of a twelve-question true-false test at random are 7.3 percent. In other words, if you were to give the same test to a hundred monkeys, about 7 of them would get the same score as your personnel manager.

Statistician William Sims Bainbridge points out another way to view this statistic: A 7.3 percent "statistical significance" also means that if you gave the test repeatedly to a series of people, about 1 out of 15 would achieve a score of 9 right out of 12 if they responded purely at random.

The same odds also apply to people who would get 9 wrong out of 12.

For that matter, the formula applies to people who flip coins; usually, about 1 out of 15 people who flip a coin will get 9 heads and 4 tails out of 12 flips.)  No social scientist, Bainbridge concludes, "would be impressed by a finding that could come about purely by accident one out of 15 times."

## Problems with the Administration of the Test

Aside from that, you've got a problem with the test.  Do you administer the same test after the training program?  That wouldn't be particularly valid, because the personnel director may have looked up the answers to the questions he didn't know (a perfectly logical thing for someone responsible for knowing immigration law to do).  But if you use a different test, how do you know if the questions are equitable?

Sorry, but your research is pretty much worthless as a method to show that the new training program works.  Luckily, you are capable or learning from your mistake.

## Using a Control Group to Overcome Administration Problems

The obvious solution is to administer the test to two groups and measure the difference.  You will not have the problem caused by the personnel director taking the same test twice.

Now, you administer the test to 100 people, divided into two groups.  One group gets trained with the multimedia kit; one group learns the old-fashioned way, with a manual.  In addition, you have a testing expert mix and match questions in the tests so that you can accurately compare results even though you give different questions the second time.

After doing the math (which we will not pursue, because it gets into complexities beyond the scope of this introduction) you discover that there is only a 5 percent (.05) chance that the results were produced purely at random.  Now, you've reached a level of statistical significance that will make some social scientists take notice.  In a test of this sort, it would be much better if you had an even greater level of significance, less than one percent, perhaps.  (Less than one out of a hundred people will score 11 out of 12 right purely by chance.)

## Problems with Control Groups

So, armed with a .01 level of statistical significance, you assume your research is "bulletproof."  Well, perhaps.  But when you present the results to an experienced researcher, she raises some troubling questions:

•Wait a minute!  There was a month between the first and second test.  I notice that the group that was trained on the computer had a lot of people who were just hired...more so than the group who got the manual.  Wouldn't these people have gotten better at their jobs all by themselves?

•Hold on, here!  You told the people that got the computer training that they were going to be tested to see if they improved.  They knew they were being watched!  Don't you think that may have affected their enthusiasm for learning the subject?   After all, these people aren't stupid...the ones who just got the old-fashioned manual knew they weren't expected to do as well.

•May I point something out to you?  Do you realize that in the group that used the computer there were ten people with master's degrees, 39 with bachelor's, and 1 with no college.  In the control (the group that used the manual and was not exposed to the variable, the new technology) two people had master's degrees, 40 had bachelor's degrees, and 10 had no college.  Didn't it occur to you that a group with higher educational levels would be more experienced in learning and would perform better?

The point is that research results can be confounded by a number of factors, and that is why the "scientific method" -- public documentation of method and results -- is so important.  Other researchers may detect problems in the design of the study, either upon "refereeing" the report, reading it in a journal, or reproducing some aspect of it themselves.

Research does not have to involve numbers, but it always includes a full disclosure of method and sources from which information was obtained.  This broadly defined scientific method is applicable to all forms of research, including experimental research, qualitative research, surveys, content analysis and what we will call for our purposes observational and rhetorical research.   These types of research are particularly relevant to the study of electronic mass media.  We will define these categories and then take a realistic view of what research actually accomplishes and what limitations it faces.

## Experimental Research

The name says it all: A situation is created, subjects are exposed to it, and any change is measured, as in our experiment with the personnel managers.

A great deal of experimental research has been conducted involving violence in television.  One noted study exposed a group of children to television with many violent scenes and then monitored their play habits

after viewing the tape.  Another group was exposed to less violent programming, and their post-viewing behavior was also monitor.  The result: The observers felt that children who had seen the violent TV were much more aggressive in their post-viewing play than the other group, the "control group."  In research jargon, a control group is a group not exposed to "variable" (the situation that changes) and therefore is the "normal" group to which we compare the behavior of the experimental group.

Experimenting on living, breathing people, of course, is an exercise fraught with ethical dilemmas.  Aside from producing a perhaps unwanted effect on the people exposed to, let us say, a medical treatment, you also produce an effect on the people in the control group from whom you withhold treatment.

Most colleges and universities require that a committee approve any experiment involving human subjects.

Experimental research is also difficult because there are so many different effects that can make a person do something in a particular way that it is often quite difficult to ascertain exactly what you are measuring.  (As in our hypothetical example above.)

Note that sometimes there are so many data on a subject that a research study involves not only gathering new data but analyzing what already exists.  Some of the more significant studies involving violence and children followed this strategy.  Two reports issued by the United States Surgeon general analyzed literally thousands of research studies on the effect of violence on children.  A study released in 1996, which was funded by the cable TV industry, used more or less the same strategy.

All three studies concluded that the high level of violence observed by children tends to "de-sensitize" them to violence, especially when they do not see the actual consequences of violence and/or see violence portrayed as an effective means to solve conflict.


**Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research refers to studies that do not count results and test results for statistical validity.  Qualitative studies include such techniques as field observations and focus groups.

•In a field observation, for example, a researcher might ride with a TV news crew and observe their actions and reactions during a typical day's work.

•A focus group is a collection of people led in an organized discussion of an issue by a trained facilitator. Their reactions are recorded and in many cases counted. (In a focus group there is generally no attempt to test responses for "statistical validity," because responses are not gathered in quantities that lend themselves to this sort of analysis.)

A focus group can elicit an organized collection of people's reactions and perceptions. For example, Kathleen Hall Jamieson of the University of Pennsylvania has made significant contributions to the field of knowledge surrounding politics and media by convening focus groups and asking them what they remembered about "the news." In many cases, she found that people remembered information presented in campaign advertising but mistakenly attributed it to political news coverage. Thus, she made a very important observation: People frequently muddy the source of their information about political campaigns.

## Surveys

The survey is a favorite tool among communications researchers. Some information is simply not conveniently available, and you must therefore go out and mine it, either by mail, telephone, or in-person questioning.

Surveys are particularly useful for finding out how many people engage in a particular activity. For example, dozens of surveys have been undertaken to estimate how many radio and TV stations have written ethics codes for their news departments. Other surveyors have focused on more precise details: How many times in the past year have these codes been enforced?

Some survey researchers attempt to measure attitudes and make correlations (a correlation is a direct relationship between two variables) between people who respond one way to a particular question and one way to another. For example, I once surveyed radio news directors to see if they agreed with the contention that (I am paraphrasing) the news media are notoriously thin-skinned, and while they like to dish out criticism, they don't like to take it. Another question in the study asked if they (the respondents) had observed cases of the press "backing away" from coverage that involved other reporters.

Neither set of responses was remarkable in itself, but what was of particular interest was the very high correlation between the respondents who claimed that the press was thin-skinned and who said they had observed press cover-ups. The meaning of that correlation is open to interpretation, but it does open up some interesting paths for future investigations.

Survey research is tricky; the problem is that when you deal with numbers the results can appear quite persuasive but if the questions were clumsy, as discussed earlier, or the sample skewed your results can be meaningless or -- worse -- misleading. For example, let's say you wanted to survey television news directors on this question: Is advertiser pressure a consideration in selecting and editing news stories? First of all, that's a pretty imprecise question and unless it's clarified, your results will be muddy, too. But more importantly, consider how your sample selection can foul up you results. Surveys live and die on the representative nature of their samples, and if you choose, for example, only large-market TV stations, you probably won't get very representative answers for the industry as a whole. Why? It's likely that large stations -- stations that exist in markets full of advertisers -- are more insulated from advertiser pressure than is a small-town station, where the loss of one major advertiser can literally bankrupt the operation.

## Content Analysis

This form of research involves counting the number of messages in a particular sample and, in most cases, making an inference as to what the number, type and structure of those messages mean.

One of the earliest forms of content analysis was developed as a form of spying during World War II. Allied troops wanted to figure out exactly where the German army was in its march through France. The Allies simply listened to radio and counted the number of German popular music airing on French radio stations. It seems the first thing the Germans did after conquering a French town was to commandeer the radio station and play, as you might expect, music that was popular in Germany.

Today, content analysis is used to evaluate the meaning behind many messages. For example, content analysis studies are often undertaken to determine the type of language -- positive or negative -- associated with the reporting of a news story. One study with which I helped was an analysis of the words used to describe the longest-running strike in America; we found that in the many references to the cause of the strike, money was mentioned frequently. But seniority was not. And in fact, seniority (privileges given workers who have been on the job a long time) was the main issue. Agreement on salaries had been worked out early in the dispute.

That analysis led us to infer that the reporters covering the story (and therefore the general public) did not have a clear picture of the issues driving the strike. We also found that the wording used to describe the strike was remarkably similar from newspaper story to newspaper story,

leading us to deduce that reporters relied heavily on clips from the newspaper's library of past stories about the strike.

As a matter of fact, a focus group held with various reporters after the content analysis was complete reinforced that notion. Many, including TV reporters, said that the story was given to many different reporters at various times, most of whom were not extensively familiar with the issue, and relied on previous clippings to build new stories. This is an example of how one type of research (in this case, content analysis) opened other doors, providing different views on a subject.

## Observational and Rhetorical Research

This is not a standard category in most of the research world, but rather an informal term describing the many works have relied not on surveys or content analysis or experiments but simply on tightly argued rhetoric (reasoned argument) and logic. Jacques Ellul, for example, very rarely invokes statistics in his work. (He dislikes them heartily, in fact). He instead puts forward his ideas and supports them with historical examples and common-sense deductions.

For example, in his book Propaganda, Ellul uses cohesive argument to argue the fact that "educated" people are actually more susceptible to propaganda than are people without extensive formal educations. He supports this with careful and logical arguments that propose:

· People with a great deal of formal education are already conditioned to accept the contention of someone armed with a collection of facts. They've spent years in classrooms being pre-propagandized.

· They have in their heads a vast assortment of loosely connected information that is essentially meaningless because there is so much of it floating around that it does not fit into any coherent theory. A propagandist can exploit this by forming a link between the free-floating cocktail-party chatter and the idea the propagandist wants to move forward.

· The educated class feels a need to have an opinion on every subject. They are, therefore, quite vulnerable to being swayed by a clever propagandist.

· People with extensive formal educations also feel qualified to pass judgment on most matters, so they are ripe receivers for propaganda that takes advantage of the three factors cited above.

This, of course, is a vastly oversimplified rendering of a carefully reasoned argument that takes a couple of hundred pages to unfold. But it is intriguing and appears logical, does it not? And while researchers who rely heavily on statistics and sampling have contended that observational and rhetorical works lack rigor, researchers such as Ellul fire back with the contention that it is impossible to measure real-life in a laboratory simulations.

And indeed, that is a fundamental problem of research; while not everyone will agree that the laboratory approach is worthless, all know that the extrapolation that can be made from the lab to real life is limited. It is virtually impossible to "prove" things about human behavior.

## WHY IT IS SO DIFFICULT TO "PROVE" ANYTHING WITH RESEARCH

For example, you probably noticed many of the descriptions of research results in this section were larded with qualifiers and qualified statements ("leading us to infer," "in several cases, it appeared that"). The reason is not verbal timidity; it is that you must be cautious about how much you claim to have "proven" with a study. Indeed, "proven" is such a presumptuous word that it is usually avoided except in geometry.

Most studies provide information that illuminates but rarely "proves." If an issue were that cut-and-dried, so neatly examined that it could be proven one way or the other, there would be little need for research about it. But issues such as the effect of violence on children or the way voters are influenced by news coverage are incredibly complex.

Let's summarize four reasons why research about the electronic mass media cannot provide us with definite answers to all the questions we have.

### Cause and Effect Cannot Always Be Linked

It is very difficult to separate cause and effect in real life. We must be extremely cautious about assuming that just because there is a statistical relationship between two factors that one factor caused the other. Reduced to the absurd, this means that if you find a 100-percent statistical correlation between a rooster crowing and the sun coming up, this does not mean that the rooster "caused" the sun to come up.

Likewise, you may find a very strong relationship between, perhaps, viewers of a particularly violent TV program and actual violent acts committed by those viewers. But did watching the TV violence cause them

to commit violent acts?  Is it not likely that people who commit violent crimes simply like to watch violent TV?  You could probably conduct a simply study and find the correlation, but you would be on shaky ground indeed to conclude that the TV viewing caused the violence.  You might, for example, find that the overwhelming number of these violent criminals have tattoos.

Do tattoos *cause* violence?

## The Message and the Receiver Can Not Always be Separated During and Analysis

It is sometimes impossible to separate the effect of the message received from the conditions that already exist in the mind of the individual.  We all have personal experiences, biases, fears, and hopes that affect our reception of media, and it is nearly impossible to figure out which is the result of "media" and what is simply emotional baggage packed with a lifetime of experiences.

## Indirect Connections are Difficult to Identify and Measure

We often miss indirect connections.  Political scientist Doris A. Graber notes that a research study may miss the fact that media coverage about a certain issue influenced people to go their union with a complaint, and then the union representative testified before Congress.  Real life and real politics work this way, and it is extraordinarily complex to chart such relationships.

## Real Life is Inherently Messy

Attitudes are hard to measure. Lab results are often impossible to extrapolate; agendas are difficult to detect.

**CONCLUSION**

If you take away any one piece of knowledge from this chapter or from this entire text, it should be that data from research indicates responses at a certain time and makes educated guess about human behavior.  Examples don't prove; they illustrate.

A poll is a snapshot in time; you can't make a movie out of it.

Figures lie.

Liars figure.