MASS COMMUNICATION

LIVING IN A MEDIA WORLD



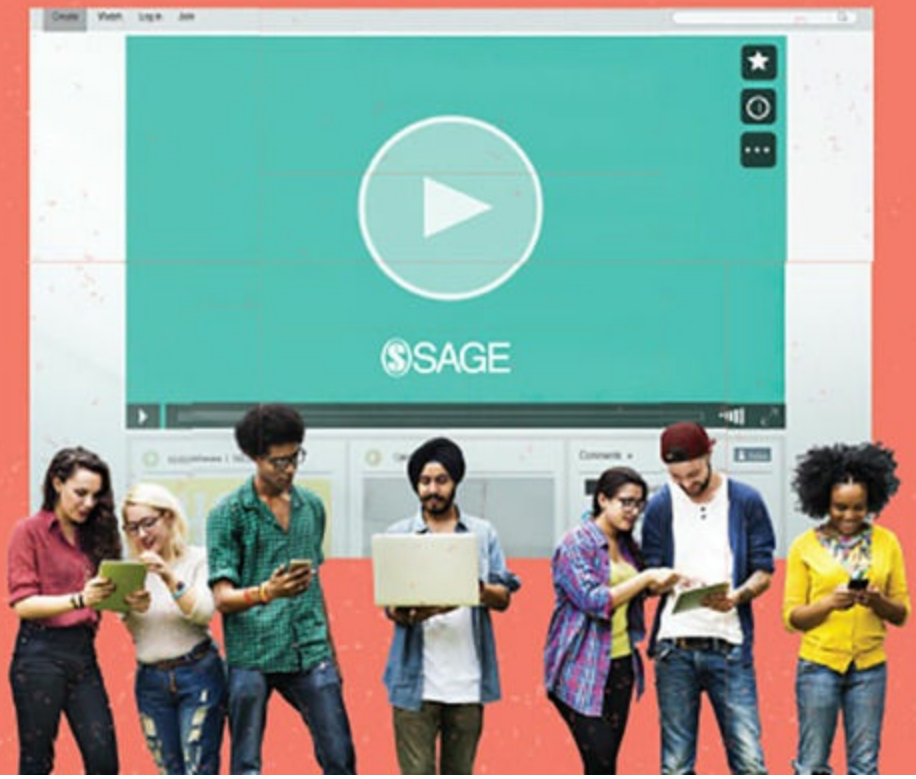
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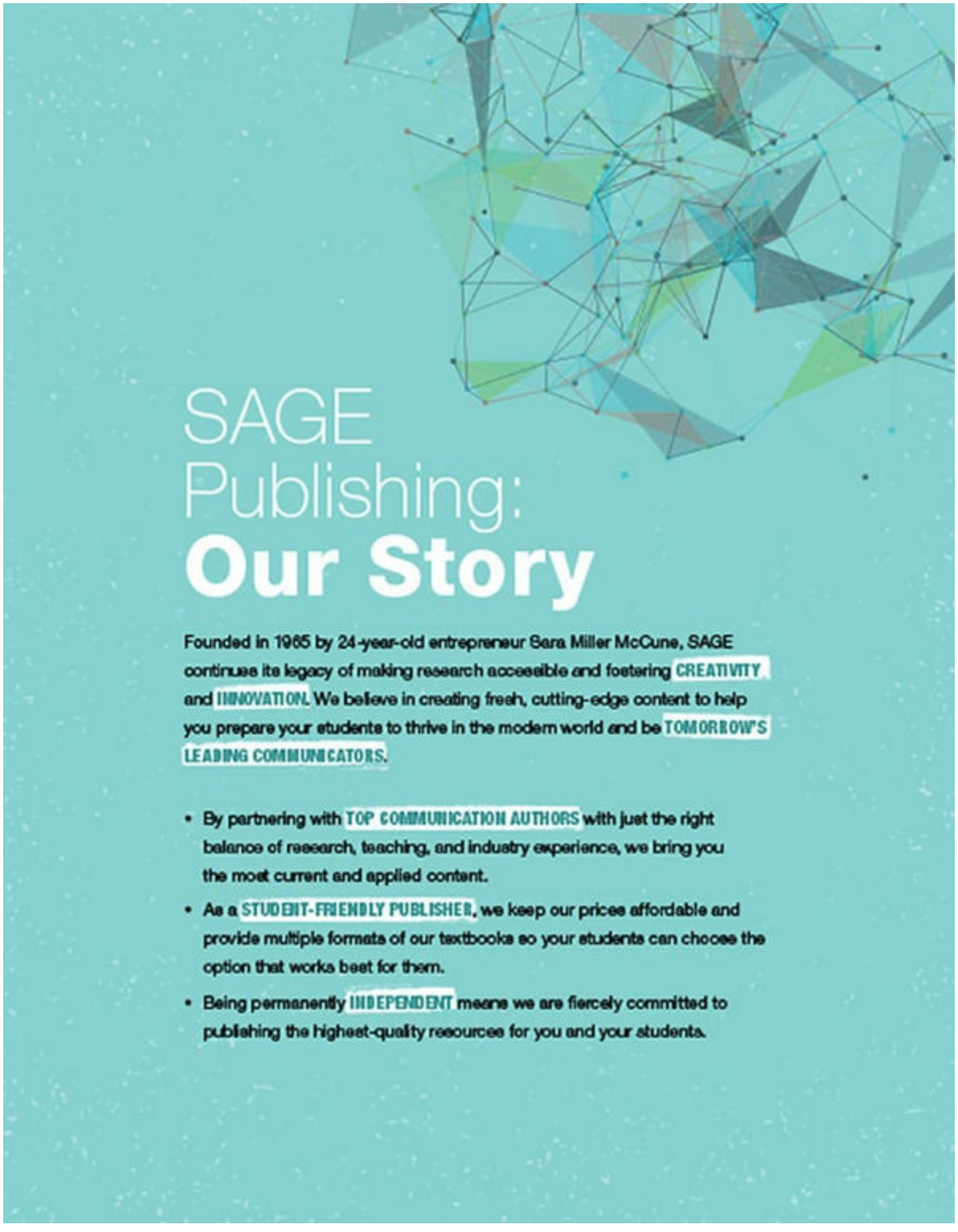

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Mass Communication

Edition 7

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Mass Communication

Living in a Media World

Edition 7

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Brief Contents

Preface
Acknowledgments
About the Author
PART I. INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDIA
- Chapter 1. Living in a Media World: An Introduction to Mass Communication
- Chapter 2. Mass Communication Effects: How Society and Media Interact
- Chapter 3. The Media Business: Consolidation, Globalization, and the Long Tail

PART II. WRITTEN MEDIA
- Chapter 4. Books: The Birth of the Mass Media
- Chapter 5. Magazines: The Power of Words and Images
- Chapter 6. Newspapers and the News: Reflection of a Democratic Society

PART III. ELECTRONIC MEDIA
- Chapter 7. Audio: Music and Talk Across Media
- Chapter 8. Movies: Mass Producing Entertainment
- Chapter 9. Television: Broadcast and Beyond
- Chapter 10. Online Media: The Internet, Social Media, and Video Games

PART IV. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
- Chapter 11. Advertising: Selling a Message
- Chapter 12. Public Relations: Interactions, Relationships, and the News

PART V. REGULATION AND CONTROL OF THE MEDIA
- Chapter 13. Media Law: Free Speech and Fairness
- Chapter 14. Media Ethics: Truthfulness, Fairness, and Standards of Decency
- Chapter 15. Global Media: Communication Around the World

Glossary
Notes
Index

Detailed Contents

Preface
Acknowledgments
About the Author
PART I. INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDIA
Chapter 1. Living in a Media World: An Introduction to Mass Communication
Levels of Communication
Intrapersonal Communication
Interpersonal Communication
Group Communication
Mass Communication
A Mix of Levels
Elements of Mass Communication
The Players in the Mass Communication Process
• Media Transformations: When Media Connect Us to the Most Remote Places on Earth
Contemporary Models of Mass Communication
Evolution of the Media World
Before Print: Pre-Mass Media Communication Networks
Print: Arrival of the Book
Electronic Networks: Telegraph, Gramophone, Radio, Movies, and Television
• Test Your Media Literacy: Can Television Take Anything Seriously?
Online and Mobile Media: Interactive Communication
Understanding the Media World
Defining Media Literacy
The Seven Secrets About the Media "They" Don't Want You to Know
• Test Your Media Literacy: What Did the Media's Future Look Like in the Past?
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 2. Mass Communication Effects: How Society and Media Interact
History of Media Effects Research
Rise of Mass Society
Propaganda and the Direct Effects Model

Voter Studies and the Limited Effects Model
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: The Messages in Propaganda
The Importance of Meaning and the Critical/Cultural Model
Effects of the Media in Our Lives
Message Effects
Medium Effects
• Media Transformations: From Clay to Paper to Electronic Documents
Ownership Effects
Active Audience Effects
Theories of Media and Society
Functional Analysis
Agenda Setting
Uses and Gratifications Theory
• Test Your Media Literacy: Working With Theory
Social Learning
Symbolic Interactionism
Spiral of Silence
Cultivation Analysis
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 3. The Media Business: Consolidation, Globalization, and the Long Tail
The Development of the Media Business in the United States
A Tradition of Private Ownership
The Growth of National News
Big Media: The Legacy Conglomerates
Disney: The Mouse That Grew
News Corporation and 21st Century Fox: A Worldwide Giant Splits in Two
Time Warner Becomes Warner Media: Starting the Trend That "Smaller Is Better"
Viacom and CBS: A Generational Change
Bertelsmann: The World's Largest Publisher
Big Media: The New Players
Comcast/NBCUniversal: Cable Buys Broadcaster
• Media Transformations: What Is the Right Size? The Changing Scale of Media Companies
Alphabet: Google and Company
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Google Doodles

Apple: Reinventing the Media
Media Economics and the Long Tail
The Short Head Versus the Long Tail
Characteristics of the Long Tail
Consequences of the Long Tail
Big Players in the Long Tail
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
PART II. WRITTEN MEDIA
Chapter 4. Books: The Birth of the Mass Media
The Development of the Book and Mass Communication
Early Books and Writing
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Emojis Bring Back Picture Writing
The Development of the Printing Press
The Invention of Mass Culture
• Test Your Media Literacy: How Do Words Get Into the Dictionary?
Books in the New World
The Development of Large-Scale, Mass-Produced Books
Buying and Selling Books
Publishers
Authors
Booksellers
Books and the Long Tail
• Media Transformations: The Textbook Business
Books and Culture
The Importance of Blockbuster Books
• Test Your Media Literacy: Libraries
Books and Censorship
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Comics Don't Have to Be Funny
The Future of Books
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 5. Magazines: The Power of Words and Images
The Development of a National Culture
Early Magazines

The Saturday Evening Post
The Birth of Photojournalism
The Magazine Business
The Economics of Magazine Publishing
Trade Magazines
Literary and Commentary Magazines
Newsmagazines
Women's Magazines
Men's Magazines
Magazines and Modern Society
Magazines and Body Image
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Presenting a Broader Range of Beauty
Who's in Control? Advertising Versus Editorial
The Importance of Magazine Covers
The Future of Magazines
Magazines for the Twenty-First Century
• Media Transformations: Going From Paper to Digital
Magazines in the Digital Age
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 6. Newspapers and the News: Reflection of a Democratic Society
Inventing the Modern Press
Colonial Publishing: A Tradition of Independence
The Penny Press: Newspapers for the People
Pulitzer, Hearst, and the Battle for New York City
The Tabloids
Broadcast News
The News Business
Newspaper Conglomerates—Consolidation and Profitability
Newspapers With a National Reach and Metropolitan Newspapers
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Comic Strip Tells Story of Syrian Refugee Family
Local and Community News
News, Politics, and Society
• Test Your Media Literacy: The View From Nowhere
Sources, Advertisers, and Readers—Whom Do You Please?
Media and Political Bias
• Media Transformations: Where Do We Go for the News?
Patriotism and the Press—Reporters Risk Their Lives to Report

the News
The Alternative Press
The Future of News
News in the Age of Mobile Media
The Future Is Mobile and Social
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
PART III. ELECTRONIC MEDIA
Chapter 7. Audio: Music and Talk Across Media
History of Sound Recording and Transmission
Storing Musical Performances: The Development of the Recording Industry
Transmitting Music and Talk: The Birth of Radio
From the Golden Age to the Television Age
• Test Your Media Literacy: When Is a Radio Show Racist?
Radio's New Look: HD and Satellite
Streaming/Downloads: Online and Mobile Audio
• Test Your Media Literacy: Podcasting From the Long Tail
Music, Youth Culture, and Society
Rock 'n' Roll and the Integration of Music
The Changing Face of Popular Music
Country: Pop Music for Adults
Finding a Niche: Popular Radio Formats
Talk Radio: Politics, News, Shock Jocks, and Sports
Public Radio
Concerns About Effects of Music on Young People
Changing the Musical Experience: From Social Music to Personal Soundtracks
From Singles to Digital Downloads: Making Money in the Recording Industry
LPs Versus 45s
CDs and Digital Recording
Economics of Streaming and Downloads
Radio Consolidates and Goes High-Tech
The Future of Sound
Music and the Long Tail: Alternatives to Broadcasting
• Media Transformations: Working and Living in the Long Tail
New Economic Models for the Music Industry
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary

Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 8. Movies: Mass Producing Entertainment
The Development of Movies
The First Moviemakers
The Studio System
The Blacklist
Television and the Movies
The Movie Business
The Blockbuster Era
Home Video
Digital Production and Projection
• Media Transformations: As You Like It: Movie Viewership in the Digital Era
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Are Practical Effects "More Real" Than Digital Effects?
What Makes a Movie Profitable?
Movies and Society
How Much Influence Do Movies Have?
Diversity in the Movies
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Does It Look As If Women Have Major Film Roles?
The Production Code: Protecting the Movies From Censorship
The Ratings System
The Future of Movies
Movies as a Brand
Movie Promotion on the Internet
Movies and the Long Tail
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 9. Television: Broadcast and Beyond
Television: Broadcast and Cable/Satellite
Broadcast Television
Cable and Satellite Television
Digital Television
From Broadcasting to Narrowcasting: The Changing Business of Television
Networks and Affiliates
Educational Broadcasting Becomes Public Broadcasting
The Fox Network

Defining Ratings
An Earthquake in Slow Motion
Diversity on Television
Television and Society
Television as a Major Social Force
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: What Does a TV Show Look Like?
How Do Viewers Use Television?
Standards for Television
• Test Your Media Literacy: No Sense of Place
The Problem of Decency
Moving Beyond Broadcasting
Defining Television in the Twenty-First Century
• Media Transformations: The Earthquake in Slow Motion Continues
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 10. Online Media: The Internet, Social Media, and Video Games
The Development of the Internet
Packet Switching: Letting Computers Talk to Each Other
ARPAnet
Connecting Incompatible Networks
What Are Online/Mobile Media?
Email
Texting and Direct Messaging
The World Wide Web
Search as a Medium
Blogs
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Humans of New York
Podcasts and Streaming Media
Social Media: Sharing Our Lives Online
What Makes Media Social?
Who Are Our Social Media?
• Test Your Media Literacy: Should the President Be Tweeting?
Going Mobile
Mobile Apps
Video Games as Mass Communication
• Media Transformation: Video Games as a Spectator Sport
Diversity and Representation in Video Games
The Internet and Society

The Hacker Ethic
Hacking the 2016 Presidential Election
The Notion of Cyberspace
Broadening Our Online World
Conflicts Over Digital Media
Convergence of Old and New Media
Everything Is Data
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
PART IV. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
Chapter 11. Advertising: Selling a Message
The Development of the Advertising Industry
The Birth of Consumer Culture
The Growth of Brand Names
Advertising-Supported Media
The Advertising Business
The Client
The Agency
Burger King and Google
The Media
The Audience
• Test Your Media Literacy: Target's Targeting
Advertising in Contemporary Culture
The Problem of Clutter
Debunking Subliminal Advertising
When Advertisements Are More Important Than the Program
Advertising to Children
• Test Your Media Literacy: Limits on Advertising Food to Children
The Future of Advertising
Integrated Marketing Communication
• Media Transformations: From Advertorials to Native Advertising
Is Anyone Watching Television Ads?
Product Placement
The Long Tail of Advertising
Social Marketing
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions

Chapter 12. Public Relations: Interactions, Relationships, and the News
From Press Agentry to Professionalism
The Origins of Public Relations
• Test Your Media Literacy: False Reports Garner Publicity
World War I: The Federal Government Starts Using Public Relations
Public Relations Becomes a Profession
The Business of Public Relations
What Is Public Relations?
The Public Relations Process
Who Are the Publics?
Crisis Communication
Public Relations Goes Online
• Media Transformations: Coca-Cola Freestyle
Public Relations and Society
Journalism and Public Relations
Public Relations and the Government
Spin Control: A More Personal Form of Public Relations
Public Relations and the Civil Rights Movement
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
PART V. REGULATION AND CONTROL OF THE MEDIA
Chapter 13. Media Law: Free Speech and Fairness
The Development of a Free Press
The First Amendment: "Congress Shall Make No Law"
The Roots of American Free Speech
Limits on Free Speech in the Post-9/11 Era
Protection of Individuals
Libel
Invasion of Privacy
Privacy Law in Europe
Free Press/Fair Trial
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Should Legal Protections Extend to Offensive Speech?
Controlling the Press
Honesty and the Press
Prior Restraint
Free Speech and Students
Journalists Going to Jail
Obscenity

• Test Your Media Literacy: When Is Arresting Reporters Considered Acceptable?
Regulation of the Media Industry
Copyright and Fair Use
The Rise and Fall of Broadcast Regulation
Mandating Fairness on the Air
The Telecommunications Act of 1996
• Media Transformations: Net Neutrality
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 14. Media Ethics: Truthfulness, Fairness, and Standards of Decency
Ethical Principles and Decision Making
Aristotle: Virtue and the Golden Mean
Kant: The Categorical Imperative
John Stuart Mill: The Principle of Utility
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: "It was such a violent collision"
John Rawls: The Veil of Ignorance
Hutchins Commission: Social Responsibility Ethics
The Bok Model for Ethical Decision Making
Ethics and News
Truthfulness
Conflict of Interest
Sensationalism
• Test Your Media Literacy: Recognizing Fake News, Consumer Responsibility
Going Too Far: The News of the World Hacking Scandal
When and How Do You Apologize?
There Is No "They": The Sago Mine Disaster
Photography
Enforcing Ethics
Ethics and Persuasive Communication
Advertising
Ethics in Public Relations
Attacks on Women Through Online Media
• Media Transformations: Importance of Representation
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Chapter 15. Global Media: Communication Around the World

Media Ideals Around the World
Authoritarian Theory
Communist Theory
Libertarian Theory
Social Responsibility Theory
Norms for the Press in the Twenty-First Century
The Internet in the Twenty-First Century
Going Global: Media Standards Around the World
• Test Your Media Literacy: Updating the Four Theories
Canada, Western Europe, and Great Britain
• Test Your Visual Media Literacy: Are There Limits to What Media Images Should Display?
Central and Latin America
Islamic Countries and the Middle East
Africa
Russia and the Former Soviet Republics
• Test Your Media Literacy: How Free Are the World's Media to Report the News?
Asia
• Media Transformations: Are We Really Living in a Media World?
Chapter Review
Chapter Summary
Key Terms
Review Questions
Glossary
Notes
Index

Preface

Many of the defining moments of our lives come from our shared experiences with the media. It could be witnessing mass shootings through social media coverage, experiencing the thrill of the World Cup competition viewed streaming on the internet, going to the latest Marvel Cinematic Universe movie as the backdrop to a first date, or hearing "that" song from the summer you turned sixteen. For my generation, it was the Moon walk. Parents all across the United States let their nine-year-olds stay up way past their bedtimes to watch on television the biggest show of their lives—*Apollo 11* astronaut Neil Armstrong setting foot on the moon. On September 11, 2001, my eldest son and his fellow fifth-grade classmates sat mesmerized by news coverage of the airplanes crashing into the World Trade Center Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and a field in southwestern Pennsylvania. Some parents questioned whether their children ought to have watched these events, but my son said, "We begged the teacher to keep the TV on. We had to know." As I write this, my former fifth-grader has his master's degree and has lived in Canada, Europe, and Asia with a global perspective brought on in part by that fateful day in 2001. In the fall of 2019, I will have incoming freshman students for whom 9/11 is something that happened before they were born. It will simply be a thing that has always been. Now their top media memory might be watching *Hannah Montana* (Miley Cyrus, was that really you?), Pixar's *Finding Nemo*, or listening to Michael Jackson songs on the radio with their parents.

Then there are the myriad trivial aspects of everyday life that come from our time with the media: finding the perfect little brunch café through restaurant review site Yelp, watching the rapper Drake play Fortnite on a Twitch stream, or arguing on social media as to who should be the top pick in your fantasy football league.

The media world we inhabit is constantly changing, as is our relationship with the media. In my first job as a college professor, I taught a course in media effects. On the first day of class, a student raised his hand and asked, "When do we get to the part where we talk about how television turns people into zombies?" His question has stayed with me through the years because it represents the view many people have about the media. The student's attitude had been fostered by media critics with an agenda—getting elected to office, getting a regulation approved, promoting a product, or even pushing a moral choice. I have long taken the view that the successful study of mass communication is also a journey of self-awareness. We are students of media and also players in a media world.

Approach of the Book

A study conducted by *eMarketer* in 2017 shows that people spend an average of more than twelve hours a day interacting with mass media of one form or another. Time-wise, the biggest medium is television, but in terms of growth, it's online media—much of it mobile. Much of this time is also multitasking, interacting with your phone while watching TV, for example. That's how people squeeze in that much time with the media.

Mass Communication: Living in a Media World views the media in our world not as isolated institutions that somehow "do something" to us, but rather as forces that are central to how we live, work, and play. The media are not outside influences; they are part of who we are. From mobile media devices to streaming video, the pervasiveness of mass communication in our daily lives complicates our ability to understand the media's rich history of technical, cultural, sociological, political, economic, and artistic achievements. *Mass Communication* reveals the forces that drive the industry, while at the same time motivating readers to think critically about how they consume media. It uses compelling stories and examples drawn from everyday life. Readers are encouraged to consider the media industry from the inside out and, in so doing, to explore the many dimensions of mass communication that operate in our society.

My students over the years have told me that they remember information better if it is presented as a story, and so I strive to be a storyteller. Some of these stories are unpleasant and ugly. But that doesn't mean we don't need to tell them. The narrative style of this book will help motivate students to do the reading and facilitate their recall of the material. Many of the Test Your Media Literacy exercises are based on writing assignments I've used in classroom settings, as well as in more writing-intensive online sections. These exercises connect the material from the book to the media that students use every day, and students say that these assignments make them really think about how they experience the media.

Organization

The book is organized into five parts, each examining critical dimensions that comprise the world of mass communication. *Part I: Introduction to the Media* presents the institutions, social effects, and business workings of the media in order to lay the foundation for understanding mass communication. *Part II: Written Media* explores the development of mass literacy and mass communication and what has traditionally been the paper-oriented print media, including newspapers, books, and magazines. But these media are now increasingly delivered in digital form as well. *Part III: Electronic Media* covers the media of sound and motion, from radio and music to movies, television, and online. *Part IV: Strategic Communication* delves into the advertising and public relations industries. *Part V: Regulation and Control of the Media* looks at the institutions, conventions, and rules that regulate and control the media in the United States and around the world, critiques normative theories of the press in various countries, and looks at how the media operate around the globe.

Most of the chapters about the individual print or electronic media (Parts II and III) are organized around the same basic structure. Following an opening vignette come four major sections:

1. How the medium developed along with major changes in society and culture. More than just a history of the medium, this section considers how societal, cultural, and technological elements came together to create the medium we have today.
2. How the medium operates within the business and social world. This section looks at why the medium behaves the way it does within our economy.
3. Current issues and controversies between the medium and society. These often include issues involving media effects, such as the concern about the importance of seeing people like yourself portrayed in the media.
4. The future of the medium, including the effects mobile technology and the long tail have had on it.

New to the Seventh Edition

The media world of 2019 is very different from that of 2015 or 2010, and it's unimaginably different from the year 2000 and the change of the millennium. "Fake news" used to refer to late-night satirical comedy from *Saturday Night Live* or *The Daily Show*. Now it's an attack on the news media or a description of deceptive social media propaganda efforts. Powerful men showing up unexpectedly in the news used to mean they had completed some big business deal or died. Now it often means they have been accused of sexual misconduct. Talk about hip-hop used to be talk about BET videos. Now it's a discussion of the Broadway hit show *Hamilton* or the Pulitzer Prize–winning album DAMN. from Kendrick Lamar.

In the sixth edition of *Mass Communication* I offered a strengthened focus on critical/cultural theory. With this seventh edition, I've tried to build on this with the importance of representation, inclusion, and diversity with an emphasis on whose voices get heard. Your author is a firm believer that everything can be explained by the hip-hop musical *Hamilton*. In this case, the line comes at the end from President George Washington, who asks the musical question, "Who lives, who dies, who tells your story?" In the Oscar-winning animated musical *Coco*, the characters who are dead live on in the afterlife as long as there is someone to tell their story. But when no one remembers their story, who they are, on *el Día de Muertos* (the Day of the Dead), the dead truly die. It is almost exactly 214 years after the death of founding father and treasury secretary Alexander Hamilton as I write this preface. And the reason that no one questions why I would bring him up is that Ron Chernow wrote a brilliant biography of Hamilton that Lin-Manuel Miranda used as the basis for a musical. Hamilton, his nemesis Aaron Burr, his wife Eliza, and his sister-in-law Angelica live on for us because we tell their stories.

In 2017 and 2018, we started hearing the stories of women who had suffered harassment and abuse by powerful men in Hollywood. We heard the story of people who grew up in poor African American neighborhoods through voices such as Ryan Coogler, writer and director of the hit superhero movie *Black Panther*. While the hero King T'Challa is a man of royal privilege, our somewhat sympathetic villain is Erik Killmonger, who grew up in the housing projects of Oakland, California. The point here is that what we talk about in our media matters a lot. The stories we talk about are the stories that get told.

Updated Media Transformations Boxes.

These boxes use text and images to help students understand the rapid rate of media changes over recent decades. Each Media Transformations feature includes text telling the story of one specific transformation such as how consumers pick news sources that match their ideology, how the movement from stone tablets to paper to electronic documents has

transformed the world, how independent musicians are making a living in the era of streaming music and file sharing, and how video games have been transformed from something you play with a friend to something you watch being played by celebrities. New for this edition, each story is accompanied by an online animation that depicts the transformation.

New Chapter-Opening Vignette.

Fourteen of the chapters feature brand-new stories about key figures and issues in the media to provide a powerful narrative thread exemplifying the major themes of each chapter. These vignettes convey the excitement and relevance of media studies and critical enquiry by way of those whose lives have been profoundly affected by the media. New vignettes include the problem of consumer brands depending on erratic young YouTube stars like Logan Paul as endorsers; Keah Brown's social media hashtag campaign #DisabledAndCute; the #MeToo movement that brought down movie mogul Harvey Weinstein; and how journalist Marie Colvin was murdered by the Syrian military to stop her from reporting on that country's civil war.

Review Questions.

The central concepts that were listed at the end of each chapter have been converted to review questions. These questions will encourage students to apply critical thinking skills to examples of mass communication from literature and popular culture.

Updated Chapters.

Each chapter has been thoroughly updated to include new developments, new scholarship, and recent events in mass communication. Highlights of the revisions include the following:

- Chapter 1, *Living in a Media World*, kicks off our discussion of the concept of fake news with a new vignette that tracks the concept from England of the 1720s to the present day. The chapter also starts off the edition-long discussion of issues of representation and diversity by looking at the hit movie *Wonder Woman.*
- Chapter 2, *Mass Communication Effects*, opens with a new vignette on how the press covered (and didn't cover) sexual harassment and abuse in the media industry. This is part of the seventh edition's look at the role of diversity and inclusion in our media industry. The chapter also makes use of examples from John Williams's career as our most famous film composer and of Omarosa Manigault Newman's move from reality TV star to government official and back to reality TV star. Finally, there's a new media literacy box that lets students see how the communication theories we use help shape the results we find.
- Chapter 3, *The Media Business*, begins with an in-depth look at Mark Zuckerberg

and his company Facebook. The opening vignette looks at Facebook not only for its possible role in shaping the 2016 election but also as one of our most wide-reaching media. A second major theme for this chapter is how multiple companies are scrambling to buy up the most valuable parts of their competitors. Finally, as a more lighthearted, but still contentious, bit of media business, we look at how various people and organizations argue over the people and events that Google chooses to honor with its homepage "Doodles."

- Chapter 4, *Books*, considers the role that young adult novels play in our culture by looking at how author John Green, who wrote *The Fault in Our Stars* and *Turtles All the Way Down*, has brought attention to the problems of mental illness. Along with being a best-selling author, Green has partnered with his brother to create a popular teen-oriented video blog. The chapter also considers *Mass Communicatio*n's tradition of taking a deep dive into how textbooks are created and sold. A third major area for this edition's coverage of books is a much expanded look at the role of libraries throughout history.
- Chapter 5, *Magazines*, looks at how a short story by a young author went viral after being published in the *New Yorker.* This was one of the first times a new short story had captured the attention of social media. The chapter also looks at a couple of ways that social media have shaped our perceptions and acceptance of two seemingly unconventional magazine fashion models.
- Chapter 6, *Newspapers and the News*, takes a fresh look at how the news media did (and did not) cover the Flint, Michigan, water crisis, and considers the role of local media in breaking important national stories. A major theme of this chapter is how both journalists and news consumers deal with the issue of bias in the news. One approach is by looking at what NYU professor Jay Rosen calls "The View From Nowhere" and how it affects news coverage of controversial issues. A second is with a new Media Transformations feature that lets students evaluate the quality of the sources they turn to for the news.
- Chapters 7 and 8, *Audio* and *Movies*, give the biggest look at hip-hop we've had in this book, considering two prize-winning examples: Rapper Kendrick Lamar, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his album DAMN. as well as serving as the music consultant for the hit movie *Black Panther*; and Lin-Manuel Miranda, whose hip-hop musical *Hamilton* brought attention to both "the $10 founding father" and hip-hop as part of a Broadway musical. Chapter 8 also takes a look at the reasons behind the success of faith-based movie *I Can Only Imagine.*
- Chapter 9, *Television*, looks at the business side of the medium along with the cultural and technical aspects by taking a deep dive into the Sinclair Broadcast Group, the biggest owner of local TV broadcast stations in the United States. The chapter also considers the impact of streaming video by individuals and corporations in a way that brings up five of the Seven Secrets About the Media "They" Don't Want You to Know.
- Chapter 10, *Online Media*, continues this edition's examination of diversity and

inclusion by looking at journalist Keah Brown's #DisabledAndCute hashtag campaign. It also looks at President Trump's unprecedented use of social media to take his message directly to voters, as well as the controversy over the Russians' involvement in social media hacking of the 2016 presidential election.

- Chapter 11, *Advertising*, considers the rewards and risks of brands putting their reputations in the hands of young YouTube and Instagram stars who may be better at knowing what will attract attention than whether it is a good kind of attention. Actually, it's not just young social media folks—there's also a look at how entrepreneur Elon Musk used his SpaceX rocket launch business to generate attention for his electric car business.
- Chapter 12, *Public Relations*, speaking of irresponsible social media use's influence on major brands, discusses how Procter & Gamble's Tide laundry detergent has had to build a communication strategy to deal with young people posting videos of themselves biting into liquid laundry packs. The chapter also looks at how Coca-Cola used integrated marketing communication to promote its new "Coke machine of the future."
- Chapter 13, *Media Law*, begins with a vignette about a group of Kansas high school journalists who discovered what their school district had not found—that their new principal was claiming teaching and education credentials she didn't have. The students were able to report and write these stories because they were protected by a Kansas state law that protected their student free speech/free press rights. There's also an in-depth look at the changes that have taken place in net neutrality.
- Chapter 14, *Media Ethics*, opens up with a look at the difficult issue of how news organizations deal with reporting the vulgar and offensive things presidents have said, ranging from legendarily crude Lyndon Johnson to President Donald Trump. Both Chapters 14 and 15 (on *Global Media*) deal with the challenges journalists face trying to cover dangerous situations ranging from local journalist Ryan Kelly shooting photos of a white nationalist riot in Charlottesville, Virginia, to Marie Colvin's death while covering the civil war in Syria.

Returning Favorites

While some of the book's new features were described above, the seventh edition contains many returning features and coverage that have been updated to enhance and improve upon the existing content.

In the sixth edition, it became clear that it was time to update the Seven Secrets to better match our changing media world. These updated secrets all deal with what the media are, who controls the media, how media content is selected, why the media behave the way they do, and how society and the media interact with each other. The Seven Secrets are as follows:

Secret 1 The media are essential components of our lives.
Secret 2 There are no mainstream media.
Secret 3 Everything from the margin moves to the center.
Secret 4 Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.
Secret 5 All media are social.
Secret 6 Online media are mobile media.
Secret 7 There is no "they."

The secrets are presented in depth in the last section of Chapter 1, and they recur, when relevant, in the subsequent chapters to remind students of these concepts and also to serve as a springboard for discussions or writing assignments. These important principles of media literacy are highlighted to call attention to where the Seven Secrets appear throughout the chapters, reminding readers to be attentive and thoughtful.

Mobile Media.

This edition continues to emphasize the dominant role mobile media are playing in how we consume both legacy and new types of media. More than two-thirds of all Americans go online with mobile devices like smartphones or tablets. Many online sites are finding they have more mobile traffic than connections from traditional computers. And mobile media have moved us from the need-to-connect of dial-up service, to the always-on of broadband, to the access-everywhere of mobile internet.

Social Media.

These channels for interaction are used not only on their own but as a tool for existing media to connect with their audiences. With Secret 5: All media are social, we are also reminded that there has always been a social element of media use, long before we had online social media. We look at how media recall is enhanced by social interaction, how being able to discuss issues anonymously changes the rhetoric (and usually not for the

better), and how marketers depend on their best customers for social promotion. The roles of social media and interaction are integrated throughout the book.

Chapter Objectives.

Learning objectives appear at the start of each chapter and call out key topics for close, focused reading. Students can refer back to them for study guidance as well.

Test Your Media Literacy Boxes.

There's no better way to cultivate critical media consumers than by modeling critical thinking. These boxes present students with current research, interviews, and issues relating to the practice of mass communication, and ask questions that challenge students to evaluate and analyze the story being told. The readings are engaging and fun, but more important, the questions get students to do more than summarize what they've read—they encourage them to think.

Test Your Visual Media Literacy Boxes.

These boxes showcase images—sometimes controversial, sometimes disturbing—from various media to seek instinctive reactions from students before providing context and questions that encourage critical assessment of how we see and interpret images, and what more may be behind them. Both media literacy boxes are supplemented with up-to-the-minute additions and further related information through my blog at http://ralphehanson.com.

Questioning the Media Feature.

This marginal feature poses critical-thinking questions that address current media issues and encourage students to consider how they use and consume media and develop their own opinions.

Chapter Summary.

Each chapter concludes with a brief recap of important points to assist students in reviewing key themes, events, and concepts.

Key Terms.

A list of key terms—with page references—appears at the end of each chapter to make the terms easy to locate.

Living in a Media World's Social Media

Located at http://ralphehanson.com, my blog *Living in a Media World* covers the entire mass communication field and has been linked to by national websites, including *FishbowlDC*, *Wonkette*, *Gawker*, *Eat the Press*, and *USA Today*'s *On Deadline*. One of the blog's biggest benefits to you is that it provides a single destination for up-to-date material on the topics covered in this book. It also provides links to current multimedia features created by media outlets across the country. Think of it as a clearinghouse for current media news and features. You may find examples of new assignments or early versions of new book features on the blog as well.

The *Living in a Media World* blog has now been joined by several other social media feeds. You can follow me on Twitter (https://twitter.com/ralphehanson) for daily links to media news and whatever else I'm reading. I try to tag my tweets that tie most closely to this book with the hashtag #liamw (for Living In A Media World), as occasionally do other teachers and students. (Expect links to Web comics, motorcycle news, and whatever I am reading to make an appearances as well.) I also have a Tumblr (http://ralphehanson.tumblr.com) that will feature a lot of great video clips that work well as a pre-class feature, along with photos and other images I've found online or created myself. Typical content includes music clips, viral videos, memes, and commentary on geek culture. The Tumblr tends to be a bit less focused than the blog and sometimes includes photos I've taken. Finally, this book has a Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/livinginamediaworld) where you can share materials and find links to what I've been posting about on the blog and on Tumblr.

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    - Media Transformation Videos accompanied by easy-to-follow narrations demonstrate how media channels and industries have changed over recent decades.
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- Sample course syllabi with suggested models for structuring your course that give you options to customize your course in a way that is perfect for you
- An Instructor's manual written by the author and offers chapter overviews, lecture starters, media literacy exercises, class activities, review questions, and suggested readings.
- Integrated links to the interactive eBook that make it easy for your students to maximize their study time with this "anywhere, anytime" mobile-friendly version of the text. It also offers access to more digital tools and resources, including SAGE Premium Video

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- Chapter-specific study questions that allow students to engage with the material
- Video, audio, and web resources that bring concepts to life, are tied to learning objectives, and are curated exclusively for this text.

In the electronic edition of the book you have purchased, there are several icons that reference links (videos, journal articles) to additional content. Though the electronic edition links are not live, all content referenced may be accessed at edge.sagepub.com/hanson7e . This URL is referenced at several points throughout your electronic edition.

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REH,

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About the Author



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Ralph E. Hanson

is a professor in the communication department at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, where he teaches courses in writing, blogging, reporting, and mass communication. Previously, he was on the faculty at West Virginia University and Northern Arizona University. He has been teaching introduction to mass communication for more than twenty years, and he has worked extensively on developing online courses and degree programs. Hanson has a bachelor's degree in journalism and anthropology from Iowa State University, a master's degree in journalism from Iowa State, and a doctorate in sociology from Arizona State University. He is currently working on research about the connection between sports boycotts and civil rights legislation. When Ralph is not out on his motorcycle riding to places a long way from Nebraska, he is blogging on mass communication issues at http://ralphehanson.com. He tweets as @ralphehanson.

PART I Introduction to the Media

Chapter 1 Living in a Media World
An Introduction to Mass Communication
Chapter 2 Mass Communication Effects
How Society and Media Interact
Chapter 3 The Media Business
Consolidation, Globalization, and the Long Tail



NBC/Photofest

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Identify the four levels of communication
2. Explain the difference between mass communication and mass media
3. Define three contemporary models of mass communication
4. Explain the historical evolution of the media world
5. Define media literacy
6. Describe the "Seven Secrets" about the mass media

Fake news seems to be everywhere right now. The president accuses the *New York Times* of being fake news. The Russians are accused of spreading fake news through social media in an attempt to influence elections in the United States and Europe. Websites promote "too good to be true" stories as a way to attract clicks, and comedians use the term to refer to their biting satire of current events. But if all of these are "fake news," does the term still have any meaning? And if so, what is it?

Before we can answer those questions, let's start by jumping back nearly three hundred years and look at a news story that actually was fake—and true.

Back in the 1730s and 1740s, the British Parliament passed a law making it illegal for journalists to report on the debates and actions of the government. So Edward Cave, publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, started running columns that were supposedly accounts of the fictional "Parliament of Lilliput" but were really thinly disguised accounts of the real British government, largely written by that great man of British letters, Samuel Johnson. (You all remember the fictional nation of Lilliput with its six-inch-tall citizens from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, don't you?)

Johnson's fictionalized (and entertaining) accounts of the actions of the British Parliament were acceptable to readers because they understood that British law banned direct reporting on the government. Readers got "fake news" stories that were designed to use fiction in order to tell true stories. Tom Koch, in his book *The News as Myth: Fact and Context in Journalism*, writes, "Indeed, most of the Parliament of Lilliput copy was, by modern journalistic standards, pure fabrication. It carried the sense of the events in parliament, but almost never the actual words or actions of its members."[1]

This technique of using fiction to tell true stories was carried out by American writer Mark Twain (best known for his novels *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*), who, in addition to being a famed novelist and travel writer, had a brief career as a journalist.

In the early 1860s, Twain deserted from the Confederate army and needed to get away

from the United States for a while until the Civil War calmed down. Twain ended up working for the *Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City, Nevada Territory. While there, he engaged in writing fake news stories known as "quaints." Often these were done with the purpose of making a point for the reader, getting at some kind of higher truth. Twain's "interesting stories" for the *Enterprise* were sometimes told as stories that were clearly meant to be believed, while others were just as clearly tall tales that he had no expectation of being accepted as fact.[2]

Twain had learned how to do traditional journalism from the staff of the *Enterprise*, but he quickly became bored with straight reporting about the mining industry. Twain instead developed his use of the exaggerated story and his use of the "wink" to let readers know it's all a joke—something many people missed.

But it was comedian and commentator Jon Stewart who really brought both the term and concept of fake news to the forefront. Stewart took over as host of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* in the summer of 1996. Despite hosting a show featuring satire that Stewart called fake news, multiple articles listed him as one of the most admired journalists in the United States. Nevertheless, Stewart steadfastly maintained he was just a comedian—a guy who told jokes. Stewart used the term *fake news* to refer to his brand of satirical news that had its roots in the world of *Saturday Night Live*'s Weekend Update news satire segment.

Fake news continued to have a low level of discussion throughout the early 2000s, mostly in reference to satire and comedy programs. But then, in 2016, when Donald Trump started running for president, use of the term exploded, with nearly four hundred mentions for the year in the *Washington Post*. In 2017, when the former reality TV host became president, there were more than eight hundred references to fake news in the *Post* in the first three months of the year, most of which were connected to the new president.[3]



Twitter/@realDonaldTrump

President Trump used the term *fake news* in new ways compared to how it had been used in the past. He wasn't talking about allegorical stories masquerading as news or fiction, as Mark Twain's and Samuel Johnson's work did. And he wasn't referring to late-night satire on *The Daily Show*, as host Jon Stewart did. While the president sometimes referred to stories that had errors in them or were fabricated, he also often used the term to refer to stories and news outlets he simply didn't like. In a tweet from the president dated February 17, 2017, he wrote, "The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!"[4]

By 2018, the term *fake news* was so commonly used to refer to so many things that it became hard to know what it means. But there were least five common usages:

- Satire—*Fake news* as an ironic term refers to stories that stretch the facts in order to make a joke or cultural criticism.
- Mistakes and fabrication—Sometimes news stories have errors in them that eventually get corrected. Sometimes stories are actually fabricated by unethical reporters (you can read more about this topic in Chapter 14, "Media Ethics").
- Partisan clickbait—Sometimes websites make up sensational stories designed specifically to attract readers to their pages so that the readers will see the ads that appear with the fake articles. Oftentimes, if you dig deeply enough into these pages, you will see a mention that the stories are "fictional and presumably satirical news."
- Foreign political manipulation—The Russian intelligence agencies have planted and amplified stories throughout the United States and Europe in order to try to manipulate elections. Some of these stories are made up, similar to partisan clickbait, while others are simply manipulated to appear more important and popular than they really are.
- Media criticism—Politicians and others often use the term *fake news* to refer to news outlets they don't like as a general-purpose media criticism.

Historian and social critic Christopher Lasch wrote in 1979 that even then people were starting to question whether truth or falsity was still an important distinction in the media:

> [T]he rise of mass media makes the categories of truth and falsehood irrelevant to an evaluation of their influence. Truth has given way to credibility, facts to statements that sound authoritative without conveying any authoritative information.[5]

The debate over fake news and whether there is anything we can trust in the news is part of the rapidly changing media world we live in. We experience it through legacy media like newspapers, cable news, magazines, and talk radio, as well as through social media and other online sources.

Levels of Communication

As the director of forensics and a communication instructor at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Aaron Blackman communicates a lot. For both work and hobbies, his communication often flows through social media like Facebook, Twitter, Discord, and Instagram. He uses these outlets to stay in touch with friends and family, attend meetings, and form new connections with gamers around the world. "Communicating with others through social media weaves in and out of my daily routine," Aaron says.

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

> I check numerous forms of social media throughout the day for a variety of reasons. I use Twitter the most to keep up on video game news, politics, and the weather. I'm a freelance eSports journalist on top of being an instructor, so Twitter serves as my first point of contact when it comes to interviewing pro players and gauging fan reactions to pro games. Twitter is also useful for promoting my articles as well as when I go live with my Twitch stream. I've been streaming video games on Twitch every Monday night (my latest game was *Fortnite*), which, in addition to reaching my general audience, allows me to chat about gaming and life with my friends and family, including cousins from Minnesota that I don't get to see very often.
>
> I've recently started to use Instagram, but mostly for sharing pictures of our adorable 15-year-old Jack Russell terrier named Bailey. Additionally, I picked up cross-stitching video game art as a hobby, so I tend to share my progress pictures via Instagram. Another major service I use every day is Discord, which is a voice/text chat app that lets me connect with various gaming groups and provides a fantastic option for voice communication for meetings or while playing video games. As a member since 2005, I don't update my Facebook very often anymore, but I find myself scrolling through every day to catch up on life updates from family members, friends, and the forensics community.[6]

When Aaron is on social media, he's engaging in almost every possible level of communication, but before we try to analyze the levels of communication Aaron is using, we need to define what communication is. Media scholar George Gerbner provides a simple definition: Communication is "social interaction through messages."[7] More plainly put, communication is how we interact with our entire world, whether through spoken words, written words, gestures, music, paintings, photographs, or dance. The important point is that communication is a process, not a static thing. Communication is an interaction that allows individuals, groups, and institutions to share ideas.

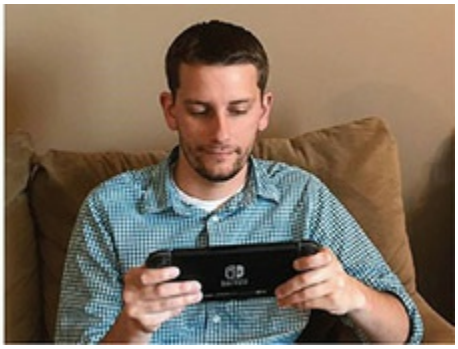
Media scholar and theorist Denis McQuail suggests that the various levels of communication can be viewed as a pyramid with a large base of intrapersonal communication where everyone is sending messages, building up to a peak of mass communication at which a relatively small number of organizations or individuals are transmitting messages (see Figure 1.1).[8]

Intrapersonal Communication

Communication at its most basic level is intrapersonal communication, which is really communication within the self. This is how we think and how we assign meaning to all the messages and events that surround our lives. It ranges from the simple act of smiling in response to the smell of a favorite food coming from the kitchen to the complex reaction to an unexpected proposal of marriage. Feedback, or the response from the receiver of the message, is constant because we are always reflecting on what we have done and how we will react. Intrapersonal communication is the most prevalent form of communication and is, therefore, at the base of the pyramid. When Aaron is thinking over in his own mind which game he's going to stream on Twitch next Monday, he is engaging in intrapersonal communication.

▼ University of Nebraska at Kearney Director of Forensics Aaron Blackman (right) handles his own communication with his friends, colleagues, and even fans of his video game streams through his Twitter account.





Twitter/@acblackman

Courtesy of Michelle Blackman

Interpersonal Communication

The next level on the pyramid is interpersonal communication, or one-on-one communication: "[t]he intentional or accidental transmission of information through verbal or nonverbal message systems to another human being."[9] Interpersonal communication can be a conversation with a friend or a hug that tells your mother you love her. Like communication with the self, interpersonal communication is continual when others are around because we constantly send out messages, even if those messages consist of nothing more than body language indicating that we want to be left alone.

Interpersonal communication provides many opportunities for feedback. Your friend nods, raises an eyebrow, touches you on the arm, or simply answers your question. Not all interpersonal communication is done face-to-face, however. A telephone conversation, an SMS text message, an email, or even a greeting card can be interpersonal communication, though at a somewhat greater emotional distance than in a face-to-face conversation. When Aaron carries out a personal conversation over Discord, sends an email to an editor about a possible eSports story, or talks to his wife over dinner, he's engaging in interpersonal communication.

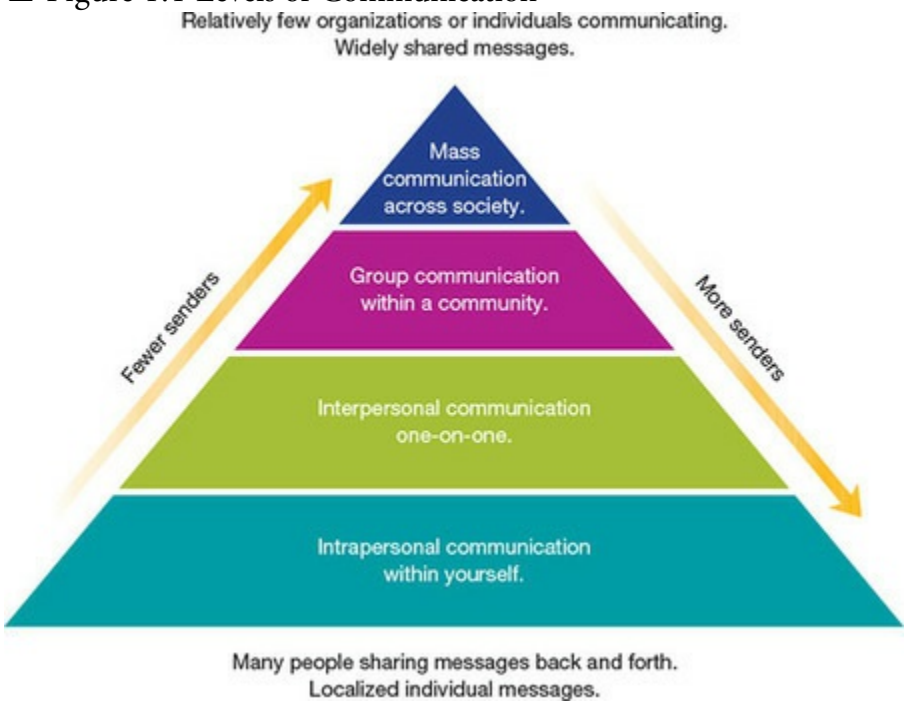
Questioning the Media

How many different ways have you engaged in interpersonal communication today? What techniques have you or your friends used to get messages (both verbal and nonverbal) across to each other? Do you prefer one technique over others? If so, why?

Group Communication

Group communication is near the top of the pyramid and has reached a level of unequal communication in which one person is communicating with an audience of two or more people. Group communication often has a leader and is more public than interpersonal communication. In a small group—for example, a family at the dinner table or a coach with a basketball team—each individual has an opportunity to respond to the leader and is likely to do so. In a large group—such as a 350-student lecture section of a university class—each individual still has an opportunity to respond but is unlikely to do so. Other situations test the boundaries of group communication, such as a Kendrick Lamar concert at an amphitheater or concert hall. With the amplifiers and multiple video screens, there is a high level of communication technology but limited possibilities for audience members to provide direct feedback to the performers. However, there is still interaction between the rapper and his audience. Aaron engages in group communication when he meets with his forensics team, cheers when attending an eSports event in person, or shares a photo on Facebook.[10]

▲ Figure 1.1 Levels of Communication



Source: Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 6th ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 18. Reproduced by permission of Sage Publications. Copyright © Denis McQuail, 2005.

Mass Communication

Mass communication is the pinnacle of the communication pyramid; it is a society-wide communication process in which an individual or institution uses technology to send messages to a large, mixed audience, most of whose members are not known to the sender. Nationally broadcast speeches by politicians, stories about crime in the newspapers, and popular new novels are all forms of mass communication. These communications are fundamentally different from the forms described previously because the sender is separated in space, and possibly in time, from the receiver. Also, the audience is not really known to the communicator. When a communicator appears on television or writes an article for a newspaper, he or she doesn't know who will be listening or reading. What is more, the audience consists of many types of people. It might contain a young man in prison, an old woman in a nursing home, a child eating Cheerios for breakfast, or Aaron as he's getting ready to go to the office to meet with his speech students. The message is communicated to all these people and to thousands or millions of others.[11]

Traditionally, mass communication has allowed only limited opportunities for feedback because the channels of communication are largely one way, but with the rise of interactive communication networks, the opportunities for feedback are growing rapidly. Aaron consumes a wide range of mass communication during his day, including binge-watching series on Netflix, Hulu, and HBO Go; watching video game streamers and *Heroes of the Storm* tournaments on Twitch; playing video games on Blizzard, Steam, and the PlayStation Network; and listening to music through YouTube or Spotify. "My wife and I haven't paid for cable or satellite for years," Aaron says. "Aside from *Westworld* and *Game of Thrones*, we are perfectly content to catch up on TV shows months or years after their initial run. Entertainment fits into our busy schedules, not the other way around."[12]

A Mix of Levels

The distinctions among the various levels of communication are useful, but don't assume that every instance of communication can automatically be placed in one category or another. In reality, there are frequent crossovers in the levels of communication. Consider online communication. You can share a photo with a friend via Snapchat. Through a Tumblr blog, you can share your favorite images and videos. With a listserv, an employer can communicate with employees throughout the world. And through websites and podcasts, messages can go out to the entire world. The same is true of a newspaper, in which a classified ad can carry a proposal of marriage, a notice of a group meeting, or a political manifesto. When Aaron goes out to dinner with friends, they cheer when the *Heroes of the Storm* eSports tournament being shown on ESPN gets exciting and talk about the competitors with each other, thus engaging in mass and group communication at the same time.

▼ Dan Middleton, better known as YouTube video game streamer DanTDM, has managed to become enough of a media star to be invited to attend the BAFTA Children's Awards in London.



Photo by Mike Marsland/WireImage/Getty Images

The purpose of this book is to help you better understand mass communication and the mass media. In the fifteen chapters of this book, we look at a variety of topics:

- The institutions that make up the media and how they function in and affect our society
- Who owns and controls the media business
- The media themselves, including books, magazines, newspapers, radio, recorded

music, movies, television, and the internet
- The industries that support the media, including advertising and public relations
- The laws and ethics that regulate and control the media
- The roles the media play in countries and cultures around the world

By the time you are finished, you will better understand what the media are, why they function as they do, and what roles they play in your life.

Elements of Mass Communication

Although people often use the terms *mass communication* and *mass media* interchangeably, they are significantly different concepts. Mass communication is a process, whereas the mass media are simply the technological tools used to transmit the messages of mass communication.[13] Earlier in this chapter, we defined mass communication as a society-wide communication process in which an individual or institution uses technology to send messages to a large mixed audience, most of whose members are not known to the sender. Let's now take a closer look at all the players in the mass communication process and at several models that describe how these elements interact with each other.

The Players in the Mass Communication Process

There is an old way of describing mass communication known as the Sender Message Channel Receiver (SMCR) or transmission model. This transmission model does not do justice to the complexity of the mass communication process because it tends to portray mass communication as a largely one-directional flow of messages from the sender to the receiver, rather than as a complex interaction where senders and receivers are constantly changing places. But the model is still useful in helping to identify all the players we will be working with throughout this text.

The Sender.

When critics talk about "the media" as a potent force, they are often talking about the ability of a few large corporations to control the messages that go out through the various channels of mass communication. These corporations, which are discussed in depth in Chapter 3, are the major senders in the mass communication process. They are the large, bureaucratic organizations that produce the complex messages we receive through the mass media, and they employ large numbers of people. If you look at the credits of a major movie, you'll see hundreds, if not thousands, of names listed. Even a relatively straightforward medium such as a newspaper requires a substantial staff of writers, editors, graphic artists, photographers, computer specialists, printers, truck drivers, delivery people, janitors, librarians, circulation clerks, accountants, advertising salespeople, business managers, and a publisher.

As you may have already figured out, there are many other senders besides the major corporations. For example, although the majority of the most frequently visited websites are produced by large media organizations, social media and other forms of online communication have given rise to smaller, more intimate media without the accompanying structure and staff. For example, *Six Until Me*, one of the leading blogs for persons with diabetes, is operated by patient and diabetes advocate Kerri Morrone Sparling, assisted by one other person. *Six Until Me* started back in 2005 with a total of two readers: Kerri's mother and her then boyfriend. By 2018, Kerri was communicating with her readers through a variety of social media platforms that point to her blog. As of this writing, she had 4,500 followers on Instagram, 27,500 followers on Twitter, and 7,800 likes on her *Six Until Me* Facebook page.[14] You act as a "sender," too, every time you post something publicly on your social media accounts.

Mass communication has generally been thought of as one-on-many communication, with few senders and many receivers, in contrast to interpersonal communication, which involves roughly equal numbers of senders and receivers. Sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote that the real power of the mass media is that they can control what topics are being covered

and how much attention they receive. The most significant change brought about by the media in the United States, he said, was that public communication became a matter of sending information to a large number of receivers rather than a dialogue between roughly equal numbers of senders and receivers.[15]

The balance of power between senders and receivers in the mass media has started to change in recent years, however, with the rise of social media. Bloggers are people who post their thoughts on a regularly updated website. We got a big reminder of the importance of blogs on Thursday, June 28, 2012, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare, was constitutional. Everyone in the news media knew that this story would be breaking at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 28. The decision coming down was definitely not a surprise.

And yet . . .

▼ When news of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act broke on June 28, 2012, competing cable news channels CNN and Fox News both got the story wrong.



Twitter/@cnnbrk

Both CNN and Fox News initially got the story wrong. In their effort to be first, both cable networks initially reported that the court had overturned the individual mandate requirement that everyone purchase health insurance or pay a fine/tax because the court rejected the argument that this was justified by the Commerce Clause of the Constitution —except that Chief Justice John Roberts's opinion went on to say that the mandate could be justified under Congress's authority to levy taxes. And so . . . two of our biggest sources of breaking news got the story flat-out wrong. Meanwhile, a little blog that typically draws a few thousand readers a day, *SCOTUSblog*, was the authoritative news site that everyone turned to for immediate and accurate news about the decision. And on a day that several bigger websites had trouble staying online because of heavy demand, *SCOTUSblog* had

server capacity to spare despite drawing hundreds of times more traffic than normal.[16]

The Message.

The message is the content being transmitted by the sender and reacted to by the receiver. Before a message can be transmitted, it must be encoded. Encoding requires at least two steps. First, the sender's ideas must be turned into a message: A script for a broadcast is drafted, a graphic is created, or a newspaper story is written. Second, the message must be prepared for transmission: The script is taped and sent out over the air, the graphic is placed on a web page, or the newspaper is printed.

Mass communication messages are transmitted rapidly to the receivers. Audience members can receive the message simultaneously, as they would in the case of a radio broadcast; at similar though not identical times, as in the case of a newspaper or magazine; or occasionally over an extended period, as in the case of a CD, movie, or video. In addition to being transmitted rapidly, mass communication messages are available to a wide audience. Mass communication messages also tend to be transient—here today and gone tomorrow. The newspapers and magazines are recycled; a new movie replaces the old at the theater; the tweet moves through your feed so fast you don't realize it was ever there. Even though the message can be stored in the form of a computer file, it is generally replaced when something new comes along. The receiver's attention fades even if the physical item remains.

Production of mass communication messages is generally expensive. The average cost of producing the top hundred biggest-budget movies as of the spring of 2018 was $212 million, with 2009's *Avatar* coming in at the top at an estimated $425 million and 2007's *Evan Almighty* coming in at #100 with a budget of $175 million.[17] That, of course, is just the cost of making the movie. Advertising and promotion add a lot to that figure. Pamela McClintock, writing for the *Hollywood Reporter* in 2014, said that a typical big-budget studio blockbuster would have a promotion budget north of $200 million, and a more modest film would still have a $40 million promotion budget.[18] (Current numbers on average movie production and promotion budgets are hard to come by as studios frequently go to significant lengths to avoid letting people know what movies really cost to make.) Thirty seconds of commercial time during the 2018 Super Bowl cost approximately $5 million. (That's $166,666 per second!) This was expected to generate $500 million in revenue for NBC from the Super Bowl–related programming (including the episode of *This Is Us* that followed the game).[19] But, again, if people do not seek to make money with their messages, they can reach a large audience online at a relatively low cost. For example, your author pays about $400 per year to keep his blog online and secure (ralphehanson.com).

▼ The cost of coveted ad time during the Super Bowl has more than doubled over the last decade. The average cost of a thirty-second commercial is $5 million, or $166,666 per

second. The NFL's spoof of *Dirty Dancing* featuring Eli Manning and Odell Beckham Jr. was one minute and three seconds.



NFL, "Touchdown Celebrations to Come | NFL | Super Bowl LII Commercial" retrieved from YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUoD-gPDahw.

What do all these messages mean? According to media scholar James Potter, the meaning of messages depends on who is receiving them and what kinds of media literacy skills the receivers can use to decode them. Potter writes that people with low levels of media literacy will look at the surface meanings in media content, whereas those with higher levels of media literacy can interpret messages from a wide range of perspectives with many choices of meanings.[20] For example, Patty Jenkins's *Wonder Woman*, released in the summer of 2017, was the first modern superhero movie to be directed by and star women.[21] The movie tells of Amazon and demigod warrior Diana as she is forced to confront the evil events of World War I. The movie can be seen as a simple heroic adventure story, an allegory on the nature of good and evil, or a treatise on differences between masculine and feminine responses to the modern world. Which of these interpretations is correct? Although *Wonder Woman* is most emphatically an adventure story, it also tells of the mythical conflict between Ares, the god of war, and Diana, a demigod whose responsibility is to defend humans.

The Channel.

The channel is the medium used to transmit the message. Recall that a mass medium is a technological tool. Think about a newspaper. It consists of black and colored ink printed on relatively low-quality paper. It is portable, readily available, and cheap. An article can be clipped from the paper and placed in a pocket. A newspaper also provides local and regional news in greater depth than is possible with almost any other medium.[22]

Print media include books, magazines, newspapers, billboards, and posters. Audiovisual

media include radio, sound recordings, broadcast television, cable and satellite television, and video recordings. Interactive media include the web, social media, mobile media, and video games.

What about faxes, text messages, letters, and email? Do they fit in as channels of mass communication? Although email is not generally considered to be a mass medium, an unsolicited commercial email, known as spam, could satisfy at least part of the definition of mass communication, since spam is distributed widely to a large, mixed, and anonymous audience. News reports and sports scores arriving via SMS text messages on the small screen on a mobile phone would also seem to qualify. But our phone calls, texts, and emails from friends are generally considered to be interpersonal communications unless we post them to a blog or social media site for everyone to see.

The nature of the channel used to transmit a message can change the meaning of the message. Take, for example, the daily news. On the radio, the news is something happening in the background; read in a newspaper, news is something that demands your undivided attention. But can you call information news when it is presented by comedian Jimmy Kimmel on ABC's *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*? A dramatic speech given by a great orator on television will likely be much more influential than a transcript of the speech that's published in a newspaper the next day.

The Receiver.

The receiver is the audience for the mass communication message—that is, the people who are receiving and decoding the message. Decoding is the process of translating a signal from a mass medium into a form that the receiver can understand. The term *mass* can have at least two meanings when referring to audiences. In one sense, the term refers to the mix of ordinary people who receive the message—"the masses." In another sense, the term refers to the size of the audience. The concept of mass, or popular, taste is an old one, but the concept of a massive, or large, audience developed in the twentieth century. The mass audiences reading major newspapers, listening to the radio, watching network television, or going to the movies are much larger than the crowds of people who gather for events such as political rallies or rock concerts. They form a heterogeneous audience—an audience made up of a mix of people who differ in age, sex, income, education, ethnicity, race, religion, and other characteristics. As with size, heterogeneity is a matter of degree. A small-town radio station is likely to reach an audience whose members are more similar than those listening to a station in a major urban area.

Receivers don't always get a clear message from the sender, however. Several types of noise can interfere with the delivery of the message. There is semantic noise, which occurs when the receiver does not understand the meaning of the message, such as when you can't understand the lyrics on a Latin music channel because you don't speak Spanish; mechanical noise, which occurs when the channel has trouble transmitting the message,

such as when a thunderstorm produces too much static for you to hear the score of a baseball game being broadcast on an AM radio station; and environmental noise, which occurs when the action and sounds surrounding the receiver interfere with the reception of the message, such as when your roommate's loud stereo keeps you from concentrating on your Introduction to Mass Communication textbook.

The receivers of a mass communication message have traditionally been seen as an anonymous audience. This means that the sender does not personally know all, or even most, of the people receiving the message. This doesn't mean that the audience consists of isolated people who have no connection to anyone else; audience members simply don't expect the sender to know who they are. But with the increasing number of channels available for audience members to send feedback to the senders—through the web, social media, email, faxes, text messages, and phone calls—audience members typically on the receiving end are becoming senders themselves and are becoming better and better known to the original senders. Sometimes, in the case of reality TV programs such as *The Voice*, audience members become active participants by voting on which contestants should advance to the next level of the competition.

Media Transformations

When Media Connect Us to the Most Remote Places on Earth

▼ After Hurricane Maria, power lines came down all over Puerto Rico. Facebook pledged to send a "connectivity team" to help restore communications to the island, in a move by one of several tech companies—among them Tesla, Google, Cisco, Microsoft, and a range of startups—who came with disaster response proposals, most aimed at getting phone and internet service up and running.



AP Photo/Carlos Giusti, File

In the year 2000, when the Pew Research Center first started tracking Americans' use of the internet, slightly more than 50 percent of us were online. That number has increased steadily over the ensuing two decades; in 2018, approximately 90 percent of American adults are online.[23]

How we access the internet has also changed over time. Back at the turn of the millennium, if you went online at home, chances are it was with a slow, dial-up line. But by 2016, approximately 75 percent of adults had access to high-speed broadband internet at home, most likely using either a cable modem or a landline-based DSL service.

In January 2007, Apple announced the first version of its iconic iPhone, and the world of mobile internet would never be the same.

It's not that the iPhone was the first phone to access the internet. The BlackBerry had been around for eight years at that point with its little Chiclet keyboard. But the BlackBerry was always first and foremost an email and messaging device.[24] If the BlackBerry looked like a glorified pager, Apple's iPhone looked like something out of Steven Spielberg's futuristic movie *Minority Report* with its touch screen interface and full internet access.[25]

Android phones featuring Google's mobile operating system were launched in the United States in October 2008, bridging the gap between the iPhone and the BlackBerry with both a touch screen and a slide-out keyboard.[26]

Back in 2013, the *Washington Post* reported that mobile internet use was expected to grow at a rate of 66 percent a year globally as more and more people connect more and more devices online. In fact, the number of online devices in the world was expected to exceed the number of people on earth. (You wondering when the computers are going to take over? They already outnumber us.)[27]

In addition to outnumbering people, mobile devices have outnumbered traditional personal computers since 2012.[28]

According to Pew, in 2016, 12 percent of Americans used a smartphone as their primary means of going online at home. That means they have no computer, just a smartphone. Not surprisingly, those most likely to be smartphone-onlys are younger, non-white, and lower-income Americans.

In times of disaster, we depend on our mobile devices to stay in touch. We can call and text or send social media messages. People check in via their Facebook app to let their friends know that they are okay or send text messages when phone calls can't go through. But sometimes disasters can be so severe that even mobile communication can't go through. A week after Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, the island was almost entirely without electricity, half of its residents—3.4 million U.S. citizens—were without running water, and 90 percent of the island was still without cell phone service. The Federal Emergency Management Agency depended on satellite phones to communicate with, and on much of the island, amateur radio operators (ham radios) were the only way to get word to the mainland.[29]

With the prevalence of mobile media, going online is not something we do; it's something we are. In the days of AOL and dial-up internet, going online was something that you did at a specific time and space. With the coming of broadband access, you could go online as much as you wanted, but you were still tethered to a space. But with mobile internet, the online world is where we live. It goes with us everywhere. We have moved to a world where, instead of deliberately going online, we need to deliberately go offline.

HOW do people communicate during times of disaster? What do they do when even cell service is knocked out? Why would mobile service be talked about in the same breath as access to power and running water following a natural disaster?

HOW do you do most of your online activity? What do you do from a desktop computer? A laptop? Your phone or tablet? Do you ever have to limit how much you are online in order to conserve your mobile data?

HOW has your life been changed by the fact that you are connected online 24/7? Do you feel uneasy when you have to "go dark"? Do you ever deliberately try to take time off from the media and communication technology?

HAVE you ever needed to use your mobile device during a time of emergency? What was that like? Were you able to connect with the people you needed to reach?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

Contemporary Models of Mass Communication

Though the transmission model (SMCR) is useful for laying out the various elements of the mass communication process, it does not explain how mass communication works in our lives. It focuses primarily on the process of transmitting messages largely from the point of view of a sender trying to have an effect on the receiver. Media scholar Denis McQuail lays out three contemporary models that help us answer three different questions about the nature of mass communication[30] (see Table 1.1):

▼ Table 1.1

▼ TABLE 1.1

Mass Communication Models

Model	Orientation of Sender	Orientation of Receiver
Transmission Model	Transfer of meaning	Cognitive processing
Ritual Model	Performance	Shared experience
Publicity Model	Competitive display	Attention-giving spectatorship
Reception Model	Preferential encoding	Differential decoding/construction of meaning

Source: Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 6th ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2010). Reproduced by permission of Sage Publications. Copyright © Denis McQuail, 2005.

Source: Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 6th ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2010). Reproduced by permission of Sage Publications. Copyright © Denis McQuail, 2005.

Ritual Model.

Whereas the transmission model looks at how a message is sent, the ritual model puts audience members at the center of the equation. The ritual model looks at how and why audience members (receivers) consume media messages. This model suggests that we watch a program such as *The Voice* not so much to learn about aspiring singers or to receive advertising messages, but rather to interact in a shared ritual with family and friends. This ritual is then extended through television to other groups of people all across the United States. Media consumption thus goes beyond simply delivering messages and becomes a shared experience that brings us together as a people. For example, following a terrorist bombing that killed twenty-two people and injured approximately fifty others in Manchester, England, at an Ariana Grande concert, the young singer posted the tweet to the right.



Twitter/@ArianaGrande

The tweet resonated with fans of the singer and former *Nickelodeon* star, with them providing more than 2.6 million "likes," 1.1 million shares, and 131,000 comments.[31] Of course, it's not just tragedies that bring social media attention. Carter Wilkerson, a then 16-year-old from Reno, Nevada, holds the record for Twitter engagement with 3.6 million retweets and 1 million likes for his tweet trying to get a year's worth of free chicken nuggets from Wendy's. The fast-food chain told him he would need to get 18 million shares to gets his free chicken, but in the end they gave him his nuggets anyway. For what it's worth, Wilkerson told the *New York Times* that he might use his experience as a launching ground for a career in marketing. "It'd be pretty cool to put on my college applications that I'm the No. 1 retweeted tweet of all time," he said.[32]

Publicity Model.

Sometimes media messages are not trying to convey specific information as much as they are trying to draw attention to a particular person, group, or concept. According to the publicity model, the mere fact that a topic is covered by the media can make the topic important, regardless of what is said about it. For example, when Justin Timberlake exposed Janet Jackson's right nipple for nine-sixteenths of a second during the 2004 Super Bowl, there were all sorts of charges that broadcast network CBS was lowering the moral standards of America's young people. The major effect of Jackson's stunt was that the Federal Communications Commission adopted increasingly strict rules on broadcast decency. As a result, at least twenty Sinclair-owned ABC affiliates refused to air the World War II movie *Saving Private Ryan* the following November for fear that they would be fined for all the bad language contained in the movie. Concerns about changing television standards had existed for several years prior to Jackson flashing Super Bowl viewers, but the attention Jackson brought to the issue put broadcast decency in the limelight.[33] By 2018, however, Timberlake's role in the affair seems to have been forgotten with the singer giving the Super Bowl halftime show. Miss Jackson, on the other hand, was not invited back.

Questioning the Media

How much are you on social media? Do you post original material, or do you mostly share things other people have posted? Do you go online to chat about a show as you watch it? Could you even watch a single show from beginning to end without being on social media?

Reception Model.

The reception model moves us out of the realm of social science analysis and into the world of critical theory. Instead of looking at how messages affect audiences or are used by the senders or receivers, the reception model looks at how audience members derive and create meaning out of media content. Rather than seeing content as having an intended, fixed meaning, the reception model says that each receiver decodes the message based on his or her own unique experiences, feelings, and beliefs. You can take a single news story and show it to liberal and conservative observers, and both will claim that it is biased against their point of view. In fact, a 1982 study showed that the more journalists tried to present multiple sides of an issue, the more partisans on either side of the issue viewed the story as biased.[34]

Evolution of the Media World

Where did our media world come from? Is it just a product of the late twentieth century with its constant flow of print and electronic messages? Not really. The world of interconnected and overlapping communication networks that surrounds us has been evolving for hundreds of years. Before the advent of the mass media, people interacted primarily face-to-face. Most of the time, they interacted only with people like themselves and had little contact with the outside world. But people gradually created communication networks that used first interpersonal channels, then print media, electronic media, and, most recently, interactive media. This section examines how various communication networks have grown over the centuries to form the media world in which we now live.

▼ By the 1880s, telegraph wires crisscrossed the New York City skyline, sending messages rapidly through the city, across the country, and around the world.



AP Images/Associated Press

Before Print: Pre-Mass Media Communication Networks

The first major communication network in the Western world predates the mass media and was developed by the Roman Catholic Church in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. During that period, messages flowed from the Vatican in Italy through the cardinals and bishops to priests in cathedrals and villages throughout Europe and finally to congregations through sermons from the pulpit.[35]

Print: Arrival of the Book

The first major expansion in communication beyond the Church was the development of the printing press—in particular, the invention of movable type in the 1450s—and the subsequent mass production of printed materials. Mass printing made it possible for major social changes, such as the Protestant Reformation, to spread from their country of origin to the rest of Europe and the world beyond.

Although the printing press allowed for the mass production of information, printing was still relatively slow, and publications remained fairly expensive. The addition of steam power to the printing press in 1814 dramatically increased the rate at which printed material could be reproduced.

Electronic Networks: Telegraph, Gramophone, Radio, Movies, and Television

The advent of electronic communication made the media world much more complex. This type of communication began in 1844 with the opening of the first telegraph line from Baltimore, Maryland, to Washington, D.C. In 1866, telegraph cables spanned the Atlantic Ocean, overcoming a seemingly insurmountable barrier that had long hindered transoceanic communication. Instead of sending a message on a two-week journey by boat across the ocean and waiting for a reply to come back the same way, two people on opposite sides of the ocean could carry on a dialogue via telegraph.

In the 1880s, Emile Berliner invented the gramophone, or phonograph, which played mass-produced discs containing about three minutes of music. Just as printed books made possible the storage and spread of ideas, so the gramophone allowed musical performances to be captured and reproduced.

The invention of radio in the late nineteenth century freed electronic communication from the limits imposed on it by telegraph wires. Messages could come into the home at any time and at almost no cost to the receiver. All that was needed was a radio set to receive an endless variety of cultural content, news, and other programming.

Movies were first shown at nickelodeon theaters in the late 1890s and early 1900s and were produced by an entertainment industry that distributed films worldwide. Young couples on a date in London, Ohio, and London, England, could see the same movie, copy the same styles of dress, and perhaps even practice the same kisses they saw in the movie. Due to radio and the movies, the media world became a shared entertainment culture produced for profit by major media corporations.

In 1939, patrons in New York's neighborhood taverns no longer had to settle for radio broadcasts of Yankees games being played at the Polo Grounds. Instead, a small black-and-white television set located on a pedestal behind the bar showed a faint, flickering image of the game. After a series of delays caused by World War II, television surpassed radio in popularity. It also became a lightning rod for controversy as people stayed home to watch whatever images it would deliver.

Test Your Media Literacy

Can Television Take Anything Seriously?

Back in 1985, New York University communication professor Neil Postman published his book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. In it, Dr. Postman argues that the primary effect of television is that it changes how people see the world; that is, with television, people start viewing everything as entertainment. Young people get their news in a comedy format, watching *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert* the same way they watch the newsmagazine *60 Minutes* on CBS. They learn about politics on the same channel that shows a professional football game.[36]

In an interview with Robert Nelson for the *Civic Arts Review*, Postman described the major point of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*:

> Television always recreates the world to some extent in its own image by selecting parts of that world and editing those parts. So a television news show is a kind of symbolic creation and construction made by news directors and camera crews. . . .
> Americans turn to television not only for their light entertainment but for their news, their weather, their politics, their religion, their history, all of which may be said to be their furious entertainment. What I'm talking about is television's preemption of our culture's most serious business. It is one thing to say that TV presents us with entertaining subject matter. It is quite another to say that on TV all subject matter is presented as entertaining and it is in that sense that TV can bring ruin to any intelligent understanding of public affairs. . . .
> And stranger still is the fact that commercials may appear anywhere in a news story, before, after, or in the middle, so that all events are rendered essentially trivial, that is to say, all events are treated as a source of public entertainment. How serious can an earthquake in Mexico be or a hijacking in Beirut, if it is shown to us prefaced by a happy United Airlines commercial and summarized by a Calvin Klein jeans commercial? Indeed, TV newscasters have added to our grammar a new part of speech altogether. What may be called the "now this" conjunction. "Now this" is a conjunction that does not connect two things but does the opposite. It disconnects. When newscasters say, "Now this," they mean to indicate that what you have just heard or seen has no relevance to what you are about to hear or see. There is no murder so brutal, no political blunder so costly, no bombing so devastating that it cannot be erased from our minds by a newscaster saying, "Now this." The newscaster means that you have thought long enough on the matter, let's say 45 seconds, that you must not be morbidly preoccupied with it, let us say for 90 seconds, and that you must now give your attention to a commercial. Such a situation in my view is not news. And in my opinion it accounts for the fact that Americans are among the most ill informed people in the Western world.[37]

WHO is the source?

Neil Postman (1931–2003), a prominent American educator, media theorist, and cultural critic, founded the media ecology program at New York University and chaired the NYU Department of Culture and Communication. Postman wrote eighteen books and more than two hundred magazine and newspaper articles for such periodicals as the *New York Times Magazine*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, and the *Washington Post*. He also edited the journal *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* and was on the editorial board of the *Nation*.

WHAT is he saying?

Postman argues that the primary effect of television is that it changes how people see the world; that is, with television, people start viewing everything as entertainment. In comparison, think about your own viewing habits. Do you watch the news the same way you watch *Big Bang Theory*? Or learn about politics on the same channel that shows *Big Brother*? Or see news about the war in Syria, followed by a commercial for

Domino's Pizza?

WHAT kind of evidence does the book provide?

What kind of data does Postman provide to support his arguments? What kind of evidence is needed to bolster these claims? Is there evidence that disputes his claims? How do you think Postman's background is likely to have shaped his view of television?

HOW do you or your classmates react to Postman's arguments?

What does the title *Amusing Ourselves to Death* mean to you? Do you feel that television trivializes important issues or makes them more palatable? Have you noticed similar effects in yourself as described by Postman? Do you notice differences in how news anchors make the transition from news to commercials and back again? Are the stories before and after the break any different from stories during the rest of the newscast?

DOES it all add up?

Do you believe that Postman's arguments are true today? In October 2017, CBS News was so eager to break the news about the death of rock legend/entertainer Tom Petty that its anchors started reporting it in the early afternoon, nearly half a day before he actually died. The news then rapidly spread to other major news outlets that didn't want to miss out on the breaking story, including *Entertainment Weekly*, the *Huffington Post*, and *Rolling Stone* magazine. This led to music stars such as John Mayer, Shania Twain, and Jon Bon Jovi expressing their sympathy. But within an hour of having set off this flurry of interest, the Los Angeles Police Department, supposedly the source of the story, said it could not confirm the report. Finally, at 11:30 on the evening of October 2, the LAPD confirmed that Petty had died.[38]

Do you think that this fascination with celebrity deaths supports Postman's claims? Why or why not? Do you think that Petty's death was newsworthy enough to merit the coverage it received? Or were CBS and its fellow news channels just trying to entertain their viewers?

Online and Mobile Media: Interactive Communication

After several decades of television, people had gotten used to the idea that news, information, and entertainment could be delivered almost magically into their homes, although they could do little to control the content of this medium other than change channels. Then a new medium emerged, one that made senders and receivers readily interchangeable. The internet became a full-fledged mass communication network in the 1990s (though many people were unaware that the first nodes of this new medium were being linked together as far back as 1969). Rather than simply making it easier for individuals and organizations to send messages to a mass audience, the new computer networks were designed for two-way communication. Audience members were becoming message providers themselves.

Online media's interactivity was the culmination of a trend toward giving audience members new control over their communication world. The growth of cable and satellite television, along with the VCR, had already given viewers more choices and more control, and the remote control allowed them to choose among dozens of channels without leaving their chairs.

The implications of interactivity are significant. Whereas the commercial media have come to be controlled by a smaller and smaller number of large corporations (see Chapter 3), an important channel of mass communication is open to ordinary people in ways that were never before possible. With a trivial investment in a mobile device or computer, individuals can grab the spotlight with news and entertainment through social media and the World Wide Web.

Consider the example of artist Danielle Corsetto, creator of the popular web comic *Girls With Slingshots*. Her comic started under the name *Hazelnuts* when she was in high school, but she took it online in October 2004 when fans of her sketches asked her when she was going to start publishing her comic. Corsetto explained to the *Frederick News-Post* that *Girls With Slingshots* (or GWS) is a slice-of-life comic that tells the story of "sour, grumpy girl" Hazel and her best friend, Jamie, a "bubbly girl who is very comfortable with herself."[39] One of the fascinating things about the comic is the level of diversity within its cast. There is Melody, who is deaf; Soo Lin, who is blind; Darren, who is gay; Erin, who is asexual; and McPedro, a cactus who talks when Hazel's been drinking. Anna Pearce, writing for *Bitch Media*, says that her favorite thing about the comic is that it looks at disability from the point of view of a disabled person. "What I like about the jokes in this strip are that they are all over the place. Some are about how clueless people can be about blindness. Some are disability-related humour as told by people with disabilities."[40]

▼ Self portrait of Danielle Corsetto with her cat.



Courtesy of Danielle Corsetto

Although her comic is online, she still does her drawing by hand. Corsetto explains, "It's more realistic and less stereotypical. All the characters have these unusual relations, both romantic and platonic . . . that are not what you would find in, say, a sitcom, but it's written like a sitcom. I'm kind of trying to normalize these things that are taboo."

Since 2007, she has made her living exclusively through drawing and writing comics. In addition to *Girls With Slingshots*, Corsetto works on a variety of side projects, including writing three volumes of the *Adventure Time* graphic novel series. Although GWS started out small, Corsetto's website drew about one hundred thousand readers a day at its peak. In March 2015, Corsetto brought GWS to a close, with her heroine Hazel coming to terms with her long-absent father. Given the subject matter, alcohol use, and language in GWS, Corsetto would not have been able to publish her work in a legacy newspaper or magazine. Although the strip is distributed online, Corsetto makes her drawings using pen and ink on heavyweight paper, with the coloring being electronically added.[41]

Following the completion of the comic, Corsetto has taken what she called a "sabbatical," working on advancing her art skills, teaching art classes, editing a two-volume hardcover book edition of GWS, and developing various side projects.[42] Corsetto says she has been depending on donations from the crowdfunding platform Patreon for most of her current income.

While Corsetto is "making a living" from her artwork, she wrote in a recent post to her Patreon supporters that this can mean different things to different people:

> I net more than the average schoolteacher, but less than the average accountant. My

> income fluctuates year to year. I live comfortably and I feel wealthy. . . . But I guarantee if I showed my bookkeeping to an old-school cartoonist who hit it big in newspaper syndication in the 90s, they'd think I was insane to say that I "feel wealthy."[43]

Some critics would argue that the growth of cable television stations, websites, and magazines creates only an illusion of choice because a majority of the channels are still controlled by the same five or six companies.[44] Even so, it is a new media world, one in which audience members are choosing what media content they will consume and when they will consume it. It's a world that even media giants are being forced to adjust to.

Understanding the Media World

Most people have ambivalent feelings about their high levels of media use. The convenience of the mobile phone is offset by the fact that it makes a person available to others at all times. The wide selection of programming on cable television is wonderful, but the content on some of those channels can be disturbing. It is liberating to be connected to the entire industrialized world through the internet, but the risk of invasion of privacy is troubling. This section discusses the concept of media literacy and examines some common misconceptions about the mass media. It also examines in detail "Seven Secrets" about mass media and mass communication that are at the center of this book's look at media literacy.

Defining Media Literacy

The term media literacy refers to people's understanding of what the media are, how they operate, what messages they are delivering, what roles they play in society, and how audience members respond to media messages. Media scholar James Potter writes that people with high levels of media literacy have a great deal of control over the vision of the world they see through the media and can decide for themselves what the messages mean. In contrast, those with low levels of media literacy can develop exaggerated impressions of problems in society, even when those impressions conflict with their own experience. For example, media consumers who spend large amounts of time watching television often perceive society as far more dangerous and crime-ridden that it is because that's the image they see on television.[45] Potter says that too often consumers with low levels of media literacy assume that the media have large, obvious, and mostly negative effects on other people but little or no effect on themselves. Finally, those with low levels of media literacy tend to blame the media for complex social problems, such as teen pregnancy or school violence.

Questioning the Media

For as long as there have been media, there have been those who blame the media for society's ills. Others believe that critics are just trying to place the blame on a convenient target. How do you feel about this debate? Why?

Potter has identified four basic dimensions of media literacy: cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral.[46] Let's take a closer look at each of these dimensions.

The Cognitive Dimension.

The cognitive dimension of media literacy deals with the ability to intellectually process information communicated by the media. This can involve interpreting the meaning of words on a printed page, appreciating the implications of ominous music in a movie, or understanding that a well-dressed character in a television show is wealthy. For example, while the *Wonder Woman* mythos has changed multiple times through its incarnations in comic books, as a TV series, and now as a big-budget movie, the version directed by Patty Jenkins and portrayed by Israeli actress Gal Gadot makes extensive use of Greek and Roman mythology, giving a depth of meaning to those who know the stories.[47]

The cognitive dimension also includes the skills necessary to access the media: using a tablet, accessing high-definition programming on your HDTV, or finding a book in the library. All of these are learned skills. We learn to read in school, learn the meaning of musical cues from movies we've seen, and learn how to navigate online through repeated practice.

The Emotional Dimension.

The emotional dimension of media literacy covers the feelings created by media messages. Sometimes the emotions can be overwhelming; examples include the fear of a young child watching a scary movie or the joy of a parent watching a news story about a child in danger being rescued. People often spend time with songs, movies, books, and other media specifically to feel the emotions they generate.[48] *Wonder Woman* became a box office champion in part because groups of women went together to see the movie, sometimes attending special women-only screenings to experience a sense of empowerment from a story that focused on a powerful female superhero.[49] And it is unlikely that many of the truly fake news stories out there would spread so quickly if they didn't resonate so emotionally with audiences.

▼ One of the many reasons we go to the movies is to experience strong emotions such as fear, horror, surprise, or romance in a safe environment.



©iStockphoto.com/ Paolo Cipriani

The Aesthetic Dimension.

The aesthetic dimension of media literacy involves interpreting media content from an artistic or critical point of view. How well is the media artifact produced? What skills were used in producing it? How does it compare in quality to other, similar works? Understanding more than the surface dimensions of media content can require extensive learning. *Wonder Woman* was unquestionably a commercial success, and it was largely a critical success as well. The movie was praised for excellent performances by the leads Gal Gadot and Chris Pine, but also for the casting of Robin Wright, who played Princess Buttercup in 1987's *The Princess Bride*, as the fierce and powerful General Antiope.[50] This didn't stop critics, though, from almost universally panning the movie's ending with an all-too-conventional boss fight.

The Moral Dimension.

The moral dimension of media literacy consists of examining the values of the medium or the message. In a television situation comedy, for example, an underlying message might be that a quick wit is an important tool for dealing with problems or that a problem can be solved in a short time. In an action movie, the moral lessons may be that violence and authority are needed if one is to succeed and that the world is a mean and dangerous place. The moral message of most advertisements is that problems can be solved by purchasing something.[51] According to *New Yorker* movie critic Richard Brody, one of the most

powerful issues raised by *Wonder Woman* is that evil doesn't come from "overtly monstrous villains but arises within humankind itself."[52]

The Seven Secrets About the Media "They" Don't Want You to Know

Media literacy is a tricky subject to talk about because few people will admit that they really don't understand how the media operate and how messages, audiences, channels, and senders interact. After all, since we spend so much time with the media, we must know all about them, right? As an example, most students in an Introduction to Mass Communication class will claim that the media and media messages tend to affect other people far more than themselves. The question of media literacy can also become a political question, for which the answer depends on whether you are a liberal or a conservative, rich or poor, young or old. But the biggest problem in the public discussion of media literacy is that certain routine issues get discussed again and again, while many big questions are left unasked.

The Seven Secrets About the Media "They" Don't Want You to Know 2.0

Secret 1 The media are essential components of our lives.

Secret 2 There are no mainstream media (MSM).

Secret 3 Everything from the margin moves to the center.

Secret 4 Nothing's new: everything that happened in the past will happen again.

Secret 5 All media are social.

Secret 6 Online media are mobile media.

Secret 7 There is no "they."

Five editions of this book ago, I first came out with the Seven Secrets About the Media "They" Don't Want You to Know. These were things we don't typically hear about in the media. Secret things. Perhaps it's because there is no one out there who can attract an audience by saying these things. Or maybe it's because the ideas are complicated, and we don't like complexity from our media. Or maybe it's because "they" (whoever "they" may be) don't want us to know them.

But the media world has changed considerably since the secrets were first developed in 2006:

- Netflix had no streaming service—it was only a DVD-by-mail service.
- There was no iPhone—the BlackBerry with its little Chiclet keyboard was the height of smartphone technology.
- There were no tablet computers.
- Cell phone service was typically sold by the minute, and most mobile plans had a

limit to the number of text messages that were included in the basic plan.

- Google was in the process of buying a cell phone video sharing service called YouTube created by three former PayPal employees.
- Facebook was only two years old, and use of it was limited to college students.
- Instagram hadn't yet gone online—that wouldn't happen until 2010. By 2018, it had eight hundred million active users.[53]

▼ The meaning of yellow ribbons tied into a bow has transformed many times over the last several decades.



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Today, my students tell me they watch most of their video using Netflix streaming, virtually all of them have a smartphone and several social media accounts, and their most frequent way of going online is with a mobile device. So in the sixth edition, it became clear that it was time to update the Seven Secrets to better match the current media world—we were releasing the Seven Secrets About the Media "They" Don't Want You to Know 2.0. These key issues of media

literacy—which don't get the discussion they deserve—provide a foundation for the rest of the chapters in this book. (And just who are "they"? Wait for Secret 7.)

SECRET 1 ▸ The Media Are Essential Components of Our Lives. Critics often talk about the effects the media have on us as though the media were something separate and distinct from our everyday lives. But conversations with my students have convinced me otherwise. Every semester I poll my students as to what media they have used so far that day, with the day starting at midnight. I run through the list: checking Twitter, Snapchat, or Instagram; listening to the radio; checking the weather on a mobile device; binge-watching *Stranger Things* on Netflix; reading the latest John Green novel; listening to Spotify on an iPhone; and so it goes. In fact, media use is likely to be the most universal experience my students will share. Surveys of my students find that more of my morning-class students have consumed media content than have eaten breakfast or showered since the day began at midnight. Are the media an important force in our lives? Absolutely! But the media are more than an outside influence on us. They are a part of our everyday lives.

Think about how we assign meanings to objects that otherwise would have no meaning at all. Take a simple yellow ribbon twisted in a stylized bow. You've seen thousands of these, and most likely you know exactly what they stand for—"Support Our Troops." But that hasn't always been the meaning of the symbol.

The yellow ribbon has a long history in American popular culture. It played a role in the rather rude World War II–era marching song "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon." The ribbon was a symbol of a young woman's love for a soldier "far, far away," and the lyrics mention that her father kept a shotgun handy to keep the soldier "far, far away." The yellow ribbon was also a symbol of love and faithfulness in the John Ford film *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*. In the 1970s, the ribbon became a symbol of remembering the U.S. staff in the Iranian embassy who had been taken hostage. This meaning came from the song "Tie a Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Old Oak Tree," made popular by the group Tony Orlando and Dawn. The song tells about a prisoner coming home from jail hoping that his girlfriend will remember him. She can prove her love by displaying the yellow ribbon. The prisoner arrives home to find not one but one hundred yellow ribbons tied to the tree. The display of yellow ribbons tied to trees became commonplace in newspaper articles and television news stories about the ongoing hostage crisis after the wife of a hostage started displaying one in her yard.

Later, during the 1990–1991 Persian Gulf War, Americans were eager to show their

support for the troops fighting overseas, even if they did not necessarily support the war itself, and the stylized ribbon started to become institutionalized as a symbol of support. The yellow "Support Our Troops" ribbon was followed by the red ribbon of AIDS awareness, the pink ribbon of breast cancer awareness, and ribbons of virtually every color for other issues. And how do we know the meanings of these ribbons? We hear or see them being discussed through our media. The meaning is assigned by the creators of a ribbon, but the success of the ribbon depends on its meaning being shared through the media. So, do the media create the meanings? Not really. But could the meanings be shared nationwide without the media? Absolutely not. The media may not define our lives, but they do help transmit and disseminate shared meanings from one side of the country to the other.[54]

SECRET 2 ▸ There Are No Mainstream Media (MSM). We often hear charges related to perceived sins of the so-called mainstream media. But who exactly are these mainstream media? For some, the MSM are the heavyweights of journalism, especially the television broadcast networks and the major newspapers, such as the *New York Times*. For others, the MSM are the giant corporations that run many of our media outlets. New York University journalism professor and blogger Jay Rosen says that the term MSM is often used to refer to media we just don't like—a "them."[55] It isn't always clear who constitutes the MSM, but in general we can consider them to be the old-line legacy media—the big-business newspapers, magazines, and television.

But are these old media more in the mainstream than our alternative media? Look at talk radio. Afternoon talk radio is dominated by conservative political talk show hosts, such as Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity. Limbaugh, in particular, is fond of complaining about how the MSM don't "get it." But how mainstream are the MSM? In April 2018, Fox News averaged 2.4 million viewers in prime time, MSNBC 2 million, and CNN about 1 million.[56]

With all the talk of cable news, it's easy to forget that the legacy broadcast networks have significant audiences as well: ABC with 9.4 million viewers, NBC with 8.9 million, and CBS with 6.9 million, as of the first three months of 2018. (The Fox broadcast network does not have a network evening news broadcast.)[57] *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, on the other hand, averages 14 million listeners a week, and Fox host Sean Hannity's radio show draws about 13.5 million listeners per week.[58] (Note that television audiences and radio audiences are measured differently.) So which is more mainstream? A popular afternoon radio show with a large daily audience or a television news program with a somewhat smaller audience?

And then there is video game streamer Daniel Middleton, aka DanTDM, who has nearly 17 million followers and more than 11 billion (that's *billion* with a *b*) views on YouTube, streaming *Minecraft* and other video games. What could possibly be more mainstream than 17 million viewers and 11 billion views?[59] Again, these numbers are not directly comparable with television

ratings—they are much, much bigger. Overall, YouTube claims to have more than 1.5 billion monthly users. Most videos don't get a particularly large viewership, but the combined total is massive.[60]

So it is largely meaningless to describe one medium as mainstream and another as nonmainstream. They are all significant presences in our world. Can we distinguish between old and new media? Perhaps. Can we argue that our alternative sources of news and entertainment are any less significant than the traditional ones? Absolutely not.

SECRET 3 ▸ Everything From the Margin Moves to the Center. The mass media, both news and entertainment, are frequently accused of trying to put forward an extremist agenda of violence, permissiveness, homosexuality, drug use, edgy fashion, and nonmainstream values.

People in the media business, be they entertainers or journalists, respond with the argument that they are just "keeping it real," portraying the world as it is by showing aspects of society that some people want to pretend don't exist. They have no agenda, the argument goes; they just want to portray reality.

Now it is true that much of what the media portray that upsets people is real. On the other hand, it is a bit disingenuous to argue that movie directors and musicians are not trying for shock value when they use offensive language or portray stylized violence combined with graphic sexuality. Think back to any of a number of recent horror movies. We all know that teenagers routinely get slashed to ribbons by a psycho killer just after having sex, right? Clearly, movie producers are trying to attract an audience by providing content that is outside of the mainstream.

▼ Laverne Cox starred in Fox's TV remake of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* as the mad scientist/alien/transvestite Dr. Frank-N-Furter, replacing Tim Curry (left). The film is easily the most beloved camp cult movie of all time.





Dan MacMedan/Getty Images

Rocky Horror Picture Show

The problem with the argument between "keeping it real" and "extremist agenda" is that it misses what is actually happening. There can be no question that audiences go after media content that is outside of the mainstream. By the same token, the more nonmainstream content is presented, the more ordinary it seems to become. This is what is meant by Secret 3—one of the mass media's biggest effects on everyday life is to take culture from the margins of society and make it into part of the mainstream, or center. This process can move people, ideas, and even individual words from small communities into mass society.

We can see this happening in several ways. Take the 1975 cult movie *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* that tells the story of a gay male transvestite (Dr. Frank-N-Furter) who is building a muscle-bound boyfriend (Rocky) for himself when a newly engaged straight couple show up at his castle's doorstep seeking shelter from a storm. While the movie found success as a midnight movie in the counterculture community, it took years to move from being considered a flop to being a cult classic.

But in recent years *Rocky Horror* has moved from being a midnight movie to being a core element of popular culture. The Fox Broadcasting show *Glee* did a Halloween episode in 2010 where the kids in the show's glee club produced *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* as a high school musical. But the *Glee* version had actress Amber Riley playing the part of Dr. Frank-N-Furter, while the part of Rocky was still played by a male actor, Chord Overstreet.

Thus, the central plotline went from gay to straight. The *Glee* version also had Frank-N-Furter singing about being from "Sensational, Transylvania" instead of "Transsexual, Transylvania." With these changes, *The Rocky Horror Glee Show* became a perfect example of Secret 3. *Rocky Horror* started out as a camp musical in the 1970s that found enormous success in the counterculture community. But *Glee* sanitized it from a celebration of cross-dressing gay culture into a mass-market story of straight people playing with gay themes. In 2016, Fox Broadcasting showed a full remake of *Rocky Horror* that aired in October featuring trans actress Laverne Cox (of *Orange Is the New Black* fame) as Dr. Frank-N-Furter. *Hollywood Reporter* reviewer Daniel Finberg noted in 2016 that the show is no longer shocking in that "one of the most unorthodox characters in the history of musicals has become oddly conventional."[61]

An alternative approach is to look at how the media accelerate the adoption of activist language into the mainstream. Take the medical term *intact dilation and extraction*, which describes a controversial type of late-term abortion. A search of the LexisNexis news database shows that newspapers used the medical term only five times over a six-month period. On the other hand, *partial-birth abortion*, the term for the procedure used by abortion opponents, was used in more than 125 stories during the same time period. Opponents even got the term used in the title of a bill passed by Congress that outlawed the procedure, thus moving the phrase into the mainstream through repeated publication of the bill's name.

This process is not a product of a liberal or conservative bias by the news media. It's simply a consequence of the repeated use of the term in the press.

SECRET 4 ▸ Nothing's New: Everything That Happened in the Past Will Happen Again. Secret 4 is a little different than the oft-repeated slogan, "Those who ignore the past are doomed to repeat it." Instead, it says that media face the same issues over and over again as technologies change and new people come into the business.

The fight between today's recording companies and file sharers has its roots in the battle between music publishers and the distributors of player piano rolls in the early 1900s. The player piano was one of the first technologies for reproducing musical performances. Piano roll publishers would buy a single copy of a piece of sheet music and hire a skilled pianist to have his or her performance recorded as a series of holes punched in a paper roll. That roll (and the performance) could then be reproduced and sold to anyone who owned a player piano without further payment to the music's original publisher.[62]

Then, in 1984, Sony successfully defended itself against a lawsuit from Universal Studios by arguing that it had a right to sell VCRs to the public because there were legitimate, legal uses for the technology. Universal had protested the sales because the video recorders could be used to duplicate its movies. Before long, the studios quit trying to ban the VCR and started selling videocassettes of movies directly to consumers at reasonable prices. All of a sudden, the studios had a major new source of revenue.[63]

▼ Congressional hearings in the 1950s about horror comics, such as those pictured here, show how adults are always concerned about the possible effects of new media on children.



©Bettmann/Getty Images

This can also be seen with the repeated fears of new media technologies emerging over the years. In the 1930s, there was fear that watching movies, especially gangster pictures, would lead to precocious sexual behavior, delinquency, lower standards and ideals, and poor physical and emotional health. The 1940s brought concern about how people would react to radio programs, particularly soap operas.[64] Comic books came under attack in the 1950s. The notion that comic books were dangerous was popularized by a book titled *Seduction of the Innocent* by Dr. Fredric Wertham. Wertham also testified before Congress that violent and explicit comic books were a cause of teenage delinquency and sexual behavior. The industry responded to the criticism by forming the Comics Code Authority and ceasing publication of popular crime and horror comics such as *Tales From the Crypt* and *Weird Science*.

The 1980s and 1990s saw controversies over offensive rap and rock lyrics.[65] These controversies reflected widespread concern about bad language and hidden messages in songs. In 2009, pop star Britney Spears had a not-so-hidden allusion to the "*F* word" in her song "If U Seek Amy." If you speak the title aloud, it sounds like you are spelling out *F*, *U*, . . . well, you get the picture. Critics were, of course, shocked and dismayed at this example of a pop star lowering public taste. Of course, Spears didn't really create her naughty little lyric on her own. Aside from a host of rock and blues singers who have used similar lines, *Slate* writer Jesse Sheidlower notes that James Joyce used the same basic line in *Ulysses*,

when he has a group of women sing:

> If you see kay
> Tell him he may
> See you in tea
> Tell him from me.

A careful reading of the third line will let you find a second hidden obscenity as well.[66]

Numerous media critics and scholars have argued that television and movies present a distorted view of the world, making it look like a much more violent and dangerous place than it is. More recently, mobile devices have been blamed for a range of social ills, from car accidents caused by distracted drivers to promiscuity caused by sexually explicit mobile phone text and photo messages.

Why has there been such long-running, repeated concern about the possible effects of the media? Media sociologist Charles R. Wright says that people want to be able to solve social ills, and it is easier to believe that poverty, crime, and drug abuse are caused by media coverage than to acknowledge that their causes are complex and not fully understood.[67]

Writing in 1948, sociologists Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld identified four major aspects of public concern about the media:

- Concern that because the media are everywhere, they might be able to control and manipulate people. This is a large part of the legacy of fear.
- Fear that those in power will use the media to reinforce the existing social structure and discourage social criticism. When critics express concern about who owns and runs the media, this is what they are worried about.
- Fear that mass entertainment will lower the tastes and standards for popular culture by trying to attract the largest-possible audience. Criticism of action movies, soap operas, and wrestling as replacements for healthier entertainment, such as Shakespeare's plays, is at the heart of this concern.
- The belief that mass entertainment is a waste of time that detracts from more useful activities. When your mother told you to turn off the television set and go outside, this was her concern![68]

SECRET 5 ▸ All Media Are Social. No matter what media you are using—whether it be a legacy newspaper or television station or a social media channel like Facebook—you are always interacting with it at a social level—whether it be face-to-face, with friends on Facebook, or with the entire world via Twitter.

Take, as an example, when your author went to hear President Obama speak at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) campus. I got the expected reactions from friends to the selfie of my wife and me standing in line to enter the arena. I also shared

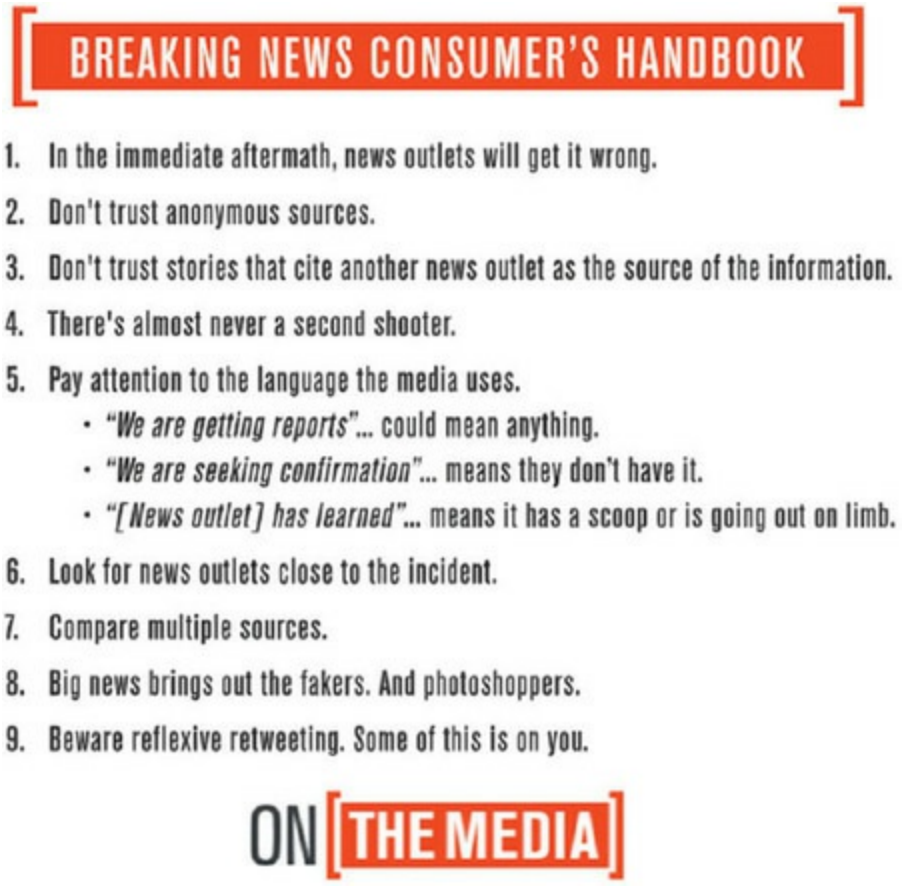
news on Twitter about the president's visit from social media guru Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz. And while I was on Dr. Lipschultz's Twitter page, *Omaha World-Herald* weather reporter Nancy Gaarder tweeted out a photo of me at work. Now, in this case, Gaarder and I were interacting because she was sitting behind me and we got to talking face-to-face. But this was only the first of many social interactions for the day based on news being shared socially.

As everyone in the arena waited for the president to appear, I tweeted out a photo of the press corps area on the floor of the arena, along with the hashtag #POTUSatUNO, one of several in use at the event. Before long I picked up a response from Marjorie Sturgeon, a multimedia journalist for Omaha's Action 3 News, who noted she could see herself in my photo. Meanwhile,

I was sharing news from the *Omaha World-Herald*, UNO student journalists, and other observers. Media recall research tells us that one of the best predictors of the news we will remember is the news we talk about. Thus the news we share socially will become the news that matters most to us.

When important news breaks, it's likely we'll hear about it first through social media. When a mass shooter killed at least fifty-eight people and left more than five hundred people injured in Las Vegas in October 2017, there were lots of contradictory stories circulating on Twitter and other social media. But with all the reports circulating, it could be hard to tell which stories should be believed. New Hampshire Public Radio reporter Casey McDermott noted that NPR included the following statement at the bottom of its web stories about the shooting:

> This is a developing story. Some things that get reported by the media will later turn out to be wrong. We will focus on reports from police officials and other authorities, credible news outlets and reporters who are at the scene. We will update as the situation develops.[69]



New York Public Radio's *On the Media*.

NPR's media news show *On the Media* has a guide for consumers dealing with breaking news that was shared widely on social media at the time of the shooting. To the left is an example of it from Matthew Gertz of the watchdog group Media Matters.

> SECRET 6 ▸ Online Media Are Mobile Media. Going online used to mean going someplace where there was a computer plugged into an Ethernet cable, but increasingly, going online now means pulling out your mobile device. And in many parts of the world, the mobile internet is the only internet.

Recent data from the Pew Research Center show that, as of 2018, 95 percent of American adults have a mobile phone and 77 percent of us own smartphones. That's up from 35 percent just seven years earlier. When we just look at young adults, ages 18–29, 100 percent of them have mobile phones, and 94 percent have smartphones.[71] That stereotypical image of young people always having their nose in their phone does have some basis in fact.[72] If we look at it from the point of view of the media providers, we see that 45 percent of U.S. adults often get news from a mobile device compared to 36 percent who often get news from their desktop computer or laptop.[73]

Another way to get a feel for the growing impact of mobile media is to look at the size of

the audience for various channels. Those that allow people to express themselves publically through their mobile devices have much bigger audiences than those that call for passive consumption. So Facebook has an audience of 2 billion, YouTube has 1.5 billion, and the Super Bowl (on television) has an audience of 119 million. Think about it—the Super Bowl has just over 5 percent of the audience size of Facebook.[74]

If you look outside the United States, the use of mobile media becomes even more significant. Among refugees from Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East, mobile media are the only media people have access to. During the Arab Spring movement in Egypt in 2011, much of the news coming out of the country was by way of mobile phones.[75]

Computers and laptops are still important tools for going online, but with the growing power, size, and availability of mobile devices, we can now think of online being everywhere/all the time.

Test Your Media Literacy

What did the media's future look like in the past?

From the 1950s to the 1980s, it was fun talking about what the "world of tomorrow" might look like. From art deco skyscrapers, to personal jet packs, to videophones, it all sounded pretty exciting. In 1967, CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite hosted a series called *The 21st Century* in which he made a number of pretty good predictions for what home office technology might look like in 2001. In 1982, the Institute for the Future published a book on what we might expect from electronic information technology. As the Pew Research Center points out, the report predicted that by 1998 electronic information services would have "relatively widespread penetration. It may not be in every home, but it is probably in a neighbor's home, and you might be considering getting it yourself."[70] Pew points out that in reality, about 25 percent of the United States was online in 1998. The report also suggested that the following would be common:

- We would each be able to design our own custom news feeds.
- We would be concerned about the amount of information technology we would be revealing about our personal lives.
- We would have access to electronic banking.
- We would be able to call up music and video programming on demand.
- We would be able to interact with people who are outside our existing peer groups that we connect to through our electronic home information systems.
- We would be able to vote electronically from home in elections.
- We would have access to a wider variety of political candidates through the electronic information system, thus bringing to an end the two-party system.

WHO are the sources?

Walter Cronkite was one of the most respected journalists of the 1960s and anchored the top-rated nightly news program, and the Institute for the Future is a Silicon Valley think tank. How credible of sources are these? Were they capable of making predictions about the future? Why or why not?

WHAT is the report saying?

What are the major predictions made from each of these two reports? What did they say our world would look like today?

WHAT kind of evidence does the study provide?

What kinds of data do the researchers use? How do they justify their predictions? What evidence do they have to back up their predictions?

HOW do you or your classmates react to these predictions about our current media world?

How close do you think these two reports came to predicting what our media world would be like? What did they get right? What did they get wrong? What did they miss? What surprised you the most about these predictions?

SECRET 7 ▸ There Is No "They." If you listen to media criticism for long, you will hear a pair of words used over and over again: *they* and *them*. It is easy to take potshots at some anonymous bogeymen—they—who embody all evil. I even engaged in it at the beginning of this section with the title "The Seven Secrets About the Media 'They' Don't Want You to Know 2.0."

So who are they? No one. Everyone. A nonspecific other we want to blame. Anytime I used *they* in a news story, my high school journalism teacher would ask who "they" were. And

that's what you need to ask whenever you hear criticism of the media. It isn't that the criticism is not accurate. It very well may be. But it probably applies to a specific media outlet, a specific journalist, a certain song, or a particular movie. But *we* can make few generalizations about an industry so diverse that it includes everything from a giant corporation spending a reported $1 billion to produce *Avengers: Infinity War* and its unnamed *Avengers 4* sequel to young people posting photos and messages on Snapchat.[76] There are a lot of media out there, but no unified them.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Communication takes place at a number of levels, including intrapersonal (within the self), interpersonal (between individuals), group (between three or more individuals), and mass (between a single sender and a large audience). Mass communication is a communication process that covers an entire society, in which an individual or institution uses technology to send messages to a large, mixed audience, most of whose members are not known to the sender. Mass communication can be examined in terms of the process of transmission; the rituals surrounding its consumption; the attention its messages draw to persons, groups, or concepts; or how audience members create meaning out of media content.

The first communication network was developed by the Roman Catholic Church, which could send messages reliably throughout Europe as early as the twelfth century. In the mid-fifteenth century, the development of printing made it possible for books and other publications to be mass produced for the first time, leading to numerous cultural changes. Books, magazines, newspapers, and other printed media forms became readily available, although they were expensive before steam-driven printing presses became common in the nineteenth century.

The electronic media emerged in the mid-nineteenth century with the invention of the telegraph, followed by recorded music, radio, movies, and television. These media allowed popular culture to be produced commercially and to be delivered easily and inexpensively into people's homes. The first interactive digital communication network, the internet, was developed starting in the late 1960s but wasn't available to the general public until the 1990s. Online media added a return channel to the mass communication process, initiating a much higher level of audience feedback. Online media also allowed individuals to disseminate their own ideas and information without the costs of a traditional mass medium.

The rapid growth of the mass media has led the public and media critics to raise questions about the effects various media might have on society and individuals. Scholars have suggested that the best way to control the impact of the media in our lives is to develop high levels of media literacy—an understanding of what the media are, how they operate, what messages they are delivering, what roles they play in society, and how audience members respond to these messages. Media literacy includes cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral dimensions.

Your text suggests that the following seven principles can guide your understanding of how the media operate: (1) The media are essential components of our lives, (2) there are no mainstream media, (3) everything from the margin moves to the center, (4) nothing's new—everything that happened in the past will happen again, (5) all media are social, (6) online media are mobile media, and (7) there is no "they."

Key Terms ▶▶

legacy media 4
communication 5
intrapersonal communication 5
interpersonal communication 5
group communication 6
mass communication 7
mass media 8
Sender Message Channel Receiver (SMCR) or transmission model 8
bloggers 9
message 10
encoding 10
channel 10
receiver 11
decoding 11
heterogeneous audience 11
noise 11
anonymous audience 11
ritual model 13
publicity model 14
reception model 14
media literacy 18

Review Questions ▶▶

1. Where did "fake news" come from? What are the forms that it can take?
2. What are the four different levels of communication? Explain how many of our interactions with mass communication involve several levels of communication.
3. What are the elements that make mass communication mass? Would you consider social media like Facebook to be mass communication? Why or why not?
4. Some people compare the development of the internet to the invention of moveable type and the printing press. Do you think they are of comparable importance? Why or why not?
5. List two of the Seven Secrets and provide a current example of each from the news.

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Theo Wargo/Staff/Getty Images

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Discuss the history and development of our understanding of media effects
2. Explain how the critical theory model differs from the effects models
3. Name four types of effects the mass media can have
4. Explain eight major communication theories and their uses
5. Explain how the mean world syndrome addresses the effects of consuming large amounts of violent media

During 2017, attention to the issue of sexual harassment and abuse, both sensational and serious, became the major cultural story for our media. As Secret 3 points out, the stories moved this issue from the margins of society to the center. While there are many points on the timeline we could highlight as the start of the media's focus on sexual harassment and abuse, there is no doubt that it exploded when multitudes of women started coming forward and telling their stories of mistreatment at the hands of Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein.

On October 8, 2017, following the news that he had paid financial settlements to eight women to drop their claims, The Weinstein Company fired Weinstein from the movie production company he helped found. And while this may have been the point where most people started paying attention to the story, it certainly wasn't the beginning. According to the *New York Times*, the accusations and rumors about Weinstein dated back for three decades. It wasn't as though these stories weren't known about by reporters; they simply weren't reported.[1]

In November 2017, the *New York Times* started keeping track of the number of men who have been fired or forced to resign over accusations of sexual misconduct since Weinstein was fired.[2] As of February 8, 2018, the *Times* count had reached seventy-one. The paper also had a second list of twenty-eight men who had faced charges of sexual misconduct but who had only been suspended or received similar lesser punishment. The list was a who's who of the powerful behind and in front of the scenes in the entertainment business, industry, and politics.

So this leaves us with a question:

Why, after years of neglect, did the press, in all its varied forms, suddenly start paying attention to these accusations and the women making them?

While the story of women being sexually harassed and abused by powerful men had been slowly breaking further and further into the media for several years, the real explosion came when actress Ashley Judd went public with her story from two decades earlier.

Judd told the *New York Times* in early October 2017 that she went to what she thought was a breakfast meeting at a hotel. She was instead sent up to Weinstein's room where he greeted her wearing a bathrobe and suggested either he give her a massage or she "watch him shower."[3]

It is at this point that we see the basic elements of the narrative coming through. Judd had to figure out how to get out of the room without alienating one of the most powerful producers in Hollywood.

The *Times* goes on to report that Weinstein reached "at least eight settlements with women," paying them to drop their claims and keep their silence. When all of these stories started surfacing, Weinstein said in a statement to the *Times*:

> I appreciate the way I've behaved with colleagues in the past has caused a lot of pain, and I sincerely apologize for it. Though I'm trying to do better, I know I have a long way to go.[4]

Judd had previously talked about what had happened with Weinstein back in 2015 with *Variety* magazine, but she didn't name him.

Judd told *Variety* she felt bad because she didn't do anything about it at the time:

> I beat myself up for a while. This is another part of the process. We internalize the shame. It really belongs to the person who is the aggressor. And so later, when I was able to see what happened, I thought: Oh god, that's wrong. That's sexual harassment. That's illegal. I was really hard on myself because I didn't get out of it by saying, "OK motherf—er, I'm calling the police."[5]

The common theme between Judd and the other women who say Weinstein abused or harassed them was that women didn't speak out because they didn't know each other; they didn't live in the same cities. But while they didn't talk about it publicly, they did talk about it among themselves.

So what kept these women's stories from getting published?

Many of the women were embarrassed that this had happened to them and sometimes wondered whether they were responsible for it.

They still wanted to work where they worked. They wanted the access the abuser gave them.

They were afraid they would get blacklisted in some form if they spoke out (something that happened with several of Weinstein's victims).

They were afraid they wouldn't be believed.

In this chapter, we will be looking at various explanations of how the mass media interact with and affect audience members. We will return to the story of Harvey Weinstein and the explosion of stories about abuse by powerful men to look for explanations. It will not so much be a question of which of these explanations is correct as it will be one of what kind of understanding the theories give us. In this chapter, we look at how our understanding of media and their effects has evolved over the past century and consider several approaches to studying these effects.

History of Media Effects Research

As we discussed in Chapter 1 in the section on media literacy, media consumers often assume that the media have large, obvious, and generally negative effects on people, and they look to blame the media for complex social problems.[6] In this section, we look at how our understanding of media effects has evolved and changed over the past two hundred years.

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

Rise of Mass Society

Prior to the 1800s, most people in Europe and North America lived in rural communities where their neighbors were likely to be similar in ethnic, racial, and religious background. People knew their neighbors, and their neighbors knew them. There were only limited opportunities for people to change their station in life or to learn much about the outside world. But with the rise of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, we started to see massive migration from the rural areas into the cities and from various countries to the United States. As people moved into the cities, they started working for wages in factories with people who were quite different from them. With industrialization, people went from small, close-knit communities where they knew everyone to a mass society where they learned about the world from mass media sources, such as the new inexpensive newspapers, magazines, and paperback novels.[7]

> SECRET 7 ▸ At the end of the nineteenth century, people came to believe that the traditional ties of church, community, and family were breaking down and losing their power to influence people. The comfortable local community was being replaced by something impersonal, complex, and removed from the traditions that had previously held people together; people felt that their community was being replaced by a mysterious "they" or "them." Concerned observers noted that people seemed to be alienated, isolated, and interchangeable members of a faceless mass audience, separated by the decline of the family and the growth of technology. So what held this new mass society together?[8] The increasingly frequent answer was that the mass media were replacing the church, family, and community in shaping public opinion.[9]

(For additional discussion of the growth of the mass media from its origins in the 1400s to the present day, see Chapter 1.)

Propaganda and the Direct Effects Model

Fears that media messages would have strong, direct effects on audience members grew out of propaganda efforts by all combatants during World War I and by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the 1930s. Critics worried that mass media messages would overwhelm people in the absence of the influences of family and community. With traditional social forces in decline, it was inevitable, critics feared, that the media would become the most powerful force within society.

▼ Allied propaganda posters designed to build support for World War I weren't afraid to make use of strong negative stereotypes of the Germans.



Library of Congress

This argument viewed audience members as passive targets who would be hit or injected with the message, which, like a vaccine, would affect most people in similar ways. But research looking for powerful, direct effects leading to opinion and behavioral changes generally came up short. In fact, in the 1940s and 1950s, researchers sometimes doubted whether media messages had any effect on individuals at all.[10] Although most scholars now focus on the media's indirect effects on society rather than their direct effects on individuals, they remain concerned about how the media influence individuals.

The big problem is that the direct effects approach viewed media messages as a stimulus that would lead to a predictable attitudinal or behavioral response with nothing intervening between sender and audience. But although people have a shared biological heritage, they have different backgrounds, needs, attitudes, and values. In short, everyone has been socialized differently. The indirect effects approach still looks at the effects that messages have on individuals, but it accounts for the fact that audience members perceive and interpret these messages selectively according to individual differences. Because people's perceptions are selective, their responses to the messages vary as well. A person who is preparing to buy a car, a person who just bought a car, and a person who doesn't drive will each react differently to an automobile commercial.

Voter Studies and the Limited Effects Model

During the 1920s and 1930s, the decades when the Nazis, Italian Fascists, and Soviets were using propaganda, many critics worried that the media might be responsible for powerful direct effects on the public. Their general worries about the media extended to the possible effects of political campaign messages. Critics, considering recent urbanization and the decline of traditional institutions, feared that political media campaigns would "inject" people with ideas that would lead to the message creator's desired actions, such as supporting a particular candidate, ideology, or point of view. This model of powerful direct campaign effects was largely discredited by voter studies in the 1940s and 1950s, but it remains important because many people still believe that it is accurate.[11]

The People's Choice.

One of the first large-scale social-scientific studies of campaign influences was the *People's Choice* study of the 1940 U.S. presidential election contest between Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt and Republican Wendell Willkie. A team of researchers led by Paul Lazarsfeld looked at how voters in Erie County, Ohio, decided which candidate to vote for. Lazarsfeld's team found that people who were highly interested in the campaign and paid the most attention to media coverage of it were the least likely to be influenced by the campaign. Why? Because they had decided whom they supported before the campaign had even begun.[14]

In contrast, voters who decided at the last minute usually turned to friends or neighbors, rather than the media, for information about the campaign. In general, they turned to people who followed the campaign closely, the ones whom Lazarsfeld called opinion leaders.

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

The Messages in Propaganda

▼ Are you surprised to see car sharing as a subject of propaganda? What's your reaction to each poster? How does looking at these images as propaganda, rather than as advertisements or marketing material, influence your view of their message? Would the message promoting car sharing have more influence on you if you were already considering doing it?





LA Metro

National Archives

There's an internet meme known as Godwin's Law of Nazi Analogies that states: "As an online discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches one."[12]

With the common use of Nazi name-calling these days, it's hard sometimes to remember that during World War II when people talked about Hitler and the Nazis, they were talking about actual Nazis. Hitler was a popular figure used by American and European government propagandists, as can be seen in the poster on the left promoting car sharing. Although it doesn't invoke Hitler, the Los Angeles Metro transit agency used persuasive posters to get people out of their cars and onto the local bus system. The campaign was successful, increasing the number of discretionary riders from 24 to 36 percent.[13]

WHAT are these posters saying?

What message is the World War II poster on the left trying to convey? What is the message of the poster on the right from the Los Angeles Metro system?

WHY are they sending these messages?

Why are these two groups sending these messages? What is their goal in trying to persuade you to stop driving solo in a car?

HOW do you and your classmates interpret these messages?

How do you react to messages like these? How do arguments today comparing someone to Hitler differ

from those made during the World War II era? How do the arguments for carpooling during World War II differ from arguments today? Do you think one is more persuasive than the other? Why?

SECRET 5 ▸ Opinion leaders are influential community members—friends, family members, and coworkers—who spend significant time with the media. Lazarsfeld suggested that information flows from the media to opinion leaders, and then from opinion leaders to the rest of the public. Keep in mind that the opinion leaders are ordinary people who are simply very interested and involved in a topic. Although this finding was not expected, it should not be terribly surprising that interpersonal influence is more important than the media. The idea here is fairly simple: People in groups tend to share opinions with one another, and when they want reliable information, they go to the people they know. And this serves to illustrate Secret 5—All media are social. Even decades before so-called social media (like Facebook and Twitter) existed, people were still drawn to talk about the news at length.

With the lengthy campaigns today, people find it easier to turn to interpersonal sources than the wealth of media information. Yet this trend is nothing new. Although many people believe that our election campaigns are starting earlier and earlier every election cycle, presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan started his campaign for the 1900 election one month after the election of 1896![15] Even as early as the 1830s, when the penny press was just getting started, presidential campaigns could run as long as two years.

The *People's Choice* study, as well as other early voter studies, found that campaigns typically reinforced existing political predispositions and that few people changed their minds about whom they were going to support. There are several reasons for this:

- The voters who start off with strong opinions are unlikely to change them.
- The voters who pay the most attention to a campaign are those with the strongest political views; thus, they are the least likely to change their opinions.
- The most persuadable voters (those who are least informed) are not likely to pay attention to political communication and therefore are not strongly influenced by media coverage of the campaign.[16]

The Importance of Meaning and the Critical/Cultural Model

In the decades between World War I and World War II came the rise of a revolution in social science thinking known as critical theory. Originated by a group of German scholars known as the Frankfurt School, these cultural critics were trying to make sense of a changing world that was leaving people alienated, exploited, and repressed with no good way of making sense of what was happening. Many of these scholars were Marxist in their political and social views, deeply concerned by the upheavals brought about by the end of World War I. These upheavals led to the rise of fascism in some parts of Europe and communism divorced from Karl Marx's ideas in others. There are several key principles to this approach:

- There are serious problems that people suffer that come from exploitation and the division of labor.
- People are treated as "things" to be used rather than individuals who have value.
- You can't make sense out of ideas and events if you take them out of their historical context.
- Society is coming to be dominated by a culture industry (what we might call the mass media) that takes cultural ideas, turns them into commodities, and sells them in a way to make the maximum amount of money. This separates ideas from the people who produce them.
- You cannot separate facts from the values attached to them and the circumstances from which these facts emerged.

Political science scholar Stephen Bronner writes that it is out of critical theory that we saw the rise of environmentalism, racial equality, sexual equality, and the examination of privilege. While critical theory cannot always help us understand ideas themselves, it can, Bronner writes, help us understand where they come from: "To put it crudely, critical theory can offer fruitful perspectives on the historical genesis and social uses of, say, the theory of relativity introduced by Albert Einstein. But it should not attempt to make philosophical judgments about its truth character."[17]

SECRET 3 ▸ C. Wright Mills, who was heavily influenced by critical theorists, argued that media coverage of private problems helped turn them into major public issues. Bronner writes, "Women have already turned incest and spousal abuse from private into public concerns; gay and lesbian citizens have advocated the need for legislation against 'hate crimes'; people of color are challenging institutional racism; and countless other attempts have been made . . . to render the myriad institutions of the powerful accountable to the disempowered."[18] In other words, this is Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center.

Up through the 1940s, most of the research on the mass media focused on direct and indirect effects of media messages on the behaviors of groups and individuals. But another

school of thought looks at how people use media to construct their view of the world rather than looking at how media change people's behaviors. Instead of using the quantitative data analysis of the voter studies, the critical/cultural approach takes a more qualitative examination of the social structure in which communication takes place. It considers how meaning is created within society, who controls the media systems, and the roles the media play in our lives. Instead of looking at how messages affect people, it looks at how people use and construct messages.[19]

▼ When Casey Anthony was acquitted of charges of murdering her daughter in 2011, cable news channels and social media devoted massive coverage to the verdict. Critics charge that when cases such as this don't involve an attractive white woman or girl, they get very little media attention.



AP Images/Red Huber

An example of the critical/cultural approach is the charge, leveled by many critics, that the crime stories that deal with attractive, wealthy, white women and girls attract much more media attention than do disappearances of women of color or those who are poor. Consider

the story of Casey Anthony. The attractive, young, white mother was accused of murdering her two-year-old daughter. During her trial in 2011, the news media, especially cable television, was obsessed with the case. When Anthony was found not guilty, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites were filled with outraged comments about the verdict. In addition, talk show hosts such as Nancy Grace seemed to be obsessed with the case.

Five years after the court acquitted Anthony, Google News still featured more than 202,000 links to news stories connected to the case. On the other hand, a 2016 Google search for Jhessye Shockley, a five-year-old African American girl from Arizona who disappeared in 2011, only turned up 341 news stories, most connecting to the 2015 conviction of her mother in Jhessye's death.[20]

Keith Woods, an expert on diversity issues who has worked for both the Poynter Institute (a journalism think tank) and NPR, says stories about minority women tend to receive less attention because reporters are more likely to report about people they see as being like themselves. And since most newsrooms tend to be disproportionately white and middle class, the disappearance of a white woman is seen as a bigger story. This control over which stories are reported means that the public at large is not aware that African American women are disproportionately more likely to disappear than white women.[21]

Effects of the Media in Our Lives

Media scholars throughout the twentieth century who studied the effects of the mass media on individuals and society questioned several aspects of the media, including the messages being sent, the media sending them, the owners of the media, and the audience members themselves.[22]

Questioning the Media

Can you come up with a recent example of someone publicly making the argument that "the media" have powerful direct effects on people? How would you respond to his or her arguments?

Message Effects

Not surprisingly, the earliest concerns about the effects of mass communication focused on how messages might change people's behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs. These message effects can take a variety of forms.

Cognitive Effects.

The most common and observable message effect is on the short-term learning of information. This can be as significant as learning about a new medical treatment or as trivial as remembering the lyrics to a popular song. The amount of learning that takes place from media content depends largely on the motivation level of the person consuming the media.

SECRET 5 ▸ Political scientist Doris Graber found that people who want to be able to talk intelligently with others about media content (whether it be the news, a sporting event, or an entertainment program) learn much more from the media than people who are simply seeking entertainment. (This is one more example of Secret 5—All media are social. Remember, you don't need to be using Facebook or Twitter to make media social.) Research also shows that people learn more from people they identify with and pay more attention to political commentators they agree with than ones they dislike.[23] Hence the most popular political radio talk shows, such as those hosted by conservatives Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity, argue a single and consistent point of view rather than providing a range of views.[24]

Attitudinal Effects.

People can develop feelings about a product, an individual, or an idea on the basis of media content. Viewers might decide that they like a new product, political candidate, or hairstyle because of what they have seen in a television commercial, a news broadcast, or a sitcom. Typically, it is much easier to get people to form new opinions than to get them to change existing ones.[25] For example, political advertising generally tries to change the opinions of uncommitted voters rather than those of voters who already have strong political loyalties. In the 2016 presidential election campaign, the Bernie Sanders campaign found substantial success by targeting young, uncommitted voters who value being asked directly for their support.[26]

▼ AP Images/ Associated Press



The youth vote's biggest beneficiary has been Bernie Sanders, who won 80 percent of the youth vote in Iowa and Nevada. The candidate was the internet's darling, dominating the competition on Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, and Twitter.

Behavioral Effects.

Behavioral effects include actions such as clipping a coupon from a newspaper, buying a product, making a phone call, and voting for a candidate. They might also include imitating attractive behaviors (for example, dressing a certain way). Behavioral effects are in many ways the most difficult to achieve because people are reluctant to change their behavior. Sometimes, however, people go to the media deliberately looking for behavior to copy, as when a child watches an episode of *Batman* and then imitates it in play, or when a teenager watches a movie to learn how to behave on a date.[27]

▼ Canadian media scholar Marshall McLuhan, right, is best remembered for his statement "The medium is the message." He became such a pop-culture figure in the 1970s that he had a cameo playing himself in Woody Allen's film *Annie Hall*.



United Artists/Photofest

Psychological Effects.

Media content can inspire fear, joy, revulsion, happiness, or amusement, among other feelings.[28] A major psychological effect of media content, especially violent or erotic material, is arousal. Symptoms of arousal can include a rise in heart rate, adrenaline levels, or sexual response. Seeking a psychological response is a common reason for spending time with the media, whether the response sought is relaxation, excitement, or emotional release. Arousal can come from content (action, violence, sexuality, loud music or sound) and from style (motion, use of color, the rate and speed at which new images appear). Notice that music videos, which often offer little in terms of learning, provide many of these elements.[29]

Legendary film composer John Williams is known for his sweeping, emotionally memorable scores for movies like the *Indiana Jones* series, the *Jurassic Park* series, and even Kobe Bryant's Academy Award–winning animated short *Dear Basketball*. But he is undoubtedly best known for his scores for the eight (soon to be nine) core *Star Wars* films. From the opening fanfare played over the crawling text, to the menacing Imperial March for Darth Vader, to the Love Theme for Han and Leia, these melodies are instantly recognized cultural icons. They also are a key part of how the *Star Wars* movies are capable of so blatantly manipulating our feelings.

Alex Ross, music critic for the *New Yorker*, writes that Williams manipulated the audience in *Episode VII: The Force Awakens* by composing vaguely menacing music for Luke

Skywalker to make the audience question whether the Jedi hero has gone over to the dark side. “The new film tells us otherwise,” Ross says, “but shadowy chords surround the exiled hero for much of the film, leaving us in suspense as to his intentions.”[30]

Medium Effects

As mass media consumption grew in the 1950s, scholars also started paying more attention to the particular medium being used to transmit messages. Until the 1950s, most media effects research focused on the interactions among the sender, the message, and the receiver, ignoring the influence of the medium itself. But the medium used to communicate is crucial. Canadian communication researcher Marshall McLuhan argued that the medium used for transmission can be as important as the message itself, if not more so. McLuhan is best known for his statement "The medium is the message," by which he meant that the method of message transmittal is a central part of the message. For example, television does an excellent job of transmitting emotional messages because it includes both visual (explosions, luxury interiors) and audio (laugh tracks, scary music) cues along with words. And consider technology that enhances the sound of movies: Surround sound systems are designed to create a realistic experience by surrounding viewers with five distinct sound channels, as well as shaking them with a deep bass channel. The goal is not to transmit the message better, but to create a more overwhelming experience. (Think of how the impact of a summer blockbuster film would be diminished if the sound were turned down.) The same is true of large-screen high-definition television sets. Books and newspapers, in contrast, are much better at transmitting complex rational information because these media allow us to review the information and consider its meaning at our own pace.[31] The web excels at providing obscure materials that appeal to a limited, widely dispersed audience, and it makes it easy for receivers to respond to what they've seen or heard.

Media Transformations

From Clay to Paper to Electronic Documents

Back in 1971, Pentagon official Daniel Ellsberg leaked copies of many of the volumes of the so-called Pentagon Papers to reporters first at the *New York Times*, and later at the *Washington Post*. The Pentagon Papers were a top-secret forty-seven-volume report commissioned by the Secretary of Defense to explain how the United States got involved and fought in the Vietnam War. The story of Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers was recently told in the Steven Spielberg movie *The Post*. You can read more about the Pentagon Papers case and Ellsberg in Chapter 13. Leaking the documents was physically a big job. To do so, Ellsberg had to physically photocopy pages at a time when photocopy machines were uncommon and typically locked down after hours. Smuggling the thousands of copied pages out of a secure building was also a major undertaking.[35]

Forty-one years later, former National Security Agency contract worker Edward Snowden decided he wanted to leak a massive collection of meticulously categorized top-secret documents that he believed would show the overreach of the NSA without endangering lives.[36] Snowden delivered the thousands of pages of documents to journalist Glenn Greenwald in electronic form on a flash drive that fit in his pocket. Snowden had to know how to bypass computer security, but beyond that, all he had to do was a few keystrokes and mouse clicks.

Just as Ellsberg's leaked documents helped Americans better understand what had happened during the Vietnam War, so did Snowden's documents help us understand what the NSA was doing with all the information it was secretly collecting about the American people following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

A blogger writing for the newsweekly the *Economist* says that whether you view people who leak top-secret electronic documents as heroes or traitors really doesn't matter. The writer argues that we are undergoing a major shift from a world with paper documents that are heavy and tied to a place to electronic documents that can be moved around the globe with the click of a mouse, and no amount of prosecuting cyberleakers will change that. The writer is not defending those who release electronic documents; rather, he's explaining the long-term impact that this change of media means.

The blogger is essentially bringing to the forefront the ideas of Canadian economist Harold Innis, who believed that any given medium has a bias of lasting a long time or of being easy to distribute. Paper documents, which we are more used to, are heavy and hard to move. Electronic documents, on the other hand, don't have a physical form and thus can be moved about with incredible ease.[37] To be fair to Innis, he considered parchment, clay, and stone to be durable media biased toward the concept of time, while paper and electronic media were easy to distribute and thus biased toward space. But we should keep in mind that Innis wrote his original book on the subject, *Empire and Communications*, in 1950 when it was published as a hardback paper book. Your author downloaded his copy electronically from Amazon's Kindle store.[38]

Innis was the scholar who inspired media theorist Marshall McLuhan's popular concept of "the medium is the message" and the importance of the inherent characteristics of different media. But while Innis was a much more serious and meticulous scholar than McLuhan, McLuhan's writing was much more popular and accessible. And Innis biographer Alexander Watson credits McLuhan with popularizing Innis's often dense writing.[39]

SECRET 5 ▸ As you think about the transformations that electronic documents have brought to our society, remember that it is a key example of Secret 5—All media are social. Because electronic documents are so portable, they can always be shared. Although both Innis and McLuhan predated computers and the internet, their work on influence of the changing nature of our media continues to be relevant today.

WHAT does Innis mean by the "bias of communication"?

HOW has the changing bias of our media changed how we handle documents?

HOW does the changing bias of our media transform the level of control we have over information?

CAN anything be kept secret now in the age of electronic documents? Why or why not?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

SECRET 1 ▸ Media scholars now recognize that communication technology is a fundamental element of society and that new technologies can lead to social change.[32] (As Secret 1 points out, the media are essential components of our lives.) Media sociologist Joshua Meyrowitz, for example, argues that the existence and development of various media can lead to radical changes in society.

He writes that the development of publishing and books in the sixteenth century made it easy for new ideas to spread beyond the person who originated them and that this tended to undermine the control of ideas by both the monarchy and the Roman Catholic Church.[33] As can be seen by the Edward Snowden story discussed in this chapter's "Media Transformation," the existence of digital documents, encrypted email, and high-capacity thumb drives now allows a small group of technically skilled individuals to spread news and documents around the world, with governments powerless to stop them. Meyrowitz also identifies some social effects of particular media. In *No Sense of Place*, he argues that the major effect of print as a medium is to segregate audiences according to education, age, class, and gender. For example, a teenager needs to be able to read at a certain level to understand the content of a magazine targeted at young women or young men—content that a young child would be unable to comprehend. In contrast, electronic media such as television tend to cross the demographic boundaries. A child too young to read a magazine or book can still understand at least some of the information in a television program targeted at adults.[34] This is why parent groups and childhood educators push to have early-evening programming on television contain more "family-friendly" programs and why parents seek to restrict certain sites and apps on a child's smartphone or tablet.

The importance of the particular medium used to convey a message applies at every level of communication, from intrapersonal (how is an audio journal different from a written one?) to interpersonal (how is a phone call different from an email?) to mass (how is a book different from a movie?).

Questioning the Media

Does the medium you use for mass communication change how you perceive the message? How does watching the movie *Ready Player One* in 3-D at an IMAX theater differ from watching it on your laptop screen? How does listening to a speech on the radio or on television differ from reading a copy of the speech online or in a newspaper? Are you more comfortable reading something disturbing than seeing a video about the same subject?

Ownership Effects

Instead of looking at the effects of media and their messages, some scholars examine the influence of those who own and control the media.[40] These critical scholars are concerned because owners of media determine which ideas will be produced and distributed by those media.

In the United States, the majority of media outlets are owned by a small number of giant multinational conglomerates and new media companies: Disney, News Corporation/21st Century Fox, Time Warner, Viacom/CBS, Bertelsmann, Comcast/NBCUniversal, and Google. Some observers, such as German academic and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, fear that these corporations are becoming a sort of ruling class, controlling which books are published, which programs are aired, which movies are produced, and which news stories are written.[41] As we discuss in Chapter 3, Disney, News Corporation, and Google have all had to compromise at times with the Chinese government in order to keep doing business in China. For example, Google had to agree to censor its search results about sensitive topics in China for the company to be allowed to operate there.[42]

Media critic and former newspaper editor Ben Bagdikian suggests that the influence of media owners can be seen in how the news media select stories to be covered. He argues that large media organizations will kill news stories and entertainment programs that don't reflect well on the corporation. The roots of this tendency go back to when captains of industry such as J. P. Morgan and the Rockefellers bought out magazines that criticized them in order to silence that criticism. What we end up with, Bagdikian says, is not the feared bogeyman of government censorship, but rather "a new Private Ministry of Information and Culture" that gives corporations control over what we will see, hear, or read.[43] Increasingly, however, the new alternative media are providing channels that allow consumers to bypass Big Media controls.[44] (See the section on long-tail media in Chapter 3 for more on how these new channels are enabling anyone who wants to distribute content to do so on a large scale.) Websites such as *Brietbart* or *Daily Kos* give voice to issues from a partisan point of view with no controls at all other than those the authors choose to employ. There are also data-driven, online news sources like Nate Silver's *FiveThirtyEight* that have an underlying political point of view but nevertheless are committed to honest reporting backed up by hard, supporting data.

Active Audience Effects

Some of the early fears about the effects of the media on audience members arose from the belief that the audience truly was a faceless, undifferentiated mass—that the characteristics of the audience en masse also applied to the audience's individual members. Early critics viewed modern people as alienated and isolated individuals who, separated by the decline of the family and the growth of a technological society, didn't communicate with one another. After World War II, the concept of the mass audience began to change as scholars came to realize that the audience was made up of unique members who responded as individuals, not as undifferentiated members of a mass.[45]

Today, communicators, marketers, and scholars realize that individuals seek and respond to different messages at different times and for different reasons. Therefore, they divide audiences on the basis of geographics, or where people live; demographics, or their gender, race, ethnic background, income, education, age, educational attainment, and the like; or psychographics, a combination of demographics, lifestyle characteristics, and product usage. Hence, a young woman buying a small SUV to take her mountain bike out into the mountains will respond to a very different kind of advertising message than a mother seeking a small SUV so that she can safely drive her child to school during rush hour in the winter.

Audiences can also be classified by the amount of time they spend using media or by the purposes for which they use media. Each segment of the media audience will behave differently. Take television viewing as an example. Some people tune in daily to watch their favorite soap opera or talk show and won't change the channel for the entire hour. This is known as appointment viewing. Others surf through a number of channels using the remote control, looking for something that will capture their interest. Still others switch back and forth between two channels.

> SECRET 7 ▸ With regard to television, the concept of a mass audience consuming the same content at the same time existed to some extent from the 1950s to the 1970s when the vast majority of viewers had access to only three broadcast networks, but that concept broke down completely with the advent of cable, satellite, multiple broadcast networks, TiVo, DVDs, and VCRs. (This is an example of Secret 7—There is no "they.")

Media scholar James Potter suggests that the media audience resembles a pyramid. (Remember the pyramid figure in Chapter 1?) At the peak of the pyramid, we are all consuming the same messages, such as the horrifying reports of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. At the base of the pyramid, we are all different, consuming what interests us personally, such as when we surf the internet. In between the narrow top and the wide base are the various audience segments that the media and advertisers are trying to reach.[46]

In addition to recognizing that different people use the media in different ways, scholars have realized that mass communication messages are generally mediated through other levels of communication. One reason this book discusses intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group communication in addition to mass communication is that these levels all come into play in how mass communication operates. People discuss political news with one another, cheer together for their favorite teams while watching a hockey game on television, and think about how stock market information is going to affect their investment plans. A young man's reaction to a love scene in a movie will differ depending on if he watches it with a group of friends, with his sweetie, or with his parents.[47]

Theories of Media and Society

There is a scene in *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* in which Luke Skywalker is nervous about entering a cave beneath a tree in the Dagobah jungle. He asks Master Yoda, "What's in there?" Yoda replies, "Only what you take with you." And so it is with mass communication. What we find with mass communication research depends in large part on the theory base we take with us and the questions the theories suggest we pose. It's not so much that different approaches to research give us different answers—it's more that they take us to different questions. In this section, we look at several of the theoretical approaches to mass communication and the types of questions they raise.

Functional Analysis

The effects of the media are not limited to those on individuals or groups. Some of the media's most significant effects reach society as a whole.

According to media scholar Harold Lasswell, the mass media are simply an extension of basic functions that society has always needed. Earlier societies had priests, town criers, storytellers, bards who sang ballads, and travelers who brought news from distant lands.[48] Communication can be functional or dysfunctional, but in either case it operates within the social system.[49] For example, some people respond inappropriately to the news of approaching danger. Instead of going to the basement during a tornado warning, a functional response, they go outside with their video cameras to get footage of the storm, a dysfunctional response. In both cases, they are responding to the news of the storm.

Lasswell wrote that the media perform three major social functions[50]:

1. Surveillance of the environment, looking for both threats and opportunities
2. Correlation of different elements of society, allowing segments of society to work together
3. Transmission of culture from one generation to the next

To these three, media sociologist Charles Wright adds the function of entertainment.[51] Let's look more closely at each of these functions.

Surveillance of the Environment.

Much of what we know about the world we learn from the media through the process of surveillance. The media show us what is happening not only within our own culture, but in other societies as well. Our only other sources of knowledge about the world are our own direct experiences and the direct experiences that others share with us. For example, people who live in the Middle East learn much of what they know about the outside world through their use of social media and direct messaging software like WhatsApp, which allow them to bypass much of the local censorship that limits legacy media.[52]

The constant flow of information from the media allows us to survey our surroundings. It can give us warnings of approaching danger—everything from changes in the weather to earthquakes to violence in the streets. This flow of information is essential for the everyday operation of society. The stock markets depend on the business news, travelers depend on weather forecasts, and grocery shoppers depend on knowing what's on special this week.

Surveillance can also serve to undermine society. For example, when people in poor nations see media images of what life is like in the United States and other industrialized Western

nations, they may become dissatisfied with the conditions of their own lives, and this may lead to social unrest and violence. News about violence may also make people more fearful for their own safety.

▼ A striking example of status conferral, Omarosa Manigault Newman came into the public eye in 2004 as a contestant on Donald Trump's reality TV show *The Apprentice*. She later became a director of communications in Trump's White House, serving there for several months until she left and returned to reality television as a contestant on *Celebrity Big Brother* in 2018.



CBS Photo Archive/Getty Images

Surveillance is not just for the masses. Government and industry leaders worldwide watch CNN or C-SPAN or read the *New York Times* or *Financial Times* to know what other government leaders are saying and thinking.

News can also give status to individuals. Because media coverage exposes them to large audiences, they seem important. This process is known as status conferral. In a rather extreme example, Omarosa Manigault Newman initially became famous after being a villainous character/competitor on the first season of Donald Trump's *The Apprentice* back in 2004. After becoming a celebrity through being on the show, she went on to be featured on a range of television shows primarily designed to feature people who had become prominent on reality TV. Then, in a strange twist of fate, Manigualt Newman became

President Trump's director of communications for the White House Office of Public Liaison. After getting fired from the White House, she went on to star on the CBS series *Celebrity Big Brother*.[53] Thus Manigualt Newman became a television celebrity and a national political figure, and then used that status to return to reality TV.

Correlation of Different Elements of Society.

Correlation is the selection, evaluation, and interpretation of events to impose structure on the news. Correlation is accomplished by persuasive communication through editorials, commentary, advertising, and propaganda. Through media-supplied correlation, we make sense out of what we learn through surveillance. It puts news into categories and provides cues that indicate the importance of each news item. Does it appear on the front page of the newspaper? Is it the first item on the broadcast? Is there a teaser on the magazine cover promoting the story?

Although many people say that they would prefer just the facts, virtually the only news outlet that provides no interpretation of events is the public affairs network C-SPAN, which has rigid rules governing how every event is covered. Far more viewers choose to go to the broadcast networks or cable news channels, which provide some interpretation, rather than watch the relatively dry, "just the facts" C-SPAN.[54]

It is often difficult to distinguish between communication that is informative and communication that is persuasive. Editorial judgments are always being made as to which stories should be covered and which should be omitted, which picture of a politician should be published, or what kind of headline should be written. Thus, it is useful to view surveillance and correlation as two functions that can be shared by a particular message.

Socialization and Transmission of Culture.

Socialization is the process of integrating people within society through the transmission of values, social norms, and knowledge to new members of the group.

> SECRET 1 ▸ It is through the media, as well as through our friends, family, school, and church, that we learn the values of our society. Socialization is important not only to young people as they are growing up, but also to immigrants learning about and assimilating into their new country, high school students heading off to college, and new graduates going to work.[55] (Here is another example of Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives.)

The media provide socialization in a variety of ways:

- Through role models in entertainment programming
- Through goals and desires as presented in media content
- Through the citizenship values portrayed in the news
- Through advertisements for products that may be useful to us in different stages of

our lives

Entertainment.

Entertainment is communication designed primarily to amuse, even if it serves other functions as well, which it almost always does. A television medical drama would be considered entertainment, even though it might educate a person about life in a hospital or the symptoms of a major illness. In fact, a major characteristic of all television programming, including entertainment programming, is to let people know what life outside their own world is like.[56]

▼ Journalist Ronan Farrow shared a Pulitzer Prize for Public Service in 2018 for his reporting on the allegations of sexual assault brought against Harvey Weinstein. The attention that his and others' reporting brought to the issue helped put the #MeToo movement on the national agenda.



Evan Agostini/Invision/AP

Agenda Setting

Although explanations of powerful direct effects did not hold up under research scrutiny, people still had a hard time accepting that the news media and political campaigns had little or no effect on the public. Agenda-setting theory provides an alternative explanation that does not minimize the influence of the media on society.[57] This theory holds that issues that are portrayed as important in the news media become important to the public—that is, the media set the agenda for public debate. If the media are not able to tell people what to think, as the direct effects model proposed, perhaps they can tell people what to think about. Agenda-setting theorists seek to determine whether the issues that are important to the media are also important to the public.[58]

The initial study of agenda setting was conducted in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, by Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs. The researchers found, among uncommitted voters in the 1968 presidential election, a strong relationship between the issues the press considered important and the issues the voters considered important. Since these voters had not already made up their minds about the upcoming election, their most likely source of cues, the researchers concluded, was the mass media. The study compared the content of the press and the attitudes of voters and found a strong correlation. Even though the researchers did not find evidence that the press persuaded people to change their opinions, they did find that the issues featured in the campaign and in the press were also the issues that voters felt were important.[59]

There are, however, some limits on the usefulness of the agenda-setting concept. If a story does not resonate with the public, neither the media nor the candidates will be able to make people care. For example, reports that Ronald and Nancy Reagan had conceived a child before they were married did not seem to do any damage to Reagan's image; nor was the Rev. Pat Robertson's campaign damaged by reports that the candidate and his wife had lied about the date of their wedding anniversary to hide the fact that their first child was conceived premaritally.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications theory turns the traditional way of looking at media effects on its head. Instead of looking at the audience as a sheep-like mass of receivers of messages, uses and gratifications theory views audience members as active receivers of information of their own choosing. Uses and gratifications theory is based on the following assumptions:

Test Your Media Literacy

Working With Theory

So far, you've seen the application of several of the Seven Secrets, and you might have even asked yourself, which of these is most important? As you work your way through this text, you will likely suspect that the author would put forward Secret 3—everything from the margin moves to the center.

The introduction to this secret notes:

> One of the mass media's biggest effects on everyday life is to take culture from the margins of society and make it into part of the mainstream, or center. This process can move people, ideas, and even individual words from small communities into mass society.

So if we apply this to the case study that opens this chapter, we are left with the question:

Why, after years of neglect, did the press, in all its varied forms, suddenly start paying attention to these accusations and the women making them? (Want to read more on this subject? You can find that here: www.ralphehanson.com/tag/me-too/.) Why did these stories move to the center?

Two of the theories you've read about so far could be used to answer this question. Here is a simplified summary of each:

Agenda Setting	Critical/Cultural Theory
Issues that are portrayed as important in the news media become important to the public. While the media don't tell people what to think, they can tell people what to think about. This theory asks whether people take their cues from the media as to what the most important stories are that they should attend to.	There are serious problems that people suffer that come from exploitation and the division of labor. People are treated as "things" to be used rather than individuals who have value. You can't make sense out of ideas and events if you take them out of their historical context. Society is coming to be dominated by a culture industry (the mass media) that takes cultural ideas, turns them into commodities, and sells them in a way to make the maximum amount of money.

WHO are the sources?

Who were the sources for the sexual harassment and abuse stories? Who was publishing the stories? Where did the information come from?

WHAT are they saying?

Read through either the opening vignette or the series of blog posts linked to above. What reasons do the sources give for the sexual harassment/abuse story breaking out when it did? Whom do they say was responsible for this happening?

WHAT evidence exists?

What evidence is there for the story spreading because news organizations were interested in making the story spread? What evidence is there for the story spreading because women (and men) who had been abused were willing to speak out?

WHAT do you think explains what happened?

How would you explain the spread of the story using agenda setting? Critical/cultural theory? Which do you think does a better job of explaining what happened? Why?

- Audience members are active receivers who have wants and needs. They then make decisions about media use based on those wants and needs. For example, in this approach, video games don't do things to children; children make use of video games.
- Media compete with many sources of gratification. I might watch television in the evening to relax. Television would be competing with reading a magazine, going for a walk, and playing with my son as alternative ways of relaxing.
- Audience members are aware of these choices and make them consciously.
- Our judgments about the value of various media uses must come from the audience's perspective.[60]

The idea behind uses and gratifications theory is that individuals are constantly seeking gratifications, and the media compete to provide them. Media scholar Arthur Asa Berger says that among the gratifications that audience members might seek are to be amused, to experience the beautiful, to have shared experiences with others, to find models to imitate, and to believe in romantic love.[61] So someone who doesn't care about football might still watch a game on television and enjoy it because he wants to spend time with friends. Although he is consuming media, that's not the real point of his interaction with the television set.

Questioning the Media

Can you name a story that has become an important issue primarily because it has received extensive coverage from the news media? What's an important issue that's been ignored or not covered enough by the news media? Considering both stories, why was one covered more extensively than the other?

Social Learning

At some point in your life, you've been told that experience is the best teacher. While experience may be a good teacher, it is also a harsh one, forcing us to suffer from our mistakes. Fortunately, we don't have to make all these mistakes ourselves, according to social psychologist Albert Bandura's social learning theory. Bandura writes, "If knowledge and skills could be acquired only by direct experience, the process of human development would be greatly retarded, not to mention exceedingly tedious and hazardous."[62] Instead, he says that we are able to learn by observing what others do and the consequences they face. Bandura says humans go through three steps to engage in social learning:

- We extract key information from situations we observe.
- We integrate these observations to create rules about how the world operates.
- We put these rules into practice to regulate our own behavior and predict the behaviors of others.

The media, by widening the information about the world that we are exposed to, play an important role in social learning. Students and young professionals have all been warned on numerous occasions to be careful what they post on social media. But media coverage of a public relations practitioner named Justine's social media self-destruction has likely helped a lot of folks avoid her mistake. In 2013, Justine sent out a tweet that read "Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!" just before her twelve-hour flight took off from London for Cape Town, South Africa. Her tweet spawned an extended online firestorm under the hashtag #HasJustineLandedYet. Tweets ranged from mocking her insensitivity, to parody accounts, to expressions of offense and hurt. Once Justine did land, she learned she had been fired while she was in the air. Despite having only about five hundred followers at the time she took off, her tweet rapidly spread around the world. With a case like #HasJustineLandedYet, social media users can learn from the example of one woman without having to suffer all the consequences she did.[63]

Symbolic Interactionism

George Herbert Mead wrote back in 1934 that what holds us together as a culture is our common creation of society through our interactions based on language, or symbolic interactionism. We engage in symbolic interactions in which we continually attempt to arouse in others the feeling we have in ourselves by telling others how we feel.

> SECRET 1 ▸ If our language is understood, we are able to communicate; if, on the other hand, we do not share common meanings, we will not be understood.[64] The mass media are by far the biggest source of shared meanings in our world. (Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives.)

▼ The panic many people think was inspired by Welles made *War of the Worlds* perhaps the most notorious event in American broadcast history.



Ullstein Bild/Getty Images

If you think back to our discussion of the meaning of the yellow ribbon in Chapter 1, you can see how this works. We start with an arbitrary symbol: the yellow ribbon. We assign it meaning and then propagate that meaning through portrayal through the media. Eventually, nearly everyone comes to have the same shared meaning of the looped ribbon, and the ribbon becomes a universal symbol of support—support for the troops, for disease

sufferers, and for all kinds of social causes.

Sociologist W. I. Thomas provides us with one of the most quoted and understandable statements of symbolic interactionism: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences."[65] If we ignore the outdated gender bias of the quote, there's a lot to analyze there. What Thomas is saying is that if people view a problem as being real, and behave as though a problem is real, it will have real consequences, even if the problem does not truly exist. Back in 1938, Orson Welles narrated a famous radio adaptation of H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*. The radio play was misinterpreted by some to be an actual news story, and there were many accounts at the time of people panicking and even committing suicide out of fear of the Martians invading New Jersey. Ever since then, broadcasters have been very careful to run extensive disclaimers on the air every time they run a *War of the Worlds*–style story, to make sure they don't panic their audience. There is also a widespread fear of powerful effects that the mass media can have on susceptible audience members. The only problem is that the research conducted at the time on the *War of the Worlds* panic was seriously flawed, and criticism of the research, which dates back to the 1940s, has largely been ignored, in part because the belief in the *War of the Worlds* effect is so strong. The truth is that there was far more perception of panic than actual panic at the time. In summary, it doesn't matter much now whether the panic actually took place. What matters is that people believe that it did.[66]

Spiral of Silence

German media scholar Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, with her spiral of silence, has raised the question of why people become unwilling to express what they perceive to be a minority opinion. Noelle-Neumann became interested in this question in part from trying to find out why the Germans supported political positions that led to national defeat, humiliation, and ruin in the 1930s and 1940s, or why the French under German occupation were seemingly complacent as Jewish friends and neighbors were sent to concentration camps. Noelle-Neumann says that societies function on the basis of perceived consensus. We want to view ourselves as part of a majority and as holding the consensus opinion. Thus people will refrain from expressing opinions that they think will be at odds with those of their friends and neighbors, even though their neighbors might actually agree with them.[67]

So how do people receive the cues that indicate what popular public opinion is so that they might agree with it? The media are important public institutions because they are often our best source of public opinion. Central to Noelle-Neumann's argument is that when people believe they are in the minority with their opinion, they will tend to stay quiet on the topic, thus feeding the sense that a particular opinion is held by a minority. Thus it becomes a death spiral of diversity of ideas, as more and more people come to believe that they hold a minority opinion.[68]

While the spiral of silence is a fascinating explanation of how public opinion functions, it is difficult to independently verify and prove whether it, in fact, works that way. Radicals will oftentimes speak up with unpopular opinions precisely because they are unpopular. And people who care deeply about an issue will speak out simply because they feel they are correct. But a study from the Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project found support for the spiral of silence when it comes to discussing controversial issues on social media. The researchers were attempting to find out whether social media such as Facebook or Twitter might make people more willing to express their opinions on political issues. The Pew study looked at how willing people were to express an opinion about Edward Snowden's release of classified documents as discussed in the "Media Transformation" for this chapter. Not surprisingly, the study showed that Americans were split as to whether Snowden's leaks were a good idea and whether the surveillance policy was a good idea. But the study went on to show the following:

- People were less willing to discuss the Snowden case on social media than they were in person.
- People were more likely to share their opinions about Snowden if they thought their audience agreed with their point of view. This was true both in person and online.
- People who wouldn't share their opinion on Snowden in a face-to-face conversation were even less likely to share their opinion on social media.

Overall, the Pew study found a strong spiral of silence effect for controversial issues on social media.[69]

Cultivation Analysis

George Gerbner (1919–2005), the best-known researcher of television violence, did not believe televised violence has direct effects on people's behavior, but he was deeply concerned about its effect on society as a whole.[70] Gerbner developed an alternative to traditional message effects research called cultivation analysis. His argument was that watching large amounts of television cultivates a distinct view of the world that is sharply at odds with reality.[71]

Over the years, Gerbner and his colleagues analyzed thousands of network television programs for the themes they presented and the level of violence they included. In a series of studies beginning in 1967, Gerbner's team found high levels of violence on television. They defined violence as "the overt expression of force intended to hurt or kill."[72]

Network officials have been openly critical of Gerbner, saying that his studies weren't representative of television as a whole and that his definition of violence is not useful because it does not discriminate between the fantasy violence of a *Road Runner* cartoon and the more graphic gore of a *Saw* or *Hostel* movie.

Gerbner compared the rate of violence on television to the rate of it occurring in the real world. He concluded that television cultivates a view of the world that is much more violent than the world we live in. The nature of the violence is different as well, with most television violence occurring between strangers rather than between family members, as does real-life violence. Gerbner said that, because of this, people who watch a great deal of television perceive the world differently than do light viewers. Heavy television viewing cultivates a response that Gerbner calls the mean world syndrome.

Gerbner explained what he considered to be major misconceptions about the effects of televised violence and what his research suggested the real effects were. He argued that watching large amounts of television cultivates a distinct view of the world that is at odds with reality.

Gerbner argued that, because of televised violence, heavy television viewers are more likely to

- Overestimate their chances of experiencing violence
- Believe that their neighborhoods are unsafe
- State that fear of crime is a very serious personal problem
- Assume that the crime rate is rising, regardless of the actual crime rate[73]

In an appearance before Congress, Gerbner testified:

> The most general and prevalent association with television viewing is a heightened sense of living in a "mean world" of violence and danger. Fearful people are more dependent, more easily manipulated and controlled, more susceptible to deceptively simple, strong, tough measures and hard-line postures. . . . They may accept and even welcome repression if it promises to relieve their insecurities. That is the deeper problem of violence-laden television.[74]

The effect of violent television, Gerbner argued, is not that it will program children to be violent; instead, the real harm is more complex. Violent programming

- Pushes aside other ways of portraying conflict
- Deprives viewers of other choices
- Facilitates the victim mentality
- Discourages production of alternative programming[75]

Gerbner's point was that the most obvious-to-imagine effects might not be the most important actual effects.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

With the rise of mass society and the rapid growth of the mass media starting in the nineteenth century, the public, media critics, and scholars have raised questions about the effects various media might have on society and individuals. These effects were viewed initially as being strong, direct, and relatively uniform on the population as a whole. After World War I, critics were concerned that media-oriented political campaigns could have powerful direct effects on voters. This view, though still widespread, was largely discredited by voter studies conducted in the 1940s and 1950s. These studies found that the voters with the strongest political opinions were those most likely to pay attention to a campaign and hence least likely to be affected by it. More recently, research has expanded to move beyond looking just at the effects that media and media content have on individuals and society to examinations of how living in a world with all-pervasive media changes the nature of our interactions and culture.

Understanding the effects of media on individuals and society requires that we examine the messages being sent, the medium transmitting these messages, the owners of the media, and the audience members themselves. The effects can be cognitive, attitudinal, behavioral, or psychological.

Media effects can also be examined in terms of a number of theoretical approaches, including functional analysis, agenda setting, uses and gratifications, social learning, symbolic interactionism, spiral of silence, and cultivation analysis.

Key Terms ▶▶

opinion leaders 35
critical theory 35
Pentagon Papers 39
geographics 41
demographics 41
psychographics 41
surveillance 42
status conferral 43
correlation 43
socialization 43
entertainment 44
agenda-setting theory 44
uses and gratifications theory 44
social learning theory 46
symbolic interactionism 46
spiral of silence 47
cultivation analysis 48
mean world syndrome 48

Review Questions ▶▶

1. Why did the number of stories of sexual harassment and abuse explode in October 2017? What are at least two theoretical explanations of what happened then?
2. How did the existence of electronic documents allow Edward Snowden to steal and release so many secret government records? Could he have done the same thing with paper documents?
3. What were the major problems with the direct effects model—the original theory of media effects?
4. What are the four major types of media effects? Give an example of each.
5. Compare and contrast how the direct effects model, vs. the cultivation theory, would explain the effects of media violence.
6. What kind of questions can you best answer using critical theory? What kind of questions is it weakest at answering?

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Chapter 3 The Media Business Consolidation, Globalization, and the Long Tail



JIM WATSON/AFP/Getty Images

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Describe how the media developed as a private industry in the United States from the colonial period to the present day
2. Summarize how control of the media industry has changed from the 1950s to the present day
3. Explain why Apple, Google, and other tech companies may also be considered leading media companies
4. Explain how media companies struggle with the concept of how big they should be
5. Describe the concept of long-tail media and its implications for the future of the media industry with the concept of how big they should be

Mark Zuckerberg legendarily invented Facebook in his dorm room at Harvard in 2004. Depending on whom you believe, it was either a re-creation of the paper face books printed to help students get to know the other people in the dorm or a way to rate girls according to how attractive they were.

Journalist Jose Antonio Vargas (whom we will talk about more in Chapter 14 on media ethics) summed up Facebook this way:

> The site is a directory of the world's people, and a place for private citizens to create public identities. You sign up and start posting information about yourself: photographs, employment history, why you are peeved right now with the gummy-bear selection at Rite Aid or bullish about prospects for peace in the Middle East.[1]

Of course, you really don't need this explained. Chances are pretty good you have a Facebook account that you use to share family-friendly photos and stories with your friends, your siblings, your parents, and perhaps even your grandparents. (In fact, your grandma is why you are so careful about what you post on Facebook these days.)

Zuckerberg's fascination with computers and programming started at an early age, with Vargas reporting that Zuckerberg at age twelve wrote an early instant messaging program used to communicate in his dad's dental office.

The business model of Facebook is dependent on us being willing to share, well, just about everything. Depending on your privacy settings, your photos, where you ate lunch, where you shop, your opinions on movies, and your latest political rant are all used to serve up advertising targeted specifically at people like you.

Talk with friends on Facebook about your interest in a specific new little SUV, and all of a sudden your social media are full of information about that cute little vehicle. Look at a trailer for the latest Marvel Cinematic Universe movie, and all of a sudden DVDs for every

other Marvel movie are popping up in your feed.

While Facebook's use of your data to target you with advertising has brought the social network a certain level of criticism, more has come from Zuckerberg's decision to open up Facebook to work with corporate partners.

That means that when you choose to play a game on Facebook, take a quiz to tell you which house at Hogwarts in the world of Harry Potter you belong in, or fill out a survey on where you stand politically, those data don't stay with Facebook. Instead, they get shared with Facebook's corporate partners, who use those data, and perhaps data on your friends, to sell a profile of you to other companies and organizations—perhaps even political candidates you oppose.

Among the most visible companies buying data from Facebook was the political research company Cambridge Analytica. Cambridge collected data on tens of millions of Americans through a Facebook quiz app and used those data to help political candidates and movements, often ones that might be at odds with the values of the people who took the quizzes. When Cambridge's use of the data was revealed, Facebook suspended the company's access to Facebook, and the scandal surrounding it eventually resulted in the company being shut down.

Jeff Chester of the Center for Digital Democracy told the *Washington Post*, "The closing of Cambridge Analytica doesn't stop the problem that voters and consumers face in terms of a growing loss of privacy and a gross misuse of their data. Cambridge Analytica's practices, although it crossed ethical boundaries, is really emblematic of how data driven digital marketing occurs worldwide. Americans are currently helpless to stop the massive flows of their personal information now regularly fed to Google, Facebook, [internet service providers] and many others."[2]

SECRET 6 ▸ Frederic Filloux, writing in the tech newsletter the *Monday Note*, points out that this information about you is worth about $84 a year to Facebook if you live in North America and $27 if you live in Europe. Facebook's big areas for growth in the coming years are Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Filloux writes that in countries such as Myanmar or Indonesia, for many people Facebook on their inexpensive Android phone is the internet.[3] (This is also an example of Secret 6—Online media are mobile media.)

As of June 2017, Facebook had 2 billion subscribers worldwide, and this makes it by far the largest social network. Among those that come close? WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, each with 1.2 billion users and each also owned by Facebook.[4]

The only non-Facebook social media networks that come close are Google's YouTube with 1.5 billion registered users and WeChat (a China-based social network) with almost 900 million users. Twitter, by comparison, has a wee 328 million subscribers, and the upstart Snapchat has an estimated 255 million.

While Facebook has one of the largest audiences of any media company, it's not the largest financially. For 2016, it had revenue of $27.6 billion with a net income of $10.2 billion. That gave the company an impressive 37 percent profit.[5] Comcast, owner of NBCUniversal and a major supplier of cable television services, in comparison had revenue of $80.4 billion but a more modest 10.8 percent profit; Apple had a whopping revenue of $229 billion and a 21.1 percent profit; movie studio and television company 21st Century Fox had a profit of 10.4 percent.[6]

What Zuckerberg's Facebook has taught us is that a media outlet's importance and influence can be measured in many ways—how much money it brings in, how big a profit it makes, how many audience members it serves, and what its audience's level of engagement is. Those are just a few of the questions we're going to be attempting to answer in this chapter as we look at the companies that own and run our media.

In recent years, ownership of newspapers, book and magazine publishers, recording labels, movie companies, and internet companies has become increasingly concentrated, moving from the hands of the families that started them into the hands of a small number of very large corporations. However, entrepreneurs are able to use digital technologies to create new media that can turn upside-down Big Media's focus on using traditional tools to deliver media using the same techniques they have for years. Instead of looking at "the media" as a unified whole, we look at who owns and controls the varied mass media and how new channels are emerging rapidly.

The Development of the Media Business in the United States

The U.S. media are unique in the world in that they are almost entirely privately owned and operated for profit. Even the broadcasting industry, which in most countries is tightly controlled by the government, is run by private businesses.[7]

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

A Tradition of Private Ownership

The media in the United States have a long tradition of private ownership that dates back to the 1640s. The media industry was among the first in the American colonies: The first printing press came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1638. It was used to establish the Cambridge press, publisher of *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, better known as the Bay Psalm Book. This became the colonies' first best seller and was even exported back to Great Britain and Europe. Most of the early published works consisted of religious tracts, such as sermons, and were printed under license of the colonial government.[8]

Newspapers were published throughout the colonial and revolutionary period, but they were not the large, general-appeal publications we are familiar with today. Instead, they provided commentary and gossip that would appeal to members of a particular political group. Benjamin Harris, who published the first newspaper in the colonies in 1690, also ran a coffeehouse, and the content of his paper, *Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick*, resembled the talk in his coffeehouse. Only one issue of the paper appeared, in part because Harris had failed to obtain a license to publish.

Although the newspapers of the colonial period were much smaller than those to come during the 1800s, they could nevertheless be quite profitable. Publisher and statesman Benjamin Franklin became relatively wealthy publishing his *Pennsylvania Gazette*—although his success was due at least in part to his ability, as postmaster general, to prevent competing newspapers from being distributed through the mail.[9] Franklin, along with several other successful publishers, was able to use his paper's profitability to improve his publications and thus increase his success. He was an intense competitor, vying with other publishers for the top writers and editors in the book, newspaper, and magazine businesses.[10] In many ways, he established the pattern that media moguls would follow for the next two and a half centuries.

Even though print media were widespread in America in the 1700s, subscription prices were high, and publications were subsidized by political parties. It wasn't until the development of penny press newspapers in the 1830s that the news industry really got started. These inexpensive, widely circulated papers were published in large numbers and were the first American newspapers to be supported primarily through advertising revenue and read by large numbers of people.[11] The same model of advertising-supported media guided the development of the magazine industry in the 1800s.

In the United States, unlike in most other countries, the electronic media have always been privately owned, beginning with the telegraph line between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Maryland, in 1844. By 1849, the telegraph was being used to transmit news on a regular basis. Although it was replaced by newer technology in the twentieth century, the

telegraph set the stage for private ownership of electronic media.[12] Today the broadcasting industry is primarily a private business in the United States, although it is regulated by the government. In contrast, while Britain has a thriving commercial broadcasting industry, the publicly funded British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has a much bigger presence than the U.S. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). And while the internet, the most recent of the electronic media, began as a partnership between the military and universities in the 1960s and 1970s, it was fully opened to business and the public in the 1990s.

Questioning the Media

Is the United States better off having privately owned media? Would you rather see government-owned or -controlled media replace the privately owned media? Why or why not? How would this change our media?

The Growth of National News

Nationally circulated magazines provided news and entertainment in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and radio networks carried national news from the 1930s on, but it was the growing popularity of television networks in the 1950s that gave the United States a true national media culture. For the first time, people routinely depended on nationally available media for their news. The CBS and NBC television networks started carrying a half-hour nightly news broadcast in 1963; ABC followed suit in 1967, and CBS added its weekly newsmagazine *60 Minutes* in 1968. In 1979, ABC started running a late-night news update called *America Held Hostage* when U.S. embassy employees in Iran were taken hostage. As the hostage crisis dragged on for 444 days, the update evolved into the program now known as *Nightline*.

Public affairs network C-SPAN began broadcasting on cable in 1979. It carried full coverage of the U.S. House of Representatives live and unedited; coverage of the Senate was added in 1986. CNN went on cable in 1980, promising not to go off the air until "the end of the world." CNN subsequently went worldwide with CNN International and CNN en Español.

All this means that, even though a relatively limited number of companies own the media outlets, Americans have access to a wide range of competing news sources. The absolute number of independent sources has declined, but their availability is vastly improved.[13] In addition to these giants, several slightly smaller companies are extraordinarily influential on how our media operate. While the focus in this chapter is on the media in the United States, we take a much broader look at global media in Chapter 15.

Big Media: The Legacy Conglomerates

Media journalist Ken Auletta notes that massive changes have taken place in the media industry during the past forty years. In 1980, the VCR was a scarce luxury, cable television was just starting to become popular, the personal computer was for hobbyists, the internet was available only to academics and the military, *USA Today* had yet to be published, MTV and CNN were not yet on cable, there were only three broadcast television networks, you couldn't buy a CD, and mobile phones were connected to large boxes and used only by the wealthy and people with mobile offices.

By 2017, 55 percent of U.S. households subscribed to a paid streaming video service such as Netflix or Hulu. Basic cable was in more than 53 percent of homes, and high-speed cable was available to over 93 percent of them; direct-broadcast satellite television was in 34 percent; radio was universally available; 68 percent of American adults had access to broadband internet at home, and another 10 percent had smartphone-only internet; the *Wall Street Journal* had 2.5 million paper and digital readers per day; there were at least six national broadcast networks; and more than 90 percent of Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine had smartphones (which means they had always-on online access as well).[14] In Europe, there were more than five thousand television channels available, and more cell phone subscriptions than inhabitants.[15]

Since corporations control so much of what is available to the public, it is worth examining who they are and what they control, as well as how they have had to change to react to the new media environment of the twenty-first century. Companies that had counted on consolidation to bring in profits from synergy were likely to be disappointed as often as they were pleased. In general, the word synergy refers to a combination of effects that is greater than the sum of the individual effects. For example, two medications given together may do more than twice as much good as the two medications given separately. In the media business, synergy means that a combined company can offer more value, cost savings, or strength than two companies could separately.

However, there is more to our media world than just the legacy conglomerates of Big Media. There are the newer companies that are becoming a huge part of our media landscape, such as Comcast, Google, and Apple. Then there are the companies that are more limited in the scope of their media ownership, such as iHeartMedia, which has 858-plus radio stations; Gannett, which owns local papers with a daily print circulation of 5 million and a monthly digital circulation of 43 million; and *USA Today*, with 2.6 million print readers daily and 93 million unique visitors per month. So after we talk about the legacy media conglomerates, we'll look at the giant new players, along with a few other smaller, but still significant, media companies.[16]

Questioning the Media

In the twenty-first century, we have more media options available to us than ever before. But most of the major media outlets are owned by a small number of corporations. Given this, do you believe that we as media consumers have more or fewer choices than in the past? Why?

Disney: The Mouse That Grew

The Walt Disney Company, popularly known as the Mouse, may be the world's most famous media company, due to its wealth of recognizable characters, such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck (see Box 3.1). It is also the largest of the legacy media conglomerates. In 2016, it had revenue of $55.6 billion, with over $42 billion coming from the United States and Canada and over $4.5 billion from Asia and the Pacific.[17]

From Mickey Mouse to Media Giant.

The Disney Company got its start in 1928 when Walt Disney started producing Mickey Mouse cartoons. The first two silent Mickey cartoons came and went with little fanfare, but the third, which featured synchronized music and sound effects, was a huge hit. Walt Disney produced more than one hundred short animated cartoons featuring Mickey and his friends. In 1937, he took animation to the next level by releasing the first feature-length cartoon, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. A major success for the studio, the film held the box-office record of $8 million until *Gone With the Wind* was released in 1939.

▼ A still from the 2017 movie *Coco* captures the changing face of Disney with characters Miguel (right, voiced by Anthony Gonzalez) and his *abuela* Mamâ Coco (voiced by Ana Ofelia Murguía).



Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures/Photofest

In the 1950s, the Disney Company started producing live-action feature films and continued production of the wildlife documentaries it started in the late 1940s.[18] It was also in the 1950s that Disney opened its first theme park, in California.

Walt Disney was among the first Hollywood movie producers to see the potential of television, for which he produced and hosted a weekly program for more than a decade.[19]

He understood the concept of synergy very early and used his television show to promote his movies and theme park. The Disney Company has also been licensing merchandise longer than almost any other media company. In 1930, the company signed its first international licensing contract for Mickey Mouse products, and the famous Mickey Mouse watch went on sale in 1933. By 1954, the company was selling more than three thousand Disney items, ranging from pajamas to school supplies.[20]

After Walt Disney's death in 1966, the company lost much of its direction.[21] But in 1984, Michael Eisner, formerly of ABC Television and Paramount Pictures, took over as head of the studio, a job he held until 2005. Under Eisner's leadership, the Disney Company produced a series of popular animated films; formed new movie companies, including Touchstone Pictures (which has produced films for adults, such as *Pretty Woman*); and moved into television.[22]

In addition to being a significant force in American media, the Disney Company has been developing a presence throughout Europe and Asia. As of 2016, approximately 23 percent of Disney's earnings came from outside North America, but the quest for an international audience has not always gone smoothly.[23] For example, Disneyland Paris, which opened in 1992, went through four name changes and numerous cultural changes before it became profitable. Tokyo Disneyland, which opened in 1983, started off slowly but was soon busier than the California Disneyland. But the market Disney is most interested in is China, with its nearly 1.4 billion potential consumers.[24]

Disney had been doing business in China for several years before the communists came to power in 1949. But for the next thirty-five or so years, Disney and other Western businesses were barred from the country. By the mid-1980s, China was becoming more open to Western business and culture, so in 1985, Disney began negotiations with Chinese broadcast media to bring Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck cartoons to Chinese television.[25]

In 1996, Disney's relationship with China hit a rough period when Touchstone released the movie *Kundun*. The film, which deals with Tibet and the Dalai Lama, outraged the Chinese government. (China controls Tibet and has attempted to suppress the teachings of the Dalai Lama.) After *Kundun*'s release, Disney programming was banned briefly in China.[26]

Box 3.1 What Does Disney Own?

Publishing

- Disney Publishing Worldwide
- Marvel Comics

Broadcast Network

- ABC

Broadcast Television Stations

Disney owns eight ABC affiliates in major cities, including Chicago, Los Angeles, Raleigh-Durham, San Francisco, New York City, and Houston.

Cable/Digital Networks

Many cable/digital networks (either partially or in full), including

- Disney Channel (includes more than one hundred channels in thirty-four languages)
- ESPN Inc.
- A&E Networks (50 percent ownership—includes multiple versions of A&E, History, and Lifetime networks)
- Fusion
- Hulu (online streaming network, owned in conjunction with Comcast and 21st Century Fox)

Movie Studios and Distributors

- Walt Disney Pictures
- Touchstone Pictures
- Pixar
- Marvel Entertainment
- Lucasfilm (includes the visual and audio effects companies Industrial Light & Magic and Skywalker Sound)

Other Properties

- Disney Music Group
- Disney Theatrical Group
- Theme parks in China, Hong Kong, Japan, France, and the United States
- A cruise line business
- Disney stores
- Numerous international television broadcasting and production companies

Source: D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: The Walt Disney Company," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.the_walt_disney_company.432c15c5e0758b7d.html; The Walt Disney Company, "Fourth Quarter and Full Year Earnings for Fiscal Year 2017," November 9, 2017, https://ditm-twdc-us.storage.googleapis.com/q4-fy17-earnings.pdf; U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, "Form 10-K Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2017: The Walt Disney Company," https://otp.tools.investis.com/clients/us/the_walt_disney_company/SEC/sec-show.aspx?Type=html&FilingId=12398732&CIK=0001001039&Index=10000.

By 2002, Disney had successfully distanced itself from *Kundun* and was airing its cartoons on Dragon Club, which reaches sixty million Chinese households, and by 2005, it had a major presence on Chinese television and in Chinese department stores.[27] Disney opened Hong Kong Disneyland in 2005. Despite some early problems, the park has been growing, and Disney invested $800 million into expanding the park in 2009.[28] Chinese visitors don't seem to be bothered by the fact that the rides have English soundtracks. One Chinese guest told the *Washington Post*, "I don't expect to see many Chinese things in Disneyland. I came to see different things, fresh things."[29] Disney has continued to work on a $5.5 billion theme park in Shanghai in conjunction with a Chinese corporation.[30]

Disney's reach extends far beyond its children's programming and theme park operations. Central to the Disney Company today is the ABC broadcast network and the ESPN cable networks. ABC had been an independent company until 1985, when it was bought by Capital Cities Communications. Ten years later, Disney bought Capital Cities and acquired ABC as part of the deal.[31] Unlike Viacom and Time Warner, Disney is primarily a content company—a producer of programming. Although it owns ten television stations and a number of radio stations, it has not (as of this writing) invested heavily in local cable companies, theaters, or an internet service provider. It also has invested in retail stores and theme parks.[32]

The Twenty-First Century at Disney.

Disney has had a series of ups and downs over the past several years, sometimes in the same areas of the company. These include

- Animation—Disney's animation studio suffered a string of failures starting in 2000

with traditional, hand-drawn animation, but the company revitalized its cartoon offerings by acquiring Pixar, the studio responsible for the three *Toy Story* movies, *Finding Dory*, *Up*, and *Inside Out*. In 2013 and 2014, Disney animation had its biggest hit ever (not counting the Pixar-branded movies) with *Frozen* and has continued to see success with *Wreck-It Ralph*, *Big Hero 6*, and *Zootopia*.[33]

- Media convergence at Disney—Just as Disney saw the potential for bringing together movie and television properties back in the 1950s and 1960s, in recent decades it has understood how to bring together other popular sources of media entertainment such as Marvel Entertainment (home of Iron Man and the rest of the Avengers) and Lucasfilm (home of the *Star Wars* series). The company has also moved into using online media as a partial owner of the online streaming video service Hulu and uses it to provide viewers with additional opportunities to watch shows from ABC, Freeform (formerly ABC Family), and Disney Channel. Disney was also among the first of the Big Media companies to make its movies and television shows available through Apple's online iTunes Store.[34] Disney is also contemplating launching its own streaming service, though exactly what form that might take is not yet clear.[35]

▼ The Walt Disney Company has worked extensively in recent years to expand its offerings in China, including a theme park in Shanghai and exclusive merchandise deals.



Barcroft Media/Getty Images

You can read more about Disney's efforts to acquire large parts of 21st Century Fox in the "Media Transformations" section.

- Kicking merchandising up to the next level—Disney merchandise goes way beyond Mickey Mouse watches and *Frozen* jammies. When Disney had a live-action remake

of *Beauty and the Beast* in 2017, among the merchandise tie-ins were a $78 Danielle Nicole Beast backpack, a $280 Le Creuset *Beauty and the Beast* soup pot, and, perhaps most extravagantly, a pair of $499 Swarovski *Beauty and the Beast* clip earrings. (This also shows exactly who the target audience is for a lot of Disney merchandise!)[36]

- Declining TV audience for ESPN—ESPN is one of the most important of Disney's properties, and it has traditionally been the biggest profit center for the company. But between 2013 and 2015, the network lost seven million subscribers. That's a drop from ninety-nine million to ninety-two million potential viewers.[37] One thing that is not readily appreciated is that ESPN makes more money from its subscribers than its viewers. If you have a cable or satellite TV package, chances are you are paying about $8 a month for ESPN networks, even if you never watch anything other than the news and reruns of *Friends.* ESPN is certainly suffering from a decline in viewership, and NFL football has certainly had declining ratings as of late, but the real problem the sports network is facing is competition from Netflix and Hulu. To put this in perspective, the number of homes receiving ESPN declined from one hundred million in 2012 to just under ninety million in 2017. Netflix, over the same period, doubled its subscriber base from twenty-five million to fifty million. That is why ESPN is suffering.[38]

▼ Media giants engage in next-level merchandising. Disney partnered with French cookware company Le Creuset to produce a *Beauty and the Beast*–themed cooking pot that retailed for $280. It sold out at Williams Sonoma.



Courtesy of Tania Lamb

News Corporation and 21st Century Fox: A Worldwide Giant Splits in Two

In 2013, Rupert Murdoch's worldwide news and entertainment giant News Corporation became one of the latest media conglomerates to break into two parts. News Corporation retained Murdoch's newspapers, information services, and book publishing business. It publishes the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post* in the United States, along with the *Times* and the *Sun* in London. (Its biggest paper, the *News of the World*, was shut down following a phone hacking scandal in 2011. You can learn more about this and sexual harassment problems at Fox News in Chapter 14, "Media Ethics.") 21st Century Fox took on his cable, broadcast, film, pay television, and satellite properties. Interestingly, the entertainment-oriented 21st Century Fox, rather than the news-oriented News Corp., owns Fox News. Murdoch has a worldwide presence in nine different media: newspapers, magazines, books, broadcasting, direct-broadcast satellite television, cable networks, a movie studio, home video, and the internet. (See Boxes 3.2 and 3.3.) In fact, the only continent on which Murdoch doesn't own media properties is Antarctica.[39] In fiscal year 2016, News Corporation had sales of $8.1 billion, and 21st Century Fox had sales of $28.5 billion, for a total of $36.6 billion, making the two companies together about 28 percent smaller than Disney.[40]

Box 3.2 What Does News Corporation Own?

Dow Jones & Co.

- Including the *Wall Street Journal*

Newspapers

More than 275 newspapers worldwide, including

- The *New York Post*
- The *Times* (of London)
- The *Sun* (London tabloid)
- The *Australian* (national daily)

Magazines

All or part of four Australian magazines

Book Publishing

Multiple book publishing houses, including

- HarperCollins (United States along with divisions in England, Australia, and Canada) and its imprints, including
  - Zondervan (religious publisher)
  - Avon
  - Harlequin

Sources: "Who Owns What," *Columbia Journalism Review*, www.cjr.org/resources/index.php; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: News Corporation," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.news_corporation.d1ee25e1070bc1ae.html; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: Twenty-First-Century Fox, Inc.," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.twenty-first_century_fox_inc.0b822046e0ab357c.html.

From Australia to the World.

Rupert Murdoch's father owned two Australian newspapers, but when the elder Murdoch died in 1952, the younger Murdoch had to sell one of the papers to cover inheritance taxes. So Murdoch's News Corporation empire grew out of a single newspaper, the *Adelaide News*, which had a circulation under one hundred thousand.[41]

By 1964, Murdoch had put together a major newspaper chain and had begun publishing the *Australian*, a national newspaper. In 1969, he moved to Britain, taking over the Sunday tabloid *News of the World* and eventually acquiring four more tabloids. In 1977, he moved to the United States, where he acquired the *New York Post* and transformed it into a lively, politically conservative paper.

In the 1980s, Murdoch bought the 20th Century Fox movie studio and a number of U.S. television stations and used them to create the Fox television network. He also became a U.S. citizen at this time because the United States does not permit foreign ownership of a television network. The Fox News cable network was launched in 1996 and has for years been the most popular of the cable news operations. In 2018, Fox News was not only the top-rated cable news channel; it was the top rated of all basic cable networks for prime-time audiences.[42] In addition to its more than twenty-five broadcast television stations, book publishing operations, and broadcast and cable networks, 21st Century Fox is the world's dominant player in the direct-broadcast satellite business, owning a large portion of Sky (Britain), Sky Italia (Italy), and Sky Deutschland (Germany). It also owns a stake in China's state-owned telecommunications company.[43] As of this writing, 21st Century Fox was looking to sell off much of its entertainment property, with both Disney and Comcast actively seeking that property. You can read more about this in the chapter's "Media Transformations" section. 21st Century Fox has also been attempting to buy the remaining portion of Sky News, but has been running into regulatory problems in Britain.[44]

The Murdoch family owns a controlling interest in voting stock in both News Corporation and 21st Century Fox, and Murdoch runs his business using the same hands-on style he employed when it was a small family-owned company. If Disney succeeds in purchasing a major portion of 21st Century Fox, the Murdoch family will become the second-largest Disney shareholder.[45]

By far the biggest news surrounding News Corporation in recent years was its 2007 purchase of the *Wall Street Journal* and its parent company, Dow Jones & Company Inc. Murdoch paid a substantial premium for the paper to buy it from its longtime controlling owners, the Bancroft family. Although the *Journal* has always had a politically conservative editorial page, the paper's news coverage has generally been considered evenhanded. When Murdoch first expressed interest in the *Journal*, there were concerns in the news industry that he would apply the same partisan style to the paper that he used with the Fox News Channel. Up until 2017, that did not seem to have happened. But reporters at the *Wall Street Journal* and press critics have expressed concern that Murdoch has had the paper's editorial page lighten up with its criticism of President Trump.[46]

Box 3.3 What Does 21st Century Fox Own?

Broadcast Television Networks

- Fox Broadcasting
- MyNetworkTV (broadcast network launched in 2006)

Broadcast Television Stations

21st Century Fox owns at least thirty television stations in at least seventeen cities, including New York City; Los Angeles; Minneapolis; Washington, D.C.; and Phoenix.

Cable/Satellite Networks

Numerous cable networks, including

- Fox News Channel
- Fox Sports
- Fox Sports Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America
- Fox Sports 1 (formerly Speed)
- FX

Global Channels

- Fox International Channels (three hundred channels across Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, in forty-four languages)
- Star Group (network of more than thirty channels in seven languages)

Direct-Broadcast Satellite Companies (all or partial ownership)

Multiple DBS services, including

- Sky (formerly British Sky Broadcasting)
- Sky Deutschland
- Sky Italia

Movie Studios

- 20th Century Fox (including at least seven spin-off studios)

Note: Many of these properties may be sold by the time you read this. You can get the latest on the status of 21st Century Fox at www.ralphehanson.com/2018/07/07/mergers_updates/.

Sources: "Who Owns What," *Columbia Journalism Review*, www.cjr.org/resources/index.php; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: News Corporation," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.news_corporation.d1ee25e1070bc1ae.html; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: Twenty-First-Century Fox, Inc.," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.twenty-first_century_fox_inc.0b822046e0ab357c.html.

The Twenty-First Century at News Corporation and 21st Century Fox.

News Corporation split into two separate companies in 2013. Rupert Murdoch's media corporations seem to have figured out the rapidly changing media world of the new century. They have experienced growing revenue throughout the recent recession, rising from annual sales of $16 billion in 2002 to more than $36.6 billion in 2017. How have his corporations managed to be so successful?[47]

Being willing to change to match the new media environment—News Corporation split into two separate companies in 2013 for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the toxic environment surrounding the *News of the World* phone hacking scandal (discussed in Chapter 14). The split also allowed for the more profitable entertainment-oriented 21st Century Fox to follow a separate path from the news and publishing News Corporation.[48] As of this writing, Disney and Comcast were in a bidding war/business fight for many of 21st Century Fox's entertainment properties. You can read more about this in the "Media Transformations" section.

Giving consumers what they want—Although Murdoch is known for his politically conservative newspapers and cable news channel, his companies are generally pragmatic about delivering what audiences want. Fox Broadcasting carries shows such as *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, and *American Dad*, which frequently make the lists of the most objectionable shows on television, and News Corporation's British tabloids can get quite racy—the London *Sun* includes a photo of a topless woman as a daily feature.

▼ Time Warner's pioneering pay-TV network HBO is home to many popular series including *Game of Thrones*, one of its all-time most watched. Here Tyrion Lannister (played by Peter Dinklage, left) and Daenerys Targaryen (Emilia Clarke, right) plot to take over the fictional realm of Westeros near the end of season seven.



HBO/Photofest

Wise use of multiple platforms—21st Century Fox produces a wide range of content that can be distributed through multiple platforms. For example, a movie produced by 20th Century Fox can be shown in theaters, sold on a disc by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, aired on Fox Broadcasting, shown again on the FX cable channel, and finally used as an afternoon or late-night program on a 21st Century Fox–owned television station.[49] This multiplatform approach then leads to global synergy.

Global synergy at News Corporation—News Corporation's direct-broadcast satellite systems currently cover much of the globe. Due to his various studios, Murdoch also owns the means to produce content to flow out over these channels. He has, in the words of media journalist Ken Auletta, both content and the pipeline. Owning every step of the process is important according to Murdoch, who says, "We'd like to be vertically integrated from the moment of creation through to the moment of delivery into the home."[50] Although News Corporation owns media properties around the world, Murdoch does not take a one-size-fits-all approach in providing content to these varied channels. "You would be very wrong to forget that what people want to watch in their own country is basically local programming, local language, local culture," Murdoch says. "I learned that many, many years ago in Australia, when I was loading up [News Corporation's network] with good American programs and we'd get beat with second-rate Australian ones."[51]

Box 3.4 What Does Time Warner Own?

Cable Networks

- HBO (at least twenty-eight channels)
- CNN (at least eight channels)
- TBS
- TNT HD
- truTV
- Turner Classic Movies
- Cartoon Network (at least four channels)

The Turner Broadcasting division of Time Warner operates more than 180 different channels globally.

Broadcast Television Network

- The CW Television Network (co-owned with CBS)

Movie and TV Studios

- Warner Bros.
- DC Entertainment (Home of Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman; Marvel's main rival for comic book–based movies)
- New Line Cinema
- Castle Rock Entertainment
- Hanna-Barbera Cartoons

Note: This table lists only a sample of Time Warner's holdings. The company also owns multiple television and movie production companies.

Sources: "Form 10-K Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2017: Time Warner, Inc.," https://www.last10k.com/sec-filings/twx#fullReport.

Time Warner Becomes Warner Media: Starting the Trend That "Smaller Is Better"

At one point, Time Warner (now transitioning to Warner Media—we'll talk about that in a bit) was the world's largest media conglomerate; with 2008 sales of almost $47 billion, it brought in $9 billion more than Disney did that year. But in 2016, Time Warner was down to annual revenue of $29 billion. Why did the company have such a gigantic drop in revenue over such a short period? Well, hold on just a moment. It's also worth noting that in 2008 Time Warner lost $13.4 billion, but in 2015 it turned a profit of $3.9 billion. What happened? The decline in the company's size and growth of profitability came from its selling off of several assets, including internet provider AOL in 2009 and cable TV provider Time Warner Cable. (That's right. Time Warner Cable is not owned by Time Warner. Just so that's clear. We'll talk about that a little bit further on.) Time Warner is a major player in film, television, cable TV, publishing, and online content, and it is the home to many iconic media characters, such as Scooby-Doo, Harry Potter, and Justice League (see Box 3.4).[52]

Time, Warner Bros, and Turner Broadcasting.

Media giant Time Warner started out as the publisher of *Time* magazine, founded in 1922 by Henry Luce and his prep-school friend Briton Hadden. Time quickly prospered, and by 1930, Luce had started the business magazine *Fortune*, which was followed by the photo magazine *Life* in 1936. By the 1980s, Time Inc. had added multiple magazines, book publishers, local cable companies, and the Home Box Office (HBO) cable movie channel to its holdings. In 1989, Time merged with Warner Communications, which had grown out of the Warner Bros. movie studio. This merger combined a major movie studio with the nation's largest magazine publisher.

Among Time Warner's businesses were a large number of local cable television systems, which delivered programming to individual homes (these have since been spun off as the separate company Time Warner Cable, which has been acquired by Charter Communications), and HBO, one of the first premium cable networks. In 1996, Time Warner vastly expanded its stable by purchasing cable pioneer Ted Turner's group of channels, which included the CNN networks, WTBS, TNT, Turner Classic Movies, and the Cartoon Network. Along with his cable properties, Turner also sold his internet operations and movie studio. When Time Warner took over Turner Broadcasting System (TBS), Turner became a vice president of the new company and its largest stockholder. More significantly, the Turner networks had passed from the control of a single individual to that of a publicly owned company, in much the same way that Robert Johnson's Black Entertainment Television (BET) would later be bought by Viacom.[53]

The Twenty-First Century at Time Warner.

Although Time Warner has been among the biggest of the Big Media, that bigness has been a mixed blessing for the company since 2000.

In 2001, the big news was that AOL, then known as America Online, was merging with (some said buying) Time Warner. At the time of the merger, AOL was valued at $124 billion; when the companies separated in 2009, AOL's value was below $3 billion. The goal of the merger was to have greater synergy between AOL's online offerings and Time Warner's older legacy media. The only problem? The AOL–Time Warner synergy never really worked. The new company soon cut more than four thousand jobs and sold off numerous properties, including its sports teams, its book division, and the Warner Music Group.[54]

In 2014, Time Warner took its magazine publishing arm, Time Inc., and made it into its own, independent company. This means that the part of the media giant that gave Time Warner half of its name is no longer a part of the company. Time Inc. publishes more than ninety magazines and forty-five websites. Magazine publishing has been going through a difficult time since the Great Recession of 2007–2009, and *New York Times* reporters David Carr and Ravi Somaiya say they were not surprised to see Time Warner cutting the magazine division loose in much the same way it previously had with Time Warner Cable and AOL.[55] In November 2017, the Time Inc. family of magazines was purchased by Iowa magazine publisher Meredith Corp. Joe Nocera, a former Time Inc. journalist writing for *Bloomberg*, says that he suspects that Meredith's main interest is in Time's lifestyle titles like *In Style* and *Real Simple* rather than the news-oriented *Time*, *Fortune*, or *Money*.[56]

As of this writing, AT&T was working at purchasing Time Warner and renaming it Warner Media. You can read more about this in the "Media Transformations" section.

Viacom and CBS: A Generational Change

The relationship between media conglomerate Viacom and established broadcast network CBS has been a long-term on-again, off-again one. Although they are currently two separate corporations with separate stocks, the ownership and management of the two companies heavily overlap. The companies had combined revenue for 2016 of almost $25.6 billion. Of that $25.6 billion, $12.5 billion came from Viacom and $13.1 billion from CBS. CBS owns the CBS broadcast network, half of the CW broadcast network, a number of television production companies, approximately thirty broadcast television stations, and the Simon & Schuster publishing group. Viacom owns the movie studio Paramount and numerous cable channels, including Comedy Central, BET, and the various MTV and Nickelodeon channels (see Box 3.5).[57]

▼ Shari Redstone (above) and her father Sumner are engaged in a multifront legal battle over management transitions at Viacom.



Bloomberg/Bloomberg/Getty Images

The Child Buys/Sells the Parent.

CBS became a force in broadcasting when William S. Paley and his father bought United Independent Broadcasters and turned it into the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). In the mid-1980s, when all three of the original broadcast networks changed ownership, CBS was bought by investor Laurence Tisch and his Loews Corporation. Westinghouse bought Tisch's company in 1995, and by 1997, it had sold all its nonmedia businesses and was simply CBS Inc.

Then, in one of the strangest twists in media history, CBS was bought by Viacom in 1999. What made this transaction so unusual was that Viacom had begun as a small film production unit within CBS. Later, in 1971, the federal government became concerned that the broadcast networks were becoming too powerful, so it forced them to sell their content production units. As an independent company, Viacom grew into a major producer of cable television programming; its products included MTV and Nickelodeon.

In 1987, theater owner Sumner Redstone bought Viacom. Under Redstone's leadership, the company became a dominant media corporation in the 1990s. It acquired the Blockbuster video store chain, the Paramount movie studio, and the start-up television network United Paramount Network (UPN). (In 2006, UPN was merged with the WB network to become the CW.) Finally, Viacom bought CBS, the television network that had given birth to it decades before.[58] But then, in 2005, Viacom and CBS split back into two separate corporations with separate stocks being traded. So they are no longer a single Big Media company, right? Well, sort of. In recent years, Sumner Redstone and his daughter Shari have been battling over control of the company. Sumner is now in his 90s and in failing health, so Shari has been more firmly in control. But the story over the possible remerger of the two companies has been as much a family soap opera as a business narrative. You can read more about this battle in the "Media Transformations" section.[59]

The Twenty-First Century at Viacom and CBS.

The split of Viacom and CBS into separately traded companies was the most visible change at Redstone's companies, but other, more significant, changes have happened there as well:

- Indecency—CBS and Viacom were at the center of the debate on broadcast indecency that came out of Janet Jackson's infamous "wardrobe malfunction" during the 2004 Super Bowl broadcast. (For more on the issue of broadcast indecency, see Chapter 13.) Radio stations owned by CBS have also drawn fire from critics and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for sexually explicit broadcasts by shock jocks Howard Stern and Opie and Anthony, all of whom have since left CBS. Viacom has paid more than $3.5 million in fines and promised to suspend and possibly fire anyone who makes an indecent broadcast over the company's properties.[60]
- Music on TV— For many years, Viacom was the dominant force in music videos, owning BET (rap and hip-hop), MTV (music appealing to teens and twentysomethings), VH1 (music appealing to people who were teens a long time ago), and CMT. But more recently they have been featuring live music through a host of live awards shows, such as the MTV Video Music Awards, the BET Awards, and the VH1 Hip-Hop Honors.[61]

SECRET 5 ▸ The split was more than just finance—Common wisdom held that the split of Viacom

and CBS was purely a financial move, but the two companies seem to be reacting very differently to the new media environment. While Viacom, with its cable and movie studio properties, has been vehemently opposed to video-sharing services such as YouTube posting Viacom-owned content to the web without a licensing agreement, CBS was able to reach an agreement with YouTube to share advertising revenue raised from clips posted from CBS-owned programs. Why this different response? Media journalist Ken Auletta has written that the most likely reason is that Viacom has always been in the business of licensing content while CBS was in the business of selling advertising time. YouTube was a good match to the CBS model and a bad match for Viacom. It may also be that Viacom is suffering from not being able to cope with Secret 5—All media are social.[62]

Box 3.5 What Do CBS and Viacom Own?

CBS and Viacom split into separate corporations in 2005, though they are still largely owned and managed by the same people. In general, CBS owns broadcasting and publishing properties while Viacom owns cable and movie properties.

CBS

Broadcast Television Networks

- CBS television network
- The CW television network (co-owned with Time Warner)
- Showtime Networks Inc.

Broadcast Television Stations

CBS owns approximately thirty television stations in at least twenty-seven cities, including New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco.

Radio Properties

- CBS Radio operates numerous radio stations, most of which are in the top fifty U.S. markets.

Book Publishing

- Simon & Schuster

Viacom

Cable Channels

Viacom owns numerous cable channels, including

- Viacom Media Networks (seventeen channels, including MTV, VH1, Nickelodeon, CMT, and four varieties of BET)
- Comedy Central (partial owner)

Movie Studios

- Paramount Pictures
- MTV Films
- Nickelodeon Movies

Source: "Who Owns What," *Columbia Journalism Review*, www.cjr.org/resources/index.php; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: Viacom Inc.," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.viacom_inc.6747d8b05f13db09.html; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: CBS Corporation," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.cbs_corporation.21bc71ea9265b776.html.

Bertelsmann: The World's Largest Publisher

Although the German media corporation Bertelsmann has historically been known for its book and music publishing and management business, it also has a major presence in magazines, newspapers, and internet and broadcast properties (see Box 3.6). Bertelsmann is both the world's largest publisher and the largest publisher of English-language books. In 2015, it had sales of $20.4 billion.[63]

Books Still Matter.

Bertelsmann started out in 1835 as a publisher of Christian music and prayers. It was also the original publisher of the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm in the nineteenth century. After World War II, the company was run by Reinhard Mohn, a former German Luftwaffe officer who learned to speak English while in a prisoner-of-war camp in Kansas.[64]

Unlike most of the other media giants, Bertelsmann is a privately held company—it is owned by a German foundation that mandates that the company not only earn a profit but also operate for the benefit of its employees and various social causes.[65] Bertelsmann sees book publishing as one of the key media of the twenty-first century and, having purchased major American publishers Random House for $1.4 billion in 1998 and Penguin in 2013, has a much stronger presence in this area than the other media giants. It also owns the RTL Group, Europe's largest television broadcaster, and a large number of magazines through its Gruner + Jahr division.[66]

▼ Bertelsmann merged Random House and Penguin into a single company in 2013.



AP/dapd

The Twenty-First Century at Bertelsmann

As a publisher and European broadcaster, Bertelsmann is not in the public eye the way Time Warner, Viacom, and Disney are. It does not have Scooby-Doo, SpongeBob, or

Mickey Mouse as a mascot, but it has quietly made its presence felt by utilizing the following methods[67]:

- Returning to core strengths—Up until 2002, under the leadership of CEO Thomas Middelhoff, Bertelsmann looked like it was preparing to become a generalized media giant on the scale of Time Warner or Disney. But members of the Mohn family forced Middelhoff out and returned the company to its core business of book and magazine publishing. Ever since, the company has been gradually selling off peripheral businesses and buying back its stock. In October 2017, Bertelsmann bought more stock in Penguin Random House, bringing its ownership up to approximately 75 percent. This gives Bertelsmann considerably more control over the publisher and the right to name the chairman of the board in the future.[68]
- Broadcasting in Europe—Bertelsmann is big in European television, owning 90 percent of the RTL Group, Europe's largest broadcaster. In addition to operating more than forty-five television channels in a dozen countries, it also produced the long-running *American Idol* and a wide range of other *Idol* versions around the world.[69]
- Adapting to the changing music business—Bertelsmann has long been in the music business, first with the Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG) and later with its partnership with Sony BMG Music Entertainment.[70] But with the massive changes that file sharing and digital downloads have brought to the music industry, Bertelsmann has taken a new approach. It sold out its interest in Sony BMG to Sony, and it's now involved with pressing CDs for other publishers and managing the song catalogs of more than two hundred artists without being their publisher. So Bertelsmann has gotten out of the business of selling music and is now in the business of assisting companies that do sell it.[71]

Box 3.6 What Does Bertelsmann Own?

Book Publishing

- Penguin Random House (including Bantam, Dell, and Ballantine)
- WaterBrook & Multnomah
- Knopf
- Fodor's Travel

Magazines

- Gruner + Jahr (publisher of numerous trade magazines)
- More than two dozen European magazines, including the German publication *Stern*
- Multiple North American magazines (partially or in full), including *National Geographic*

Broadcasting

- Numerous European television stations (partially or in full), including RTL Group, Europe's largest television company
- Multiple television production companies
- Multiple radio services throughout Europe
- FremantleMedia (multiple international versions; producer of *Idol* singing competition series)

Others

- BMG: The New Music Company
- Arvato (a business strategy group)

Sources: "Who Owns What," *Columbia Journalism Review*, http://www.cjr.org/resources/?c=timewarner; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: Warner Media, LLC," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.time_warner_inc.e82b639239136034.html; Bertelsmann, "Annual Report 2017," https://www.bertelsmann.com/media/investor-relations/annual-reports/annual-report-2017-financial-information-2.pdf.

Big Media: The New Players

SECRET 2 ▸ The conglomerates have long been seen as the unquestioned rulers of the American media. But trying to rank the biggest media companies has gotten to be harder and harder with the rise of new media companies. Look at Disney, generally considered to be the largest of the media conglomerates with annual income of nearly $56 billion. Then compare it to cable giant Comcast, which now owns NBCUniversal. For 2016, Comcast had annual revenue of $80.4 billion, up nearly $12 billion from 2014. Or consider search giant Google and its parent company Alphabet. In 2016, Alphabet had annual sales of $90.3 billion, most of which came from advertising. That makes it even bigger than Comcast.[72] So let us now look at the other contenders in the Big Media business. Remember Secret 2—There are no mainstream media. There is a wide range of media out there, all of which are significant.[73]

Comcast/NBCUniversal: Cable Buys Broadcaster

NBCUniversal (NBCU) is one of the oldest broadcasters in the United States. It was founded in 1926 by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), the original monopoly in the broadcast business. Initially, the federal government established RCA to consolidate all the patents required to start the radio business. RCA formed the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) to provide radio programming across the country. As is described in more detail in Chapter 7, NBC had two networks, the "Red" and the "Blue." In the 1940s, it sold the Blue network, which became ABC, now owned by Disney.[74] In the 1930s, RCA began developing television technology and was the first network with regularly scheduled television broadcasts.

In 1985, General Electric (GE) bought both NBC and RCA. The purchase was controversial from the very beginning because GE's primary business is not media but manufacturing and financial services. GE makes consumer electronics, electric generating plants, and aircraft engines. Critics questioned whether a major defense contractor ought to be allowed to own a broadcast network.[75]

Up until the fall of 2009, cable, internet, and phone service provider Comcast wasn't on anyone's list of American media giants. Sure, it was the largest single supplier of cable television and internet services in the United States, but it wasn't talked about in the same breath as Disney, Viacom, or Fox. But then the news started breaking that the cable giant was in negotiations to purchase 51 percent of NBCU from GE, which would give the Philadelphia-based company controlling ownership of the network/movie studio.[76] In February 2013, Comcast announced it would be completing its purchase of NBCU.[77] Purchasing NBCU made Comcast the nation's most valuable pure-media company. (Apple is often considered the world's most valuable company, depending on its stock price, but it is only partially a media company.)[78] For 2015, Comcast had revenue of $80.4 billion, making it more than a third bigger than Disney.[79]

Comcast makes the majority of its revenue by selling cable television, internet, and phone services to its nearly twenty-eight million subscribers. Along with its media-related properties, Comcast owns an interest in professional sports teams and arenas in Philadelphia. The purchase of NBCU gave it the NBC broadcast network, the number-two Spanish-language broadcast network Telemundo, ten NBC affiliate stations, and more than twenty cable networks. These cable networks include the top-rated USA Network, along with Bravo, Syfy, and the Weather Channel. On the film side, the deal gave Comcast control of the major film studio Universal Studios and small-picture/indie studio Focus Features. And, finally, the deal included the Universal Studios theme parks in Florida and California.[80] In the spring of 2016, NBCU purchased DreamWorks Animation, the home of the *Minions* and *Despicable Me* series, for $3.8 billion. The purchase was seen as doing

more than just strengthening Comcast's animation presence. "DreamWorks will help us grow our film, television, theme parks and consumer products business for years to come," said Steve Burke, CEO of NBCU.[81]

Media Transformations

What Is the Right Size? The Changing Scale of Media Companies

Media critic and Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Ben Bagdikian wrote that in 1983 the media business was dominated by fifty corporations that controlled more than half the newspaper, magazine, television, radio, and music output in the United States. By 1987, this number had shrunk to twenty-nine companies, and as of 2004, only five companies controlled a majority of the media output in the United States: Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, Bertelsmann, and News Corporation. A sixth company could be added to this list: General Electric, which at the time owned NBCUniversal.[83] But that picture of six conglomerates controlling American media does not work anymore.

Search giant Alphabet/Google, which draws 90 percent of its revenue from advertising, makes more money than Disney, the biggest of the old media companies. In addition to being in the search business, Google distributes an almost unimaginable amount of video through YouTube. And how does one even attempt to classify a company like Apple? While it clearly generates most of its income selling hardware, much of that hardware is related to media consumption and production. Apple is also the largest music retailer in the United States, a major video supplier, and a major software vendor through its App Store. It's no accident that Apple dropped *Computer* out of its corporate name back in 2007.[84]

Just figuring out who controls what in our corporate media world can be complicated. Consider the following mergers/acquisitions that were under considerations in the spring/summer of 2018:

- AT&T/Time Warner: Telecommunications giant AT&T, in June 2018, completed its purchase of media giant Time Warner in an $85 million deal. AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson said in a statement, "We're going to bring a fresh approach to how the media and entertainment industry works for consumers, content creators, distributors and advertisers."[85] AT&T is anticipating being able to use its mobile and satellite distribution network to deliver programming ranging from HBO's *Game of Thrones* to basketball on TNT. While the U.S. Justice Department has been relatively friendly to corporate mergers in recent years, there were arguments made that this merger might hurt consumers—primarily because the Turner cable channels such as CNN, TBS, and TNT are "must watch" channels that AT&T's rivals need ready access to.[86] There can be no question that this is a giant merger, but supporters of it argue that the two companies are really in different, noncompeting businesses. This is not Time Warner's first go at the merger merry-go-round. Time Warner was owned by AOL back at the start of the millennium, but since then it has split off into several divisions and is now a much smaller company than it was in 2008. Among those sold-off divisions is the Time Inc. magazine division that gave the company the *Time* part of its name. AT&T intends to call the company Warner Media.[87]
- 21st Century Fox/Disney (or is it Comcast?): As of this writing in June 2018, Disney appeared to be the winner in a bidding war with Comcast to buy much of the entertainment business owned by 21st Century Fox. This would give Disney control of the rest of the Marvel universe by bringing the X-Men into the fold. It would also give Disney notable TV properties including *The Simpsons*, the FX cable channel, and National Geographic. It will also give Disney (known for focusing on blockbuster films) Fox Searchlight, which is known for small-budget, critically acclaimed films. Disney initially had proposed a $52.4 billion deal in cash and stock that would not include Fox broadcast networks, the Fox News properties. Significantly, it would also give Disney the 30 percent of streaming company Hulu that Fox currently owns.[88] Comcast countered that offer with an all-cash offer of $65 billion. Disney followed that with a $71.3 billion offer of stock and cash. The U.S. Justice Department has indicated that it would allow this transaction, assuming Disney sells off Fox's twenty-two regional sports networks, many of which would compete directly with Disney's ESPN. As of this writing, Comcast has not yet thrown in the towel, but *Washington Post*

sources suggested that Disney was likely to prevail. (The Post also notes that the stock/cash offer from Disney offered substantial tax advantages to the Murdoch family.)[89]

- CBS/Viacom: CBS was purchased by Viacom back in 1999, but they split back into two corporations in 2005, with CBS handling broadcasting and Viacom handling movies and cable. Management of the two companies had substantial overlap, but they were still clearly separate corporations. In 2018, however, the companies have been dancing back and forth, considering becoming one company once again. The issues surrounding this deal seem to be largely one of how much one company would be willing to pay for the other, and who would be the management after the merger.[90]

As you think about the companies that own our media, remember that they are not static units. They are ever-changing organizations that will work to maximize the current media environment.

WHO should we think of as our major media companies these days? Are they the legacy media or the new tech companies?

SHOULD we be concerned about how many properties and distribution channels one company owns?

DO you worry about who controls the media you consume?

SHOULD the government prevent or encourage these corporate mergers? Why or why not?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

Note: You can get the latest updates on these deals here: www.ralphehanson.com/2018/07/07/mergers_updates/.

Although Comcast is a publicly owned corporation, one-third of the company's voting stock is controlled by CEO Brian Roberts, son of the company's founder. Comcast got its start in the cable business in Mississippi in 1963 and got its name in 1969. After acquiring cable systems in Pennsylvania, it moved to Philadelphia. Throughout the 1980s, Comcast grew by buying up local cable service throughout the United States. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Comcast started buying up mobile phone companies as well. In 2004, Comcast made its first bid at buying a Big Media company with an offer for Disney. While that deal was not successful, it did set the stage for the cable giant making the play for NBCU (see Box 3.7).

Critics of the merger were concerned that giving control of the NBCU twenty-plus major cable networks to one of the nation's leading internet and cable providers could lead to a "walled garden" internet, where only Comcast subscribers would have access to NBCU programing. The agreement Comcast made with the FCC on the merger requires Comcast to give up management control of the Hulu streaming video service (though it can still be an investor). Also, the FCC can require Comcast to make its shows widely available on the internet if its competitors start doing so first.[82]

As you can read about in the "Media Transformations" section, Comcast has also been involved with the struggle to be bigger and to control 21st Century Fox's entertainment

properties.

Alphabet: Google and Company

In previous editions of this book, I raised the question "Are search engines a new part of mass communication?" Certainly the internet and the World Wide Web are a part of our mass media, and search engines, such as Google and Bing, are the tools we use to find information on the web. They might even be considered news media. Think about Google News. It's in essence a search tool that decides what the major news stories of the day are, collects links to them on a single page, and presents them to the reader. According to Google, Google News draws stories from more than 4,500 English-language news sources from around the world. The articles are evaluated by Google's computers as to how often and on what sites the stories appear. Google claims this leads to an unbiased presentation of the news.[91]

Box 3.7 What Does Comcast/NBCUniversal Own?

Broadcast Television Networks

- NBC broadcast network
- Telemundo Spanish-language broadcast network

Broadcast Television Stations

NBCU owns twenty-eight television stations, some of which are NBC affiliates and some of which broadcast the Spanish-language Telemundo network.

Cable Networks

Numerous cable networks (partially or in full), including

- CNBC (financial news)
- MSNBC (news)
- Bravo
- Syfy
- USA Network
- NBC Sports Network

Movie Studios

- Universal Pictures
- Focus Features
- Universal Pictures Home Entertainment

Online Properties

- Fandango movie ticketing company
- Hulu (streaming video, 32 percent)

Cable/Internet/Phone Services

Comcast is a major cable/internet/phone services provider with more than twenty-eight million subscribers.

Sports Teams and Facilities

Comcast owns partial interest in Philadelphia-area professional sports teams and arenas.

Sources: "Who Owns What," *Columbia Journalism Review*, www.cjr.org/resources/index.php; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: Comcast Corporation," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.comcast_corporation.42bb142511eab416.html; D&B Hoovers, "Company Profile: NBCUniversal Media, LLC," http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.nbcuniversal_media_llc.109556adb7a28138.html.

Google has become so much a part of our lives that the search engine's name has become a synonym for searching on the internet—I'll just go Google the answer. But Google is more than just a search engine. This is why in the summer of 2015 cofounder Larry Page announced on his blog that the company would restructure into a new parent company called Alphabet. Alphabet is the home for

- Google—advertising, search engine, email, YouTube, Android mobile operating system, maps, and apps
- Calico—antiaging research
- Nest—connected Internet of Things devices
- Project Wing—delivery drones
- Fiber—ultra-high-speed internet
- Verily—health care and disease prevention research
- YouTube—video-sharing service
- Driverless cars[92]

In 2016, Alphabet/Google had worldwide sales of $90.3 billion, with 47 percent of its income coming from the United States, 7.8 percent from the United Kingdom, and 40 percent from the rest of the world. This places Google, like Comcast, ahead of all of the legacy media conglomerates in terms of revenue. Of this income, the vast majority came from advertising sales. Not only is Google bringing in a lot of income; it is among the most profitable of the media companies as well. Given all this, Google has to be considered one of the major new players in the media business.[93]

Google was founded in 1998 by two engineers who didn't even suspect they were going into the advertising business. Sergey Brin, the child of Jewish Russian immigrants, learned to program at age nine when his parents gave him a Commodore 64 computer. He partnered with Larry Page, whose father was a professor of computer science at Michigan State and whose mother was a database consultant. Brin and Page met each other while in graduate school at Stanford. One night, Page explains, he had a dream: "I was thinking: What if we could download the whole Web, and just keep the links?"[100]

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Google Doodles

Back in 1999, before Google was even incorporated as a company, back before its name was a verb meaning "to search online," Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin wanted to use their search engine's home page to advertise that they were "out of the office" to attend the Burning Man celebration of technology and counterculture in the Nevada desert. A couple of years later, the second doodle was created in honor of Bastille Day by webmaster and intern Dennis Hwang; and with the doodle's success, Hwang was in charge of producing the playful illustrations, animations, and interactions honoring events or anniversaries.[94]



Google Doodles Archive

The Google doodles have come a long way from those early static illustrations. Some of these doodles are essentially short films in tribute to their subject, oftentimes honoring an underappreciated individual in an area's history. For example, in June 2016, there was a doodle honoring animated film pioneer Lotte Reiniger, who did creative films featuring paper cuts and shadow puppets. She was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1899 and was known best for her fairy tale films.[95]

Others, in addition to having cool animation and music, have a big interactive component. The one from August 11, 2017, honored the forty-fourth anniversary of the birth of hip-hop at a back-to-school party in the Bronx, New York. The doodle gives you a history lesson followed by a chance to practice your DJing skills by picking records, scratching, and matching beats. (You can read more about this in Chapter 7.)[96]

A significant amount of work goes into each of these doodles. For the hip-hop project, there is a front logo created by graffiti artist Cey Adams; the history part is narrated and hosted by an animated Fab 5 Freddy, former host of *Yo! MTV Raps*. The final project includes credits for the more than forty people who worked on it.

SECRET 5 ▸ Because the Google doodles are free on the internet, there are, of course, people who inevitably find them offensive. The controversies over the doodles seem to be as much over what they are not about as what they are. Conservative news and conspiracy website *WorldNetDaily* complained in 2006 that Google was not honoring U.S. veterans or war dead. Then, in 2007, Google took heat for honoring the fiftieth anniversary of human spaceflight—something that was accomplished first by the communist Soviet Union.[97] Additional criticism of Google's choices of topics have come from Fox News and the website *Infowars*. What sometimes gets missed amidst the criticism is that Google is a global company that brings in more than 50 percent of its income from outside the United States.[98] (This is also a long-running example of Secret 5—All media are social; even cartoon illustrations on a search engine page.)

The ideas for the doodles that do get created come from a range of sources, including the staff at Google, who look for "interesting events and anniversaries that reflect Google's personality and love for innovation."[99] Ideas also come from Google users. Following criticism for not honoring Christmas and Easter with doodles, Google has adopted a formal policy of not recognizing any religious holidays.

You can see the doodles discussed here:

www.ralphehanson.com/2018/05/11/ch-3-visual-media-literacy-google-doodles/

WHO is the source?

Who is creating the Google doodles? Who comes up with the ideas for the doodles? Who is being critical of the doodles?

WHAT are they saying?

What kinds of doodles get made? What kind of messages do they have? What kinds of messages are not getting made?

WHAT is the lasting impact?

What does it mean for a website with millions of visitors daily to offer short films and interactions to its users? Do the doodles bring in more traffic?

HOW do you and your classmates react to the Google doodles?

Do you or your friends enjoy the Google doodles? Do you ever deliberately go to see them? Have you ever been upset or offended by one of them?

▼ In 2016, Google announced its reconfiguration into a conglomerate called Alphabet. Eric Schmidt (above), the executive chairman of Alphabet, has traveled the world to speak about how technology will revolutionize our day-to-day lives.



Bloomberg/Getty Images

The two classmates created a search system based on that idea that worked by analyzing the quality of links to a topic and then scored them according to a system known as PageRank, which stood for both Page's name and the rank of the web page itself. Google was initially launched not in a garage (though it would later move into a garage) but in graduate

housing at Stanford. Google was founded without a business plan or a strategy for making money. But what the founders did have was a strategy for creating the most simple, clean search system.

While Brin and Page were quite happy to burn through investors' money without worrying about generating any, the venture capitalists who were bankrolling the company did want a return on their investments. It was in 2002 that Google finally figured out that to make money for its investors, it had to be in the advertising business. What Google's engineers came up with was the AdWords system, where advertisers bid on the rights to advertise next to search results. The advertisers buy certain keywords that they want their ads to appear next to. But Google requires that the ads that appear be relevant to the people doing the search. So, for example, advertisers can't buy the word *chocolate* and use it to put up links selling cars. But the words *helicopter parts* would be perfect for someone wanting to sell tools for repairing helicopters. Advertisers are only charged when audience members click on their ads.

Google's second big advertising product was AdSense, which places ads on blogs and websites that match the ads with the content of the site. Then Google splits the revenue, with about two-thirds of the money going to the owner of the website. This put Google in the position of collaborating with a lot of smaller, independent sites and being seen as a benefactor. This not only made Google quite profitable; it allowed lots of small sites to make money as well.

SECRETS 2 AND 6 ▸ All this brings us back to Secret 2—There are no mainstream media. We have lots of different media out there, ranging from the legacy corporations, to new media giants, to individuals sharing their work through services like YouTube. And they are all our media. It also reminds us of Secret 6—Online media are mobile media—given that Google makes the mobile operating system Android that powers huge numbers of phones, and that Apple has defined the mobile market with its iPhones and iPads.

While in retrospect using search as an advertising medium seems really obvious, Google was founded on the idea of making the best possible search engine, not making money. The founders figured that if they built a great product, they would eventually come up with a good source of revenue.

Unlike so many of our legacy media, Google has been unafraid of the massive changes taking place in the media business. At a time when the music and movie industries are terrified of their fans/users/customers and are taking them to court for being "pirates," Google is trying to figure out how to better serve them. Google cofounder Larry Page told media journalist Ken Auletta, "[Thinking that] your customer or users are always right, and your goal is to build systems that work for them in a natural way is a good attitude to have. You can replace the system. You can't replace the user."[101]

▼ Apple CEO Tim Cook introduces the Apple Watch at one of the company's highly

anticipated media events. While Apple is primarily in the hardware business, it's transformed how people consume media in the twenty-first century.



Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Apple: Reinventing the Media

Although Apple is best known as a technology company, it has done as much as any corporation to change the media business in the twenty-first century. A quick check of Apple's balance sheet shows that in 2016 the California company sold $137 billion worth of iPhone products; $21 billion worth of iPads; $25 billion worth of more conventional computer equipment; and $30 billion worth of iTunes, apps through the App Store, iPods, Apple TV, software, and other services. Apple also has gone through incredible levels of growth. Apple had $66 billion in revenue for 2010, which grew to $216 billion in 2016. That's close to quadrupling its income over five years.[102] And if you look carefully at the numbers, computers are only a small part of the company's business. That's why these days the company's name is Apple, not Apple Computer.

Steve Jobs cofounded Apple back in 1976 with his friend Steve Wozniak. "Woz" was the inventor, and Jobs was the businessman and visionary. Wozniak left the company in 1983, and Jobs was forced out by Apple's board of directors in 1985.[103] After leaving Apple, Jobs founded NeXT Inc., which built an innovative UNIX-based computer that was used by Tim Berners-Lee to create the World Wide Web.[104] (You can read more about Berners-Lee in Chapter 10.)

Then, in 1997, Apple had a change of heart, bought out NeXT Inc., and brought Jobs back as its interim CEO. The NeXTSTEP software morphed into OS X, Apple's radical and successful remake of its computer operating system. By 2001, Jobs had dropped *interim* from his title and started Apple on the path to its current success, in which the Mac is not just a computer, but rather a "digital hub" for all types of media and entertainment content. It was also in 2001 that Apple introduced its iconic media player, the iPod.[105]

With the iPod, and its accompanying iTunes software, Jobs solidified his company as a player in the new media business. Jobs did numerous things people told him he couldn't do. He persuaded the major recording labels to offer their music through Apple's iTunes Store. He persuaded the major broadcast and cable networks to sell their television shows through the iTunes Store. He persuaded major movie studios to sell and rent their movies through . . . oh, you get the picture.[106]

In addition to running Apple, Jobs took Pixar, a computer graphics company he bought for $10 million from *Star Wars* director George Lucas, and turned it into America's leading animation studio, valued in excess of $7 billion when he sold it to Disney in 2006.[107] Upon the sale of Pixar, Jobs became Disney's biggest stockholder and a member of the company's board of directors, thus cementing an already strong relationship between Apple and Disney.[108] Disney CEO Robert Iger depended on Jobs for guidance on how his company could avoid the problems the music industry faced in dealing with the internet.

Iger's response was to license his studio's content to Apple's iTunes Store so that customers could legally buy and watch Disney entertainment on their computers and mobile devices.[109]

When Jobs lost his long battle with pancreatic cancer in 2011, the response from fans and the news media—from Facebook to cable news—was at a level you might have expected from the death of Prince or David Bowie, not from the head of one of the world's most valuable corporations. But then few companies inspire the level of intense loyalty that Apple does, and few companies have been more associated with the personality and identity of its founder.[110] Tim Cook took over as Apple's CEO in 2011 after Jobs stepped down due to his illness, and Apple initially continued its rapid growth under Cook's leadership.[111] By the spring of 2018, thanks to a booming stock market, Apple reached a market value of $940 billion, nearly $1 trillion![112]

Media Economics and the Long Tail

Lists of major media companies generally include those such as cable television company Comcast, magazine publisher Meredith, or the movie and music divisions of Sony. What don't show up as often are the independent artists, writers, and videographers whose works appeal to a relatively small group of consumers. But when those many small groups are added together, they become an audience big enough to rival those being attracted by Big Media.

The world of Big Media is the world of blockbusters—selling a lot of copies of a limited number of products. Blockbusters include the big summer movies that cost more than $100 million to produce and require the sale of millions of tickets to be a financial success. They are novels by Nicholas Sparks and Liane Moriarty. They are albums by Beyoncé, Chris Stapleton, and Drake. They are the common media products, the common culture we all share.

Despite the consolidation of the media business and the ever-growing emphasis on the importance of blockbusters to Big Media, a strange phenomenon has been taking place. The annual box office has been falling for movies, broadcast television has lost one-third of its audience, and sales of CDs are plummeting, yet people seem to be consuming more media content than ever.

Questioning the Media

Do you think that these new players in the media world have more or less influence on us than the traditional media companies we previously discussed? Why? Before reading this chapter, did you view Google or Apple as media companies? Why or why not?

The Short Head Versus the Long Tail

Chris Anderson, in his book *The Long Tail*, argues that we are leaving the era of mass culture and entering one that is vastly more individualistic and much less mass oriented. He writes that, when he was growing up, the only alternatives to Big Media were the library and the comic book store. But today there are vastly more choices at both the commercial and noncommercial levels. Take Apple's iTunes music and video store. Through it, you can buy current blockbuster songs, movies, and television shows, but you can also find rather obscure materials, such as the songs of indie music duo Pomplamoose (*pamplemousse* means "grapefruit" in French), who have built a following through videos on YouTube. Or an EP by the Arizona-based band Calexico. Or the crowdsourced dance film *Girl Walk // All Day* that was posted serially online over a month and a half. Or you could take a look at the gross-out horror film *The Human Centipede* from mail-order DVD rental/streaming video company Netflix.

This is how Anderson describes the shift that has taken place as consumers turn from the mass content produced by broadcasters and publishers to the more focused content provided by broadband connections to the internet:

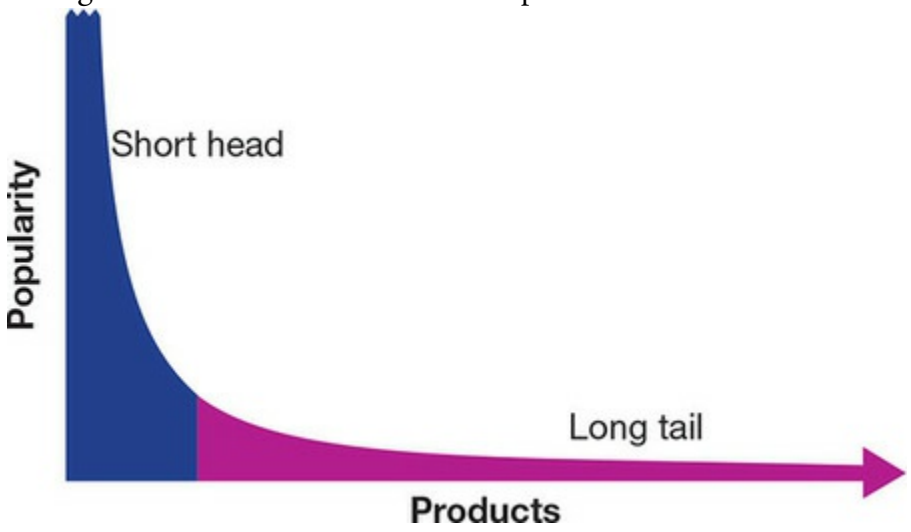
> The great thing about broadcast is that it can bring one show to millions of people with unmatchable efficiency. But it can't do the opposite—bring a million shows to one person each. Yet that is exactly what the Internet does so well. The economics of the broadcast era required hit shows—big buckets—to catch huge audiences. The economics of the broadband era are reversed. Serving the same stream to millions of people at the same time is hugely expensive and wasteful for a distribution network optimized for point-to-point communication.[113]

In short, our mass communication is becoming less mass, and we have new media companies that specialize in providing narrowly focused content. Anderson uses the statistical term the long tail to refer to this phenomenon.

Figure 3.1 depicts this phenomenon as a distribution curve showing that a relatively limited number of media products—books, songs, DVDs—sell the most copies. This area of a limited number of products and high sales on the left—the short head—is where Big Media companies like to live. When a movie comes to a local theater, it needs to attract about 1,500 people over a two-week period for the run to be a success. That means that you won't see a lot of the more obscure movies in your local theater. A CD has to sell at least four copies a year to justify the shelf space it takes up—that is, to pay the rent on its shelf space. Even if it sells five thousand copies nationwide, if it can't sell four copies in your local store, your local store can't pay the rent on the half-inch of shelf space the CD

takes up. So Big Media are all about finding the limited number of hits that will appeal to the most people. As Anderson observes, that's what they have to do to survive.[114]

▲ Figure 3.1 The New Media Marketplace

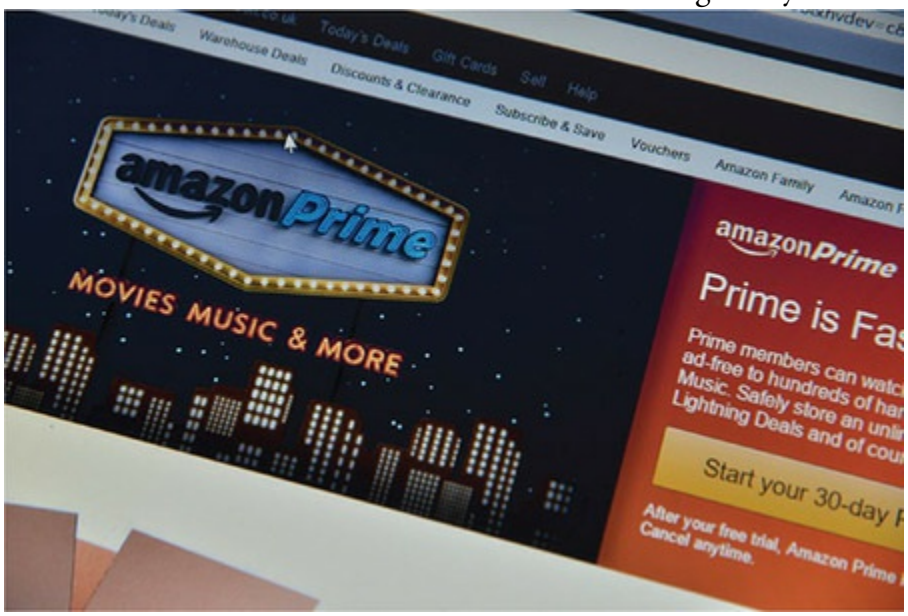


To see the short-head portion of the demand curve, look at Walmart, the United States' biggest music retailer. As recently as 2013, the discount giant carried about 3,500 different CDs in its stores. Of those, 200 CDs accounted for more than 90 percent of its sales. But in 2014, Walmart cut its selection of discs by 40 percent, offering only about 2,100 titles.[115] And now big-box retailers like Target and Best Buy are looking to largely eliminate their CD offerings. Target is moving to not paying CD vendors for the discs until they actually sell, and Best Buy is looking to discontinue carrying CDs, though the retailer is committed to stocking vinyl records for at least two years more.[116] But what about the remaining thousands and thousands of songs that a limited number of people are interested in buying? They constitute the long-tail portion of the graph that extends off to the right. This is where a limited number of people are interested in buying a lot of different products (as opposed to the short head, where a lot of people are interested in buying a limited number of products).

In contrast to Walmart, Anderson used online music seller Rhapsody (which is now operating as Napster[117]) as an illustration of the long-tail portion of the demand curve. But now much of the download market has been replaced by streaming services. Streaming is a great place to explore the long tail of music because you have no marginal cost of trying out new music other than the time it takes you to listen. One of the biggest challenges for streaming services like Spotify, Pandora, or Apple Music is to keep you as a paying customer. Supplying new music that you might not have known about but still like is a great way to keep you on the hook. Stefan Blom, then Spotify's chief content and strategy officer, told *Billboard* magazine in 2016, "I think we are really onto something in terms of democratizing the overall discovery process."[118] Spotify uses its Discover Weekly tool to connect millions of listeners with literally billions of new songs.

How can Spotify do this? Two factors come into play: (1) Its cost of inventory is minimal—it just has to store the songs on a big array of hard drives; it doesn't have to physically stock the music, and (2) it does business over the entire country with a single store, so it doesn't need a lot of consumers in a single location who want to listen to something. If they live anywhere in the United States, that's good enough.[119]

▼ In April 2018, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos revealed for the first time that Amazon Prime has more than one hundred million members globally.



NurPhoto/Getty Images

Characteristics of the Long Tail

Anderson writes that the biggest players in the long tail include Apple, the largest seller of legal music downloads; Netflix, which offers hundreds of thousands of different movies through online streaming and by DVDs sent through the mail; and Amazon, with its Amazon Prime[120] streaming service and sales of books, movies, and CDs. These companies can offer selection far beyond the current hits. Anderson argues that there are six principles that drive the success of the long-tail portion of the media marketplace:

- High number of goods—There are far more niche goods than hits. This means that if you can sell enough different niche goods, you can get as many sales as if you were selling a limited number of hits.
- Low cost of reaching markets—The cost of reaching niche markets is falling dramatically, thanks to the ease of access provided by the internet and the ability to—in many cases—sell a digital download rather than a physical product.
- Ease of finding niche products—Consumers need to be able to find these niche products. This means there need to be tools—Anderson calls them filters—that allow consumers to search through a huge selection of media content to find the particular material they are looking for. This is something internet movie rental store Netflix excels at. Netflix has consumers rate a series of movies and then provides recommendations based on those ratings.
- Flattening of the demand curve for mainstream hits—Once consumers can find their niche products, the demand curve tends to flatten. Now that consumers can find the full range of products available, there will be relatively less demand for the hits and more demand for the niche products. This will make the long tail longer and lower the demand for the hits.
- Size of collective market—There are so many niche products that they collectively can have as big a market as the hits do. In other words, you can sell as much focusing on the long tail as on the short head if you can offer enough choices.
- Tailoring to personal tastes—Once niche products become available, findable, and affordable, consumers will choose to go with media content that fits their personal wants and needs rather than consuming the hits that hold a mild appeal to so many. Media hits will become less important because consumers can get what they want rather than what happens to be available locally.[121]

Consequences of the Long Tail

Anderson says that a number of consequences arise out of a shift to the long tail from traditional mass media:

- Democratization of the means of production—It used to be that to record a CD you needed a big, expensive recording studio. Now anyone with a laptop computer and some inexpensive software can put together a multitrack recording or edit a short video. You can publish a professional-looking book without the benefit of a major publisher using a laser printer and a local copy shop. The development of the powerful home computer has made it possible for anyone to be a media producer.
- Democratization of the means of distribution—Through the internet and sites such as eBay and Amazon, anyone can open a national, or even international, sales channel. YouTube gives ordinary people a place to distribute their home-produced videos. I even run a tiny media-oriented bookstore using an Amazon partnership. As Anderson puts it, "The PC made everyone a producer or publisher, but it was the Internet that made everyone a distributor."[122]
- Greatly reduced cost of connecting suppliers and consumers—Sellers and consumers can now find each other through tools such as Google Search, iTunes, YouTube, and blogs.

Big Players in the Long Tail

Our twenty-first-century media world has room for a wide range of distribution channels. For the hits, there is nothing like Big Media for distribution. Movie theaters, bookstores, big-box retailers (such as Walmart), broadcast network television, and magazines do a great job of selling or distributing media content that appeals to a large group of people. Second are the hybrid retailers—companies such as Amazon and Netflix that have no brick-and-mortar retail stores but have to send out a physical product, such as books, CDs, or DVDs. The hybrid retailers can have national distribution and serve niches, but they still deliver a physical product. Finally, the digital retailers, such as Apple iTunes and Napster (formerly Rhapsody), sell downloads with no physical product. Any store that sells a virtual rather than a physical product handles the farthest end of the long tail.[123]

▼ Steven Chen (left) and Chad Hurley launched the video-sharing website YouTube in 2004. It has since become one of the top locations on the internet for user-generated video.



AP Photo/Noah Berger

One of the most successful providers of long-tail content has been Google's video service YouTube. While YouTube started as a way to make video easy to share, it quickly grew into a major alternative source of video entertainment. "We are providing a stage where everyone can be seen. We see ourselves as a combination of America's Funniest Home Videos and Entertainment Tonight," cofounder Chad Hurley told Associated Press reporter Michael Liedtke.[124]

Unlike the infamous site Napster, which used to share music files, YouTube has not been confrontational with Big Media. It has always promptly removed any content at the request of corporate copyright owners, but it has also pursued extensive revenue-sharing projects with those same companies. It also limits clips by users to ten minutes, which helps prevent large-scale copyright infringement from users posting entire movies or television shows.[125] (YouTube has entered into contracts with Big Media companies to stream longer videos of professionally produced content.)[126]

As of the spring of 2018, YouTube reported having 1.8 billion monthly visitors and $4 billion in annual revenue. In addition to its longtime offerings of home-brew video, it now offers the YouTube Premium[127] subscription service for $11.99 per month featuring content from social media stars like PewDiePie (who has been under fire for anti-Semitic comments in his videos) with sixty million subscribers, Chilean comedian and musician German Garmendia with thirty-three million subscribers, and Mexican beauty vlogger Yuya with nearly twenty-one million subscribers.[128]

Questioning the Media

What kinds of long-tail media content do you consume on a regular basis? Are there any long-tail artists/authors you like better than short-head/mainstream media? How did you discover them?

SECRETS 1 AND 6 ▸ With approximately two hundred million viewers in the United States per month, YouTube has a bigger audience than most cable channels.[129] But YouTube differs significantly from cable television. A television channel decides to put up a limited amount of programming each day and hopes that an audience will look at it, whereas YouTube puts up lots of content produced by both professionals and amateurs and then sees what the audience decides to look at. Unlike traditional television, YouTube is capable of delivering programming that reaches audiences that range in size from dozens to millions. "We accept everyone that uploads video to our site, and it's the community that decides what's entertaining," Hurley says.[130] YouTube's expansive approach is a prime example of Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives. YouTube combines the roles of creator, program manager, and viewer into a single person. YouTube is an expression of the audience's interests with almost unlimited levels of choice. Given that half of all YouTube views are done on mobile devices, this is also a prime example of Secret 6—Online media are mobile media.

Diane Mermigas of the *Hollywood Reporter* sees the merger of Google and YouTube as "the first viable new-media successor to broadcast and cable television."[131] She says the combination provides the tools needed to post, view, find, and place advertising on both amateur and professional video programming over broadband channels. She sees the pair leading the charge to have the "eyeballs, ad dollars and creative content that have sustained traditional television" move over to online video.[132] This is also why the late Steve Jobs succeeded in making Apple a success in the online media world. Apple understood that consumers needed an easy way to find and then use digital content, providing both the online iTunes Store and the various iPads and iPhones to play back the downloads. Using Apple's products, a consumer can download, transport, and access content anywhere and at any time.[133] The new media companies that are becoming significant and growing players understand the nature of the long tail and will deliver what consumers want.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

The American media industry, the largest in the world, is run by private business with only minor government control. Having gotten its start in the 1640s, it was among the first industries in the American colonies. However, media business did not become big until the 1830s, when high levels of literacy and the development of the steam-powered printing press allowed for the mass production of newspapers, books, and magazines. The growth of the electronic media in the second half of the twentieth century helped create a national media culture, as the same content became available simultaneously throughout the country.

For many years, six large media conglomerates dominated the American and much of the global media. They own the major television networks, broadcast stations, cable channels and providers, newspapers, magazines, record labels, movie studios, and internet services. These companies tend to be vertically integrated—producing, promoting, and delivering content to the consuming audience. But there are a number of new players in the media business who are also significant. They provide cable television and internet services, online search and content, and integrated media content and hardware. Among the biggest media companies operating in the United States are Time Warner, Disney, News Corporation, 21st Century Fox, Viacom/CBS, Bertelsmann, Comcast/NBCUniversal, Google, and Apple.

Recent years have seen both legacy and newer media companies struggle over what is the right size to be in order to be the most competitive they can be in the marketplace. This has resulted in a rapid series of sales, mergers, and transformations of these companies.

Widespread access to the internet has brought about the rise of smaller-scale new-media companies that specialize in providing a wide range of media content that appeals to relatively small numbers of consumers. When combined, these niche markets, known as the long tail of media, can rival the size of the markets for blockbuster media content.

Key Terms ▶▶

penny press 55
synergy 56
vertical integration 62
local cable television systems 63
long tail 74
short head 74

Review Questions ▸▸

1. How does Facebook make use and profit from user data? How has this created problems for the company?
2. How is media ownership different in the United States than in much of the rest of the world?
3. What do the "legacy conglomerates" have in common as media companies?
4. How do the new Big Media companies differ from the older legacy companies?
5. Why are large media companies constantly merging and breaking up with each other?
6. How do long-tail media differ from short-head media?

Student Study Site ▸▸

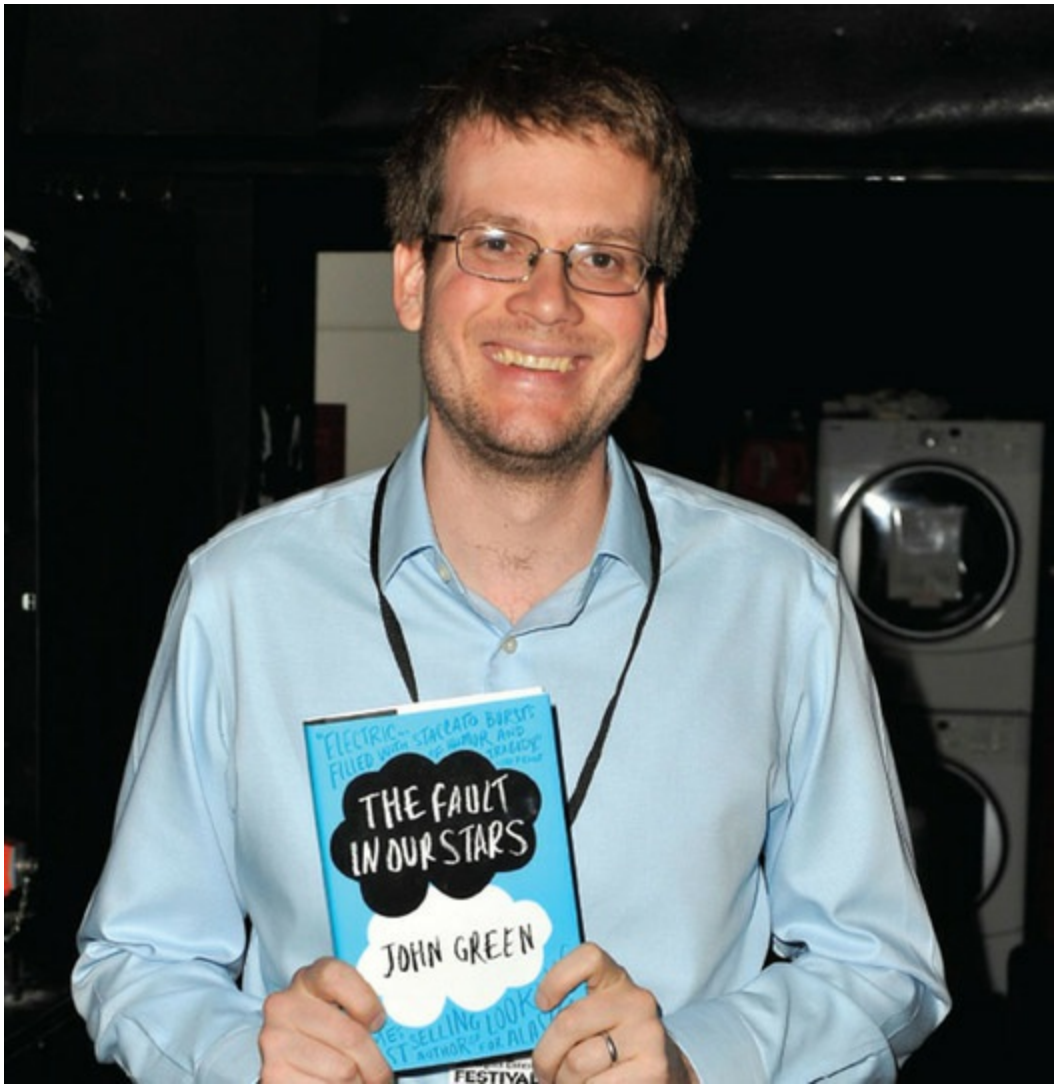
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PART II Written Media

Chapter 4 Books
The Birth of the Mass Media
Chapter 5 Magazines
The Power of Words and Images
Chapter 6 Newspapers and the News
Reflection of a Democratic Society



Jerod Harris/Stringer/Getty Images

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Discuss the development of the book from earliest pictograph to mass-produced publication
2. Describe two major cultural changes that took place with the development of the typemold and printing press
3. Explain the functions of each of the three major players in the book publishing and distribution business
4. Discuss the tension between "popular" books and "great" books
5. Describe three ways in which the long tail is transforming the book business

John Green does not write the stereotypical best-selling young adult novel. These days it seems like most of these books have a fantasy or dystopian science fiction plotline where the fate of the world hangs in the balance. Green's novels are different. They are more personal; typically involve a "bright, troubled teenager"; and feature a lead female character who could be described as a "manic pixie dream girl."[1]

The author was not an immediate success. Green's first book, 2005's *Looking for Alaska*, was a somewhat autobiographical novel that was not a best seller, but it did win the Printz Award, a major prize for young adult fiction. This was followed by several more titles that helped grow a group of committed fans.

But in January 2012, Green became a literary star, with the publication of his story of a romance between two teen cancer patients called *The Fault in Our Stars.* The book was a huge success, spending 124 weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list and 43 weeks as the number-one young adult book. (To be fair, children's and young adult best-seller lists tend to be more stable than those featuring books for adults.) The book was also at the top of the Amazon best-seller list, based on preorders, six months before it was released, though Green helped make that happen by promising in advance to personally autograph all 150,000 copies of the title's first printing.[2] The book ultimately sold more than 23 million copies and was the basis for a hit movie that made more than $307 million on a production budget of only $12 million.[3]

In addition to having best-selling novels and hit movies, Green is well known for the YouTube videos he makes with his brother Hank. Starting in 2006, he and his brother decided to spend a year communicating with each other exclusively through public videos on YouTube at a point where the video-sharing service was only entering its second year. Their videos posted as Vblogbrothers have been tremendously popular, and since they started them, they have created more than one thousand posts.[4]

Despite all of his success, Green says he still gets nervous working on each new book. "I remember thinking when I was writing my first book, 'The great thing if I get the

opportunity to do this again will be that I will then know how to write a book.' Then when it came time to write my second book, I was like, 'I have no idea how to write a book,' and each time that was the case."[5]

While he had previously turned out books on a roughly annual schedule, it took nearly six years for him to complete *Turtles All the Way Down*, his follow-up to *Fault.* Aza Holmes, the heroine of *Turtles*, is a typical Green heroine, the "bright, troubled" teen, who also suffers from obsessive compulsive disorder, a characteristic she shares with her creator. "Having OCD is something that is an ongoing part of my life and I assume will probably be part of my life for the rest of it."[6]

Green has suffered from anxiety disorder and OCD for as long as he can remember. Following the success of *The Fault in Our Stars*, he had a particularly tough time with his illness. "I couldn't escape the spiral of my thoughts, and I felt like they were coming from the outside," Green told the *New York Times*.[7] During his bout of serious mental illness, Green started and abandoned several writing projects, but following his recovery in 2015, he dug into writing and revising *Turtles* as a way of dealing with what he had experienced. "Coming out of that, it was difficult to write about anything else. The topic demanded itself."[8]

"I want to talk about it, and not feel any embarrassment or shame because I think it's important for people to hear from adults who have good fulfilling lives and manage chronic mental illness as part of those good fulfilling lives." But Green also wants to make sure he doesn't romanticize his illness or claim it as a source of his creativity. "For me, it's a way out of myself, to not feel stuck inside myself. I want to be super careful not to claim there's some huge benefit to this brain problem that I have."[9]

Green is best known for the insight that he brings of the teenage mind. He told *New Yorker* writer Margaret Talbot, "I love the intensity teen-agers bring not just to first love but also to the first time you're grappling with grief . . . , the first time you're taking on why people suffer and whether there's meaning in life. . . . Teen-agers feel that what you conclude about those questions is going to *matter.* And they're dead right."[10]

Green is not without criticism for how he relates to teens and for relying too heavily on his well-known catchphrases such as "Don't forget to be awesome," frequently abbreviated to "DFTBA." In 2015, a teenage girl accused him online of being a "creep who panders to teenage girls so he can amass some weird cult-like following."[11]

Despite Green's occasional setbacks from criticism and his mental illness, Green has managed to create a wildly successful career in publishing (and on social media, which we will talk about later on). "[OCD] is not a mountain that you climb or a hurdle that you jump, it's something that you live with in an ongoing way," Green said. "People want that

narrative of illness being in the past tense. But a lot of the time it isn't."[12]

Books are a source of entertainment, culture, and ideas for society and have given rise to more lasting controversies than almost any other medium. Book publishing is also a major business that is supported by the people who buy books. In this chapter, we look at how books developed from a hand-copied medium for elites into a popular medium consumed by millions, how society was revolutionized by the development of printing, how the publishing business operates, the conflict between literary and popular writing, and efforts to censor writers.

The Development of the Book and Mass Communication

Books, consisting of words printed on paper, were the original medium of mass communication (although the Roman Catholic Church had previously achieved a degree of mass communication through sermons, as discussed in Chapter 1). Books allowed ideas to spread, encouraged the standardization of language and spelling, and created mass culture. Books and other printed materials also helped bring about such major social changes as the Protestant Reformation.

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

Early Books and Writing

Before there could be books, there had to be writing. Writing is thought to have originated around 3500 BC in the Middle East, in either Egypt or Mesopotamia. This means that written language is around 5,500 years old; spoken language, in comparison, is thought to be at least 40,000 years old. The great advantage offered by writing was that information could be stored. No longer did people have to memorize enormous amounts of information to maintain it. Stories could be written down and preserved for generations. However, early writing was not yet a form of mass communication. Reading and writing were elite skills held by people called scribes; their rare abilities gave them power within religious institutions and governments (which were often one and the same).[13]

The Origins of Writing.

The earliest form of writing was the pictograph, which consisted of pictures of objects painted on rock walls. The next major development was the ideograph—an abstract symbol that stands for an object or an idea. An ideograph is more formalized than a pictograph, with one symbol for each object or idea. Languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Japanese still make use of ideographs. The major challenge created by having one symbol for each word is that people have to learn thousands of individual symbols. For example, literary Chinese has fifty thousand or more symbols, and everyday written Chinese has between five thousand and eight thousand symbols.

▼ This Proto-Elamite tablet (left) and the Newspaper Rock petroglyphs (right) are among the earliest forms of writing.





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Ideographs are often used as international symbols, such as those seen on street signs. They are particularly useful in areas where many languages are spoken. Imagine a traveler in Europe looking for a place to take a bath. With an ideograph, a single symbol can stand for *bain* in French, *bad* in Danish, or *baño* in Spanish.

▼ The Egyptians developed papyrus, an early form of paper made from the papyrus reed, around 3100 BC. These hieroglyphics are from a papyrus scroll of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.



World History Archive/Alamy Stock Photo

Sometime after 2000 BC, phonographs (not to be confused with record players) were first used. Phonography is a system of writing in which symbols stand for spoken sounds rather than for objects or ideas. Alphabets, in which letters represent individual sounds, were developed between 1700 BC and 1500 BC. Sound-based alphabet writing, with only a few dozen symbols, was relatively easy to learn compared to the earlier systems of ideographs. Being a scribe thus became less of an elite position. Among the earliest surviving written works are the Greek poet Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[14]

The Development of Paper.

Once people had a way to record ideas in writing, they needed something to write on. The earliest documents were written on cave walls, rocks, and clay tablets, but these media had limited usefulness. Imagine taking notes on slabs of wet clay that had to be taken back to your dorm room to dry. Something light, portable, and relatively inexpensive was needed. Papyrus, a primitive form of paper made from the papyrus reed, was developed by the Egyptians around 3100 BC. Papyrus was placed on twenty- to thirty-foot-long rolls known as scrolls. Although it was more useful and portable than stone or clay tablets, papyrus had a tendency to crumble or be eaten by bugs. Parchment, which was made from the skin of goats or sheep, eventually replaced papyrus because it was much less fragile.

Paper, made from cotton rags or wood pulp, was invented by the Chinese between 240 BC

and 105 BC.[15] Knowledge of papermaking was brought from China to Baghdad by the Muslims in the late 700s, and then to Europe by way of Spain in the mid-eleventh century. Papermaking spread throughout Europe during the 1300s, but it didn't replace parchment until printing became common in the 1500s.

Books Before the Era of Printing.

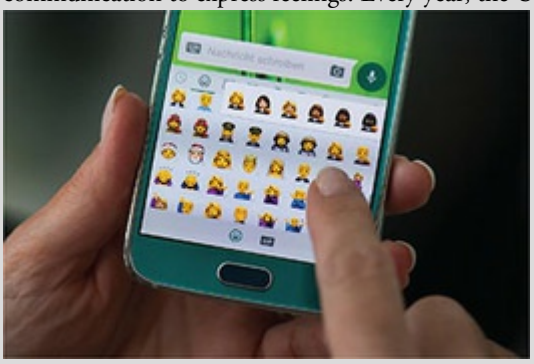
Throughout the early medieval period (AD 400–800), most books in Europe were religious texts hand-copied by monks in the scriptoria, or copying rooms, of monasteries. Because of the difficulty of preparing parchment, monks sometimes scraped the writing off old parchments to create new books. This led to the loss of many Greek and Latin texts. Books that had lasted hundreds of years and survived the fall of Rome were lost simply because they were erased!

With the rise of literacy in the thirteenth century, the demand for books increased. It soon exceeded the output of the monks, and the production of books shifted to licensed publishers, or stationers. Books were still copied by hand one at a time from a supposedly perfect original (or exemplar). One title from this era was Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which is still in print today.

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Emojis Bring Back Picture Writing

▼ These stylized smiley faces and images are examples of emojis, small digital icons used in electronic communication to express feelings. Every year, the Unicode Consortium proposes new emojis.



Arno Burgi/picture-alliance/dpa/AP Images

Typically, when we think of picture writing, we think about Egyptian hieroglyphics from two or three millennia ago. With a bit more history in mind, you might think about cave paintings in France or the Native Americans' Newspaper Rock in Utah. There are the ideographs in Chinese writing, but those symbols are pretty abstract and a long way from being recognizable drawings of something more than a symbol for an idea.

But it's likely that you've done picture writing lately—using the emoji keyboard on your mobile device. Smiling faces, a smiling pile of poop, a smiling devil, a smiling cat, an Edvard Munch screaming face—you get the idea—seem to show up everywhere from text messages to tweets to Snapchat posts. It is tempting to think that these emojis, or small icons that stand for emotions or ideas, carry universal social meanings, but people often don't agree on what they mean. For example, consider this one: While officially this is praying hands (available in any number of skin colors), some people see it portraying a high five. A study by researchers at the University of Minnesota's GroupLens lab found that people looking at exactly the same emoji can come up with dramatically different interpretations of it. Further complicating things is that each platform has its own versions of emojis. Consider the "grinning face with smiling eyes" icon. The icon is very different depending on whether you are looking at it on an Apple, Google, Microsoft, Samsung, or LG platform.[17]

For 2018, the Unicode Consortium (which establishes the standards for the character sets on computers and mobile devices) has published a proposed list of new emojis to include in upcoming smartphone software updates. These include redheads in the assortment of skin tone and hair color smiley emojis. There's also a wide range of skin tones to go with a natural African American hair—not to mention a lacrosse stick, a strand of DNA, and a skateboard. You can see the proposed new emojis in the accompanying graphic.[18]

WHAT is the source?

Where do the emojis you use in messages come from? What are some other, older, forms of picture writing?

WHAT makes communicating with emojis difficult?

Take a popular emoji and show it to several people of different ages. Ask them what it means. Does it mean the same thing to them as it does to you? Why do you think that? Look at the emojis in the graphic on this page. Do these all seem to represent the same idea/feeling? Why or why not?

WHY is representation important to people with emojis?

Why does the Unicode Consortium put so much effort into making sure there are emojis that represent a wide range of skin tones and hair colors/styles? Does it matter to you that your emoji matches you in some way? Do the proposed new emojis have a variant that matches you?

HOW do you and your classmates use emojis?

Do you and your friends use emojis in your daily communication? Why or why not? If you do, whom do you use them with? Do you think your friends understand what you are saying with emojis? Do you think that emojis enhance your communication? If so, how?

By the fourteenth century, books were becoming relatively common. Religious texts known as illuminated manuscripts were embellished with pictures and elaborately decorated calligraphy, in part to help transmit the message to nonliterate audiences.[16]

The Development of the Printing Press

Printing was invented in China toward the end of the second century. Images were carved into blocks of wood, which were inked and placed on sheets of paper, thereby reproducing the image. However, woodcuts saw limited usage because materials could not be reproduced rapidly. Between 1050 and 1200, both the Chinese and the Koreans developed the idea of movable type, but with thousands of separate ideographs, printing was not practical.

▼ German metalworker Johannes Gutenberg, depicted here, developed the typemold and printing press that led to the first mass-produced books.



Library of Congress

Gutenberg and Early Typesetting.

Johannes Gutenberg (1394–1468), a metalworker living in Mainz, Germany, in the mid-1400s, became the first European to develop movable type. Although he developed the first practical printing press (using a modified winepress), Gutenberg's most significant invention was the typemold, which enabled printers to make multiple, identical copies of a single letter without hand-carving each.

The most famous of Gutenberg's printed books was his edition of the Bible published in 1455. Approximately 120 copies of this Bible were printed, of which 46 are known to survive. In the 1980s, one of Gutenberg's Bibles sold for $5.39 million at Christie's auction

house.[19]

Typesetting was a difficult task in Gutenberg's day. The printer selected a type case containing all the characters of a typeface in a particular size and style known as a font—from a font or fountain of type. (Today the word *font* has become largely synonymous with *typeface* and is no longer restricted to mean a size and style—for example, bold or italic.) The printer then took from the case the letters needed to spell the words in a line of type and placed them on a type stick, which looked something like the rack used to hold letters in a Scrabble game. Once an entire line had been set, the printer placed it in a printer's frame, which held the type down.

Italics were invented in 1501 by the Italian printer Aldus Manutius (c. 1450–1515), from whom the early desktop publishing firm Aldus took its name. By the 1600s, printers could purchase mass-produced type rather than making their own typemolds. Many popular typefaces originated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and are named after the printers who devised them: Claude Garamond, William Caslon, John Baskerville, and Giambattista Bodoni. A quick check of a computer's font menu will show how many of them are still in use.[20]

The Invention of Mass Culture

Gutenberg's development of the typemold and printing press signaled the invention of mass communication and massive cultural changes. Culture was moving from something that was produced in the local community to something that could have a regional, national, or even international scope by being transmitted through the new mass media.

Standardized Books and Language.

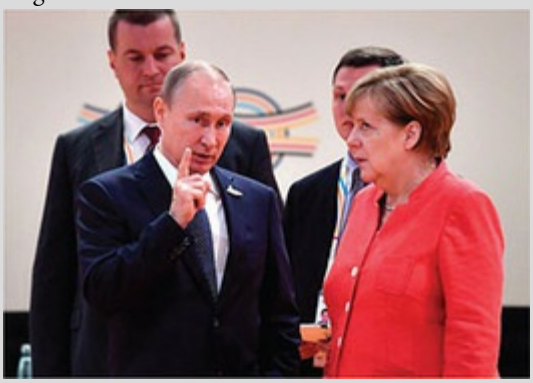
The first of the changes wrought by movable type was the printing of standardized books. The printing press allowed text to be stored in multiple "perfect" copies. No longer could copyists insert mistakes when they reproduced a book. Printing thus gave students identical copies of books to study. The printing press also made books available in greater numbers and at lower cost. Although printing did not make books inexpensive, it did make them affordable to people besides priests and the wealthy, especially due to the growth of libraries. The printing press also made new types of books available, particularly those written in a country's common language, such as German, instead of Latin, which was spoken only by the highly educated.

English printer William Caxton (c. 1422–1491) helped establish the rules for English, standardizing word usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. He accomplished much of this simply by publishing books in English rather than in the more scholarly Latin.[21] The standardization of the English language came about gradually, though. For example, in his journals written in the early 1800s, explorer William Clark notes that he and Meriwether Lewis set out "under a jentle brease."[22] It's not so much that Clark didn't know how to spell these words; at the time, there was still no single "correct" spelling.

Test Your Media Literacy

How Do Words Get Into the Dictionary?

▼ In 2018, the *Oxford English Dictionary* added the term *mansplain* to its latest electronic edition. Here, Russian president Vladimir Putin shows signs of mansplaining in his discussion with German chancellor Angela Merkel.



JOHN MACDOUGALL/AFP/Getty Images

Putting together the definitive English dictionary was a big job, and one that never really ended. Work on the first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) began in 1857 with the goal of finding the origin of every word in the English language. When the authors started the project, they thought it might take ten years. Instead, the first edition, all ten volumes of it, was not completed until April 1928.

Today the OED has been through two editions and several supplements. In the 1990s, work began on an electronic version of the dictionary. In June 2018, the editors completed their most recent updating of the dictionary and started over again with the letter A.[23] Each month, contributors to the OED submit more than eighteen thousand new words to be considered for inclusion. The following words are among those added to the electronic edition in January 2018[24]:

Mansplain—"A man's action of explaining something needlessly, overbearingly, or condescendingly, especially to a woman, in a manner thought to reveal a patronizing or chauvinistic attitude."

Hangry—"A blend of *hungry* and *angry* used colloquially to mean 'bad-tempered or irritable as a result of hunger.'" (Use of this word dates back to 1956!)

Me time—"Time devoted to doing what one wants (typically on one's own), as opposed to working or doing things for others, considered as important in reducing stress or restoring energy."

WHAT is the source?

What makes the OED different from the dictionary you have on your desk? Why would hundreds of lexicographers contribute entries to its first edition? Is there a need for so many sources? How might their background(s) influence the inclusion of new words?

WHAT is the purpose of this work?

Why do the precise meanings of words matter? If the first edition of the OED took more than seventy years to create, and the process of updating it is ongoing, is having an accurate and complete dictionary worth all this effort?

HOW do you and your classmates use the dictionary?

When was the last time you looked up the meaning of a word in the dictionary? Did it mean what you thought it did? What new words would you or your friends add to the dictionary? Does anyone worry about whether a word is being used correctly anymore? Do the uses or meanings of words change too fast for a dictionary to keep up with them? Does the dictionary have a purpose other than to record definitions?

Dissemination of Ideas and the Reformation.

By far the most important effect of the printing press was that it allowed ideas—such as those of the Protestant Reformation—to spread easily beyond the communities where they originated. Although the printing press did not cause the Protestant Reformation, it certainly helped it take root.

Martin Luther, the German monk who founded the Lutheran Church, clearly understood how the printing press could be used to spread his ideas throughout Europe. In 1522, Luther translated the New Testament of the Bible into German so that ordinary people might be able to read it.

▼ *Kit Carson on the War-Path*, published by Munro's Ten Cent Novels, was one of the many dime novels read by the newly literate public in the nineteenth century.



Library of Congress

Books in the New World

The first printing press in the New World was set up by the Spanish in Mexico City in 1539; by 1560, the press had issued more than thirty-seven titles. This was a full century before the British in the Massachusetts Bay Colony would start printing. Unfortunately, none of the books from the Spanish press survive today.[25]

Printing in North America began in 1640 with the publication of *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, known familiarly as the Bay Psalm Book. Put together by Puritans who were unhappy with existing translations of the psalms, the first edition sold 1,700 copies, a spectacular accomplishment when one considers that only 3,500 families lived in New England at the time. (Book historian James D. Hart suggests that some of these copies were exported back to England.[26]) Over the next 125 years, the Bay Psalm Book went through at least fifty-one editions in the colonies and Europe. (You can read more about how the Bay Psalm Book played a role in the establishment of the media business in the New World in Chapter 3.)

SECRETS 1 AND 4 ▸ The advent of the printing press and the publication of books in the language of everyday life helped doom Latin as a spoken language and put literacy—and the ability to interpret religious texts—within the reach of common people for the first time in history. The creation of a literate mass society also helped spread scientific ideas, such as Copernicus's claim that Earth was not the center of the universe. Books made it possible for people to learn individually, thus allowing new ideas to break into an otherwise closed community. This is also why every government since Gutenberg's time has wanted at least some control over the mass media.[27] So, with the advent of mass media barely begun, we see the first examples of Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives—and Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

What did people in the American colonies read? Among the best-known authors was Benjamin Franklin, whose *Poor Richard's Almanack* sold nearly ten thousand copies per year, far more to date than any other books at the time in North America.[28] Nonreligious books that sold well in New England included those on agriculture and animal husbandry, science, surveying, and the military.

But not everything was of serious interest. In the 1680s, Boston's leading bookseller attempted to order two copies of the book *The London Jilt, or, the Politick Whore; shewing all the artifices and stratagems which the Ladies of Pleasure make use of, for the intriguing and decoying of men; interwoven with several pleasant stories of the Misses' ingenious performances*, a title not that different from what might be ordered today.[29]

Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, published in 1740, was the first English novel. It was a book for the middle class, with characters and situations that ordinary people could identify with. Franklin published a colonial edition of the novel in 1744, but it would be forty-five years until the first American novel was published.

The Development of Large-Scale, Mass-Produced Books

The industrial prosperity of the mid-1800s spurred the growth of cities and the emergence of the middle class. During this time, the number of people who attended public schools grew as well. Education up to the high school level, although still not universal, was becoming common.[30] Mass culture in the United States expanded throughout the nineteenth century, disseminating widely through penny press newspapers, magazines, Sunday School tracts, and inexpensively produced books.

Serial novels, which were published in installments, were popular in the 1830s and 1840s. Charles Dickens published *The Pickwick Papers* as a serial novel. Serial publication made each section of the book less expensive than a whole book, which appealed to readers, and brought in a steady flow of income, which appealed to publishers.[31] (Serial novels got a boost again in the 1990s when Stephen King published his novel *The Green Mile* in paperback serial form.) The first paperbacks, the so-called dime novels (which, despite their name, often sold for as little as a nickel), were heroic action stories, popularized by authors such as Bret Harte, and they generally celebrated democratic ideals. The Civil War was a big time for sales of dime novels, with copies being shipped to Union soldiers as a morale booster.

The 1800s saw massive changes on the business side of publishing, too. Hand-powered flat-bed presses could print no more than 350 pages a day, but the new steam-powered rotary press (invented in 1814) could print as many as sixteen thousand sections (not just pages) in the same amount of time. Through all this, type still had to be set by hand, much as it was in Gutenberg's day. But 1885 saw the introduction of the Mergenthaler Linotype typesetting machine, which let a compositor type at a keyboard rather than pick each letter out by hand, thus speeding up the printing process once again. The Linotype was the standard for typesetting until the age of computer composition.

The nineteenth century thus brought the first real mass media that could be recognized today, with books, newspapers, and magazines being printed and distributed in forms that anyone could afford. With the growth of democracy and mass-produced reading materials came the growth of mass literacy.

Questioning the Media

Are books more influential than television or movies? Why do you think so? Which medium has caused the most change and turmoil in the world? Can you name some examples of this? Are there any books that have changed the world?

Buying and Selling Books

In the twentieth century, the writing and selling of books became big business, with a huge variety of books being published. The numbers have continued to grow in the early twenty-first century. In 1995, 1.2 million separate books were available, and by 2005, Amazon.com claimed to have more than 3.7 million titles available.[32] But getting a reliable number from Amazon is problematic at best. The company almost never discusses the specific number of items sold. Derek Haines, writing for the *Just Publishing Advice* blog in April 2018, tried to do a search on Amazon to come up with a number and estimated that there were 3.4 million Kindle e-books on the market and 48.5 million paper titles.[33] (We'll talk more about Amazon's competitors in just a minute.)

Getting all those books from the authors' computers or typewriters into the hands of readers is what the publishing business is all about. It involves three major players: publishers, writers, and booksellers.

Publishers

Publishers are the companies that buy manuscripts from authors and turn them into books. Although there are thousands of publishers worldwide, a very small number of companies publish the vast majority of all books sold today. This proportion has grown substantially since the 1920s, when the twenty largest publishers were responsible for only 50 percent of all books published.[34] This transformation has taken place because regional publishers are buying up small independent publishing houses, and international conglomerates are buying up major national publishing companies. As a result, the range of ownership of the publishing business is increasingly limited, and fewer people are making more of the decisions that determine what people will be able to read.[35]

You can get a visual representation of this consolidation with a chart that shows what the five biggest U.S. trade book publishers own: https://almossawi.com/big-five-publishers/.

The process of consolidation in the publishing industry can be seen in the story of American publisher Random House. Random House was founded in 1925. After years of growth, in 1960 the company acquired another major American publishing house, Alfred A. Knopf. In 1965, Random House was bought by media conglomerate RCA, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Random House continued to grow, buying up a host of publishers. In 1998, German media giant Bertelsmann bought Random House and combined it with its existing publishing holdings, and in 2013, the group added trade publisher Penguin to the mix.[36]

Penguin Random House has continued to grow by acquiring smaller publishers. In 2009, it acquired Ten Speed Press, an independent alternative publisher of titles such as *What Color Is Your Parachute?* and the *Moosewood Cookbook*. This acquisition brings to mind another, when News Corporation, through its HarperCollins division, bought out literary publisher Ecco Press. Daniel Halpern, founder of the press, told the *Washington Post*:

> People will say, "There goes another independent press, isn't it too bad." The short answer is, "Yes, it's too bad." But that's the reality. Let's not be sentimental about this stuff. This is not a time when the small press can survive.[37]

The World's Top Publishers.

The publishing business is a global industry, with owners in the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, China, and the Netherlands. These companies publish a variety of books, ranging from best-selling fiction to textbooks to technical references. Table 4.1 reports the companies' revenue only from book publishing. (Fans of J. K.

Rowling might be interested to know that Scholastic had a 45 percent increase in sales for the fiscal year that ended May 30, 2017, because of huge sales of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.[38])

▼ Table 4.1

▼ TABLE 4.1

Top Global and U.S. Publishers

Top Five Global Publishers		Revenue	Ownership
1.	Pearson—Major education publisher	$5.6 billion	United Kingdom
2.	RELX Group—Professional publications	$4.9 billion	United Kingdom/ Netherlands/ United States
3.	Thomson Reuters—Financial publications	$4.8 billion	Canada
4.	Bertlesmann—Old German publishing firm, now a media giant	$3.7 billion	Germany
5.	Wolters Kluwer—Financial publications	$3.4 billion	Germany
Top Five U.S. Publishers		**Revenue**	**Ownership**
1.	McGraw-Hill—Textbook giant	$1.76 billion	United States
2.	Wiley— Major academic publisher	$1.73 billion	United States
3.	Scholastic—Harry Potter's American publisher	$1.67 billion	United States
4.	HarperCollins—Trade publisher	$1.65 billion	United States
5.	Cengage—Major education publisher	$1.63 billion	United States/ Canada

Source: Adapted by the author from Jim Milliot, "The World's 54 Largest Publishers, 2017," *Publishers Weekly*, August 25, 2017, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/international/international-book-news/article/74505-the-world-s-50-largest-publishers-2017.html.

Source: Adapted by the author from Jim Milliot, "The World's 54 Largest Publishers, 2017," *Publishers Weekly,* August 25, 2017, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/international/international-book-news/article/74505-the-world-s-50-largest-publishers-2017.html.

University and Small Presses.

Not all publishing is done by large corporations; a substantial number of university and small presses issue a limited number of books and may not be in the business for profit. Among their titles are books that serve a limited geographic or subject area or an academic discipline—mostly scholarly books or textbooks. An example of a small press is Interweave,

which publishes books about knitting, weaving, and crafting. But academic presses occasionally print breakout books. The late Norman Maclean, an English professor at the University of Chicago, had his memoir about growing up in Montana and fly-fishing published by the University of Chicago Press. The book, *A River Runs Through It*, was an enormous success (and was made into a movie directed by Robert Redford and starring Brad Pitt).[39]

Small Publishers.

Not all successful books come from big publishers, and not all big books are conventional novels or biographies. Newcomer independent publisher Cottage Door Press has had big success since it was founded in 2014 by publishing a wide range of books targeted at children. In 2014, the company had nine employees and had published no books. By 2016, Cottage Door Press had reached nineteen employees and was releasing eighty-two new titles that year. Those books also might not match your stereotypes of what a book should look like. These include padded board books, lift-a-flap books, touch-and-feel books, and books that make sounds. Marketing manager Melissa Tigges told *Publishers Weekly*, "We believe in educating and entertaining both children and their grown-ups. We choose artwork and language that interests, informs, and stretches their growing minds."[40]

▼ Small press publisher Cottage Door Press has found a market niche publishing a range of books for small children, including board books for infants.



BSIP/Universal Images Group Editorial/Getty Images

The Government Publishing Office.

Surprisingly, the federal government is one of the nation's biggest publishers. The U.S.

Government Publishing Office (GPO) has been producing government documents and books in a variety of forms since it was founded back in 1861. While most of its titles are dry government reports, the GPO has published occasional best sellers, including the *9/11 Commission Report*, the Warren Commission's report on the Kennedy assassination, and the so-called Pentagon Papers (discussed in Chapters 2 and 13). To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Warren Commission report, the GPO published a digital edition, including the 888-page report along with the twenty-six volumes covering the hearings.[41]

Questioning the Media

Do authors still need conventional publishers in the age of long-tail distribution of e-books? Are readers able to sort through the huge number of indie-published books to find the kind of books they want to read? Have you ever bought an indie-published book? If so, what was it? Who benefits the most from indie publishing?

Authors

The next group of players in the publishing business is composed of the authors—the people who write the books. Most media attention goes to blockbuster authors, such as Margaret Atwood and, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, John Green, or literary authors, such as Richard Russo and Alice Munro; less is written about the vast majority of authors who write without multimillion-dollar contracts, book tours, or television commercials during *The View*. But what is the publishing experience like for an ordinary author?

Consider the story of a typical book, a science fiction romance titled *Moon of Desire*. Pam Hanson (a first-time author and the wife of this book's author) and her mother, Barbara Andrews (who authored several romance novels in the 1980s), wrote a proposal for the novel and a sample chapter and submitted them to a publisher in March (see Figure 4.1).

Then they waited. In June, the publisher agreed to acquire the manuscript. The authors received a contract for the book, which called for the manuscript to be delivered by December 1. With the contract signed, the authors were paid the first half of their advance. This did not mean, however, that they got rich. Advances for first novels at the time were typically between $1,000 and $5,000, and this advance was typical.

Then came the work of writing the book—ninety thousand words, or about 360 typed, double-spaced pages. The mother and daughter traded drafts back and forth between their computers. A week before the deadline, they sent the finished book to their editor at the publishing company. If the authors had missed their deadline, the publisher would have had the right to reject the book and cancel the contract.

▲ Figure 4.1 Ten Steps in the Book Publishing Process



Source: ©iStockphoto.com/penfold; ©iStockphoto.com/julichka; ©iStockphoto.com/5455586; ©iStockphoto.com/frender; ©iStockphoto.com/LonelySnailDesign; ©iStockphoto.com/milosluz; ©iStockphoto.com; ©iStockphoto.com/Warchi; ©iStockphoto.com/4x6; ©iStockphoto.com/tashka2000

A few weeks later, in early January, the editor sent revisions to the authors. Manuscript revisions may consist of anything from trivial changes in punctuation or grammar to major changes in characterization or plot. In this case, the only major change was that the mutant cannibals menacing the heroine in one chapter had to be toned down a bit. Once the manuscript was accepted, the authors received the second half of the advance. But keep in mind that advances are against royalties (a percentage of the selling price of each book paid to the author), meaning that the advance payments will be deducted from the author's royalty payments.

After a manuscript has been accepted and revised, the book goes into production. An artist creates a cover illustration on the basis of information from an "art fact sheet" that suggests possible scenes for the cover and describes what the hero and heroine look like. The *Moon of Desire* cover featured the hero and heroine on a raft floating on a flaming sea. A book designer lays out the rest of the book, deciding what the pages will look like, what typeface

will be used, and how big the book will be. (These can be serious considerations. Stephen King was required to cut 150,000 words, nearly half its length, from the original edition of *The Stand* to make it more marketable.[42])

Once the book is set in type, a copy of the ready-to-print pages—known as proofs—is sent to the authors. Authors are supposed to correct only blatant errors in proofs, although some have been known to start rewriting the book at this point. As is usual in popular fiction, Hanson and Andrews had about a week to read the proofs of their book and send them back to the publisher; after the corrections were made, the proofs were sent to a printer to produce the finished book.

At this point, it's time to start marketing the book. This may include placing advertisements in newspapers, in fan magazines, or even on television and scheduling a book tour and media appearances. But Andrews and Hanson, like most first-time novelists, had to make do with virtually no marketing support. Twenty months after the original proposal was submitted, the book was available in bookstores.

Book publishing can be lucrative for some, but the majority of writers make very little money. Nicholas Sparks's multimillion-dollar advances are exciting but not typical. According the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median income for writers and authors was $61,240 per year in 2016.[43] Hanson and Andrews, who wrote their book under a single pseudonym, Pam Rock, saw their first royalties beyond the initial advance more than two and a half years after the initial proposal was sent in.

Booksellers

The last major players in the book business are the book wholesalers and retailers—the companies that take the book from the publisher to the book-buying public.

Bookseller and Distributor Consolidation.

The Ingram Book Company, the nation's largest book wholesaler, distributes more than fourteen million book titles to more than thirty-nine thousand retail, library, and educational outlets. In essence, Ingram and its smaller competitors are the sources from which bookstores buy their books.[44]

The buyers at Ingram are among the most important in the book business; they determine how many copies of a book will be stocked in the company's warehouses. This can, in turn, determine the size of a book's press run. Ingram's buyers are respected not only by bookstore owners but also by scholarly presses.[45]

Among booksellers, Barnes & Noble is the one big chain still standing. The company's revenue totaled $3.7 billion for 2018, and it operates 630 superstores. Through its education division, it operates 724 college bookstores throughout the United States with an annual revenue of $1.9 billion. It is also an online bookseller thanks to its BarnesandNoble.com site, and the company for many years had its own line of Nook e-readers, though it discontinued all third-party apps for its e-readers in the spring of 2016.[46]

In previous editions of this book, we compared the number of titles Amazon carried compared to those in the chain superstores, or in terms of volumes of sales. But those figures are always going to come out in Amazon's favor. What is interesting is how independent bookstores have started coming back in recent years. The American Booksellers Association reports that between 1995 and 2000, the number of indie bookstores in the United States dropped 43 percent. But between 2009 and 2015, something amazing happened—the number of indie bookstores grew by 35 percent, going from 1,651 to 2,227. Organizational behavior professor Ryan Raffaelli found three major reasons for the resurgence of independent booksellers:

- The sense of community they provide. Just as people love their local coffee shops, they like the community connection of a local bookstore.
- Successful independent bookstores have a good sense of what their customers are interested in and can make recommendations that go beyond the national best-seller lists.
- Local bookstores provide an intellectual hub for their communities with lectures, book signings, and reading groups, to name just a few.[47] As an example, when Stephen King did a book tour to promote his novel *End of Watch*, he was hosted by

independent bookstores in twelve cities of varying size across the country.

▼ Amazon opened its first brick-and-mortar store in the company's hometown in Seattle, Washington.



Stephen Brashear/Getty Images

SECRET 5 ▸ If you're paying attention as you read through the reasons why independent bookstores are finding new life in the last decade, you'll notice that it's all about the interaction of customers with the store, with authors, and with each other. In other words, it's because of Secret 5—All media are social.

Books and the Long Tail

The internet launched the long-tail segment of the media by allowing a company to produce a catalog that is available to everyone with very little marginal cost for each additional viewer. Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos started selling books on the internet because the web was the only practical way to offer the variety that he sought:

> It . . . turns out that you can't have a big book catalog on paper; it's totally impractical. There are more than 100,000 new books published every year, and even a superstore can't carry them all. The biggest superstores have 175,000 titles and there are only about three that big. So that became the idea: let Amazon.com be the first place where you can easily find and buy a million different books.[48]

SECRET 2 ▸ And this was the radical notion—instead of offering a selection of books, why not offer every book, all 7.5 million or so English-language books in print? Amazon can keep the most popular books in stock in its warehouses and seamlessly order books from publishers if they are in smaller demand. It can even offer out-of-print books from private stores that partner with Amazon or custom-publish them through arrangements it's made with publishers. (This is a prime example of Secret 2—There are no mainstream media. Due to long-tail retailers like Amazon, consumers are no longer limited to just the biggest books from the biggest publishers.)

The online bookstore began operations in July 1995, and by December 1998, it had served more than 4.5 million customers. Why is it called Amazon? Because it begins with an *A* and therefore will appear first on alphabetical lists. In 1998, Amazon started selling videos and CDs, and since 1999, it has added toys, clothing, kitchen equipment, and other merchandise.

A key feature of Amazon is that it tracks customers' interests by recording what they've already bought on Amazon.com. Each time a buyer enters the site, a personalized home page shows related books that the customer might not have known about otherwise. A shopper looking at the description of the thriller *Red Sparrow* by Jason Matthews gets a recommendation for Brad Meltzer's *The Escape Artist*. Or at a more prosaic level, checking out *Personal Finance for Dummies* by Eric Tyson will get you a recommendation for *How to be a Real Estate Investor* by Phil Pustejovsky.

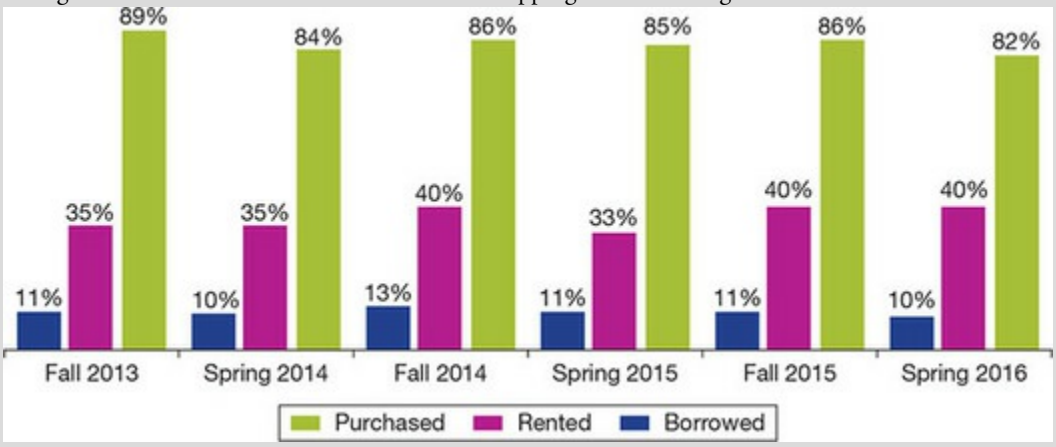
Media Transformations

The Textbook Business

Textbooks are different from other books in one major respect—the people who select the books aren't the same as the end users, the people who have to buy and pay for them. Students charge that, because of this disconnect, faculty members don't take price sufficiently into account when picking books for their courses.

Estimates on how much students spend per year on textbooks vary widely. An informational page from the College Board estimated that students spend an average of $1,250 a year on books and supplies.[51] A report from the business network CNBC suggested that the average spending on books and supplies had dropped by $602 to $579 on a basket of ten required materials based primarily on students engaging in smart shopping—buying used books during the off season when prices are low, then selling them back at times of peak demand. Another factor has been the growth of book rentals.[52] Under a rental plan, students pay a fee that is between two-thirds and one-half the cost of either a new or used book, then they turn the book back in to the bookstore at the end of the semester. In essence, it's a guaranteed buyback plan.[53] A report from Orbis Research suggests that students are also saving money by renting e-textbooks rather than paper books at substantially lower costs.[54] The disadvantage of rentals, of course, is that after the semester is over, students no longer have the books to use as a reference. While students like e-textbooks in principle, when forced to choose between a printed book and an e-book, most choose a printed textbook.[55] An informal survey of your author's students showed that while students liked e-books for recreational reading, they much preferred paper editions for the textbooks. You can see more about how students buy textbooks in Figure 4.2.

▲ Figure 4.2 Have Rentals Peaked? Textbook Shopping Habits Amongst Students



Source: "Student Watch™ 2015-2016 Academic Year: Attitudes & Behaviors toward Course Materials. Reprinted with permission from the National Association of College Stores, www.nacs.org.

John Frederick, provost of the University of Texas at San Antonio, attributes some of the high costs to the bundling of CDs and website passwords with new textbooks. When students buy the books used, they often do not get access to the website or have the CDs. "The publishers engage in a lot of tactics to limit the used-book market," Frederick said. "It is a real problem, but until universities band together to create policies that would control the price of textbooks or exert some kind of market pressure to reduce the cost, there won't be any easy solutions."[56] To be fair to the publishers, they have high fixed costs compared to the booksellers, including development, permissions, royalties, marketing, design, typesetting, and printing, which they must incur to put out even one copy of a new or revised edition.

A radically different approach a number of universities are taking is so-called inclusive access programs where schools license all of the assigned books electronically from a major publisher and make them available to students at either a discounted rate or no additional charge. In some cases, the e-books are integrated into the school's course management system that delivers other class materials. Students are typically signed up for the rental automatically and then have a short period of time when they can opt out from using the book. The advantage for faculty is that all students will have access to their books on the first day of class rather than waiting till sometimes weeks into the semester to get their books. Major educational publishers such as Pearson and McGraw-Hill Education say they have found considerable success with these programs.[57]

There are also downsides to these inclusive access programs. In many cases, students only have access when they are online. If they want a downloadable version, there is often an extra fee. Another issue is that these contracts strongly push faculty to order their texts from a preferred company rather than from the publisher that has what they consider to be the best book. Nicole Allen, an advocate for research libraries and open access materials, told Inside Higher Ed these programs are "the opposite of inclusive, because it is premised on publishers controlling when, where and for how long students have access to their materials."[58]

Students have tried a variety of methods to control their books' costs. Some simply download pirated scans of textbooks from peer-to-peer file-sharing sites in much the same way as they download illegal copies of music, TV shows, or movies. Other students go online and buy less expensive black-and-white international editions. Still others go to social media sites to find out which professor uses the least expensive book.

HOW are students getting textbooks these days?

WHAT are the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing, renting, or getting books through inclusive access programs?

DO YOU have strong feelings on using paper versus electronic textbooks?

DO prices keep you from getting the textbooks you need?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

Online bookstores are among the most successful businesses in electronic commerce. One reason for their initial success was that in the early days of the commercialized internet, people who owned computers were also likely to read books. Also, well-educated people, who tend to read for pleasure and entertainment, are likely to work in offices where they have internet connections and thus can buy books online. Finding books online can be easier than finding them in a bookstore, especially if the title is obscure. A former Penguin Random House executive notes that online bookstores provide instant gratification.[49]

Marketing partnerships are an important element of online bookstores. Anyone who wants to can set up an online bookstore on his or her website in partnership with Amazon and receive a small commission for every book sold. In the past, BarnesandNoble.com had partnerships with the *New York Times* and *USA Today* websites that let readers purchase the books being written about in the papers. Of course, such partnerships raise questions about objectivity: Can a book review be objective when the newspaper that's reviewing the book is also selling the book?[50]

Books and Culture

For all the attention that movies, television, CDs, and video games get from social critics, books continue to be a major source of excitement, controversy, money, and even violence.

Questioning the Media

Where did you buy your last book? If you bought it online, when was the last time you were in a brick-and-mortar bookstore? Do you worry about the decreasing presence of brick-and-mortar bookstores, or do you think the industry will eventually abandon print books? Do you like the computer-generated recommendations from online stores like Amazon.com, or do you find them dehumanizing and creepy? Explain your answer.

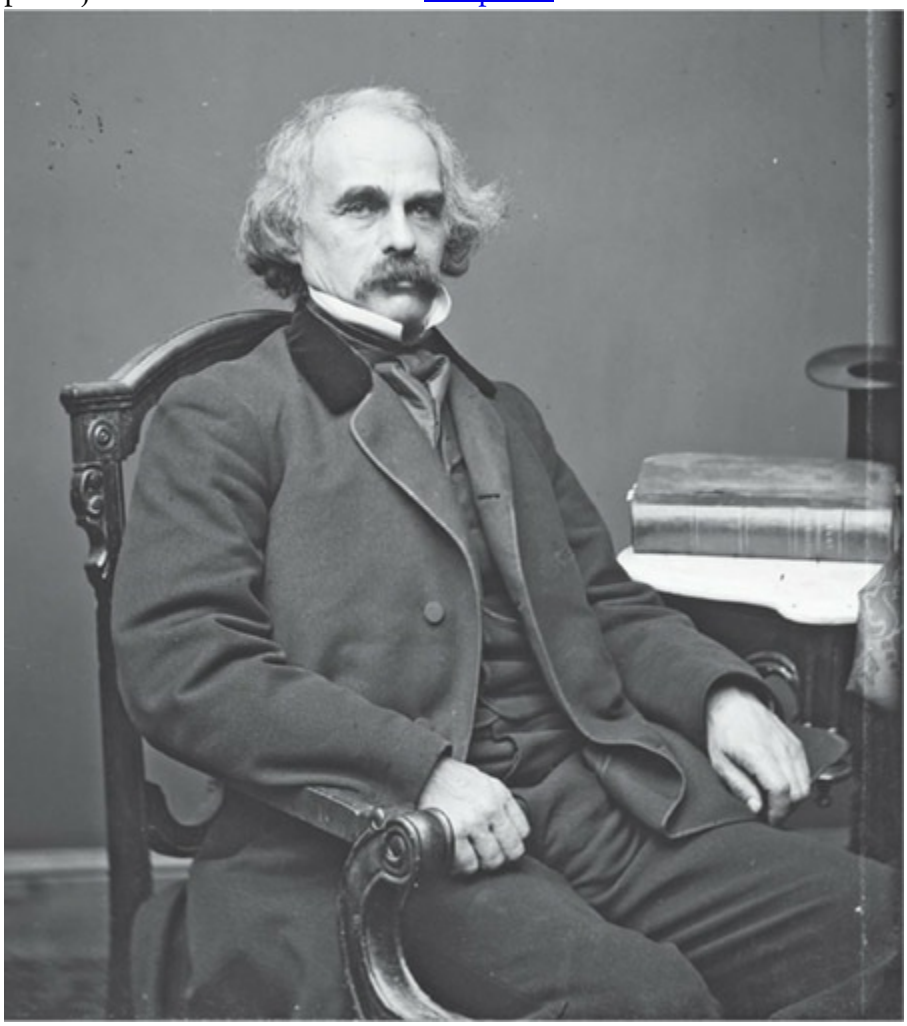
The Importance of Blockbuster Books

A continual tension exists between blockbuster books that make large amounts of money for publishers and so-called important books that have lasting literary value. But this tension is nothing new—it dates back at least to the middle of the nineteenth century.

Great Books Versus Popular Books.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the mid-1800s were a period of strong growth for the publishing business, with the number of serious novels and popular fiction titles increasing rapidly. Americans wrote almost one thousand novels from 1840 to 1850, up from the 109 books of American fiction published between 1820 and 1830.[59]

▼ Famed photographer Mathew Brady took this portrait of celebrated American author Nathaniel Hawthorne in the mid-nineteenth century. Brady's role in the development of photojournalism is discussed in Chapter 5.



Library of Congress

The 1850s saw the publication of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, but none of these "great books" sold nearly as well as popular novels written by and for women. Hawthorne resented losing sales to popular women authors. He once became so frustrated that he commented, "America is now wholly given over to a d——d mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash—and should be ashamed of myself if I did succeed."[60]

The domestic novels that Hawthorne was complaining about told of women who overcame tremendous problems through their Christian strength, virtue, and faith, ending up in prosperous middle-class homes. One of the best known of Hawthorne's "scribblers," at least today, is Sarah Josepha Hale. She was well known not only as a novelist, but also as a writer of children's books (she was the author of "Mary Had a Little Lamb") and the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, a popular women's magazine of the day (see Chapter 5).[61]

Women authors of popular fiction continue to sell well today. According to the Romance Writers of America, romantic fiction had annual sales of $1.08 billion in 2013, the majority of which was written and read by women. Nearly 40 percent of the sales of romances were as e-books, and the rest were spread among mass-market paperbacks, trade paperbacks, and hardbacks.[62]

Hawthorne's complaints about popular fiction outselling serious writing are often echoed today. Major publishers work hard to promote a limited number of blockbuster books—in part because only a small percentage of books make a profit. For example, in 2000, romance publisher Harlequin recorded a dramatic increase in profits primarily because of two best-selling titles.[63] Typical among the best-selling authors whom publishers love is mystery writer Janet Evanovich. She started writing romance novels for Bantam, then branched out into the wildly successful Stephanie Plum bounty hunter novels. Evanovich's novels mix humor, adventure, mystery, and romance. "I wanted to write the book that made people feel good. If you are having a bad day, you could read my book and I might make you smile," she has said.[64] Why did Evanovich choose to write about a somewhat inept female bounty hunter? According to her, she saw a space for it in the marketplace: "So I took what I loved about the romance genre and squashed it into a mystery format."[65] The first printing of her 2009 novel *Finger Lickin' Fifteen* was two million copies, and thirty million copies of her books are in print. In contrast, Marilynne Robinson's Pulitzer Prize–winning novel *Gilead* sold only 345,000 copies. Good sales, to be sure, but nowhere near the levels of popular fiction.[66]

Not every best-selling book is popular fiction, however. Harper Lee's classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which has stayed in print for more than fifty years, continues to sell nearly one million copies a year.[67]

These blockbuster authors illustrate the main thrust of the publishing business today—finding writers who can turn out one big hit after another. Harry Hoffman, a former bookstore chain CEO, points out that books have to compete with Nintendo and television. In essence, publishing no longer views itself as being in the literature business; instead, it considers itself to be in the entertainment business.[68]

Of course, popular fiction and literature can sometimes intersect. Among the most influential best sellers of the past fifty years is John Ronald Reuel (J. R. R.) Tolkien's epic-length fantasy trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*. Initially published in England in 1954 and 1955, the story has remained continuously in print and has now sold more than hundreds of millions of copies—eleven million during 2002 alone. (The sales boost in 2001 and following years can be attributed in part to the popularity of the movie series based on the books.)

Tolkien, an English professor at Oxford, was a colleague of Clive Staples (C. S.) Lewis, author of the popular *Chronicles of Narnia*, which also formed the basis for a popular movie series. A veteran of World War I, Tolkien specialized in the history of language and literature, and his passion was European myths and sagas. He started work on *The Hobbit*, his first book set in the fictional Middle Earth, in 1930, telling the story of Bilbo Baggins and his adventures. *The Hobbit* was written initially to entertain Tolkien's four children, but the book was published in 1937 after the ten-year-old son of an editor read the manuscript and liked it. The book was a success, and the publisher asked for a sequel. Seventeen years later, the first part of *The Lord of the Rings* was published.

Tolkien wrote the story as a single book, but the publisher divided it into three volumes to make it more practical to print and sell. In fact, the story was so long that even Tolkien didn't know what to do with it. In a letter to his publisher, Tolkien wrote, "My work has escaped from my control, and I have produced a monster: an immensely long, complex, rather bitter, and rather terrifying romance, quite unfit for children (if fit for anybody)."[69]

Although Tolkien died in 1973, his books have had a lasting influence on American popular culture. *The Lord of the Rings* strongly influenced rock groups such as Yes and Led Zeppelin, and it inspired Gary Gygax to quit his job as an insurance salesperson and devote himself to developing his role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons. There is even an academic journal devoted to Tolkien's Middle Earth and its linguistics. Most important, the entire genre of contemporary fantasy literature owes its existence to Tolkien. The fantasy sections in bookstores and the whole genre of swords-and-sorcery movies would not exist but for the inspired writings of a British professor.[70]

Young Adult Series Break the Best-Seller Lists.

The biggest publishing phenomena in recent years have been young adult novels. Some are set in supernatural or dystopian worlds: J. K. Rowling's magical *Harry Potter* books, the

Twilight vampire series by Stephenie Meyer, and the dystopian worlds of Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* and Veronica Roth's *Divergent* series. Others deal with such real-life issues as mental illness or cancer, such as those by John Green, discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Rowling's seven-volume *Harry Potter* series has sold over 500 million copies globally. Meyer's teen-vampire romance series has had four volumes published to date and has sold 250 million copies.[71] And Collins's three-volume *Hunger Games* series, which tells the story of a young woman who becomes a rebel leader after being forced to fight to the death with other teens in a televised arena, has sold more than 100 million copies.

▼ The *Harry Potter* franchise has been translated into sixty eight other languages including six different Indian dialects.



Peter Macdiamid/Getty Images

According to Caron Chapman, former executive director of the Association of Booksellers for Children (now the ABC Children's Group), the top books on the children's best-seller lists will not change as often as those on the adult list:

> Adults constantly want the newest and the latest. But in children's bookselling it's not the newest or the latest, but the best that teachers and parents are looking for. Adult bestseller lists have nothing to do with the best book, but which title has the most marketing support that week.[72]

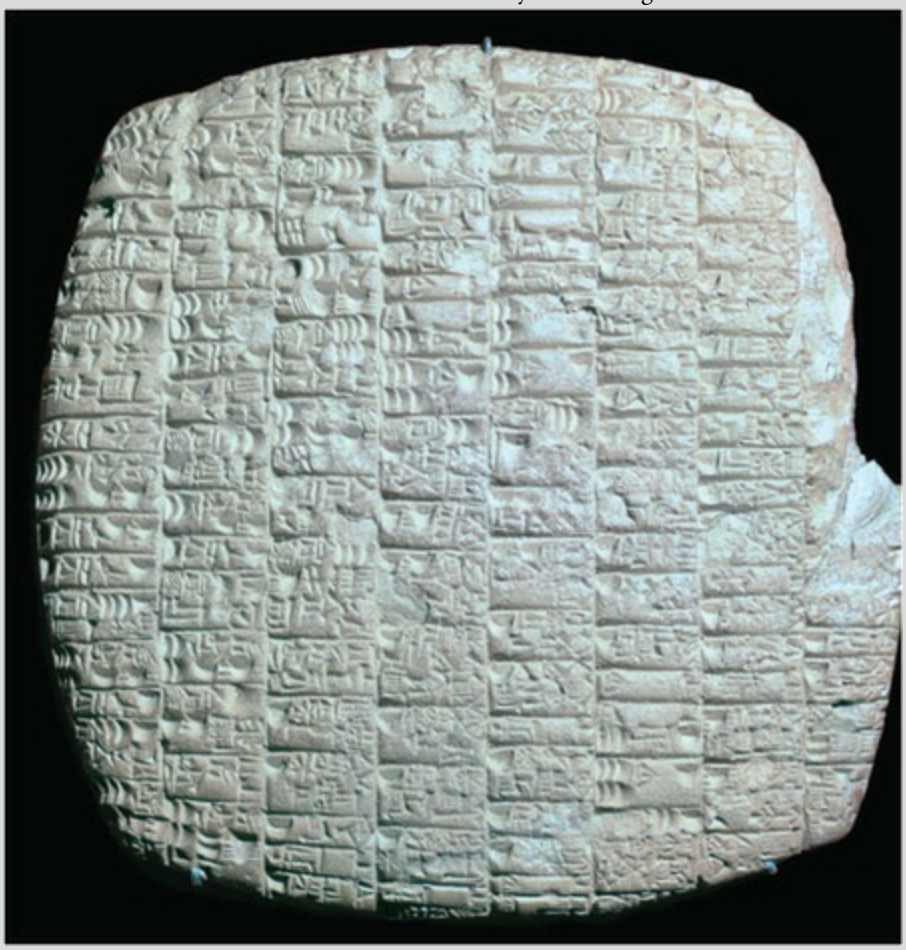
Children's books can appeal to adults as well. When Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* was published, the cover had more of an adult book look, with a text-heavy design. Green also included adult feelings in the book, knowing how often grown-ups read young adult

novels. (Your author has read most of Rick Riordan's Greek, Roman, and Egyptian gods young adult novels.)

Test Your Media Literacy

Libraries

▼ This ancient Sumerian cuneiform tablet records the distribution of barley rations to about two hundred workmen and their children within the city-state of Lagash.



CM Dixon/Print Collector/Getty Images

For as long as we have had people reading books, we have had libraries. The earliest known libraries date back to collections of clay tablets until the time of Alexander the Great. More than thirty thousand tablets were found in the ancient city of Lagash, located at the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in what is now modern-day Iraq. Scribes used reeds to inscribe wedge-shaped cuneiform letters on wet clay; if you are interested, the Library of Congress has a small collection of these dating from between 2144 BC and 2124 BC. (Remember what Harold Innis had to say back in Chapter 2 about clay tablets being biased toward lasting a long time?)[73]

The ancient library that gets the most talk is the great Alexandrian Library, which although located in Egypt was primarily a Greek repository. It was founded by Alexander the Great in 332 BC and is described as a "combination university, think tank, foundation and library [that] contained most of the world's books."[74] The library was gradually destroyed over an extended period of time, with blame being handed out to a fire in 48 BC, destruction of offensive books by early Christians in 391 AD, and the burning of the remaining books for fuel in 641 AD by Caliph Omar.[75]

What is likely the oldest currently existing library is located at St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai, Egypt, which claims to have been housing religious manuscripts since at least 383–384 AD. Among the items in the collection are texts that are among the only existing manuscripts written in the almost lost language of Caucasian Albanian.[76]

In 1731, Benjamin Franklin established one of the American colonies' earliest circulating (or subscription) libraries in Philadelphia. Patrons had to pay forty shillings initially, then ten shillings a year to continue borrowing volumes. Franklin's patrons were businessmen and tradesmen. Franklin's name occurs repeatedly in discussions of the media of the colonial era. He was an important book, magazine, and newspaper publisher—the Ted Turner or Rupert Murdoch of his day.[77]

The nineteenth century was a period of growth for libraries; the number of subscription libraries tripled between 1825 and 1850. American industrialist Andrew Carnegie financed the construction of nearly 1,700 public libraries from 1900 to 1917; since then, the number of public libraries has continued to grow and was estimated at nearly 17,000 separate facilities in 2015.[78]

Libraries today are much, much more than just collections of books, though that continues to be an important function:

- They are places where people without computers can find one to go online.
- Those with a laptop or mobile device, but no access to the internet, can use a library as a Wi-Fi hot spot.
- They often have massive collections of electronic documents patrons can access.
- Many now "check out" books to Kindles, allowing the borrower to keep the book on his or her e-book device for a limited checkout time.
- Some have "book club bags" with eight to fifteen copies of a book that would be of interest to a book club, along with discussion questions, author information, and even a large-print copy of the book.[79]

New York Public Library president Anthony Marx said in an interview that "[libraries] are a foundational part of the First Amendment. All libraries are. . . . And in this day and age, when accusations of false news are flying every day, the citizens need to be able to check facts and gather facts and argue about facts."[80]

Books and Censorship

Books are capable of exciting great passion in readers who love them and those who hate them. Wherever there are books, there are people who will want to ban or control them for one reason or another. Attempts at control can range from removing the book from a school library to threatening to kill the author.

Book Banning.

In the United States, most book censorship efforts are local rather than national in scope. Book banning is generally limited to removing specific titles from school libraries or reading lists. Typically, such efforts involve books thought to contain sexually explicit material, offensive language, violence, a portrayal of homosexuality, or offensive treatment of religion. Other reasons given are for being "unsuited" for a given age group or for being "anti-family."[81] Occasionally, though, a book's publisher will instigate the censorship. Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* tells the story of a "fireman" whose job is to burn books rather than put out fires. (Fahrenheit 451° is the temperature at which book paper starts to burn.) The book was originally published in 1953, but in 1967, Ballantine Books brought out an edition for high schools that modified seventy-five passages in the text to eliminate such words as *hell*, *damn*, and *abortion*. This was done without Bradbury's knowledge or consent. When he found out about it thirteen years later, he demanded that the edited version be withdrawn.[82]

Different titles show up on various lists of banned or challenged books, but a few appear repeatedly. Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* has had its position on many school reading lists challenged because of its description of the rape of the author as a child. Other frequently challenged books include the *Goosebumps* series by R. L. Stine, J. D. Salinger's coming-of-age novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, and Kurt Vonnegut's account of the firebombing of Dresden, *Slaughterhouse-Five*.[83]

The American Library Association has been tracking the most-challenged books for several years. Challenged books are those that some individual or group has attempted to remove or restrict. The challenger does not need to have been successful in getting the title banned for it to appear on the list. See Box 4.1 for the most-challenged books of 2017. It is worth noting, however, that most of these "challenged" books are not banned. Instead, they are subject to complaints from a few concerned parents, for whom they might get removed from a required reading list. Or perhaps a school district will send a consent note home with students. But that is the extent of most of the attempts to "ban" books in the United States.[84]

Questioning the Media

Should parents be able to get books removed from school libraries or reading lists because they find ideas or language in them objectionable? What arguments can you make for or against this?

Not all challenged books are contemporary. A number of classics have received complaints as well. According to the American Library Association, the following books are frequently challenged[85]:

- *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, because a book about adultery conflicts with a community's values
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, because it contains profanity
- *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare, because the comedy is perceived as promoting homosexuality

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Comics Don't Have to Be Funny

The story of Holocaust victim Anne Frank is known to most young people who went through American schools. Her teen diary that tells the tale of the two years she and her family spent hiding in a small apartment from the Nazis is a standard part of our middle school or high school English curriculum. But parts of her story don't come through her famous diary. For example, Anne wasn't interested in the fact that the apartment she hid in was located above a jam warehouse. As a teenage girl, Anne was far more interested in Peter, the teen boy who was hiding with her, or fighting with her mother.

When the folks who run the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam decided to commission a new biography of Anne, instead of turning to conventional biographers, they contacted comic book creators Ernie Colón and Sid Jacobson.[86] While the pair had worked on such light titles as *Casper the Friendly Ghost* and *Richie Rich*, they had also collaborated on the graphic novel treatment of the U.S. government's *9/11 Commission Report* on the September 11 terror attacks. Their graphic novel/biography of Anne covers a much wider time period than the diary, going from Anne's parents' lives before she was born and extending until the publication of the diary years after her death.

▼ Excerpt from "Annalies Marie Frank" from ANNE FRANK: THE ANNE FRANK HOUSE AUTHORIZED GRAPHIC BIOGRAPHY by Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colón. Copyright © 2010 by Sid Jacobson. Artwork copyright © 2010 by Ernesto Colón. Reprinted by permission of Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.



HOW does a graphic novel differ from a novel that just has text?

For decades, high school students have been reading the story of Anne Frank in the format of a teenage girl's diary. How does telling the story with drawings transform the experience?

WHY are they sending this message?

WHAT is the publisher trying to accomplish with the graphic novel?

Is it appropriate to tell a serious story like that of Anne Frank or the 9/11 attacks in comic book format? Have you ever read the graphic novel Maus by Art Spiegelman that tells the story of the Holocaust with the

Jews as mice and the Germans as cats? If so, what was your reaction?

HOW do you and your classmates interpret graphic novels?

Do you or your classmates read graphic novels/comic books? Would you be more likely to read a graphic novel than a text novel on a serious subject? What can you do with a graphic presentation that you can't do with text?

SECRET 4 ▸ *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain's classic, has, for a range of reasons, been in trouble ever since its publication in 1885. *Little Women* author Louisa May Alcott said of *Huck Finn*, "If Mr. Clemens cannot think of something better to tell our pure-minded lads and lasses, he had best stop writing for them." Twain was not bothered by Alcott's comments in the least, responding, "That will sell 25,000 copies for us, sure."[87] The town library of Concord, Massachusetts, banned the book as unfit, while others described it as "rough, coarse, and inelegant."[88] The basic complaint was that the novel was disrespectful and contained profanity. More recently, *Huck Finn* has been criticized as being racist. While Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist Jane Smiley does not want to see *Huck Finn* banned, she suggests that it does not deserve its position in the canon of great American literature.[89] This is, of course, an example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

While most attempts at censoring books in the United States result in at most a book's being removed from a school library, that is not always the case in the rest of the world. Few cases of censorship have been quite as spectacular as the efforts to suppress Indian-born novelist Salman Rushdie's intensely controversial novel *The Satanic Verses*, a religious satire/allegory that is extremely offensive to Muslims. Rushdie's book was first banned in India in the fall of 1988 and caused rioting in Pakistan in 1989. At that time, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini placed a religious ruling, or *fatwa*, on Rushdie for the book's blasphemous content and called for the author's death.

Box 4.1 Most-Challenged Books of 2017

1. *Thirteen Reasons Why* written by Jay Asher. Originally published in 2007, this young adult novel was challenged and banned in multiple school districts because it discusses suicide. It was also the basis of a popular Netflix series.
2. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* written by Sherman Alexie. This book is consistently challenged in school curriculums because of profanity and situations that are deemed sexually explicit.
3. *Drama* written and illustrated by Raina Telgemeier. This 2012 graphic novel from an acclaimed cartoonist was challenged and banned in school libraries because it includes LGBTQ characters and was considered "confusing."
4. *The Kite Runner* written by Khaled Hosseini. This book was challenged and banned for including sexual violence and being thought to "lead to terrorism" and "promote Islam."
5. *George* written by Alex Gino. This book for elementary-age children was challenged and banned because it includes a transgender child.
6. *Sex Is a Funny Word* written by Cory Silverberg and illustrated by Fiona Smyth. This informational children's book was challenged because it addresses sex education.
7. *To Kill a Mockingbird* written by Harper Lee. This Pulitzer Prize–winning novel was challenged and banned because of violence and its use of the *N*-word.
8. *The Hate U Give* written by Angie Thomas. This young adult novel was challenged and banned in school libraries and curriculums for drug use, profanity, and offensive language.
9. *And Tango Makes Three* written by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson and illustrated by Henry

Cole. *Tango* has made frequent appearances on the list because it features a same-sex relationship.

10. *I Am Jazz* written by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings and illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas. This autobiographical picture book cowritten by the thirteen-year-old protagonist was challenged because it addresses gender identity.

Source: Adapted from American Library Association, "Top Ten Most Challenged Books," http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10#2017.

In the early days of the *fatwa*, Rushdie went into hiding and moved from house to house daily. According to some sources, the *fatwa* played a role in eventually breaking up his marriage.[90] Khomeini died several months after issuing the *fatwa*, making it difficult to remove the death sentence and leaving Rushdie in a kind of lifelong limbo. One of the reasons why the book offends Muslims is that it contains a dream sequence in which prostitutes pretend to be wives of the prophet Muhammad in order to increase their business. Additionally, it refers to Muhammad as Mahound, a Christian demon.[91] The text also contains trilingual puns that require an understanding of Hindu, Muslim, and British culture.

After the death threat, several major chain bookstores did not carry *The Satanic Verses*, but most independent booksellers continued to sell it. The chain stores eventually relented, and *The Satanic Verses* ended up at the top of the *New York Times* best-seller list.

In the fall of 1998, the Iranian government, through its foreign minister, Kamal Kharrazi, said that it would give no reward or assistance for killing Rushdie. However, as of this writing, militant Islamic organizations are still allegedly offering bounties of as much as $3 million on the author's life.[92] Despite the lifting of the official government death threat, Rushdie is not allowed to fly on British Airways planes.[93] Rushdie was fifty-one when the nine-year-old *fatwa* was lifted, and although he still sees a continued need for caution, he views the threat as ended. Rushdie had this to say to the *New York Times* about what it was like living under the *fatwa*:

> It's an extraordinary thing to see people walking down the streets of foreign cities, carrying your picture with the eyes poked out and calling for your death. It's as if somebody were to break your picture of the world, and everything you think about somehow ceases to be true.[94]

Although Rushdie himself was never attacked, several other individuals with connections to his book were killed or injured. Hitoshi Igarashi, the Japanese translator of *The Satanic Verses*, was stabbed to death in Tokyo in July 1991; Italian translator Ettore Capriolo was beaten and stabbed by a man demanding Rushdie's address; and William Nygaard, Rushdie's Norwegian publisher, was shot and wounded in October 1993. As recently as January 2012, Rushdie had to cancel an appearance at a major literary festival in India because of death threats against him. He was rescheduled to speak via television, but threats

of violence against the festival organizers led to even that being canceled.[95]

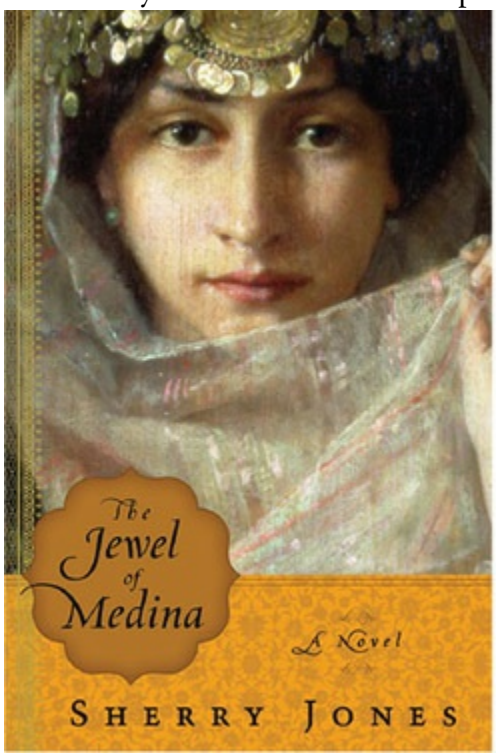
Rushdie is not the only author to face threats. In 2008, Britain's Scotland Yard stopped an attempt to firebomb the publisher of *The Jewel of Medina*, a controversial book about the prophet Muhammad and his child bride by American author Sherry Jones. The attack targeted Jones's Dutch publisher, Martin Rynja. The American publisher of *Jewel*, Random House, canceled its publication because the company feared it might incite violence. (Random House is the largest English-language publisher and is owned by German publishing giant Bertelsmann.) Random House has been accused of canceling publication of the book after having the manuscript criticized by an associate professor of Islamic history at the University of Texas. Jones was able to replace Random House with Beaufort Books as her American publisher.[96]

Other authors who have received death threats include Bangladeshi doctor, poet, and novelist Taslima Nasrin; Nigerian poet Ken Saro-Wiwa; and Nobel Prize–winning Nigerian author Wole Soyinka.[97]

The Future of Books

As we discussed in Chapter 3, digital media and the internet are bringing big changes to the media business, providing consumers with alternatives to blockbuster books. Instead, a limited number of consumers spread out across the country can access far more specialized content than they could find in even the biggest brick-and-mortar bookstore. This phenomenon is known as the long tail. The long tail recognizes that we are no longer limited by geography as to what media we will buy and whom we will talk to. As Chris Anderson, the author of *The Long Tail*, explains, "We are turning from a mass market back into a niche nation, defined now not by our geography but by our interests."[98]

▼ The *Jewel of Medina*, written by Sherry Jones (right), generated international controversy when extremists attempted to firebomb the offices of its British publisher.





Courtesy of Beaufort Books

After several years of being the perpetual "next big thing," electronic books have finally hit the mainstream. Classic books such as *Treasure Island* are being posted online, best-selling crime novels and romances are being released in electronic form, and so-called indie books, such as those by best-selling fantasy author Amanda Hocking, are being sold directly to readers by the authors.

Consumers have been justifiably nervous about jumping into e-books for technical and

logistical reasons. And then there is the whole question of "Why?" What do you get out of an e-book that you can't get from a traditional paper book?

Slate writer Jacob Weisberg is typical among fans of Amazon's Kindle, which has become the dominant e-book reader on the market for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that you can buy the books from Amazon.com and have them downloaded directly to your e-book reader without any connection to a computer.[99] In the fall of 2017, Amazon offered its first waterproof e-reader at the admittedly premium $249 price tag.[100]

Superstar author Jonathan Franzen, famous for his novels *The Corrections* and *Freedom*, came out in 2012 solidly opposed to e-books. Why? It would seem that Franzen's main objection to e-books is their lack of permanence. Commenting at the Hay cultural festival in Colombia, he said:

> The technology I like is the American paperback edition of *Freedom*. I can spill water on it and it would still work! So it's pretty good technology. And what's more, it will work great 10 years from now. So no wonder the capitalists hate it. It's a bad business model. . . . I think for serious readers, a sense of permanence has always been part of the experience. Everything else in your life is fluid, but here is the text that doesn't change.[101]

Central to Franzen's critique is that books ought to be in a fixed format that doesn't need to be updated; therefore, they don't need to be delivered on a platform that lets them be changed.

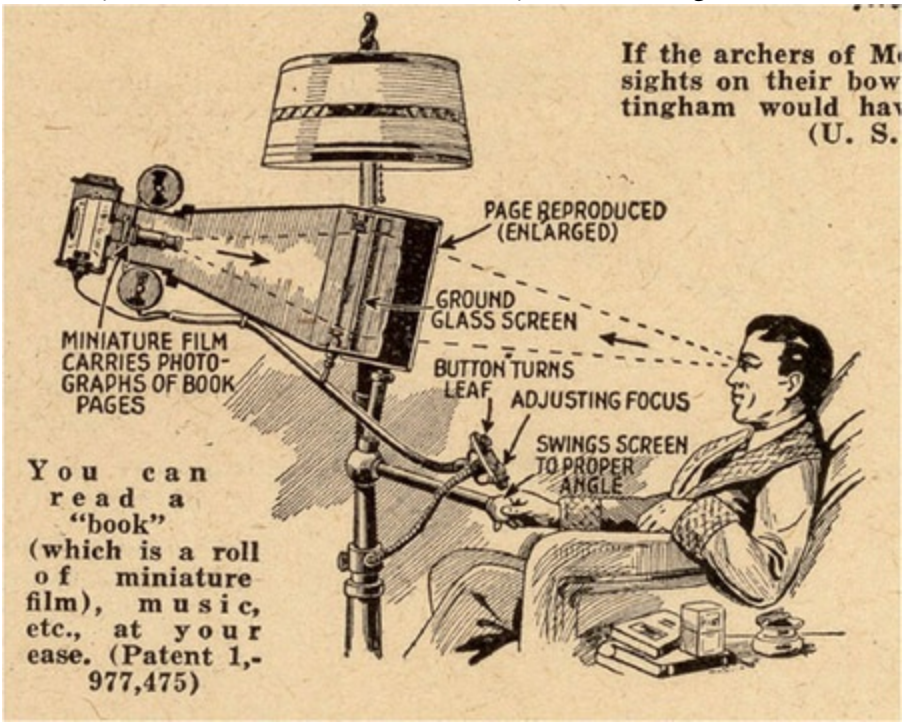
Author and commentator Jonathan Segura admits that there are limitations to e-books. As he writes at the blog *Monkey See*: "I am a scribbler, and you cannot scribble in the margins of an ebook. Not all books are available in digital editions. . . . E-books do not allow you to advertise your literary affectedness on the subway."[102] But Segura does not buy the argument that there is a conflict between traditional paper books and e-books:

> You can choose to have your text delivered on paper with a pretty cover, or you can choose to have it delivered over the air to your sleek little device. You can even play it way loose and read in both formats![103]

Aside from the reasons discussed in these debates, why would you want an e-book reader, other than to have the latest gadget?

▼ We think we're pretty modern these days if we're reading the latest best seller on a Kindle or iPad. But what was state of the art for e-readers back in the 1930s? Matt Novak,

a curator for the Smithsonian Institution, found this illustration in the April 1935 issue of *Everyday Science and Mechanics* for a microfilm-based book reader that could be mounted next to your favorite chair. Wonder why it never caught on . . .



Everyday Science and Mechanics Magazine

Journalist Ezra Klein sums up the conflict book lovers feel when they start using e-books instead of paper books:

> I like books. And I feel guilty every time I look up from my iPad and see the hundreds of books lining my walls, looking at me like Woody and Buzz watching Andy discover video games. But it's getting easier and easier for me to see how they get replaced by eBooks, and harder and harder for me to come up with arguments about why that's a bad thing.[104]

At least one alternative e-book format has been successful for many years, and that's the audiobook. For an audiobook, a voice actor, famous or not, reads books (or even magazine articles) aloud so that they can be listened to on a smartphone or one of the new voice-activated smart speakers. Major publishers are reporting that although they have had a slight decline in the number of e-books sold, they have made up for some of that by the increased popularity of audiobooks. According to the Audio Publishers Association, sales grew to $2.5 billion in 2017, up from $2.1 billion in 2016. They provide a distinct value to consumers in that they allow readers to consume books and similar material in

environments where they can't easily read. Audiobooks also have the advantage of being readily understandable—everyone knows what "audiobooks" are. Finally, though you can use special equipment like an Amazon Kindle to listen to them, you likely already own a smartphone that is more than capable of playing audiobooks. This means there's very little risk in adopting this new technology.[105]

Print on Demand.

The other side of electronic publishing is print on demand, in which the physical book is not printed until it's ordered or until the distributor of the book prints additional copies in small batches. This is how Amazon supplies some of its smallest-selling titles. The company has banks of large-capacity laser printers that can turn out fresh copies of books from digital copies stored on a computer. This allows the company to stock books at a cost that approaches zero until the book is ordered.[106] Book wholesaler Ingram also does print on demand through its subsidiary Lightning Source, which can print and deliver books within forty-eight hours.[107]

But don't write off traditional books printed on actual paper just yet. The NPD BookScan service reports that 687 million printed books were sold in 2017—an increase of 1.9 percent over the year before.[108]

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Early forms of writing first appeared in the Middle East about 3500 BC. Over the next two thousand years, writing evolved from simple pictographs to highly developed ideograms and the sound-based alphabet system. Modern rag-based paper was developed in China between 240 BC and 105 BC. In medieval Western Europe, early hand-copied books were created primarily by monks and other religious figures. Because they were difficult to produce, these books were expensive and rare.

In the mid-fifteenth century, Johannes Gutenberg developed the typemold. Printing presses using Gutenberg's movable type allowed books and other publications to be mass produced for the first time, leading to numerous cultural events, including the Protestant Reformation, the rise of literacy, and standardization of grammar and spelling.

In the New World, publishing began soon after European settlement, first in Mexico City by Spanish settlers and later by British colonists in the Massachusetts Bay area. As literacy and education spread throughout the growing middle class during the nineteenth century, improvements in printing technology made inexpensive popular reading materials, such as dime novels and serials, readily available. The first comprehensive dictionary of the English language also was produced during the nineteenth century.

The modern book business has three major participants: publishers, authors, and booksellers. The book business, like the rest of the media industry, has been characterized by rapid consolidation, with a limited number of companies controlling a substantial portion of the publishing, distribution, and retail business.

Publishers produce a wide range of books, but most of the industry's profits come from a limited number of best-selling titles from authors such as Margaret Atwood and Stephen King. Young adult authors such as J. K. Rowling, John Green, and Veronica Roth have been extremely popular and have dominated the best-seller lists in recent years. The textbook industry has come under increased scrutiny by both legislators and consumers for high costs. Responses have included textbook rental, electronic editions, and lowered costs of production.

Although books rarely attract the degree of controversy that movies, television, or video games do, they are occasionally challenged in the United States, typically by an individual library or school district. The most common reason for restricting books is that they contain offensive language, racial bias or stereotypes, sexual material, or offensive comments about religion. Outside of the United States, some controversial authors have faced threats of violence or even death, most notably Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*. Such bans and threats almost never prevent the books from being sold, however.

The internet has become an important marketplace for books, especially those for which demand is limited. Online bookstores such as Amazon.com can keep books available by selling them as digital downloads or as print-on-demand titles. E-book readers are becoming increasingly popular as a means of distributing books, especially textbooks.

Key Terms ▶▶

pictograph 82
ideograph 82
phonography 83
alphabets 83
papyrus 83
parchment 83
paper 83
scriptoria 83
emojis 84
typemold 85
font 85
Bay Psalm Book 87
serial novels 88
dime novels 88
rotary press 88
Linotype 88
publishers 88
university and small presses 89
proofs 92
inclusive access 94
e-book readers 103
domestic novels 96
trade 96
brick-and-mortar store 102
print on demand 104

Review Questions ▸▸

1. How and why does young adult author John Green deal with mental illness in his novels?
2. How do ideographs and phonetic alphabets differ from each other? What are advantages and disadvantages of phonetic alphabets?
3. How did the development of movable type transform the book publishing industry?
4. How does a publisher differ from a printer?
5. Are books often banned successfully in the United States? Why or why not? Defend your answer.
6. Aside from not involving paper, how do e-books differ from conventional books?

Student Study Site ▸▸

Get the tools you need to sharpen your study skills. SAGE edge offers a robust online environment featuring an impressive array of free tools and resources.

Access practice quizzes, eFlashcards, video, and multimedia at edge.sagepub.com/hanson7e





Courtesy of Elisa Roupenian Toha

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Explain the importance of the *Saturday Evening Post* in the development of the mass media in the United States
2. Describe the key characteristics of trade, literary, and consumer magazines
3. Illustrate how magazines have given a voice to different groups of people
4. Discuss the role that magazines and magazine ads play in defining people's body image
5. Describe what is meant by "native advertising" and why it is controversial
6. Discuss the major trends in twenty-first-century magazine publishing

Short stories, at one time, were a central part of American magazine culture.

Edgar Allan Poe helped build his fame with "The Gold-Bug" published in 1843 in *Philadelphia Dollar Magazine*. Mark Twain's "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" was published in 1865 in the *New York Saturday Press*. More recently, it has been stories published in the *New Yorker:* Shirley Jackson with "The Lottery" in 1948 and Annie Proulx's "Brokeback Mountain" from 1997.

These short stories all provoked widespread talk—Jackson's "Lottery" attracted more mail to the magazine than any previous story. You all likely read "The Lottery" in middle school or high school English class. It tells the story of an annual lottery held in an unidentified American town where the "winner" gets stoned to death by the rest of the people in the community. It's a grim story that tells us all too much about the world we live in. Most of the mail received at the *New Yorker* was negative, accusing the story of being "outrageous," "gruesome," and "utterly pointless."[1]

Jackson later said that only thirteen of the more than three hundred letters that came in were kind, "and they were mostly from friends." But the story has aged well, with a 2013 article from the *New Yorker* noting that it has been turned into a play, a television program, an opera, and even an episode of *The Simpsons.* If you have read only one modern short story, chances are it's "The Lottery."

SECRETS 4 AND 5 ▸ A magazine short story generating hundreds of reader responses and starting a national discussion seems like something from another era——certainly not from the short attention span, social media era. And yet, Secret 4 tells us nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again. And Secret 5 tells us that all media are social.

In December 2017, the *New Yorker* published a short story titled "Cat Person" by an unknown author named Kristen Roupenian. "Cat Person" is about sexual decision making in the age of Tinder and flirting by text message. It tells the story of twenty-year-old Margot and the older Robert, who meet at a local movie theater. They carry out most of

their early relationship with brief text messages. So when they finally go out on an in-person date, they don't really know each other. The date ends in a sexual encounter that goes badly: sex she wishes she had said no to but didn't feel she was able to.[2]

If you want to stop right now to read the story, there are links to both the text and the author reading it here: www.ralphehanson.com/2018/05/17/catperson/.

While the story is completely fictional, Roupenian says that she wrote the first draft quickly after a particularly bad date. "The story was inspired by a small but nasty encounter I had with a person I met online," she said. "I was shocked by the way this person treated me, and then immediately surprised by my own shock. How had I decided that this was someone I could trust? The incident got me thinking about the strange and flimsy evidence we use to judge the contextless people we meet outside of our existing social networks, whether online or off."[3]

When the story was published, Roupenian was unknown and had two hundred followers on Twitter. But in the hours and days since it was published, it seemed like everyone online had something to say about it. *New Yorker* tweets linking to the story were shared more than 1,000 times and liked more than 2,500 times the week following its publication. Rozina Sini, writing for the BBC, says, "In the age of dating apps, swiping left or right, and getting to know potential partners through social media, it seems 'Cat Person' has resonated."[4]

All this response made Roupenian famous and got her a two-book contract with a major publisher reportedly worth $1.2 million.

Constance Grady, writing for *Vox*, says that a big reason the story went viral was that there could be so many different interpretations of it: "It was a good story. No, it was a bad story, and people who thought it was good had not read enough short stories. No, it actually *was* good, and people who thought it was not good were sexist. Margot's internal monologue about Robert's body constituted fat shaming. No, she was simply a good old-fashioned unlikable narrator. Robert was the villain. No, Robert was the hero."[5]

Despite Twitter's role in fueling the attention to "Cat People," Roupenian is rarely on social media, with only thirty-two tweets since she joined Twitter in 2009. Virtually her only online response was a tweet the week after publication, saying, "I don't really know how to do justice to the conversation that is happening around my story but I am grateful for it. I need to go take a walk in the snow and hug my dog."[6]

SECRET 5 ▸ But even if the writer isn't active on social media, her readers are there and are talking. Just like Shirley Jackson's readers were back in 1948. As were Annie Proulx's in 1997 when the *New Yorker* published her most famous story, "Brokeback Mountain." Because Secret 5—All media are social—is not a secret of the modern age; it's always been true.

Provocative stories by authors such as Shirley Jackson, Annie Proulx, and Kristen Roupenian help start conversations about magazines that cover every imaginable topic, from fashion to sports to news. In this chapter, we look at how the magazine industry grew from a general national medium into one that serves a wide range of narrow interests. We look at the types of magazines published today, some controversies that surround magazine articles and advertisements, how the magazine industry operates, and what the future of the magazine industry holds.

The Development of a National Culture

Before radio and television, magazines were people's primary source for in-depth news, ideas, and pictures. In 1704, Daniel Defoe, later famous for writing *Robinson Crusoe*, founded the first real magazine in England—a weekly periodical called the *Review*. Physically, the *Review* looked just like the newspapers of the era. But newspapers focused exclusively on news, whereas Defoe's magazine covered public policy, literature, and morals. Edward Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine* was the first publication to use the word *magazine*, which was derived from the original meaning of the word as a place where goods or supplies are stored.[7]

> Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

What is a magazine? It is a periodical that contains articles of lasting interest. Typically, magazines are targeted at a specific audience and derive income from advertising, subscriptions, and newsstand sales. Magazines are also intended for a broader geographic area than newspapers, and in the nineteenth century, they increased in both number and circulation as the demand for nationwide advertising grew. (For more about the connection between the growth of advertising and magazines, see Chapter 11.)

Early Magazines

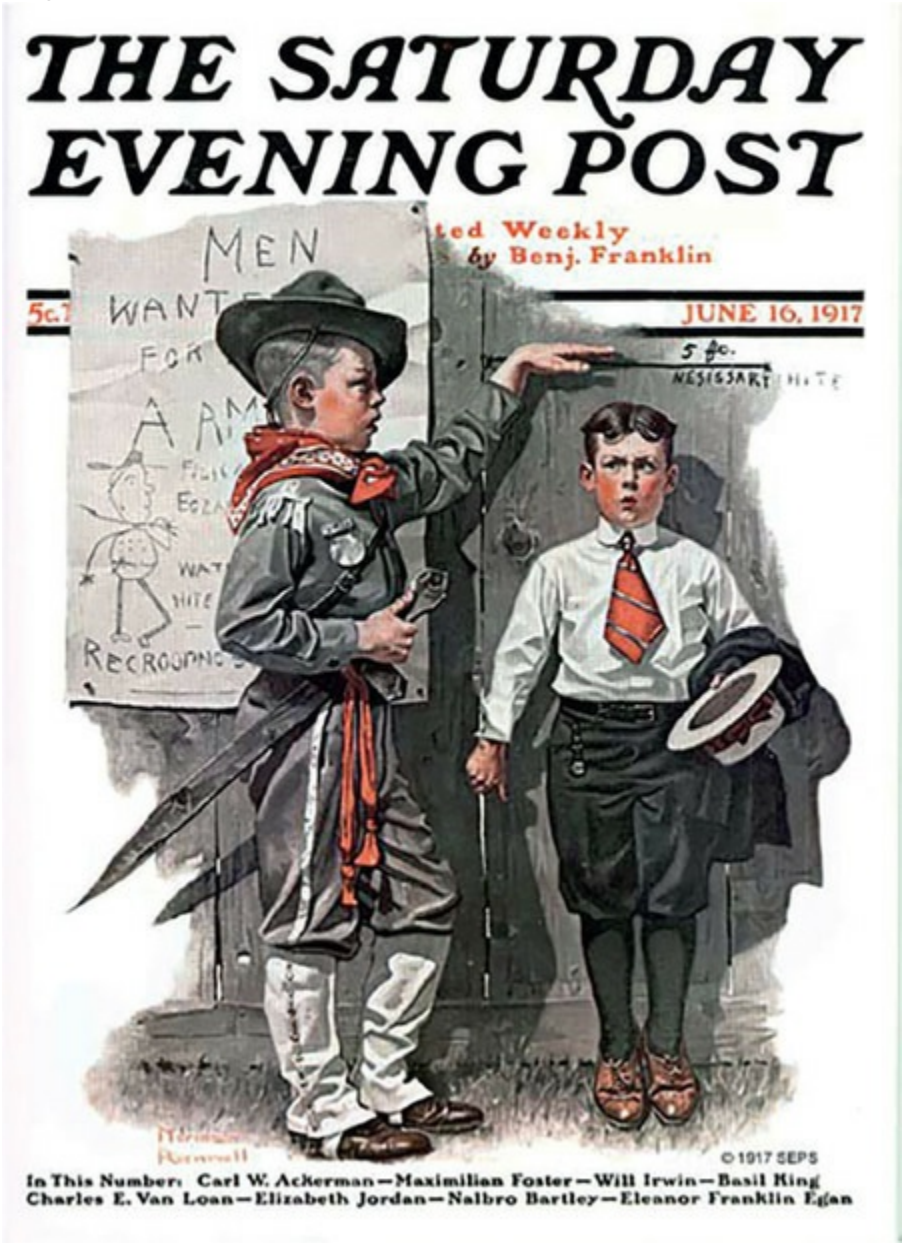
In 1740, Benjamin Franklin announced his plan to publish the *General Magazine*, with lawyer John Webbe as editor. But in a story that could rival any of today's headlines, Webbe was stolen away by publisher Andrew Bradford to edit his *American Magazine*. As a result, Bradford's magazine was published three days before Franklin's. The magazine industry in the New World was less than a week old, and it had already had its first battle.[8]

The hundred magazines published prior to 1800 contained many reprints from newspapers around the colonies, as well as items from British magazines. Magazines were free to reprint whatever they wanted because at the time there were no copyright laws or copyright protections.

The *Saturday Evening* Post

Just as television and the internet do today, the magazines of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided news, education, and entertainment. Their collections of humor, verse, and stories were designed for the small amounts of leisure time people had in the early 1800s. Because libraries were in short supply, magazines often were the only regular source of high-quality written entertainment.

▼ For more than a century, the *Saturday Evening Post* was one of the dominant magazines in the United States.



Saturday Evening Post

The most significant of the early magazines was the *Saturday Evening Post*, first published on August 4, 1821. It looked like a four-page newspaper, and a year's subscription cost two dollars, half payable in advance.[9] It featured essays, poetry, obituaries, stories, and a column called "The Ladies' Friend." It contained advertising, and by the 1830s, it was illustrated as well.

SECRET 1 ▸ The *Post* was in many ways the first truly national medium—unlike the newspapers that covered a single city, it was read in every American state from Maine to Florida. For at least forty years, the *Post* was the voice of the United States and an early example of Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives. It published the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, James Fenimore Cooper, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The *Post* appealed to a broad, general audience rather than the more exclusive audience of literary magazines. By 1848, it was the leading weekly in the United States, and even as late as 1937, it had a circulation of more than three million.

In 1928, Leon Chipple described the *Post* as follows:

> This is a magic mirror; it not only reflects, it creates us. What the [*Saturday Evening Post*] is we are. Its advertising helps standardize our physical life; its text stencils patterns on our minds. It is a main factor in raising the luxury-level by teaching us new wants. . . . But it does more than whet our hunger; by blunt or subtle devices it molds our ideas on crime, prohibition, Russia, oil, preparedness, immigration, the World Court. . . . This bulky nickel's worth of print and pictures is a kind of social and emotional common denominator of American life.[10]

SECRET 1 ▸ This is an early statement, though not a unique one, that speaks to Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives. It does not imply that magazines are the creators of our world. Rather, it claims that magazines are an integral, inseparable part of who we are in the media world.

With the coming of television, the *Post* found its preeminent position in American culture fading. The world was changing, but the *Post* did not change with it. It was stuck in the middle-class America of the pre-World War II era that it depicted in its Norman Rockwell covers. Following a series of editorial and advertising missteps, the *Post* gradually became a monthly publication, and since 2001, it has been published only bimonthly as a nostalgia and health magazine. The coming of television also forced magazines in general to change from appealing to broad audiences to focusing on narrower, more specific ones.

The Birth of Photojournalism

In addition to providing the first national source of news and commentary, magazines were the first source of photojournalism—the use of photographs to portray the news in print. At first, pictures were printed in periodicals by using hand-engraved plates copied from photographs. Then in the 1880s came the invention of the halftone, an image produced by a process in which photographs are broken down into a series of dots that appear in shades of gray on the printed page. The halftone allowed the photograph to be reproduced directly in the publication rather than being copied into a drawing.

▼ War photography, in terms of the horror of the images, hasn't changed that much since its beginnings during the American Civil War. This image of the Battle of Gettysburg (left) was taken in 1863 by photographer Timothy H. O'Sullivan, who initially trained under Mathew Brady. The photo on the right, taken by an unnamed photographer working for the NurPhoto Agency and Erbin News, shows the bodies of those killed in a suspected chemical weapons attack on a suburb of Damascus, Syria, during the country's ongoing civil war.



Library of Congress



NurPhoto/Corbis via Getty Images

Photographer Mathew Brady is often credited with inventing photojournalism in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1845, Brady began to become famous for his portraits of noted Americans. He attempted to sell printed reproductions of his photographs, and though the effort failed because the costs were too high, he set the stage for later celebrity photographers, such as Annie Leibovitz. Brady also realized that much of the value of his photographic portraits came from their being reproduced as engravings, woodcuts, lithographs, and the like. The original was valuable, but so were the reproductions. Today Brady is best remembered for his pictures of the American Civil War, the first war to be photographed from beginning to end.

During the war, Brady was as much a studio operator as a photographer. He supervised the work of a number of talented photographers, and he made sure that the photos found their way into magazines and newspapers. By 1863, *Harper's Weekly* was reproducing Brady's Civil War photos, which horrified American audiences. The photographers followed the Union Army in wagons filled with their equipment and portable darkrooms. Many of the photos credited to Brady, whose eyesight was failing, were likely shot by his assistants. Photographers working for Brady often got extremely close to the line of fire. Thomas C. Roche, who often worked for Brady, got so close that he was seen shaking dirt off himself and his camera after shells hit nearby. In fact, some of Brady's best photographers left his employ so that they might get the credit they thought they deserved for taking pictures under such dangerous conditions. Brady's greatest contribution was not so much the individual war photographs that he may or may not have taken, but what evolved from the photographs: the idea that photographs are published documents preserving history.[11]

Questioning the Media

In the 1800s, magazines were our major national-level medium. Which media serve that role today? Are magazines still a "magic mirror" of our culture? If not, what's replaced them? Is this new medium a more interactive mirror? Why or why not?

The Magazine Business

After the American Civil War, the number of magazines and their circulation grew rapidly. This growth was fueled by a number of factors, such as the emergence of a new middle class, whose members had learned to read in public schools and were now starting to read magazines. Also, a growing number of national advertisers saw the magazine as an efficient means by which to reach their target audiences. Magazine distribution was aided by the Postal Act of 1879, which allowed periodicals to be mailed across the nation easily and inexpensively. Improvements in printing, typesetting, and illustration engraving also contributed to the growth of magazines.

The Economics of Magazine Publishing

The post–Civil War era saw the introduction of several magazines, including *Popular Science*, *Good Housekeeping*, *National Geographic*, *Vogue*, and *Outdoor Life*, that are still in existence. From the start, these magazines provided news, ideas, advice for the home, and entertainment. They are all examples of consumer magazines—publications targeting an audience of like-minded consumers. As of 2016, there were approximately 7,216 consumer magazines.[12] Of those, 226 were new magazines launched in 2016.[13]

Consumer magazines cover a wide range of topics, but if it seems to you that the most popular subject is celebrities, you aren't far off. An analysis of the content of top consumer magazines found that the largest number of pages (16.9 percent) were devoted to entertainment and celebrity coverage. This was followed by apparel and accessories with 11.5 percent of the pages and food and nutrition with 8.3 percent of the pages.[14] You can see the top categories for new magazines in Table 5.1.[15] Deriving their revenue from subscriptions, newsstand sales, and advertising, consumer magazines tend to be the most visible and profitable segment of the industry. Their continued success is due to their focus on specific audiences; they stand in contrast to the many general-interest magazines that have failed as new media took their places. Top magazine advertisers include toiletries and cosmetics, food and food products, pharmaceuticals, apparel and accessories, retail, and media and advertising.

Trade Magazines

The second major category of periodicals consists of trade magazines (also known as business-to-business magazines), which are published for people who work in a particular industry or business. Trade magazines tend to be smaller, less colorful, and more specialized than consumer magazines. While there are about twice as many trade magazines as consumer magazines, they account for only about 17 percent of the industry's revenue.[16] Trade magazines vary radically in circulation, scope, and the degree to which people outside of the industry know about them. For example, *Women's Wear Daily* is routinely quoted in the mainstream press and talked about by anyone interested in fashion. On the other hand, *Accounting Today*, which covers all aspects of public accounting, is unlikely to be heard of outside of its very specialized field. The biggest topics for trade magazines are the computer industry, agriculture, medicine, and manufacturing.[17] Whereas some trade magazines are available by subscription, many have controlled circulation, meaning that people have to qualify in order to subscribe. For example, the grocery trade magazine *Refrigerated & Frozen Foods* is sent free of charge to people who work as frozen food producers, processors, and marketers. Subscribers have to fill out a survey form once or twice a year to continue qualifying for their free subscription. Advertisers know that most of the people who receive the magazine actually buy the products being advertised.[18] Trade magazine advertising is growing at a very slow rate with annual revenue of $4.9 billion for 2019.[19]

▼ TABLE 5.1

Top Categories for New Magazines, 2017–2018

Type of Publication	Number of New Titles
Crafts/Games/Hobbies	32
Pop Culture	17
Fashion	16
Regional	15
Home	13
Food	11
Special Interest	10
Arts	9
Children's	9
Black/Ethnic	7
Politics/Social Topics	6
Business/Finance	5
Fitness	5
Travel	5
Entertainment	4
Gaming	4
Gardening	4
Health	4
LGBTQ	4
Women's	4
Architecture	3
Comics	3
Equestrian	3
Men's	3

Source: Adapted by the author from Association of Magazine Media, "Magazine Media Factbook 2017/2018," http://www.magazine.org/sites/default/files/FACTBOOK-17-18-f2.pdf.

▼ Table 5.1

Source: Adapted by the author from Association of Magazine Media, "Magazine Media Factbook 2017/2018," http://www.magazine.org/sites/default/files/FACTBOOK-17-18-f2.pdf.

Literary and Commentary Magazines

Although today in the United States there are relatively few literary magazines—publications that focus on serious essays and short fiction—they were part and parcel of the magazine market of the 1800s. Two that still survive are *Harper's* (not to be confused with *Harper's Bazaar*) and the *Atlantic*.

▼ William F. Buckley Jr. founded the *National Review* as a conservative response to magazines such as the *New Republic* and the *Nation*.



Evening Standard/Getty Images

The literary magazines helped to establish authors such as American writers Edgar Allan Poe and Mark Twain, as well as British writers Joseph Conrad and Thomas Hardy. *Harper's* magazine was founded in 1850 and was known for its illustrations, especially during the American Civil War. By 1863, *Harper's Weekly* was reproducing Mathew Brady's portraits and Civil War photos. Harper's continues today as an influential publication, best known for its monthly "Index" of loosely connected facts and statistics.

In recent years, the *Atlantic* (known in the past as *Atlantic Monthly*) has gained a reputation for publishing provocative nonfiction by authors such as Ta-Nehisi Coates, and it still occasionally publishes poetry and short fiction. Despite the overall trend toward

specialization, the *Atlantic* has been doing well in the twenty-first century. It cut back from twelve to ten issues a year in 2007 but has had a steady increase in circulation, and in 2010, it turned its first profit in decades, based in large part on its increase in revenue from digital editions.[20] This trend continued through 2018, with the *Atlantic* seeing a steady growth in print circulation and much larger growth with its online properties. In fact, the publication's website saw a 36 percent growth in the first half of 2017, and had more than forty-two million visitors in May of that year.[21] In 2006, 80 percent of the publication's revenue came from print advertising; but in 2017, print advertising was responsible for less than 20 percent of the company's revenue. The rest came from digital, events, and consulting. (You can read more about how the *Atlantic* turned profitable through its digital strategy in the section on the future of magazines at the end of the chapter.)

Political journals also flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The *Nation* and the *New Republic* are examples of progressive political opinion still being published today. The *Nation*, founded in 1865, discussed current affairs, improving the lot of the working class, and civil rights. The *New Republic*, founded in 1914, promoted labor, civil rights, and antifascism. Both magazines featured letters from readers as an interactive forum for discussion. More than just filler, these letters were central to the magazines' content. The idea of reader feedback as a central component of a publication has reached its full potential in internet magazines that feature elaborate discussion boards.

The *Nation* and the *New Republic* depend on subsidies from the capitalist system they often criticize. Although the *Nation* claims to be the oldest continuously published American weekly, it loses money every year.[22] According to publisher Victor Navasky, the magazine's poor financial showing is due to a combination of factors, including small circulation and the fact that the magazine is not "advertiser friendly":

> At The Nation, we're in the business of attacking the companies that more financially successful magazines are in the business of soliciting for advertising, most notably tobacco. But these titles of opinion are at the core of what journalism should be about, and at their best, they can set the standard for the profession.[23]

▼ One of the most influential African American magazines, *the Crisis*, was founded by W. E. B. Du Bois in 1910 and is the official magazine of the NAACP. Today the magazine publishes both digital and print editions. Shown above is a recent cover of the digital edition.



The Crisis, retrieved from https://www.thecrisismagazine.com, accessed May 28, 2018.

William F. Buckley Jr.'s *National Review* was founded in 1955 as a conservative response to these magazines. In terms of circulation, it is the largest of the three discussed here (more than 178,000 copies per month). Although it is technically a for-profit venture, which means it can endorse candidates and legislation, its leading source of income remains donations from readers. As is typical for opinion magazines, the conservative *National Review* gains readership when Democrats are in power and loses readership when Republicans win elections. (That pattern is reversed for the liberal *New Republic* and *Nation*, which lose circulation when Democrats win elections.)[24] It has a strong online presence with NRPLUS.

The *Crisis*.

Giving African Americans a Voice One of the most important functions of a magazine of ideas is to offer a voice to those who otherwise would be kept silent. That was the purpose of W. E. B. Du Bois's journal, the *Crisis*. Du Bois, a Harvard-educated civil rights leader, started the *Crisis* as the official voice of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1910. At first, the magazine had only one thousand

subscribers, but by 1920, it had a monthly circulation of one hundred thousand. The *Crisis* became as successful as other political journals, such as the *Nation* and the *New Republic*, with almost as many white readers as black readers.

At its inception, the journal was one of a very few outlets for black writers. "Up until [1910] there were only five black writers who'd been published. The NAACP saw a need for art and literature," said Manie Barron, who edited an anthology of writings from the *Crisis*.[25] The *Crisis* was the leading voice against segregation in the South. It published debates between Du Bois and African American educator and leader Booker T. Washington over the proper role of black education and featured the first appearance of many of Langston Hughes's poems.[26]

Du Bois edited the *Crisis* until 1934. After he stepped down, the journal gradually became more of an African American consumer magazine than an independent journal of black intellectual writing. To address the problem, the NAACP suspended publication of the magazine for about a year in the mid-1990s to work on giving it a new focus. According to civil rights leader Julian Bond, who oversaw the remake of the magazine, "[The *Crisis*] was once the place where you read about race, and the new board wanted to make it that again." In 2008, the magazine moved from being a monthly publication to quarterly in order to control costs, and in 2010, the *Crisis* celebrated its hundredth anniversary.[27] The *Crisis* has an online presence at www.thecrisismagazine.com, and the magazine is available in both print and digital form.

The Muckrakers.

Investigative reporting was made famous by the Watergate political scandal of the early 1970s, but it began in the late 1800s at several newspapers and magazines. The most lasting examples came from the so-called muckraking magazines. The term *muckrakers* was coined by President Theodore Roosevelt to describe socially activist investigative journalists publishing in progressive-minded magazines in the early years of the twentieth century. Although Roosevelt favored the social and political reforms that the exposés clearly indicated were necessary, he suggested that the investigative reporters who published such stories were "muckraking"—that is, they were digging up dirt without stopping to see the good things in the world.

The most famous of the muckrakers was Samuel S. McClure, who led the fight at the beginning of the twentieth century for "business, social, and political reform."[28] Although McClure was a reformer, he also sought to make a profit through the investigative articles he published in his magazine, *McClure's*. Although the writing in *McClure's* was sensationalistic, it was based on fact. Circulation skyrocketed, and it was hard to find copies of the magazine on newsstands. Advertisers liked the magazine for the attention it attracted and its high readership.

McClure's took on the insurance industry, the railroads, and urban problems. Two of the most prominent writers at *McClure's* were Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell. Steffens started work at *McClure's* in 1902 and was quickly sent out into the field to report on municipal government corruption. Over the next two years, his reporting on the misdeeds of officials in St. Louis, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York led to indictments and reform. The resulting six articles were eventually collected in the classic book *The Shame of the Cities*.[29] But the magazine's most famous target was Standard Oil. Tarbell had been assigned to write a series of stories that would showcase the oil giant's achievements. Working with the full cooperation of company officials, Tarbell spent five years writing the fifteen-article series, which revealed that the company had achieved its incredible success through the use of bribes, fraud, and violence.[30] By 1908, the muckraking movement had played itself out. The original talented and committed muckrakers had moved on to other pursuits, and they were replaced by people who were more concerned with sensationalism than with accuracy.

Newsmagazines

Henry Luce, through the now-enormous Time Warner media empire, has probably done more to shape the American media environment than virtually anyone else. Luce was born in China, the son of a Christian missionary, and he graduated from Yale in 1920. He conceived the idea of *Time* magazine while in prep school with his friend Briton Hadden.

The two founded the magazine in 1923 as a reaction against the journalism of the time. They wanted a magazine that would keep readers up-to-date on current events in a single weekly magazine. Organized around news departments, *Time* was written in a style that put the news in context and told the reader how to think about the issues—a style that the magazine maintains to this day. While *Time* presents multiple sides of a story, it also indicates which side the magazine thinks is correct, rejecting the notion of objectivity as impossible.

Luce later took on the world of business with *Fortune*, a glossy magazine featuring the photography of Margaret Bourke-White. The magazine's purpose was to "reflect industrial life as faithfully in ink and paper and word as the finest skyscraper reflects it in stone, steel, and architecture."[31] Luce also was convinced that Americans wanted to get their news through pictures, so he started *Life* magazine in 1936. A success from the start, *Life* had 230,000 subscribers for its first issue and a print order for 466,000 copies. Within four months, the print order was for more than 1 million copies.[32] When *Life* was launched, the big star at the magazine was neither the editor nor a writer; it was photographer Margaret Bourke-White. Bourke-White was more than just a photographer—she became a cultural icon. Bourke-White's greatest love was industrial photography. Smokestacks, trains, steam pipes, bursts of flame—these were the subjects she most wanted to shoot. In 1929, Luce, the cofounder of *Time*, saw Bourke-White's photos of the Otis Steel mill and foundry and decided that she was the photographer he wanted to take pictures for his new magazine, *Fortune*. Bourke-White shot photos using such daring methods as hanging off the stone gargoyles at the tops of skyscrapers. She also photographed in Russia at a time when most foreigners were not allowed to take pictures of Soviet industry.[33]

▼ Margaret Bourke-White rests her camera on a steel gargoyle at the top of New York's Chrysler Building in 1934.



Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

In 1936, Bourke-White journeyed across the South with writer Erskine Caldwell, who had written the controversial novels *God's Little Acre* and *Tobacco Road*. At the time, Caldwell was America's most banned writer because of his sexually explicit (for the time) descriptions of relationships between men and women. Together Caldwell and Bourke-White documented the poverty of the South in the book *You Have Seen Their Faces*.

Following Bourke-White's work at *Fortune*, Luce put her to work on *Life* two months before it started publication. Her first assignment for the new magazine was photographing the dams of the Columbia River basin. But she also shot pictures of people living in Montana—the taxi dancers in the bars, the prostitutes, the customers bowling. The cover photo was typical of Bourke-White's industrial photography: the monumental Fort Peck Dam with a couple of tiny figures included to indicate scale. But her photo essay about the people in the bar, which included a picture of a four-year-old who sat there at night while her mother waited tables, created an uproar among *Life*'s readers and brought the magazine a tremendous amount of attention.[34] During World War II, Bourke-White became the first woman photographer accredited by the U.S. Army. The army even designed a uniform for her that became the model for those worn by all women correspondents. During the war, she was on an American ship in the Mediterranean Sea that was torpedoed by a German U-boat. As she left the ship on a lifeboat in the middle of the night, Bourke-White's biggest frustration was that the darkness prevented her from taking photographs:

> I could think of nothing but the magnificent pictures unfolding before me, which I longed to take and could not. I suppose for all photographers their greatest pictures

> are their untaken ones, and I am no exception. For me the indelible untaken photograph is the picture of our sinking ship viewed from our dangling lifeboat.[35]

Luce went on to create *Sports Illustrated*, which debuted on August 12, 1954. Critics suggested that the magazine would face an early demise because no one would be interested in it. After all, football fans wouldn't want to read about basketball or hockey. But by 1968, *Sports Illustrated* had a circulation of 1.5 million, and it currently sells more than 18 million copies a month.[36]

In 2014, Time Inc. was spun off by its parent company Time Warner as a separately traded company that includes more than twenty magazines in the United States and fifty websites. Properties include *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *People*.[37] Then, in November 2017, the Time Inc. family of magazines was purchased by Iowa magazine publisher Meredith Corp., bringing to a close the Time Warner era as one of America's premier magazine publishers.[38] A variety of reasons have been advanced for why this once major magazine publisher was sold off to be a unit within another company. One explanation was that Time Inc. management only looked at short-term revenue rather than investing in the future. Another is that this was just part of Time Warner's long process of selling off units that are not central to its entertainment business. And finally, Meredith has been hungering to get its hands on some of Time Inc.'s titles, most prominently the lifestyle publications like *InStyle* and *Real Simple*.[39] (See Chapter 3 for more on this change.)

Women's Magazines

One of the biggest categories of consumer magazines is those targeted at women. Women's magazines got their start in 1830, when Louis Godey began publishing *Godey's Lady's Book*. Edited by Sarah Josepha Hale from 1837 to 1877, *Godey's* was one of the most influential magazines dealing with American life, even though it was much more lowbrow than *Harper's* or *Atlantic Monthly*. According to magazine historian James Wood,

> *Godey's* became an American institution in the nineteenth century. It affected the manners, morals, tastes, fashions in the clothes, homes, and diet of generations of American readers. It did much to form the American woman's idea of what she was like, how she should act, and how she should insist that she be treated.[40]

Godey's also was a place where women writers could be published alongside established male authors. Hale took responsibility for openly promoting women writers. Previously, women writers had to use initials or male pseudonyms, or they had to publish in unsigned columns. Hale, however, boldly printed the names of women authors. In the same way that the *Crisis* gave voice to African American writers, *Godey's* gave women a forum. (Black women's magazines existed then as well. For example, *Ringwood's Afro-American Journal of Fashion* was being published in Cleveland in the 1890s.)

Hale also campaigned for education and exercise for women, so it isn't surprising that illustrations in *Godey's* frequently showed women carrying books, magazines, and letters. Hale argued that women needed to receive an education for their own sakes, not just to make them better wives and mothers. The fiction Hale published in *Godey's* even portrayed single women leading satisfying lives.

Hale wrote a column for fourteen years, and her last editorial appeared in *Godey's* in December 1877. She was eighty-nine years old. Hale died in 1879, and though the magazine lived on without her for a while, it was never the same.

Why does Hale still matter to us today? It is because women's magazines continue to follow in her footsteps. They provide a place for women to come together apart from men and provide material that is of specific interest to women, such as articles about women's health. They also celebrate women artists and writers.[41]

The "Seven Sisters."

Following in the tradition of *Godey's Lady's Book* were the mainstream women's service magazines—magazines that primarily contain articles about how to do things in a better

way. These articles cover such topics as health advice, cooking tips, employment help, and fashion guides. The top service magazines were once known as the "seven sisters": *Good Housekeeping*, *McCall's*, *Redbook*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Woman's Day*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Family Circle*. Each was distinctive, but all dealt with a concern for home, family, and quality of life from a traditional woman's perspective.

Cyrus H. K. Curtis founded the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1883, and in many ways, it was essentially the same magazine then that it was when it shut down in 2014. It promoted a traditional view of a woman's role in the home; it told her how to dress, what to cook, how to raise children, and how to decorate the house. But it also dealt with issues that were controversial at the time, such as venereal disease and premarital sex. In 1906, the magazine argued against the so-called double standard, in which young men were allowed to sow their wild oats while women were expected to remain virgins. Women and children were paying the price, the magazine argued, because parents would not discuss the implications of sexual promiscuity with their sons, and the young men who were most promiscuous and likely to carry disease were those most likely to appeal to women. Similar concerns about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases appear in magazines today.[42] The "seven sisters" were reduced to six in 2001 when *McCall's*, founded in 1876, ceased publication. It was reformulated and renamed *Rosie*, after television talk show host and movie star Rosie O'Donnell. The new magazine was successful, experiencing growing circulation and ad pages, until O'Donnell quit her talk show and publicly came out as a lesbian, at which point she started having trouble with her publisher. The feud over editorial direction and the choice of editor led to the magazine's folding in December 2002. *Rosie* was the first major women's service magazine to cease publication since 1957.[43]

Then, in the summer of 2014, the "six sisters" became five when *Ladies' Home Journal* ceased publication as a monthly, moving to being a "quarterly, newsstand-only publication with 'a robust digital presence.'" According to reporting from industry publication *Adweek*, though the *Journal* had held onto its circulation well with 3.2 million subscribers, it had had serious declines in advertising revenue. Other reporters noted that publisher Meredith shut down the magazine at least in part because of the aging audience for the publication. A spokesperson for Meredith told *Adweek*, "You've got a women's lifestyle field that has expanded from the original Seven Sisters to a much broader field competing for limited ad dollars."[44] While there had been talk of continuing *Ladies' Home Journal* as a quarterly print or online publication, by the spring of 2018 there was little evidence left of this formerly grand publication. And with the closing of what had been the flagship of the "seven sisters" comes the end of this concept of what women's magazines should be.

▼ Publisher and author Helen Gurley Brown photographed in her office at *Cosmopolitan* magazine in 1965 in New York City.



Santi Visalli/Getty Images

Fashion/Beauty/Lifestyle Magazines.

The fashion/beauty/lifestyle (FBL) magazines have been seeing growth in readership lately, with their audience increasing by 24 percent between 2015 and 2016. But that's not to say the print versions are doing great—almost all of that growth came from the mobile web segment, going from 22 percent of readership to 33 percent. Desktop web viewership, in contrast, dropped from 14 to 13 percent, thus reminding us of Secret 6—Online media are mobile media.[45] This number includes the readers of women's service magazines, as well as those who read the more youth-oriented magazines, such as *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan*.

Compared to service magazines, the fashion books (magazines are often called books in the trade) focus more on clothes and style and less on lifestyle. Prominent among them are *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. *Vogue* was established in 1892 and has long been the leading fashion magazine. Edna Woolman Chase started working for *Vogue* in the 1890s, became its editor in 1914, and remained there until 1952, thus becoming one of the longest-tenured voices in fashion. *Vogue* has some editorial content about people, culture, and ideas, but it is devoted primarily to fashion, both in its editorial content and in its advertising. *Vogue* has long been an international presence, with Paris, Milan, and London editions, and it started publishing a Russian edition in 1998.

Each of the FBLs claims that it has a unique editorial focus. Such protestations aside, the magazines may be more alike than they are different. Paula Span, a former freelance writer for *Glamour*, wrote in the *Washington Post*,

> [These magazines] take a remarkably narrow view of women's interests. The proverbial visitor from space would conclude that earthling women in their twenties and thirties care only about their bodies and what to put in them and on them, their relationships with men and, to a far lesser extent, their jobs; the rest of the world is largely absent.[46]

Cosmopolitan.

If the "seven sisters" were the most venerable members of the women's magazine family, *Cosmopolitan* is the naughty cousin. Until 1996, *Cosmo* spoke with the voice of its longtime editor, Helen Gurley Brown. Brown took over at *Cosmo* in 1965 and turned the "insipid, faintly intellectual" magazine into the magazine for young women, with a peak circulation of three million in 1985. (As of 2013, *Cosmo* had a monthly circulation of just over three million.[47]) Brown coined the term *mouseburger* to describe the quiet, introverted "girl" *Cosmo* was out to help. Under Brown, readers were "*Cosmo* girls," though more recently the magazine has updated its image to "fun, fearless, and female."

Cosmo has always focused on practical advice about relationships, work, fashion, health, beauty, and sex. But when acclaimed women's magazine editor Bonnie Fuller took over the helm, the magazine started dealing with issues such as AIDS and sexual harassment. Fuller told the *New York Times*, "I wanted to make it more seductive, not so much in a sexual sense, but in a sense that the reader just couldn't wait to get it and then just couldn't possibly put it down."[48] Fuller also eliminated the occasional male pinups that have appeared in *Cosmo* over the years. (The most famous pinup was the one of Burt Reynolds published in 1972. His nude photo in *Cosmo* may have cost him the Oscar for the movie *Deliverance*.)

Men's Magazines

Many men's magazines, such as *Field & Stream* and *Motor Trend*, appeal to men through their hobbies. Women might read them, but the target audience is male. There are also men's magazines featuring provocative photos of women, such as *Playboy* and (originally) *Esquire*. The most recent trend in men's magazines is toward lifestyle magazines that resemble women's magazines but are intended for men; these include *Maxim* and *Men's Health*.

Esquire: A Morale Booster for the Troops.

Esquire was founded in 1933, and though it published original work by writers such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, it was also known for its risqué pinups by artists Alberto Vargas and George Petty. These airbrushed drawings of impossibly perfect women frequently got the magazine into legal trouble for violating obscenity laws, but the pictures would be considered extremely mild by today's standards. (The University of Kansas houses the *Esquire* archives of pinup art, some of which is quite valuable. The collection's estimated value is between $10 and $20 million.) *Esquire*, due in no small part to its pinups, was considered an important morale booster during World War II and the Korean conflict, with comedian Bob Hope quoted as saying, "Our American troops are ready to fight at the drop of an *Esquire*."[49]

In recent years, *Esquire* has suffered from an identity crisis and experienced declining circulation and advertising revenue. It has changed ownership at least twice in recent decades, and it has changed its look and formula several times. Despite its problems, *Esquire* always has room for fine writing. Jim Harrison's *Legends of the Fall* first appeared there, as did many of Tom Wolfe's most influential nonfiction articles in the 1960s. In the early 2000s, *Esquire* returned to its roots and started placing greater emphasis on good writing and, as a result, picked up advertisers who want to reach a more upscale audience and more subscribers.[50]

▼ Marilyn Monroe graced the cover of the first issue of *Playboy* magazine, and a boxed set of *Playboy* magazines from the 1950s is shown in New York.



Mark Lennihan/AP Images

Playboy.

A Magazine and a Lifestyle. *Playboy* first appeared in 1953 as a competitor to *Esquire*, and it made no pretense about what it was really about—pictures of nude women—though, like *Esquire*, it publishes articles by many noted writers. But in addition to the photos and the articles, *Playboy* promoted a lifestyle: the sexually free good life.

Founder Hugh Hefner started out doing circulation promotion for *Esquire* at $60 a week. He wanted to create a magazine that would appeal to young urban males much like himself. He started by paying $200 for color printing plates and the rights to publish a nude photo of Marilyn Monroe. He obtained permission to reprint stories and articles by well-known writers, as well as cartoons and dirty jokes.[51] Hefner said that he would like to be remembered for changing attitudes toward sex: "I would like to be remembered as someone who has had a significant impact in changing sexual values, in changing the repressive attitudes toward sexuality."[52]

In 2015, *Playboy* experimented with eliminating full nudity from the photos, a change that lasted about one year before the magazine brought the nudity back. By the spring of 2018, it appeared likely that the magazine itself would be shutting down in the near future. It would seem that *Playboy*'s real value going forward is as a brand for young men rather than the media empire it once was.[53]

Men's Health claims to be the world's best-selling men's magazine with regional editions all around the world. It has a monthly circulation of 1.8 million copies, 94 percent of which are via subscription. In many ways, it looks like a traditional women's magazine with

articles about how to get back in shape, how to establish a healthy eating plan, life improvement tips, relationship advice (is she the one?), and fresh, hard-core workouts. There's the 30-Minute Body Workout, the Navy Seal Workout, and the Adventure Workout, to name just a few.[54] *Men's Health* has been around for more than thirty years, and its parent company was recently purchased by magazine giant Hearst. Under new ownership and a new editor, the magazine has had a popular remake accompanied by a growing digital presence—video viewership at its site grew by 74 percent in 2017.[55]

Questioning the Media

How do magazines appealing to men and women differ from each other? What do the articles in each tell you about the audiences? Are these magazines getting more alike or more different over time? What accounts for the change, or lack of it, in a magazine's content over the years?

Magazines and Modern Society

Magazines may not hold the dominant place in the media market today that they did in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but they are still a critical component of our culture. One reason magazines remain important is that they are able to reach narrow, specific communities with a slickly produced message (see Table 5.2). Among the major controversies surrounding magazines today are the images of women they present, the blurring of editorial and advertising content, the level of reality in editorial content, and the appropriateness of material aimed at teenagers.

Magazines and Body Image

It's no secret that a significant number of girls and young women suffer from eating disorders as a result of their quest to find beauty through thinness. The trend toward excessive thinness as a standard of beauty has become more prominent in recent decades. In 1972, 23 percent of U.S. women said that they were dissatisfied with their overall appearance. By 1996, that figure had grown to 48 percent. Critics frequently charge that the thin models in fashion magazines (both in ads and in editorial content) are at least partially responsible for promoting extreme thinness as attractive. In 1953, when Marilyn Monroe was featured in the debut issue of *Playboy*, she was a size twelve with measurements close to the then-ideal of 36-22-35, which by today's standard would make her a plus-sized model. Today, the much-photographed Jennifer Aniston is an impossible (for most women) size zero.[56]

Nina Agdal is not a plus-sized model. But as she points out, she does not have a conventional model's gaunt figure. So the Danish model was upset when her agent received an email from a magazine saying they would not run her cover story because it "did not reflect well on my talent" and "did not fit their market."

▼ Table 5.2

▼ TABLE 5.2

Top Ten Magazines, Average Monthly Audience, 2017

Magazine	Circulation***
1. ESPN The Magazine	102,245,000
2. People	79,683,000
3. Forbes	68,231,000
4. WebMD Magazine	59,472,000
5. Allrecipes	54,087,000
6. Time	47,779,000
7. Better Homes and Gardens	47,484,000
8. AARP	46,343,000
9. National Geographic	40,879,000
10. Sports Illustrated	36,249,000

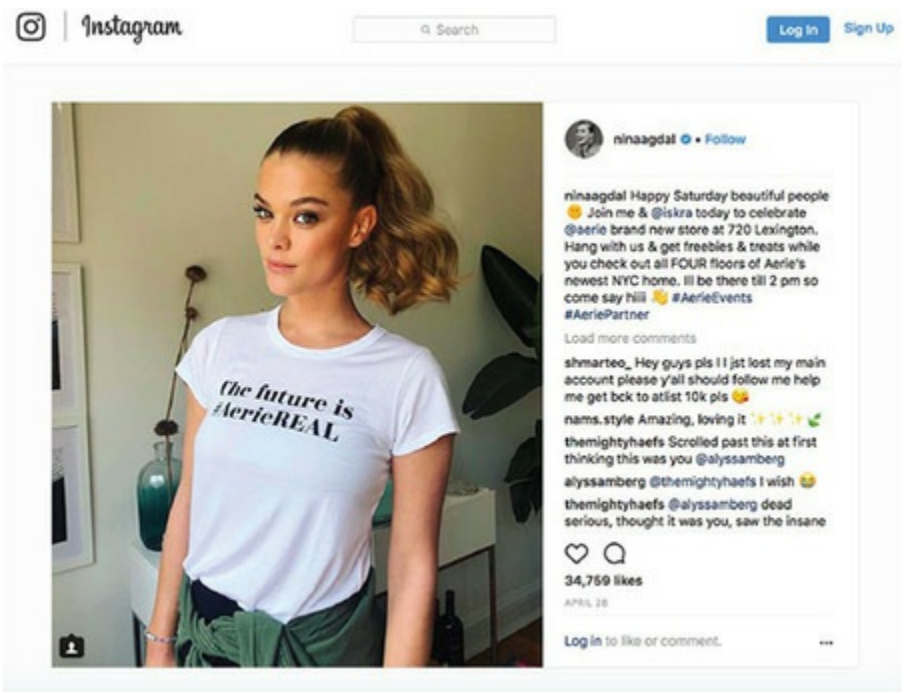
Source: Magazine Media 360, "Brand Audience Report, Full Year 2017," http://www.magazine.org/sites/default/files/MM360-BAR-Full-Year-2017%2BTop-10_0.pdf.

Note: These statistics are for total brand audience, including print, digital, web, and mobile video.

Source: Magazine Media 360, "Brand Audience Report, Full Year 2017," http://www.magazine.org/sites/default/files/MM360-BAR-Full-Year-2017%2BTop-10_0.pdf.
Note: These statistics are for total brand audience, including print, digital, web, and mobile video.

Soon after getting this rejection, she posted an Instagram of herself from the shoot to show how she looked. "If anyone has any interest in me, they know I am not an average model body—I have an athletic build and healthy curves" she said. "Some days I'm a sample size, some days I'm a size 4, some a 6. I am not built as a runway model and have never been stick thin. Now, more than ever, I embrace my curves and work diligently in the gym to stay strong and most of all, sane."[57]

▼ Nina Agdal took to social media to promote body positivity after having been rejected for modeling jobs due to her body size.



Instagram/@ninaagdal

Agdal has used this negative event to promote body positivity through her photo shoots. She tells *Glamour* magazine, "I feel a responsibility, since I'm one of the girls in the ads, in the magazines, in the commercial." In response to this, the former Victoria's Secret model has signed to be part of the unretouched #AerieReal campaign for American Eagle's underwear and swimwear brand.[58]

SECRET 3 ▸ Advertisers of products other than clothing have become concerned about the thin image being presented in fashion magazines. When photos of model Trish Goff appeared in the British edition of *Vogue* in 1996, Omega Watches pulled its ads from the magazine, saying that the magazine was portraying skeletal, anorexic-looking models.[59] By 2006, criticism of overly thin models was coming from no less than former Victoria's Secret model Frederique van der Wal. The Fashion Week shows that year in Madrid, Spain, banned models whose body mass index was too low.[60] In 2007, Madrid's Fashion Week shows again banned super-thin models, as did the Milan shows.

Remember Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center? It's possible that the willingness of women's magazines to use models of differing sizes is becoming more commonplace than it was several years ago.

It all started back in 2005 with the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty and its so-called Lumpy Ladies. That ad campaign, featuring attractive women of a variety of sizes posing in their underwear for photographer Annie Leibovitz, helped open up a dialogue about size, beauty, and magazine content. Were we going to see more images of "realistic-looking" women in magazine features and advertisements?[61] (That, of course, begs the question as to what constitutes "real women." Are size-two women not real? Or is it more that average-

sized women are ignored by the media?)

The campaign paved the way for differently sized models. The contrast between plus-sized models and more conventionally sized magazine models was highlighted with a story in *PLUS Model Magazine* (an online magazine at http://plus-model-mag.com/) that had relatively tame naked photos of plus-sized model Katya Zharkova next to an unnamed "straight-sized" model. *PLUS Model* editor-in-chief Madeline Jones explained the magazine's photo spread thusly:

> The answer to the question is this, there is nothing wrong with our bodies. We are bombarded with weight-loss ads every single day, multiple times a day because it's a multi-billion dollar industry that preys on the fear of being fat. Not everyone is meant to be skinny, our bodies are beautiful and we are not talking about health here because not every skinny person is healthy.
>
> What we desire is equality to shop and have fashion options just like smaller women. Small women cannot be marketed to with pictures of plus-size women, why are we expected to respond to pictures of small size 6 and 8 women? We don't! When the plus size modeling industry began, the models ranged in size from 14 to 18/20, and as customers we long for those days when we identify with the models and feel happy about shopping.[62]

▼ UFC champion Ronda Rousey (left) and body activist and model Ashley Graham (center) pose for the cover of the 2016 Sports *Illustrated* swimsuit issue. The magazine industry has recently moved away from the "idealized" female form of the '90s and now features a range of body types in its fashion spreads.



Richard Levine/Getty Images

In 2016, *Sports Illustrated* took its ever-controversial swimsuit issue into the world of plus-sized (or at least not tiny-sized) models when it ran three different covers. One cover was fairly conventional for SI with model Hannah Davis.[68] A second cover featured former Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) bantamweight mixed martial arts champion Ronda Rousey clad only in body paint. And the third cover featured a curvy size-sixteen Ashley Graham in a bikini. While Rousey would be difficult to categorize as plus-sized at an athletic 135 pounds, she is certainly not a typical swimsuit model. Rousey told the *Washington Post*, "You shouldn't be self-conscious about being yourself. And there's many different kinds of beauty and I'm glad it's being shown." Graham told the *Post* that SI was taking "a risk by putting a girl my size" in the swimsuit issue. "But putting me on the cover? . . . This is beyond epic."[69]

Sports Illustrated's main competition is *ESPN The Magazine*, and since 2009, it's been one-upping the SI swimsuit issue with its annual Body Issue. In it, ESPN features nude athletes, both male and female, with strategically placed hands or equipment to keep it PG-13. ESPN makes a big deal of featuring actual athletes of all sizes without overt levels of digital alteration of its subjects. Is it less objectifying than *Sports Illustrated*? Haley Halverson from the National Center on Sexual Exploitation doubts it. "While the intention of the individual interviews might be to relate the athletes' accomplishments," she says, "the nude photo shoots serve to obscure the athletic talent with visual sexual appeal."[70]

The level of photo manipulation going on at FBL magazines has been an ongoing

controversy, with performers such as Adele, Kelly Clarkson, and Kate Winslet being made almost unrecognizable as photographers and photo editors try to make the curvy stars' bodies comply with fashion magazine standards of beauty.

When Lena Dunham, the unconventional star of the HBO series *Girls*, posed for famed photographer Annie Leibovitz for the cover of *Vogue* magazine, questions were raised as to how authentic her images were. Dunham, in case you've missed the story, is famous for being naked in *Girls*—a lot—and her tattooed, untoned body is both celebrated and criticized for being an alternative to conventional standards of Hollywood beauty.

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Presenting a Broader Range of Beauty

▼ As a young person, Anok Yai did not see herself reflected in the lighter-skinned models shown in most magazines, but since the image (above) taken of her by photographer Steve Hall went viral in 2017, Yai has since worked steadily in the industry, becoming the first black model in over twenty years to open for the famous fashion house Prada.



Instagram/@thesunk

Anok Yai didn't set out to be a model. She thought it might be an interesting thing to try, but that was about it. As a child, she and her sister would watch *America's Next Top Model*, hosted by Tyra Banks, but she didn't think that kind of life was in her future. Yai is of Sudanese heritage, was born in Egypt, and moved to the United States with her family when she was two years old.

As she grew up, people told her she was beautiful, that she could be a model, that she could be on the cover of magazines. But the models Yai saw were always white or light-skinned black women.[63]

"When I was younger, I was insecure about my skin because I looked up to people in the media and, though I looked up to the black women, I never saw black women that were as dark as me," Yai said.[64]

So Yai headed off to college at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire to study biochemistry with the goal of becoming a doctor.

But then a friend suggested that they go to Howard University's homecoming. It would be a chance for Yai to immerse herself in the ultimate African American student experience. Yai dressed sharp for the weekend—her friend told her she had to. "My friend was like 'If I see you in a t-shirt and jeans, you're not walking with me,'" Yai said.[65]

But then Steve Hall, a Howard University grad and a photographer for the fashion/black culture website TheSUNK, took a picture of her. It's not the photo you would think would change a woman's life. Yai is looking straight at the camera; she says she thinks the photo makes her look like a "deer in the headlights."[66]

The next morning, Hall posted the photo to Instagram, and Yai's life was transformed. Hall's photo quickly amassed more than nineteen thousand likes, and Yai soon went from having three hundred Instagram followers to more than fifty thousand. Soon after that, the calls and emails from modeling agencies started coming in. Her childhood dream of being *America's Next Top Model* was starting to get real.

Yai eventually signed with Next Management, and in February 2018, she became the first black model to

open a runway show for the fashion house Prada since Naomi Campbell did so in 1997, more than twenty years before.

"It was an honour and I'm proud that I was the one chosen to open, but this is bigger than me," she told *Vogue* about modeling at Milan Fashion Week. "Me opening for one of the top fashion houses is a statement to the world—especially for black women—that their beauty is something that deserves to be celebrated."[67]

WHO is the source?

Who is Anok Yai? What does she do?

WHAT makes her photo from TheSUNK/Instagram stand out?

Look at the photo of Anok Yai. What makes it different from the typical photo in FBL magazines for women?

WHAT do people say about the photo?

HOW does Yai describe her feelings about the photo?

What did it do for her career? How did the public react to the photo?

HOW do you and your classmates react to the Yai photo?

What do you and your friends think about the Yai photo? Why do you think the photo drew such strong reactions? Is it important for fashion magazines to publish photos of models who don't look like all the others?

After the Dunham issue of *Vogue* came out, the blog *Jezebel*—which tends to be very critical of Photoshopped images of women—offered $10,000 to anyone who would supply it with the original, unedited images of the photos *Vogue* published. It didn't take long for someone to provide *Jezebel* with the photos. As it turns out, the photos themselves were highly manipulated: New backgrounds were added, locations were changed, and a bird was placed on Dunham's head. But surprisingly little was done to Dunham herself. On the cover photo, for example, her neck was made thinner, her head was made smaller (which makes her eyes look bigger), and her jawline was made narrower. The bigger manipulations included taking a studio image of Dunham, adding a pigeon to her head, and then placing her on a street in Brooklyn.[71]

Dunham told *Slate* following *Jezebel*'s publication of the unedited images that she had no problem with how Leibovitz had digitally altered her, and that she understands and appreciates the difference between reality and what is published in a fashion magazine:

> A fashion magazine is like a beautiful fantasy. *Vogue* isn't the place that we go to look at realistic women, *Vogue* is the place that we go to look at beautiful clothes and fancy places and escapism and so I feel like if the story reflects me and I happen to be wearing a beautiful Prada dress and surrounded by beautiful men and dogs, what's the problem? If they want to see what I really look like go watch the show that I make

every single week.[72]

Oscar-winning actress Kate Winslet specified in her contract with cosmetic company Lancôme that the company could not make digital changes to her appearance. Speaking at a Women in Hollywood event, Winslet said, "It does feel important to me, because I do think we have a responsibility to the younger generation of women. . . . I would always want to be telling the truth about who I am to that generation because they've got to have strong leaders."[73]

Questioning the Media

Do popular consumer magazines pander too much to advertisers? Do you have trouble telling the difference between advertisements and articles? Or does it matter as long as the advertising is interesting?

Who's in Control? Advertising Versus Editorial

One of the biggest conflicts in the magazine business is the separation between the editorial and advertising departments. Articles attract readers, but advertisements pay many of the bills. So a continual struggle exists between editors and advertisers to keep content separate from advertisements, to please advertisers, and to make money for the publishers.

Synergy and Magazines.

We're used to seeing massive synergy in the movie and television business due to product placement and product-themed shows. Youth-oriented fashion magazine *Marie Claire* sold the cover in 2014 with a special subscribers-only denim zipper cover done in partnership with Guess. Readers could pull the zipper on the cover down to reveal the issue's real cover, along with the Guess logo.[74]

FBL magazine *W* is working to extend synergy to its social media channels as well. The magazine's 2014 spring fashion issue was built around an "Instaglam" theme, playing off the name of the photo-sharing social media site Instagram. Lucy Kriz, publisher of *W* magazine, told *Luxury Daily*, "As March was our social media issue, we wanted to highlight the synergy between magazine, digital and social content. From coordinating tweets, Instagrams and Facebook posts with those featured in the issue . . . we drove the biggest traffic spike on the site since its relaunch, delivering click-through rates above industry average to our brand partners."[75]

What does she mean with that "marketing speak"?

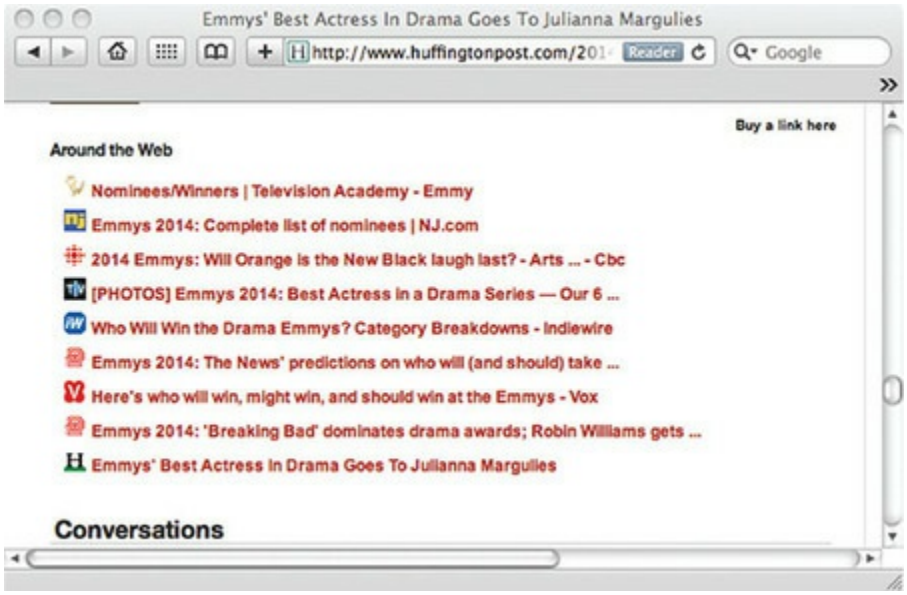
W coordinated its social media posts to go with the articles in the magazine and the social media of its advertisers with the goal of increasing the number of readers visiting both *W*'s website and the advertisers' sites.

The Blurring of Advertising and Editorial Content.

The often-strong connection between advertisers and editorial content at fashion magazines does not necessarily carry over to other periodicals, but that doesn't mean that advertisers don't try to make their ads look like magazine articles. This used to be known as "advertorial content"—combining the words *advertising* and *editorial*—but has now come to be known as native advertising. This is where paid content is created by the staff of the publication on behalf of paying clients. This content often looks just like the "real" articles on the pages with only minimal labeling.[76] One women's magazine featured a "senior merchandising editor" wearing a beautiful new coat in a feature called "Hot Shot of the Month." However, the "editor" was really an advertising staffer, and the "hot shot" was really a free promotion for a favored advertiser.[77] Such native ads are nothing new, but they

have generally been accompanied by a disclaimer saying that the item is an advertisement or a special advertising section.

▼ These links to stories about the 2014 Emmy Awards look like standard links that appear following a *Huffington* Post story, but they are there as paid "native ads" designed to look like regular editorial content. Note the link in the upper right corner that says, "Buy a link here."



Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/25/emmys-best-actress-drama_n_5698762.html

The *Atlantic*, which now considers itself as much an online publication as a magazine, frequently posts native ads to its various websites. In fact, native ads were estimated to be responsible for 75 percent of the company's advertising revenue in 2016, up 15 percent from the year before.[78] (You can read much more about the growth of native advertising in Chapter 11.)

The Importance of Magazine Covers

What (and who) appears on a magazine's cover can make or break its newsstand sales. With the steady fall of magazine circulation since 2008, publishers have been eager to find ways to make their publications stand out from the crowd.[79] For example, *Family Circle* magazine decided that it would try to stand out in the displays near supermarket checkout lines by using soothing, homey images rather than celebrity covers.

Dick Stolley, one of the founding editors of *People* magazine, established the following rules for covers:

- Young is better than old.
- Pretty is better than ugly.
- Rich is better than poor.
- Music is better than movies.
- Movies are better than television.
- Nothing is better than a dead celebrity.[80]

Janet Chan, who has served as editorial director of parenting publications for Time Inc., says,

> You'll follow a lot of rules and you could say that's the science, but I think a lot of it is gut. For me, thinking of designing a cover is looking for the image that says, "You want to take this puppy home."[81]

Covers and Race.

The fear of losing sales can make editors reluctant to take chances, and one result of this editorial caution is that relatively few nonwhites appear on the covers of men's, women's, teen, and entertainment magazines. *New York Times* reporter David Carr noted that in 2002 less than 20 percent of American magazine covers featured people of color and five years earlier only 12.7 percent of people appearing on magazine covers were nonwhite.[82] (This survey did not include fashion magazines, such as *Vogue*.)

▼ Lupita Nyong'o became the first black woman to land a deal with Lancôme cosmetics and has graced the cover of several magazines since bursting onto the scene. She is one of the few dark-skinned, short-haired women to occupy the national spotlight.



Ari Perilstein/Getty Images

Since then, things have started to improve. A 2015 study of ten leading American fashion magazine covers conducted by the blog *Fashionista* found that 19.8 percent of the covers featured a person of color on the cover. By 2016, those same magazines featured people of color on 35.3 percent of the covers, a substantial increase. *Teen Vogue* had the most diversity of the year with 63.6 percent of its covers featuring women of color. Of course, not every magazine showed diversity. *Harper's Bazaar* had only one of eleven covers with a nonwhite model, and nine of the covers featured women who were white and blonde.[83]

One of the clearest examples of the segregation of magazine covers can be seen with the ever-controversial *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. Over its first fifty years, the swimsuit issue featured only two women of color on the cover—Tyra Banks in 1996 and 1997, and Beyoncé in 2007. Even in 2006, when the cover featured eight models wearing swimsuit bottoms, all of them were white, and most were blond. (It is worth noting that *Sports Illustrated* has had at least five Hispanic cover models over the years.[84]) On a television special celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, Banks thanked the magazine for putting her on the cover, saying, "I want to thank *Sports Illustrated* . . . for being daring and for making every little black girl that year that saw that issue go 'oh my God, mama, I think I'm pretty because a black girl's on the cover just like me.'" (It's worth remembering that model Tyra Banks was the host of *America's Next Top Model*, which served as an inspiration for Anok Yai.)

Cover Lines.

Along with the cover image, cover lines have to draw readers into the publication. Cover lines are teaser headlines used to shock, intrigue, or titillate potential buyers. Keep in mind that it is important for cover lines to interest subscribers, as well as drive newsstand sales. If a subscriber is going to renew a magazine, he or she must want to read it, preferably as soon as it arrives. The goal is for cover lines to appeal to as many readers of the magazine as possible. "I would say 85 percent of your cover has to appeal to 100 percent of the audience," says magazine editor Susan Kane.[85] Numbers are often used in cover lines because they suggest value ("79 beat-stress ideas. Rush less, work smarter, find happiness and balance now!")—in other words, they imply that a great deal of good material is to be found inside the magazine.[86]

One thing that makes FBL magazines stand out in the checkout line is their distinctive cover lines. The first issue of *Glamour* under editor Bonnie Fuller had the cover line "Doing it! . . . 100 women's secret sexual agendas—Who wants what, how bad and how often." The same month, *Cosmopolitan* had the cover line "Sex Rules! 10 Make-Him-Throb Moves So Hot You'll Need a Fire Hose to Cool Down the Bed." Even *Redbook*, a service magazine targeted at mothers approaching middle age, proclaims "Sex every night: can it deepen your love? Yes! Yes! Yes!" "Put 'orgasm' on the cover and it will sell," says former *Glamour* editor Ruth Whitney.[87] Of course, some of these covers are too hot for grocery stores, which may place blinders over them to avoid offending their customers.[88]

The Future of Magazines

SECRET 4 ▸ Although the magazine industry has gone through massive changes, in many ways it is still the same as it was when it was founded in 1741 (providing another example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again).

Magazines for the Twenty-First Century

According to media scholar Leara D. Rhodes, the American magazine industry has seen a series of "launches and failures, new magazines, and revitalization of old ones."[89] Rhodes says that successful magazines have traditionally shared a number of characteristics, including the following:

- Building a relationship between the magazine and its readers
- Providing information readers can't easily find other places
- Adapting to social changes
- Being supported by advertisers
- Adjusting to economic changes and limitations
- Shaping public discourse by defining the major issues of society[90]

Questioning the Media

What magazines (if any) do you read regularly? Which of the characteristics noted by Rhodes do they share? How have the magazines you read changed over time, and why do you think those changes were made? Did they lead to a better magazine?

The total circulation of magazines in the United States has risen as the population's overall level of education has increased, thus raising the level of literacy. From 1970 to 2005, the annual paid circulation of all magazines measured by the Audit Bureau of Circulations grew by 67 percent. (The Audit Bureau of Circulations certifies to advertisers how many copies of the largest consumer magazines are actually sold.[91]) Rhodes says that, as educational availability and literacy rise in Asia and Latin America, it seems likely that they will also see a substantial growth in magazine circulation. While overall circulation for magazines dipped starting with the recession of 2008, that decline appears to have leveled out by 2013. Keep in mind, however, that magazines can boost their circulation by offering deeply discounted subscriptions.[92]

We can identify several current trends in magazine publishing:

- Magazines are targeting narrower audiences—Unlike the general-interest magazines of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, contemporary magazines are targeted at specific audiences. While *Maxim* has successfully targeted young men, a group the magazine industry ignored previously, the niches can be much smaller. For example, *Backyard Poultry* targets readers interested in raising chickens and other poultry on a small scale. It publishes six times a year and has an average monthly circulation of 86,800.[93] The same publisher also has *Countryside & Small Stock Journal*, *Goat Journal*, and *Sheep!* (Note that the exclamation point is an official part of the magazine's title.)
- Presentation is important—The layout and graphics of magazines are critical in determining how people will respond to them. Journalist Michael Scherer writes that magazines today "are filled with color, oversized headlines, graphics, photos, and pull quotes."[94] Articles are short—magazines such as *Maxim*, *InStyle*, and *Us Weekly* have replaced many of their full-fledged articles with text boxes that look like extended captions. According to Keith Blanchard of *Maxim*,

> If you are trying to reach cranky retirees, maybe six-thousand-word rants are appropriate. [*Maxim*] readers are busier today than they will ever be in their lives; they have shorter attention spans than any previous generation; they are chronically over-stimulated and easily bored.[95]

Going From Paper to Digital



Bloomberg/Getty Images

When the iPad was first released in 2010, it was clear that this new tablet computer had the potential to be a successful delivery system for electronic editions of magazines. The big question that remained was whether traditional magazine publishers would be willing to put out the effort to create tablet versions of their magazines that were easy to use and that provided readers with something of value.

The *New Yorker*, the magazine your author reads as a tablet edition, is available for the iPad, the Kindle Fire, and any number of other Android tablets. There's also an edition for the regular e-ink Kindle and a stripped-down version for phones.

The *New Yorker*'s tablet edition went live for the iPad in October 2010, and debuted on the Kindle Fire a little over a year later. The magazine also offers a complete archive online. The New Yorker has been somewhat of a pioneer in electronic offerings, as it initially sold its electronic archive as an engraved portable hard drive.[96]

The *New Yorker* has done particularly well in the transition to a tablet era. The Pew foundation reports that the magazine has successfully raised its basic subscription price and has many subscribers paying for both the print and tablet versions of the magazine. It's also brought in new online humor content that isn't behind the paywall to help draw people in to the magazine's website. "We decided that this was a serious business for us," New Yorker publisher Lisa Hughes told the Pew Research Center. "It was the moment to invest in NewYorker.com; to build it out and make it a real game changer."[97]

But the *New Yorker* has done much more digitally than just port its print magazine over to tablet format. It offers a weekly hourlong radio show and podcast in conjunction with WNYC. Its paid circulation is at an all-time high with more than one million print and digital subscribers (with subscriptions for the weekly publication running close to $100 a year.) The New Yorker also sends out a steady diet of news daily through email, social media, and its various tablet and smartphone apps. The magazine has more than seventeen million followers on its social media channels. Its website has a paywall that gives visitors five free articles a month, but unlike many publications, the New Yorker's online readership continued to grow after the paywall was implemented in 2014. In fact, its overall revenue was up 12 percent in 2017.[98]

This move to rely more on subscription revenue—whether for print or digital—has enabled the magazine to also do some very strong journalism.[99] The New Yorker and the New York Times shared the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for their reporting on the sexual harassment and abuse that has been going on unpunished for decades in the media, politics, and industry, as discussed in the opening of Chapter 2.[100] The magazine has even made short stories the subject of social media importance, as talked about at the

beginning of this chapter.

Making the move to being a successful magazine in the digital era is not easy. But publications like the Atlantic (discussed several places elsewhere in this chapter) and the New Yorker have found success by embracing the new environment rather than trying to resist it.

When Apple's iPad first was released, magazines were trying to sell electronic single issues for the same (high) price.

WHY is the switch to digital publishing, and especially "digital first" (discussed later in this chapter), so scary for magazines? Why would the New Yorker be willing to take the chance?

WHAT makes offering tablet editions of magazines along with print editions difficult for publishers?

HOW have magazines benefited by adopting digital-first and tablet-publishing strategies? What problems have they had to accept?



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Magazines in the Digital Age

The twenty-first century has been challenging for the magazine industry, to say the least. The economic collapse in 2008 and 2009 led to a 25 percent drop in ad pages sold in 2009 accompanied by a 2.2 percent drop in circulation.

The field of newsmagazines in particular has been suffering, with *U.S. News & World Report* going totally online and discontinuing its print version. *Newsweek*, formerly owned by the Washington Post Company, sold for $1. In 2013, the new owners suspended publication of the paper edition to go totally online, but they then resumed paper publication in March 2014. As recently as 2007, *Newsweek* had more than three million subscribers, but that number fell off the cliff that year, declining by half as of 2010, with the number of ad pages declining by a similar amount.[101] As of 2018, the magazine's advertising rate card promised one hundred thousand print circulation in the United States and an additional hundred thousand globally. Digitally, *Newsweek* claims six million unique U.S. visitors.[102]

One magazine that has done relatively well during this period of transition is the *Atlantic*. Ten years ago, the *Atlantic* got 85 percent of its income from print advertising and circulation. It had been financially marginal and had been losing money for at least a decade. (At its lowest point in 2005, the magazine was losing close to $7 million a year.) Now it is profitable with 80 percent of its income coming from digital, live events, and a consulting business.[103] What made the difference? Jeremy Peters, writing for the *New York Times*, said the magazine "needed to kill itself to survive."[104] According to Justin Smith, president of the *Atlantic*'s parent company, "[We] brainstormed the question, 'What would we do if the goal was to aggressively cannibalize ourselves?'"[105]

Instead of fighting the internet and all the changes it has wrought, the *Atlantic* adopted a digital-first strategy, in which online and electronic editions are the first priority, not preserving the print edition. In October 2011, the magazine's digital revenues topped its print revenues, but not because the print revenues fell. In fact, in that same month, the print edition had one of its best ad sales months in years.[106]

The *Atlantic* had a number of advantages that aided its move to a digital-first strategy. It's a small organization, which makes change simpler. It also targets an upscale, well-educated audience, which also facilitated the change. In July 2017, the *Atlantic* announced that the Emerson Collective, a philanthropic organization founded by Laurene Powell Jobs, had purchased majority ownership in the publication. Jobs is the widow of Apple cofounder Steve Jobs, and is also a major stockholder in Disney.[107]

▼ Table 5.3

▼ TABLE 5.3

Top Ten Magazine Publishers for Monthly Mobile Visitors

Magazine	Monthly Mobile Visitors
ESPN	50.9 million
Forbes	38.9 million
WebMD Magazine	34.6 million
Allrecipes	32.9 million
People	27.8 million
Time	19.4 million
New York Magazine	16.8 million
Entertainment Weekly	13.9 million
The Atlantic	13.9 million
Us Weekly	13.7 million

Source: Adapted from Magazine Media 360, "Brand Audience Report, Full Year 2017," Association of Magazine Media, http://www.magazine.org/sites/default/files/MM360-BAR-Full-Year-2017%2BTop-10_0.pdf.

Source: Adapted from Magazine Media 360, "Brand Audience Report, Full Year 2017," Association of Magazine Media, http://www.magazine.org/sites/default/files/MM360-BAR-Full-Year-2017%2BTop-10_0.pdf.

This is not to say that everything is perfect at the *Atlantic.* The publication attracted considerable controversy after it hired and then promptly fired conservative columnist Kevin Williamson. The controversy arose when Twitter users realized that Williamson had said in a tweet that women who had abortions should be convicted of murder. Further research by critics found that Williamson once said on a podcast that he was "absolutely willing to see abortion treated like regular homicide under the criminal code." He then went on to say that the punishment he "had in mind was hanging" for women who were

convicted of it.[108] Predictably, Williamson's firing drew both intense praise and criticism.

Overall, the *Atlantic* gets about half of its revenue from advertising, and 40 percent of that revenue comes from digital advertising. Advertising representatives working for the company were told not to worry about the platform they sold for. Digital ads and print ads were of equal importance. You can get an overview of the importance of mobile media for magazines in Table 5.3.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Magazines were the first media to become national in scope rather than appealing to a limited geographic area. They also contained articles designed to be of lasting appeal. Although there were magazines available during the colonial period, the first significant American magazine was the *Saturday Evening Post*. Espousing conservative, middle-class values, the *Post* was seen as a reflection of American society. Literary and commentary magazines flourished in the nineteenth century, and several of them survive today. These magazines provided a forum for important authors and were among the first to feature the work of pioneering photojournalists such as Mathew Brady.

W. E. B. Du Bois expanded the range of commentary magazines with the founding of the *Crisis* as the official magazine of the NAACP. The *Crisis* became the first magazine to provide a forum for black writers. The early twentieth century saw a trend in investigative magazine reporting known as muckraking. The work of the muckrakers set the stage for much of the investigative reporting done today by newspapers and television news.

Henry Luce founded *Time* magazine in 1923, creating what would become one of the nation's largest media companies—Time Warner. Luce's publishing empire grew to include not just the news in *Time*, but also photojournalism in *Life*, sports journalism in *Sports Illustrated*, and personality and celebrity journalism in *People*.

Women's magazines got their start with *Godey's Lady's Book* under the editorship of Sarah Josepha Hale. In addition to editing the magazine, Hale established many of the principles of modern magazines: copyrighting the stories, running original material, and paying authors for their work. The "seven sisters" women's service magazines followed in much the same tradition as *Godey's* and were concerned mainly with the home, family, and quality of life. An alternative to the traditional values of service magazines is offered by the more youth-oriented fashion/beauty/lifestyle magazines, such as *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan*.

Many magazines targeted at men appeal to them through their hobbies, but the two most influential men's magazines are *Esquire* and *Playboy*. Although *Playboy* was initially more explicit with its pinup photography, both it and *Esquire* now feature men's fashion, lifestyle coverage, and articles by well-known writers. In recent years, a new type of men's magazine focusing on adventure, fashion, health, and sex has appeared; one of the strongest examples of these magazines is *Men's Health*.

Trade publications are magazines that cover a particular industry rather than being designed for consumers. Although they often are more serious and feature less photography and color than the consumer magazines, they make up a substantial portion of the magazine market.

Fashion magazines have been criticized in recent years for featuring extremely thin models in both ads and editorial content. Critics argue that the unrealistic image promoted by these models can contribute to the development of eating disorders in young women. Several magazines and advertisers have bucked this trend and featured plus-sized models and even ordinary people. Magazines have also started offering more racial and ethnic diversity on their covers. Other conflicts in the magazine industry can involve the blurring of editorial content and advertising, as well as the photos and headlines used on covers.

Magazines in the twenty-first century are continuing many of the trends that made them successful throughout their history, including building relationships with readers, adapting to change, being supported by advertisers, and defining major issues in society. Magazines continue to be successful in their print formats but are expanding their content with tablet versions and other digital offerings.

Key Terms ▶▶

magazine 110
photojournalism 111
halftone 112
Postal Act of 1879 113
consumer magazines 113
trade magazines 113
literary magazines 114
muckrakers 115
service magazines 118
plus-sized model 121
native advertising 126
cover lines 127
digital-first strategy 130

Review Questions ▶▶

1. How can magazine short stories provoke discussion in the age of social media?
2. How did the existence of magazines lead to the development of a national culture in the United States in the late nineteenth century?
3. How does *Godey's Lady's Book* compare with modern women's magazines? Could *Godey's* be made to fit into the modern magazine market? Why or why not?
4. What has made *Men's Health* one of the most popular men's magazines? Is it similar to or different from women's fashion/beauty/lifestyle magazines?
5. Models sometimes fight back against excessive digital editing (popularly known as Photoshopping) of their photos. What are their concerns? Are these concerns a serious problem?
6. Is a magazine that is delivered digitally to a tablet still a magazine? Why or why not?

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Bill Pugliano/Getty Images

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Discuss the development of the colonial and early American press
2. Explain how tabloid newspapers differ from broadsheet newspapers
3. Describe the four major types of newspapers today, with examples
4. Name six basic news values used by journalists
5. Discuss the risks that reporters take to cover the news
6. Explain how the internet and mobile technology have changed the news and newspaper business

Long before it became a national story, the Flint, Michigan, water contamination crisis was an important local media story. Flint is an old industrial city with a population of about one hundred thousand people. It's poor, and the auto industry jobs that have left the city aren't coming back. The city is predominantly black.[1]

In the fall of 2013, Flint was suffering from severe financial problems. These were so serious that the city had lost the power of home governance and instead was being run by a state-appointed emergency manager. One way this manager found to reduce costs was to change the city's source of water from Detroit municipal water to water taken out of the Flint River.

Aside from any purity issues (of which there were several), the river water had high levels of chlorides in it, making it corrosive.[2] Among the first to discover Flint's water problem was a local General Motors plant, where employees realized that the local water was corroding car parts being produced at the factory. But in addition to corroding new car parts, that water was leeching lead and other heavy metals from lead-based water services leading up to the homes in Flint.[3] That water turned out to have such high levels of lead in it that, according to a group of Virginia Tech researchers, the liquid coming out of some local taps could be considered "toxic waste" by the Environmental Protection Agency.[4]

As early as May 2014, the *Flint Journal* local newspaper was running stories about "murky or foamy" water. By September, the paper was running stories about the boil advisories because of bacterial contamination. And by October, the *Journal* was reporting about the GM plant switching water suppliers because of the corrosion.

The reporting on Flint's water came from a number of news sources, including Curt Guyette, an investigative journalist working for the American Civil Liberties Union in Michigan. Guyette had been hired to investigate Michigan's emergency manager law. As he started digging, he found complaints about the "brownish smelly water" coming out of the household taps in Flint.[5]

It took a significant amount of time for the story to get out because it was almost too awful to believe. Guyette, in an interview with public radio's *On the Media*, said, "We would not be sitting here anyway talking about this now were it not first and foremost about the relentless efforts on the part of Flint's citizens who refused to believe the lie their government was telling them that their water was safe."

Michigan Radio, a public radio news service, started covering the story in June 2014 with news about complaints about the smell and taste of the city's water. In January 2015, a full year before the national media really started to pay attention to the story, Michigan Radio had a story about the fact that the city's water violated the Safe Drinking Water Act because the high level of chlorides was creating other problems with the water.[6]

Despite being an early reporter on the story, Michigan Radio journalist Steve Carmody is still unhappy about how long it took before he really broke the news. "It just gnaws on me that when people were saying they can't drink this water in May or June of 2014, I was taking 'Don't worry, it's safe' as an answer from state officials," he told *Columbia Journalism Review*. "It just sticks in my craw. I should have seen this earlier. That will bother me the rest of my career."[7]

The local ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox television affiliates also aggressively covered the story of the *E. coli* bacterial contamination of the river water and General Motors' decision to stop using local water. In January 2015, the Detroit papers, the *Free Press* and the *Detroit News*, started covering the story as well, but after a month and a half of coverage, the story largely dropped away until September 2015. *Free Press* columnist Nancy Kaffer was credited with running multiple in-depth articles about the crisis.[8]

Most of the broadcast and cable news networks gave it sparse coverage until January 2016 except for *The Rachel Maddow Show*, which made the Flint water crisis a major ongoing story on the show starting in December 2015. Until the state of emergency was declared, *Media Matters* reports that Maddow provided more coverage of the story than all of the other national television news organizations combined.[9]

Even after the story came to national attention and the state of Michigan declared a state of emergency in Flint, the city's water was still often undrinkable by the summer of 2016. Covering the story was a major commitment for Michigan Radio, with as many as six of its twenty-one staffers devoting time to covering the story. But Carmody says that the story will never really be over. He told CJR, "I know on my very last day, I'm going to do a story about Flint water. Not because it's my last day, and I feel like I have to, or because it's an anniversary, but because it's still going to be hurting people in this community sixteen years from now."[10]

Margaret Sullivan, the former public editor for the *New York Times*, wrote in January 2016 that the *Times* dropped the ball when it came to reporting on the Flint water crisis. The

paper had done stories on Flint's problems dating back to March 2015. But then it took the paper more than six months to do anything more with the story. Editors at the *Times* defended their level of coverage of the story, noting that increasing the number of reporters working in Flint would have resulted in them missing other important Midwest stories.[11]

Maddow has long stressed the importance of local media coverage when it comes to issues like the Flint water crisis. She frequently credits local newspaper, television, and radio journalists for bringing important stories to the forefront. Back in August 2013, she told her viewers:

> You need to pay and subscribe to your local newspaper. Whatever it is, your local paper needs you. It needs to exist. It needs to have enough reporters on staff, to have enough subscriber income to pay for local reporters and to pay for editors so you can actually get coverage of what goes on at these usually pretty boring meetings in your county and in your town, because sometimes they're really important.[12]

Some media observers have questioned whether the news business has any future, given the challenges involved in getting people to pay for their news media. But as can be seen by coverage of the Flint water crisis, there are a variety of ways for people to get news, even when major journalistic organizations like the *New York Times* fail to give a story the attention it deserves. In this chapter, we look at how journalism and the press developed in the United States, how newspapers and other news organizations operate today, and how the news business is being transformed in the digital age.

Inventing the Modern Press

Newspapers first appeared soon after Johannes Gutenberg's invention of movable type. The first English- language newspaper was *Curanto*, which was published in Amsterdam in June 1618. This was not a newspaper as we would recognize it today, but rather a single broadsheet filled with both British and foreign news. By 1622, similar papers (or newsbooks, as they were called) were being published in Britain. The government attempted to control these papers, which were empowering the new capitalist class at the expense of the aristocracy, but the papers were still distributed through places such as coffeehouses.[13]

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

SECRET 4 ▸ If you look ahead to the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, this is not all that different from how the early gay and alternative newspapers were distributed, thus illustrating Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

Among those publishing broadsheets were church reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin, and their religious writings also helped bring about some of the earliest attempts at censorship.[14]

Colonial Publishing: A Tradition of Independence

Publick Occurrences is frequently cited as the first newspaper in the American colonies; its first and only issue was published in 1690. As happened with many papers of the era, the government promptly shut it down. In this case, the government objected to the paper's disparaging remarks about the king of France, along with the fact that Benjamin Harris had failed to obtain a license to publish. The first paper to publish multiple issues was the *Boston News-Letter*, which was founded in 1704.

▼ Newsboys sold newspapers on the streets of New York and other major cities for one or two cents a copy during the penny press era of the nineteenth century.



Library of Congress

Benjamin and James Franklin.

Just as media dynasties exist today, they existed in the American colonies, with Benjamin and James Franklin having their hands in just about every medium available at the time. Starting in 1721, James, the elder of the two brothers, published the *New-England Courant*, the first newspaper to be published without the explicit approval of the British Crown. When James was thrown into prison for irritating the authorities, sixteen-year-old Benjamin, who had been working as a printer's apprentice, took over the paper. By 1729, he had purchased the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and began turning it into the most influential paper in the colonies. Franklin published the colonies' first political cartoon, the oft-reprinted "Join, or Die" cartoon, and he introduced the weather report as a regular

feature.[15]

The Penny Press: Newspapers for the People

The newspapers of the American colonies had little in common with newspapers today. Before the 1830s, daily papers contained shipping news and political essays. Designed primarily for the wealthy elite, these papers were often underwritten by political parties, and their content was determined by the editors' opinions. Although we might consider this biased coverage, these early papers made no pretense of objectivity. Why should they? Each political party had its own paper, and the small number of subscribers (two thousand at most) tended to share similar viewpoints. Battles between rival newspapers could get quite heated, even extending to physical violence.

Colonial newspapers were quite expensive, costing as much as six cents a day at a time when a worker might make eighty-five cents a day. Papers were typically available only by annual subscription, which had to be paid in advance. These papers showed their business bias with names like the *Advertiser* or the *Commercial*. They typically consisted of four pages, with the front and back filled primarily with advertising and the inside pages with news and editorial content.[16]

Benjamin Day and the *New York Sun*.

In the 1830s, Benjamin Day conceived a new type of newspaper, one that would sell large numbers of copies to the emerging literate public. On September 3, 1833, he started publishing the *New York Sun*. The paper's motto was "It shines for all." The newly developed steam engine made the *Sun* possible. Hand-powered presses, which hadn't changed much since Gutenberg's time, could print no more than 350 pages a day, but a steam-powered rotary press could print as many as sixteen thousand sections (not just pages) in the same amount of time (see Chapter 4).[17]

The *Sun* emphasized facts over opinion. Papers that followed in its wake had names like *Critic*, *Herald*, or *Star*. These inexpensive papers sold for a penny or two on the street, so they soon earned the name penny press. Instead of being subsidized by political parties, the penny papers were supported by circulation and advertising revenues. They also didn't have to worry about subscribers who wouldn't pay their bills, since they were all sold on the street for cash.[18]

Now that publishers could economically print large numbers of papers, they could command a big enough circulation to attract advertising. As a result, their profits came primarily from advertising revenues, not from subscriptions or subsidies. The makers of patent medicines, which often consisted largely of alcohol or narcotics, were the biggest advertisers. Want ads (today's classifieds) also became a prominent feature of the papers.

Penny papers were typically independent rather than being the voice of a particular political

party. In fact, they tended to ignore politics altogether because their readers weren't interested in political issues. As an example, one day the *Sun*'s congressional news column reported: "The proceedings of Congress thus far, would not interest our readers."[19]

The concept of "news" was invented by the penny press: These papers emphasized news—the newest developments from the police, courts, and the streets. The traditional papers called the penny papers sensationalistic, not because they ran big headlines or photos—neither existed at the time—but because they were printing "news" instead of political arguments or debates. The penny press also moved toward egalitarianism in the press. The affairs of ordinary people were as much news as accounts of rich aristocrats.[20]

The British press went through a similar period of change, moving from the highly partisan press of the 1700s to a more "objective" focus on news by the end of the nineteenth century—again a change largely in response to the rise of a literate working class and the desire to reach a large audience for the paper's advertising.[21]

A Modern Democratic Society.

The 1830s were a period of intense growth for the United States—in industry, in the economy, and in political participation. The penny newspaper was a vital part of this growth, providing the information the public needed to make democracy work. In 1830, there were 650 weeklies and 65 dailies in the United States, but in just ten years, those numbers had doubled to 1,241 weeklies and 138 dailies.[22] It was a period when more people were working for wages outside the home and were starting to use consumer goods purchased with cash. The penny press provided a means for advertising these goods, which in turn expanded the market for them.

The United States was being transformed from a rural community to an urban society, from an agricultural nation to an industrial one, from self-sufficient families to a market-based economy. Michael Schudson argues that the penny papers were a strong force in this change:

> These papers, whatever their political preferences, were spokesmen for egalitarian ideals in politics, economic life, and social life through their organization of sales, their solicitation of advertising, their emphasis on news, their catering to large audiences, their decreasing concern with the editorial.
>
> The penny papers expressed and built the culture of a democratic market society, a culture which had no place for social or intellectual deference.[23]

SECRET 1 ▸ During the Civil War era, the press continued its move toward being independent from

political parties. The press provided people with news about the war and whether the nation would continue to exist. Following the war, newspapers continued to grow and began to be an important part of people's everyday lives. This was the establishment of Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives. Hazel Dicken-Garcia, in her history of the nineteenth-century press, wrote,

> The press became a "habit" as Americans, perhaps for the first time, recognized a vital need for it and established it as [a] part of their lives in a way that was unprecedented. Families sought news of relatives fighting in the war, and national leaders needed information about events as a basis for making decisions and forming policies for conducting the war. . . . Since everyone had a stake in the war and thus a driving need to know about events, the newspaper became primary reading material as never before.[24]

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft and one of the world's richest men, said in an interview in 2017 that democracies still have a need for the press habit:

> So if we define media very broadly to be the things that help voters assess what's being said, assess how those things have worked, and therefore played their role of picking, on balance, reasonable leaders who pursue reasonable policies—you can't have a democracy without a media function like that. If anybody says we don't need the media, that's a little scary. Yes, some parts of the media may have bias or they may be wrong, but to attack the phenomenon of the media, I'm not sure how many populists of the past have gone to that level.[25]

Pulitzer, Hearst, and the Battle for New York City

If the penny papers of the first half of the nineteenth century gave birth to modern journalism, the battles between New York publishers Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst in the 1880s and 1890s provided journalism's turbulent adolescence.

Pulitzer and the *New York World.*

Joseph Pulitzer came to the United States from Austria in 1864 at the age of seventeen to fight in the Civil War. He survived the war, studied law, and went on to become a reporter for a German-language newspaper. In 1878, he bought the *St. Louis Post and Dispatch* and became its publisher, editor, and business manager.

In 1883, Pulitzer bought the failing *New York World*, and in just three years, he boosted its circulation from 15,000 to more than 250,000. High circulation was critical because large readership numbers attracted advertisers who were willing to pay premium prices. Twelve years after Pulitzer bought the paper, it had a daily circulation of 540,000.[26]

Pulitzer changed the appearance of the paper's front page, replacing dense type with huge multicolumn pictures and big headlines. He brought to journalism a sense of drama and style that appealed immensely to his turn-of-the-century audience. Author and press critic Paul Weaver credits Pulitzer with the invention of the modern newspaper's front page. Before Pulitzer, the front page was no different from any other page in the paper. Pulitzer started the practice of giving the most important story the biggest and widest headline and running that story above the fold of the paper, where it would be immediately visible to anyone looking at the paper on a newsstand. Thus, *above the fold* came to refer to a prominent story.

Pulitzer made many other innovations. He changed headlines so that they said something more specific about the story. For example, a pre-Pulitzer New York paper ran the story about President Lincoln's assassination under the headline "Awful Event." Pulitzer required his editors to use headlines containing a subject and an active verb, so the Lincoln assassination might have run under the headline "Lincoln Shot." Pre-Pulitzer stories told readers what they needed to know in a formal, structured way. Pulitzer presented the news as a story that people wanted to read; journalists went from just being reporters to being storytellers as well.[27]

New Readers: Immigrants and Women.

The New York City of the 1880s and 1890s was a city of immigrants—people who wanted to learn to speak and read English—and the city's newspapers were important teachers. Pulitzer's *New York World* used big headlines, easy words, and many illustrations, all of

which helped the paper appeal to the immigrant community. This was also the period when the modern Sunday paper got its start. In 1889, half of all New Yorkers bought Sunday papers. To make his Sunday editions more appealing, Pulitzer started trying out illustrations, comic strips, and color comics.

Pulitzer also tailored his newspaper to women readers by publishing women's pages and romantic fiction. He had a difficult time balancing the interests of women against those of male readers. He didn't want to offend working-class male readers by making the paper too feminist in content, but he couldn't ignore the independent women who were now reading papers. Women were the primary purchasers of household items, and advertisers wanted to reach them. So the newspaper needed to tailor its content to reach these "new women" while still appealing to its working-class male readers.

▼ Pioneering woman journalist Nellie Bly created a sensation in the late 1800s with her "stunt journalism" written for Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*.



New York Daily News/Getty Images

No one epitomized the journalism of Pulitzer's *New York World* better than "stunt journalist" Nellie Bly, who proved that women could go to the same extremes as men when

trying to get a story. From her first act at the *World* (pretending to be insane in order to get an insider's report on a women's lunatic asylum) to her most famous stunt (traveling around the world in under eighty days), she always did things more extravagantly than anyone else.[28]

Bly, who lived from 1864 to 1922, authored hundreds of newspaper articles, which were generally long and written in the first person, for the *Pittsburg Dispatch*, the *New York World*, and the *New York Evening Journal*. She was born Elizabeth Jane Cochran but went by the nickname Pink (probably for the pink dresses she wore). It was at the *Dispatch* that she started using the pen name Nellie Bly. In addition to covering women's stories for the *Dispatch*, Bly wrote a travelogue of a journey to Mexico under the headline "NELLIE IN MEXICO." She also made a name for herself covering the plight of young women working in factories.

In 1887, Bly moved to New York in the hope of finding a job at one of the city's vibrant daily papers. First on her list was Pulitzer's *New York World*. She eventually was able to see John Cockerill, managing editor of the *World*. It was Cockerill who suggested that Bly go undercover to write a story about the women's lunatic asylum. If her story was good, he told her, she would get the job.

The asylum had been charged with abusing inmates, but none of the stories written about it had the power of Bly's insider account. To gain access, Bly moved into a rooming house and proceeded to act erratically so as to be committed to the asylum. Once inside, she wrote articles describing patients being fed rotten food and being choked and beaten by nurses. After ten days, an attorney for Pulitzer came to rescue her. The series of stories she produced was a masterpiece.

With this series, Bly proved that a woman could find success in sensationalistic journalism and that she could tell a great story under dangerous circumstances. Today many people would consider it unethical for reporters to pretend to be someone they aren't, and many major papers would reject their work. But in the New York of Hearst and Pulitzer, Bly's stunts were wildly successful and were imitated by other reporters.[29]

The Era of Yellow Journalism.

William Randolph Hearst came from a wealthy family and began his newspaper career as editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*, which was owned by his father. Having dominated the San Francisco newspaper market, Hearst followed Pulitzer into the New York market by purchasing the *New York Journal*. Soon he was using Pulitzer's own techniques to compete against him. Hearst and Pulitzer became fierce rivals, each trying to outdo the other with outlandish stories and stunts. This style of shocking, sensationalistic reporting came to be known as yellow journalism. Why yellow? At one point, the two papers fought over which one would publish the popular comic strip "The Yellow Kid," which featured a

smart-aleck character and could be considered the "Doonesbury" of its day. Eventually, both papers featured their own "Yellow Kid" drawn by different artists.

▼ "The Yellow Kid" was such a popular early comic strip character that both the *New York Journal* and the *New York World* had separate versions of the feature drawn by two different artists.



AP Photo/AP Images

Pulitzer eventually repented for his excesses during the era of yellow journalism by endowing a school of journalism at Columbia University. He also endowed the Pulitzer Prizes that every year honor the best reportig, photography, and commentary in journalism.

The Tabloids

Reading newspapers isn't the sort of thing people ever feel a need to apologize for—unless they are reading one of the tabloids. These include not only weekly supermarket tabloids, such as the *Star* and the *National Enquirer*, but also a substantial number of daily tabloids, such as the *New York Daily News* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*, that present the news in a lively style that makes people want to read them.

New York Daily News.

Tabloids first became popular during the 1920s. Tabloid newspapers are printed in a half-page (11- by 14-inch) format and usually have a cover rather than a traditional front page. They stand in contrast to broadsheet newspapers, which are the standard size of 17 by 22 inches. Riding a resurgence of sensationalism that hadn't been seen since the yellow journalism days of Hearst and Pulitzer, the papers of the 1920s became known for a lively, illustrated style known as jazz journalism.

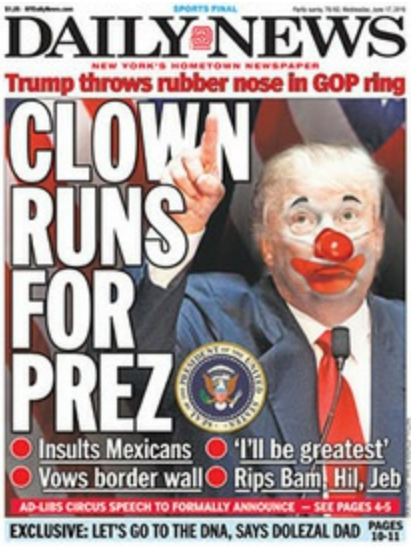
One of the great early tabloids was the *New York Daily News*, which is still popular today.[30] The paper features big photos, huge headlines, and sensationalistic stories. Its most famous cover ran on January 13, 1928. Ruth Snyder had been convicted of murdering her husband and had been sentenced to electrocution. Then, as now, executions of women were rare. Although photographers were excluded from the execution, the *Daily News* sent in a Chicago photographer (because he wouldn't be recognized by anyone present) who had strapped a camera to his ankle. At the moment of the execution, he pulled up his pant leg and took the picture. The photo ran the next day under the headline "DEAD!"[31]

Today's tabloids are no less cutthroat and competitive than Hearst's and Pulitzer's papers in the late 1800s or the tabloids in the 1920s. The *Daily News* continues to do battle on the streets of New York with its rival, the *New York Post*. They compete not only to be the primary paper of working-class New Yorkers, but also to be the tabloid that readers of the more serious *New York Times* pick up for their gossip stories.[32] (As an interesting side note, the *New York Post* was co-founded by Alexander Hamilton.)

▼ In 2016, competing New York City tabloids the *New York Post* and the *Daily News* routinely ran covers mocking the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates.



New York Daily News/Getty Images



New York Daily News/Getty Images

How fierce is the competition between these two papers? On one occasion, the *New York Post* ran an Associated Press photo of a girl competing in a spelling bee. But because she was sponsored by the *Daily News*, the *Post*'s biggest rival, the *Post* used a computer to edit out the *Daily News* logo from the sign she was wearing.[33] Of course, competition among the American tabloids is nothing compared to that of the British working-class papers. Those tabloids, such as the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*, are intensely sensationalistic, and the *Sun* even features a daily topless pinup on its Page 3. The tabs substantially outsell the more responsible papers.

Broadcast News

In the 1920s, newspapers started facing competition from new outlets. Broadcast media began to provide up-to-the-minute news delivered with a speed and immediacy that newspapers could not match.

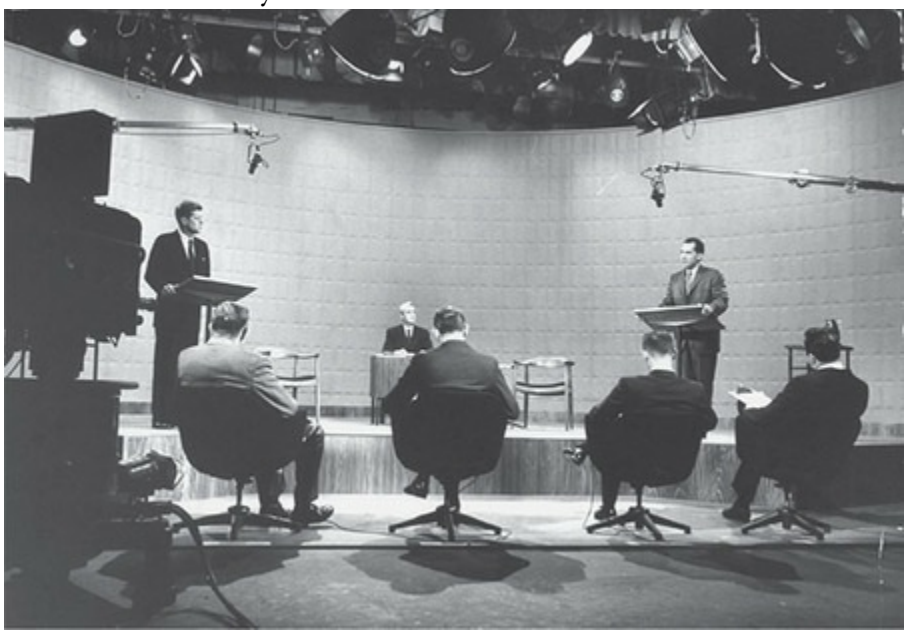
> SECRET 4 ▸ News was a part of radio programming from the very start. KDKA demonstrated the power of radio news with its 1920 nighttime broadcast of the Harding–Cox presidential election results—before the newspaper stories appeared the next morning. The newspapers, understandably, were upset by radio's apparent poaching on their territory. In fact, in the 1930s, they threatened to cut off radio stations' access to AP news and even threatened to stop running radio program listings. The newspapers insisted that unless the news was of "transcendent importance," radio shouldn't broadcast it until the newspapers were available. Not surprisingly, the radio networks didn't think much of this idea. Although various restrictions were tested for a short while, in the end, radio news could not be stopped. As we will see again and again, old media usually try unsuccessfully to hold back the development of new media, providing yet another example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again. Yet the old media do not go away. Instead, after a period of resistance, they change and adapt to the new environment.[34] Radio eliminated the extra editions of newspapers that used to be published whenever dramatic news occurred, but newspapers as a whole suffered only a slight decline in circulation.[35]

One place where radio held clear superiority over newspapers was in the realm of live news. Radio could, for the first time, bring news from around the world to people "as it happened." At no time was this more apparent than during World War II. When Adolf Hitler's army marched into Austria in 1938, CBS was on the air from Europe with immediate news and up-to-the-minute commentary. No radio correspondent of the era stood out more than CBS's European director, Edward R. Murrow. When Germany declared war on England in 1939, Murrow reported it from London in a voice that became familiar to all Americans. During the bombing of London, Americans listened to his live reports, which contained not just the news but also the sounds of everyday life: the air raid sirens, the antiaircraft guns, and the explosions of bombs. Murrow spoke directly to listeners from London rooftops and made them feel as if they were there with him.[36]

Television News Goes 24/7.

Television news started with brief coverage of the 1940 Republican National Convention on an experimental NBC television station in New York City. By 1948, both the Democratic and Republican conventions were covered extensively for the still-tiny television audience. Documentary programs, such as *See It Now*, which was hosted by former CBS radio newsman Edward R. Murrow, took on lightweight topics, as well as intensely controversial issues, such as Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy, who had accused numerous people of being communists. The program also aired notable segments on the Korean War. In 1947, NBC started TV's longest-running news and commentary program, *Meet the Press*, which is still on today.

▼ Television started playing a major role in presidential elections starting in 1960 with the famous Kennedy–Nixon debates.



Francis Miller/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images

In August 1948, the CBS-TV News started airing for fifteen minutes every weeknight, setting the standard length for network news until the 1960s. When the ocean liner *Andrea Doria* sank in 1956, a CBS camera crew on a seaplane got footage of the ship going down, which was broadcast promptly. Journalist and broadcast professor Edward Bliss Jr. noted that with the film of the *Andrea Doria*, "Television had demonstrated that it could take the public to the scene of a major story more effectively than any other news medium."[37]

In 1963, CBS expanded its nightly news show to half an hour, with Walter Cronkite at the anchor desk. Along with the news, the program featured commentary from veteran newsman Eric Sevareid. NBC soon followed the new format, joined four years later by ABC. During this time, videotape, satellite communication, and color started coming into common use, giving television news more immediacy and impact than ever before. With correspondents bringing into American homes graphic news from the war in Vietnam, as well as spectacular coverage of the moon landing in 1969, television news rose in importance as the way to see what was happening in the world.

Questioning the Media

How do you get your news? Do you read a newspaper, go to a legacy media site online, watch television, or listen to the radio? What advantages do you experience from using this news source? What is the downside of relying on that source?

On November 3, 1979, the staff of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was taken hostage by Iranian militants, and ABC started a nightly news update at 11:30 p.m. Eastern Time. That news update eventually turned into *Nightline* with anchor Ted Koppel, and it became one of the most respected news shows on television. The following year, Ted Turner's CNN went on the air with news twenty-four hours a day and the promise that the station would not sign off until the end of the world.[38] By the time the Gulf War began in January 1991, viewers were turning to CNN, not the networks, for news.[39] But CNN's dominance was not to last. By 2003 and the war in Iraq, CNN was facing competition in the twenty-four-hour news business from Fox News and, to a lesser extent, MSNBC. As early as 2002, the year after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Fox News was getting consistently higher ratings than the more established CNN. Fox did a number of things to distinguish itself from its rival. Most significantly, it was willing to take a point of view. While CNN and the broadcast networks followed the traditional objective, or neutral, style of reporting, Fox took an opinionated view in the manner of the major newsmagazines and European newspapers.[40] According to the Nielsen ratings, all three of the major cable news networks rank in the top ten of all cable channels, Fox News having the largest audience, followed by MSNBC and CNN.[41]

According to the Pew Research Center, currently only about 50 percent of Americans get news regularly from television in any of its varied forms—cable news, national network news, and local news. Some of this decline is a generational effect, with young people being less likely than older people to use TV in any of its forms for news.[42]

The News Business

The newspapers during the era of yellow journalism were the primary source of news at the time. They faced competition from magazines, but heavyweights such as *Time* and *Newsweek* had yet to weigh in. Radio news was a decade or two away, television news would have to wait half a century, and CNN was nearly a hundred years in the future. Although newspapers today owe a huge debt to the great papers of the past, they are operating in a substantially different media environment, one that is saturated with fast, up-to-the-minute competition.

Newspaper Conglomerates—Consolidation and Profitability

Unlike those of Hearst and Pulitzer, today's newspapers typically face little competition from other newspapers. There are 1,331 daily newspapers currently being published, down about 25 percent from one hundred years ago. This doesn't mean that cities are going without newspapers, however; it means only that there are relatively few cities (less than 1 percent) that have competing papers.[43] Also, most newspapers today are owned by large chains, corporations that control a significant number of newspapers or other media outlets. Former journalist Ben Bagdikian notes in his book *The Media Monopoly* that before World War II more than 80 percent of all American newspapers were independently owned. Today that picture has reversed, with chains owning more than 80 percent of all papers. The British press has had a longer tradition of concentration of ownership, with three lords owning 67 percent of the daily circulation as early as 1910.[44]

Why is the consolidation in the publishing business taking place? Sometimes family owners just want to get out of the newspaper business. In many cases, inheritance laws virtually force the sale of family-owned papers after they have been passed down through generations. The chain with the largest circulation is Gannett, the publisher of *USA Today*, which owns approximately eighty-three daily newspapers that have a combined circulation of more than nine million.[45] In addition to Gannett, other major publishers include Thomson, Cox Media Group, the New York Times Company, Advance Publications (formerly Newhouse), Tronc (formerly Tribune Publishing), McClatchy, Hearst, and News Corporation. In Britain, the largest single owner of newspapers is Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, which publishes the tabloid the *Sun* as well as the more respected broadsheets the *Times* and the *Sunday Times*. News Corp publishes more than 175 newspapers in at least four countries as well as a number of papers with international distribution, and it is the largest publisher of English-language newspapers.[46]

Until recently, newspaper publishing was one of the most profitable businesses in the United States. The Gannett newspaper chain had earnings as high as 30 to 40 percent profits from its papers.[47] The average profit for publicly owned newspaper chains in 2005 was nearly 20 percent, noticeably higher than that for companies in the Fortune 500.[48]

But newspapers have been facing rough times for the last three decades. Newspaper circulation had been declining since the 1990s, and for 2016, daily circulation—both print and digital—fell by 8 percent. Advertising revenues have also fallen by nearly two-thirds over the last ten years, dropping from $49 billion in 2006 to $18 billion in 2016.[49] That's not to say, however, that there have not been pockets of good news as well. Several major national and metropolitan papers have had substantial growth recently. In 2016, the *New York Times* added more than 500,000 digital subscribers, a 47 percent increase; the *Wall Street Journal* added more than 150,000 digital subscribers, a 23 percent increase; the

Washington Post gained 500,000 digital subscriptions, doubling the size of its online circulation; and the *Chicago Tribune* added 100,000 subscribers for a 76 percent increase.[50]

Newspapers With a National Reach and Metropolitan Newspapers

Until 2009, the United States had three national newspapers: *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the much smaller *Christian Science Monitor*. But in April 2009, the *Monitor* suspended its daily publication as a newspaper and became an all-electronic, web-based news channel.[51] Both *USA Today* and the *Journal* rely on satellite distribution of newspaper pages to printing plants across the country. In other respects, the two papers could not be more different: The *Journal* has the look of an old-fashioned nineteenth-century paper, and *USA Today* originated the multicolored format. The *New York Times*, although it is a major metropolitan newspaper, is also generally considered to be a national newspaper.

The Wall Street Journal.

The nation's premier newspaper for business and financial news has been doing well recently and experiencing increases in both its print circulation and digital revenues. At a time when other papers have been cutting newsroom staff size and budgets, the *Journal* has been hiring staff and producing new features. The *Journal* stands out in contrast with its major competition, *USA Today*. The *Journal* was the last major paper to start using color, and it has still not fully embraced photography. Instead, it uses pen-and-ink drawings for the "mug shots" that accompany its stories. The *Journal* has cultivated a traditional look that deliberately evokes the newspaper layouts of the pre-Pulitzer era.[52] It did undergo a substantial redesign in 2006, primarily to make the paper narrower so that it didn't use as much newsprint, and it has continued a slow movement toward a more modern look. The *Journal*'s circulation is the second largest of any American newspaper, with a combined print/digital circulation of 2.27 million.[53] It is the definitive source of financial news, it is highly regarded for its national and international news, and its editorial page is one of the nation's leading conservative voices. It should be noted that unlike *USA Today*, almost every view of a major article from the *Journal* is by a paid subscriber. There are virtually no free views.

▼ The *Wall Street* Journal is the United States' biggest paid circulation newspaper with a mix of business, national, and international news, along with a conservative editorial focus.



AP/ Associated Press

USA Today.

News McNuggets. When the Gannett newspaper chain founded *USA Today*, journalists made fun of the new national paper, calling it McPaper. They claimed that the brightly colored paper full of short stories was serving up "news McNuggets" to an audience raised on television news. John Quinn, a former editor of the paper, once joked that *USA Today* was "the newspaper that brought new depth to the meaning of the word *shallow*."[54] Critics of the paper warned that starting a national newspaper was a good way for Gannett to lose a lot of money in a hurry, and the critics were right. In its first decade, *USA Today* reportedly lost more than $800 million, but by 1993, the paper started turning a profit. Coming out of the recession, *USA Today* had declining circulation, and it had fewer "sponsored" copies being bought in bulk by hotels; in 2017, it had an average daily combined print/digital circulation of 4.14 million.[55] It can be difficult comparing *USA Today*'s circulation with that of other major newspapers because much of its circulation comes from being inserted into Gannett's other newspapers. It also gets extensive unpaid readership through its major online presence.[56]

What influence has *USA Today* had on the newspaper industry as a whole? First and foremost, *USA Today* changed the look of newspapers. It drove color onto the front page and made black-and-white papers look drab in comparison. Second, it was organized clearly by section, thus initiating a trend in which papers began imposing more structure on the news. Finally, and most controversially, *USA Today* has led the trend toward shorter stories.[57]

The most important effect of *USA Today* is that it has forced industry professionals to reconsider what business they are in. The publication's website describes *USA Today* as a "multi-platform news and information media company . . . Through its unique visual storytelling, USA TODAY delivers high-quality and engaging content across print, digital, social and video platforms."[58]

The New York Times.

If there has been a debate over whether *USA Today* or the *Wall Street Journal* is the nation's biggest paper, there is no question about which paper is most influential. When people in the United States refer to the *Times* without naming a city, they are almost certainly referring to the *New York Times*. According to at least one definition, news is what is "printed on the front page of the *New York Times*." News stories in the United States often don't become significant until they have been covered in the *New York Times*. The front page of the *New York Times* has as much news on it as is contained in an entire half-hour network newscast. The Sunday *New York Times* is huge: In September 1998, the paper published an Arts and Leisure section with 124 pages, a record for the *New York Times*—and that was just one section![59]

▼ The *New York Times* is an American daily newspaper that was founded and has continuously published since 1851. It has won 125 Pulitzer Prizes, more than any other news organization.



Richard Levine/Getty Images

According to *Time* magazine,

> A *Times* morning-after analysis of a presidential debate can set the agenda for days of campaign coverage and punditry. Its decision to feature, say, a murder in Texas on Page One can prompt hordes of reporters to hop a plane south. Its critics can make or break a Broadway play or turn an obscure foreign film into tomorrow's hot ticket.[60]

While the company's longtime motto is "All the News That's Fit to Print," the Hoovers business report suggests that a better choice would be "All the News That's Fit to Print and Post Online."[61] While the *New York Times* has traditionally been considered a New York City newspaper, with its massive growth of its digital circulation, it (along with the *Washington Post*) is really now a national paper.

The *New York Times* has been a respected newspaper ever since Adolph Ochs bought the failing penny press paper in 1896 and gave it an emphasis on serious national and international news. Its stodgy look, with long columns of type, earned it the nickname "Gray Lady." However, on October 16, 1997, the *Times* started running color photos on its front page, joining virtually every other paper in the country in this practice. Yet even with color the paper doesn't look like *USA Today*. As the *American Journalism Review* put it, "Don't expect the Gray Lady to step out in any gauche dress just to show off."[62] The *Times* is basically a black-and-white paper with color used as accents, according to newspaper design expert Mario Garcia.[63]

The Washington Post.

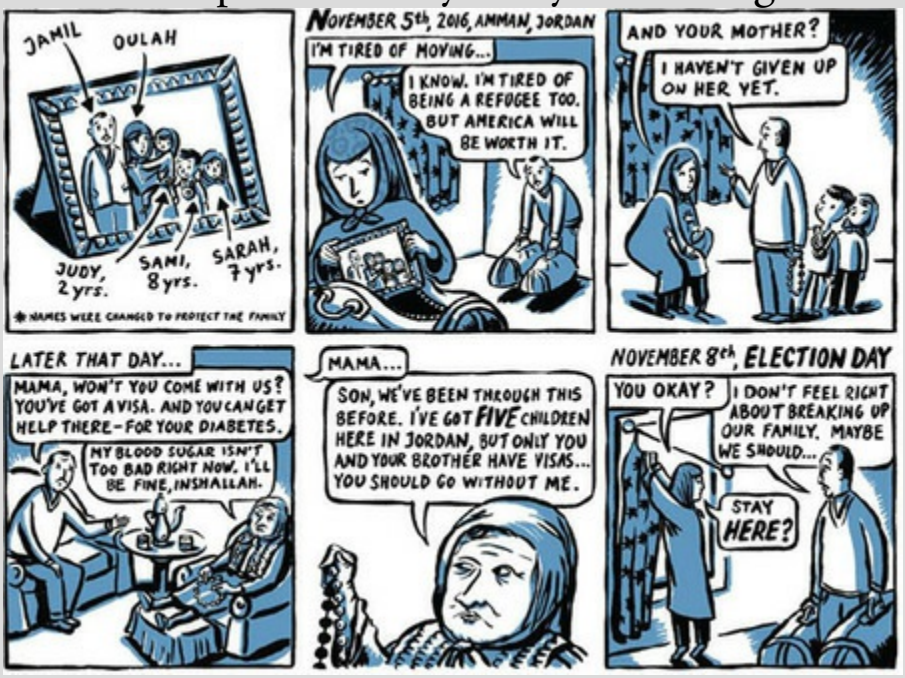
The *New York Times* set the standard for newspaper journalism in the twentieth century and continues to do so today, but in the 1970s, the *Washington Post* inspired a generation of young journalists with its coverage of the Watergate scandal, the subsequent cover-up, and the downfall of President Richard Nixon. Watergate was a story that shook the nation and transformed the *Post* from a big-city paper to one with a national reputation.

The scandal started with a "third-rate burglary" of the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate office and apartment complex on June 16, 1972. When the five Spanish-speaking burglars were arrested, one was found carrying an address book that contained the number for a phone located in the White House.

Among those assigned to cover the story were two young reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. They soon realized that this was no ordinary burglary. As weeks and then months went by, their painstaking reporting connected the burglars to the White House and eventually to the president himself. They further discovered that the White House had been systematically sabotaging the Democratic presidential candidates and attempting to cover up these actions. During the summer of 1973, Americans were spellbound by the Senate hearings into the Watergate scandal. Finally, with impeachment seeming a certainty, Nixon resigned as president on August 8, 1974.[64]

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Comic Strip Tells Story of Syrian Refugee Family



© Jake Halpern and Michael Sloan. "Welcome to the New World."

To call "Welcome to the New World" an editorial cartoon is vastly underselling the storytelling of writer Jake Halpern and artist Michael Sloan. In what is essentially a serialized graphic novel, they tell the story of a real-life refugee family from Syria who left for the United States on Election Day 2016.

Halpern, in an interview with *Buffalo Spree* magazine, said that he had always been interested in graphic narratives, especially the classic Maus that retells the story of the Holocaust using cats and mice to represent the Nazis and the Jews. Halpern started talking with refugee resettlement agencies looking for a family to feature in his story. The head of the agency asked him, "What would you think about the prospect of following a family from the moment they arrive? We've got two brothers with their families arriving on election day."[129]

The story for the family is particularly difficult because shortly after President Trump took office, he implemented a travel ban against people from Syria, which leaves the family in doubt about their status.

Halpern met with the family regularly over the twenty-episode run of the story.

The family includes Ammar, his brother Jamil, their wives Raghida and Oulah, and their children. Halpern did change the family members' names in order to help protect them. Although the family has not been identified, they still worry about having a journalist tell their story. "One of the things Jamil said to me early on was, 'Am I safe talking to you? Will it cause me trouble?' Because, where he came from in Syria, he was at risk for talking to the press. . . . I was in the process of saying, 'No, you're fine. This is America.' But, I paused for a good, long minute to just think it through. It's crazy that I had to stop and think about it. In the back of my mind, I worried about him."

Halpern says the response to the comic has been positive: "A lot of people have said that there was something about the graphic form of it that they found really touching."

Halpern said he was really excited to partner with Sloan because he liked the warm style of his work. "I

thought that would work great, because there's a temptation to turn this into a really moody, brooding, edgy, darker type of story," he said. "But, my goal was to humanize these people, and the warmth that was so evident and alive in Michael's drawings would get it."

Sloan actually lives near Halpern in New York, and has done art for a variety of outlets including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New Yorker*.

Their work won the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning, the first time it had been awarded to a reporter and an artist working together.[130] Bruce Headlam, the pair's editor, said the story could have been a conventional New York Times feature series, but instead it became "the first fully reported, regularly published comic strip to appear in the Times."[131]

While the Times has had editorial cartoons, it has not run comic strips, so when Headlam came up with the idea of telling a refugee family's story with a comic strip, he wasn't sure how the paper's management would react. To his surprise, the editors and art directors thought it was a great idea.

Perhaps the biggest challenge was having to tell the story so tightly. Headlam points out that a typical Opinion piece in the Times runs about one thousand words. Each episode of "Welcome" ran on average two hundred words.

Halpern said he felt the length restriction keenly as he and Sloan worked on the series. There was a story he wanted to include about Jamil and Ammar seeing each other in taxis at an intersection in New York after arriving in the country on separate flights from separate countries that he just couldn't include. "The one thing that's frustrating about this strip is there's such little space," Halpern said. "There's so much on the cutting room floor. If I were writing this story in any other form, there's no way I'd omit that story."[132]

WHO is the source?

Who are the artist and writer of this story? What makes their partnership unusual?

WHOSE story are they telling?

Whom are they writing about? How did they select them for this story? What makes their story significant?

WHY did the Times choose to use a comic strip to tell this story?

Does the New York Times use comic strips to report stories with very often? What made the paper think this would be a good story to tell that way? Could have it been told with a conventional newspaper feature story? What did the Times gain from using a comic strip form?

HOW do you and your classmates react to this story as a comic strip?

Have you ever read a serious journalistic story as a comic strip or as a graphic novel before? If so, what was it? What did you think of it? Do you think "Welcome to the New World" was successful? Why or why not?

In more recent years, the *Washington Post* has become known for its national importance through its online presence and for the fact that it was recently purchased by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

Like the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* has had a growing paid online presence, on both desktop and mobile screens.[65]

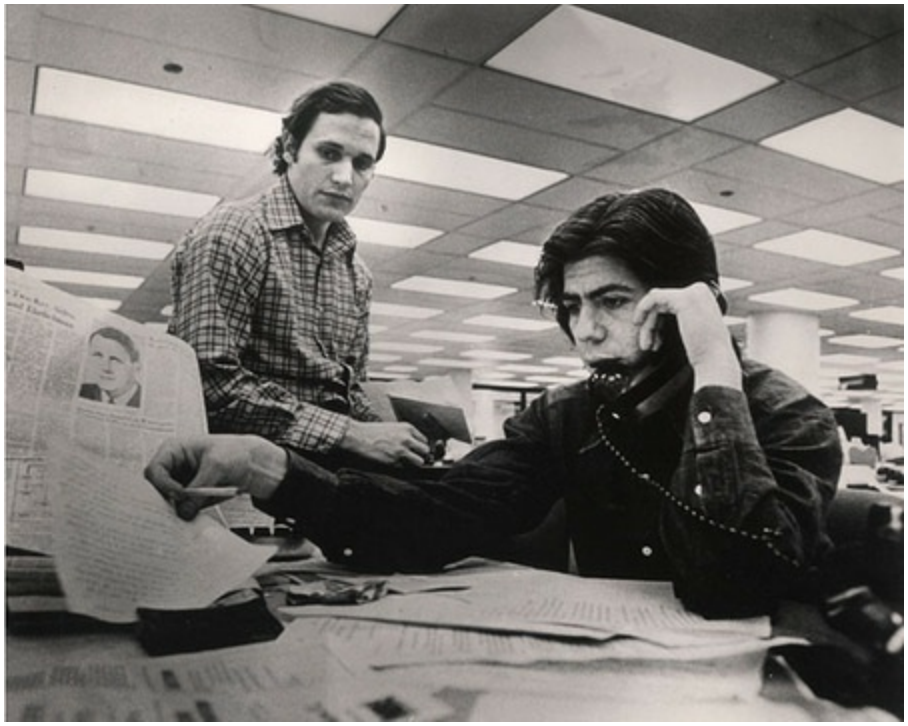
The Los Angeles Times.

When people talk about the press in general, they are usually speaking of the major East Coast papers such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. In the early 2000s, the *Los Angeles Times* established a national presence as well. While it may not have "push[ed] the *New York Times* off its perch,"[66] it has been one of the most respected papers on the West Coast, winning a Pulitzer Prize in 2016 for its coverage of the San Bernardino terrorist attack, two in 2015, two in 2011, one each in 2009 and 2007, two in 2005, and five in 2004.[67]

In 2017, the Disney corporation entered into a battle with the *LA Times* because the media conglomerate didn't like how the newspaper was covering the company's business relationships with the city of Anaheim, California. Disney retaliated against the paper by banning *LA Times* critics from attending the studio's movie press screenings. (These screenings are so critics can publish reviews on the day that movies are released.)[68]

But Disney quickly had to back off from that ban after movie critics and pop culture writers across the country responded by standing with the *LA Times*, refusing to attend early screenings or consider Disney movies for end-of-the-year awards until the ban was lifted. All of this controversy only served to promote the story about Disney's sweetheart relationship with Anaheim that the media conglomerate so desperately wanted suppressed. But this should be among the first lessons in corporate public relations: Don't give the press an excuse to write about a story you want to go away. As *Vox*'s Todd VanDerWerff tweeted at the time, "The weird thing about the Disney LAT ban is that it's turned a local story about Anaheim into national news, which can't be what Disney wanted."[69]

▼ Bob Woodward (left) and Carl Bernstein helped bring the *Washington Post* to national prominence in the 1970s with their coverage of the Watergate break-in and the subsequent cover-up.



Ken Feil/Washington Post/Getty Images

Local and Community News

While people who talk about "the media" mostly talk about the national and metropolitan newspapers and broadcasters, community media are at least numerically the biggest number of them. Jock Lauterer, in his book *Community Journalism: Relentlessly Local*, points out that of the more than nine thousand newspapers in the United States, 97 percent are considered to be small or community papers. The community press consists of weekly and daily newspapers serving individual communities or suburbs instead of an entire metropolitan area.[75] Lauterer points out that these communities are "not just 'communities of place' but also communities of ethnicity, faith, ideas or interests." He goes on to list that in addition to the stereotypical small-town paper there are alternative, African American, ethnic, gay and lesbian, Hispanic, Jewish, military, religious, and senior community papers. (This is an example of Secret 2—There are no mainstream media.)

One of the reasons community papers are important is that they publish news that readers can't get anywhere else. Journalism professor Eric K. Meyer points out that community newspapers "have the most loyal audiences and the news that you can't get elsewhere. A local newspaper won't get scooped by CNN."[76] A study by the Pew Research Center found that people who valued and used local news were also more likely to feel connected to their community to vote in local elections.[77]

The fact that a paper serves a small town does not necessarily mean that it lacks hard-hitting, significant reporting. Consider Art Cullen, editor of the *Storm Lake Times* in rural Iowa who won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for best editorial writing for a series of editorials about nitrate water pollution coming from fertilizer runoff from farm fields. Cullen investigated how the counties that were being sued for allowing the pollution to take place had their legal defense being paid for by the chemical companies that manufactured the fertilizer that was causing the pollution.

The paper, with a circulation of 3,330, is a family effort. In addition to Art working as editor, his brother, John, is the publisher, and his son, Tom, is a reporter. The paper has a total staff of about eight people. "Everybody here does everything," Art says. "If you want to buy an ad, I'll sell it to you."[78] Just to be clear, though, the paper isn't all hard-hitting reporting. Cullen told the *Washington Post*'s Eric Wemple, "We strive to have a baby, a dog, a fire and a crash on every front page."

News, Politics, and Society

What is news? Ask ten different journalists, and you'll come up with ten different definitions. One way of defining news is to list its characteristics, the values journalists use when they select which stories to report. These include the following:

- Timeliness—An earthquake that happened last night is more newsworthy than one that happened two months ago.
- Proximity—An auto accident in your town in which two people are injured is more likely to make it into the paper than an auto accident three hundred miles away in which two people are killed.

Test Your Media Literacy

The View From Nowhere

There's been a lot of talk about the role of objectivity in journalism without a lot of agreement on what that means.

Objectivity could mean the kind of coverage that C-SPAN does where journalists set up cameras at fixed locations and provide gavel-to-gavel coverage of events with no interpretation. That's probably as close as you can get to "just-the-facts" objective coverage that many people claim they want. But while C-SPAN certainly serves an important role, most people are not going to choose to watch an entire congressional hearing from gavel to gavel rather than reading or watching a summary report of it.

Objectivity could also mean a report where a journalist presents "both sides" of the issue without making any commentary on which side is making the better argument. Or whether either or both sides are lying. Or whether there are more than two sides. This can sometimes be referred to as "he said, she said" journalism.

Objectivity could even mean reporting what evidence suggests is the truth without trying to present a contrasting point of view. Journalists, of course, always want to be reporting "the truth," but knowing what is true, what is false, and what is opinion can be challenging. And a substantial portion of the audience might disagree with that truth and accuse the journalist of being biased.

Too often, to news sources and consumers, objectivity means . . . "something I agree with."

New York University journalism professor Jay Rosen, who has been an outspoken critic of the approach mainstream journalists take to objectivity, says that journalists often seem more concerned about appearing "unbiased" than presenting an accurate, unbiased picture of the world. He wrote on his blog *PressThink*:

> Something happened in our press over the last 40 years or so that never got acknowledged and to this day would be denied by a majority of newsroom professionals. Somewhere along the way, truthtelling was surpassed by other priorities the mainstream press felt a stronger duty to. These include such things as "maintaining objectivity," "not imposing a judgment," or "refusing to take sides" . . . Journalists felt better, safer, on firmer professional ground—more like pros—when they stopped short of reporting substantially untrue statements as false.[70]

Instead of trying to report what is objectively true, Rosen writes that journalists use a reporting convention based on philosopher Thomas Nagel's "view from nowhere."

Back in 2010, Rosen wrote that the view from nowhere exists for three reasons:

- Because it places journalists between the extremes of the left and the right, the reporters can call this "neither–nor" position balanced.
- Since they are being balanced in their coverage, they are not being biased.
- And so because they are not biased, they have a claim at being legitimate reporters.[71]

Rosen suggests that journalists might do better working with "transparency" rather than the view from nowhere:

> In the old way, one says: "I don't have a horse in this race. I don't have a view of the world that I'm defending. I'm just telling you the way it is, and you should accept it because I've done the work and I don't have a stake in the outcome . . .
>
> In the newer way, the logic is different. "Look I'm not going to pretend I have no view. Instead, I am going to level with you about where I'm coming from on this. So factor that in when you evaluate my

report. Because I've done the work and this is what I've concluded."[72]

Rosen also suggests that reporters can gain credibility by making sure readers understand where the story is coming from, by making sure that audience members can see that this is reporting, not just opinion writing: "Don't believe me, look for yourself. Don't accept it, here's the data. You think we're biased, check it out."[73]

He gives an example, Washington Post reporter David Fahrenthold, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on President Donald Trump's charitable giving. In addition to the stories he wrote, Fahrenthold listed the people he talked to and the documents he examined. Fahrenthold asked the public for help and made it clear the entire time he was working on the story what he was doing. The materials Fahrenthold provided not only showed his evidence, but also showed how hard he worked on the story.[74]

WHO are the sources?

Who is arguing that journalists are adopting "the view from nowhere"? What is his background? Where does the concept of the view from nowhere come from?

WHAT are they saying?

What do reporters mean when they say they are doing objective reporting? What is "the view from nowhere"?

WHY do reporters struggle with how they report stories?

Why do they adopt the view from nowhere? Why are they so concerned about being charged with being biased? What is the alternative to the view from nowhere?

WHAT do you and your classmates think about this?

Have you noticed "the view from nowhere" in stories before? Do you think it interferes with journalists telling accurate stories? Are you comfortable with journalists explaining what their personal biases or points of view are? Why or why not? Is it useful for journalists to pretend they don't have opinions about a story?

- Prominence—When two movie stars have lunch together, it's news. When you have lunch with your mother, it's not.
- Consequence—A $50 billion tax cut is more newsworthy than a $5,000 one.
- Rarity—The birth of an albino tiger is news.
- Human interest—Events that touch our hearts, such as the birth of octuplets, often make the news.

Another way to define news is to look at the wide range of ways newspaper editors think of it. Charles Dana, editor of the *New York Sun* in the late 1800s, defined news as "anything that will make people talk."[79] John B. Bogart, a city editor of the *Sun*, gave us a classic definition: "When a dog bites a man, that is not news. But when a man bites a dog, that is news." As mentioned earlier in the chapter, news is often defined as "that which is printed on the front page of the *New York Times*."[80] Noted journalist Walter Lippmann defined news as a "picture of reality on which men can act."[81] And there are cynics who say that the perfect news story is one that deals with "pets, tits, or tots."[82]

Sources, Advertisers, and Readers—Whom Do You Please?

Traditionally, newspapers have maintained a figurative wall between the business department and the newsroom, sometimes jokingly called the "separation of church and state." Reporters and editors are supposed to be concerned not with profits, but rather with reporting the news as best they can. But the barrier is coming down, and editors are increasingly looking at their newspaper as a product that should appeal to advertisers as well as readers.

John Oppedahl, who has served as editor and publisher of the *Arizona Republic*, as well as publisher of the *San Francisco Examiner*, says that editors must be concerned about the business health of their papers:

> Editors have to become more interested and more involved in how their enterprises make money. . . . If you take the view that editors really have been marketers all along, and maybe never wanted to say it, now I think they need to admit that they are.[83]

However, sometimes publishers go from printing news that readers want to publishing news that advertisers want. For example, many newspapers now publish advice and news about personal investing in addition to the traditional stock reports. While these features are undoubtedly popular with readers, they are even more popular with advertisers, who want their ads for financial services surrounded by stories telling readers that they ought to be investing.

The Project for Excellence in Journalism annual report for 2006 stated the situation fairly baldly: "At many old-media companies, though not all, the decades-long battle at the top between idealists and accountants is now over. The idealists have lost."[84]

Media and Political Bias

One of the main reasons the direct effects model still has some support is that many critics believe the media affect the public's political opinions by presenting reports that are biased toward a particular candidate or political party. But, as we discussed earlier in this chapter, holding up detached, factual, objective journalism as an ideal for reporting, the press was making a commercial decision, not a moral one. During the penny press era of the 1830s to the 1860s, newspapers tried to appeal to the broadest possible audience. The best way to attract a large number of people, publishers felt, was not to take an identifiable political point of view, as had newspapers of the colonial era. The alternative to this supposedly objective style is a more opinionated form of reporting that takes on an explicit point of view, such as that found in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and many British or European newspapers, such as London's liberal *Guardian* or conservative (Tory) *Telegraph*. These publications have a clearly understood political viewpoint that is designed to appeal to a specific audience.[85]

Erik Sorenson, former president of the MSNBC cable news channel, suggests that there is nothing wrong with taking a particular point of view: "I think a lot of people are beginning to ask, 'Is there something phony about pretending to be objective and reading off a teleprompter in the twenty-first century?'"[86]

Gans's Basic Journalistic Values.

There is more to the bias argument than the liberal-versus-conservative issue. For example, some observers charge that the media have a bias toward attractiveness or charisma. There can also be a bias toward making money or attracting an audience. Political scientist and media scholar Doris Graber argued that when it comes to selecting stories for coverage, the strongest bias is for those that will have the greatest appeal to the publication's or program's audience.[87]

Rather than looking for examples of bias in the news, media sociologist Herbert Gans set out to find the actual values exhibited within the stories themselves. He asked what the values—the biases—of journalism were. To find the answer, he studied the content of the CBS and NBC news programs, *Time* magazine, and *Newsweek*.

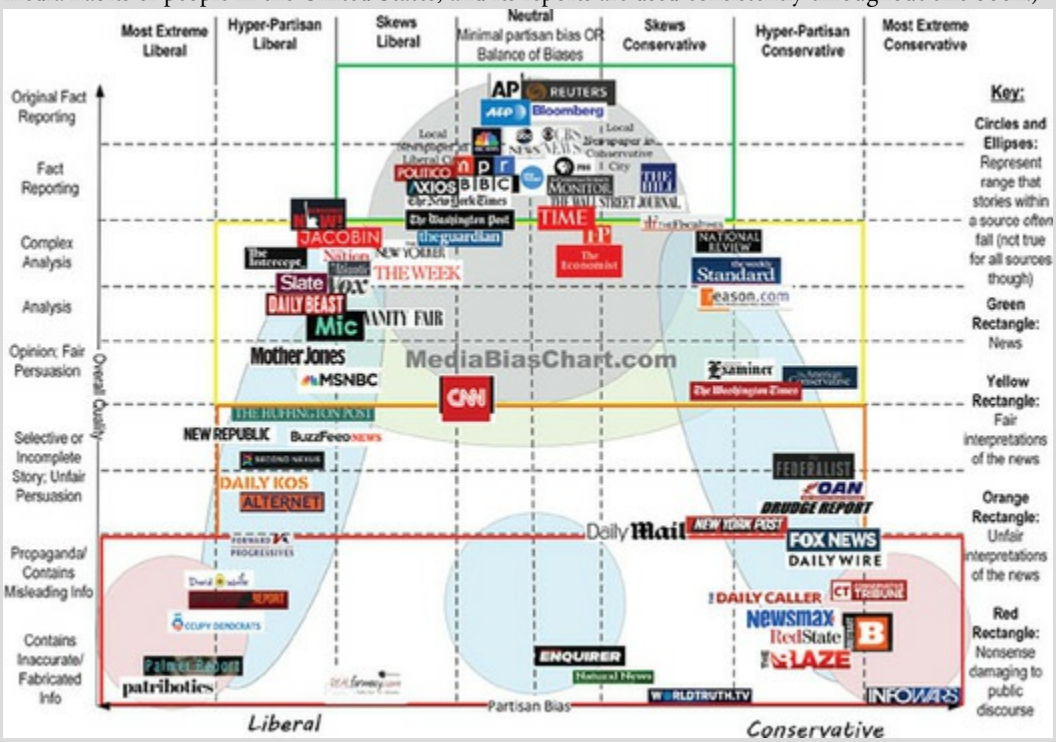
Gans found eight enduring values in the stories he studied: ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism, moderatism, social order, and leadership. These values were not stated explicitly; rather, they emerged from what was presented as good and normal and what was presented as bad.[88] Let's look briefly at each of Gans's values:

Where do we go for the news?

Given the divisiveness of the 2016 election, it's not surprising that Trump and Clinton voters got their news from different places.

A study from the Pew Research Center found that Trump supporters were relatively uniform, with 40 percent saying their main source was Fox News. Coming in at a distant second was CNN with 8 percent. Third place was Facebook at 7 percent. Clinton supporters listed CNN as their top choice with 18 percent, the liberal-leaning MSNBC was at 9 percent, and Facebook was third at 8 percent.[95]

(What is the Pew Research Center? It is a nonpartisan think tank that informs the public "about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world." Pew is one of the best sources of information about media habits of people in the United States, and its reports are used consistently throughout this book.)



Vanessa Otero, MediaBiasChart.com.

It is worth noting that Facebook itself does not produce any news; it simply allows its users to post links to news. So although similar percentages of Trump and Clinton supporters listed Facebook, as the Pew report suggests, it is likely they are getting news from very different sources.

Given the wide range of news sources available, it can be hard to know which are reliable sources of balanced, objective news; which are good sources of opinion and analysis; and what are the fringe news organizations full of actual fake news.

Patent attorney Vanessa Otero created the chart printed on this page and has taken it though multiple revisions. She distributed it by posting on it on Facebook. The chart rates news organizations on two axes:

- Overall Quality—Ranging from Original Fact Reporting to Contains Inaccurate/Fabricated Info
- Partisan Bias—Ranging from Liberal to Conservative

"We are living in a time where we have more information available to each of us than ever before in history," Otero wrote. "However, we are not all proficient at distinguishing between good information and bad information. This is true for liberal, moderate and conservative people. I submit that these two circumstances are highly related to why our country is so politically polarized at the moment."[96]

Unsurprisingly, Otero got lots of criticism of her chart. Infowars (which she categorized as "Utter Garbage/Conspiracy Theories" in an early version of her chart) completely rejected her work and suggested instead a chart that listed liberal-leaning sites as promoting "tyranny" and the conservative sites as promoting "liberty and freedom."

Otero has continued to revise her chart, doing away with the "Utter Garbage/Conspiracy Theories" and going instead with "Most Extreme Liberal" and "Most Extreme Conservative" on the horizontal axis. The chart is now up to version 3.1.

Otero doesn't demand that readers accept her analysis, offering a blank version of the template where people can create their own chart, but she does offer some advice:

> I respectfully submit that if you make your own, you should be able to place at least one source in each of the vertical columns, because they exist, and at least one in each of the horizontal rows, because they also exist. If you have just a couple sources that you think are in the middle but none exist either to the right or left of them, or up or down from them, you may be on the wrong track."[97]

You can access the full chart and the template here: www.ralphehanson.com/2018/05/21/ch-6-categorizing-news-sources/.

WHO are the sources?

Who conducted the study of media use by presidential supporters discussed here? What do they do? Who created the chart? Why did she do so?

WHAT are they saying?

How do Trump and Clinton supporters differ in where they go for news? How do our varied news sources differ from one another? What are the differing ways that Otero categorizes them on her chart?

WHAT evidence exists?

Look at the various choices of news sources. How do the ones in the lower corners differ from those on the top and in the center of the chart?

WHAT do you and your classmates think about these news sources?

What is your political point of view? Where do you turn to for news? Which sources do you trust? Which ones don't you trust? Do you think your media choices reflect your political point of view? Download the blank template and try putting all the news sources you use in the proper sections of the chart. Be honest! Just because you like a source doesn't necessarily mean it's a good (or bad) one.



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

1. *Ethnocentrism* is the idea that your own country and culture are better than all others. This shows up in the U.S. media in stories that compare other countries' values to American values. To the degree that other countries live up to American ideals, they

are good; if they are different, they are bad. Therefore, enemies of the United States are presented as evil because they don't conform to our values. Stories can be critical of the United States, but they are criticizing deviance from basic American values, not those values themselves.

2. *Altruistic democracy* is the idea that politicians should serve the public good, not their own interests. This leads to stories that are critical of corrupt politicians. By the same token, citizens, as voters, have the same obligation to work for the public good and not for selfish interests. Special interest groups and lobbyists are suspect because they are not working for the common good. This was perhaps best illustrated by the Watergate hearings in the 1970s, which revealed the corrupt behavior that occurred in the White House so that President Richard Nixon could stay in power. President Bill Clinton was criticized for his affair with Monica Lewinsky in part because he was serving his own interests rather than working for the good of the American public. President Donald Trump has been criticized for maintaining a controlling interest in his global business empire while being in charge of American foreign policy that could affect the value of that business.
3. *Responsible capitalism* is the idea that open competition among businesses will create a better, more prosperous world for everyone. But by the same token, businesses must be responsible and not seek excess profits. The same is true of labor unions. Hence the news media tend to be harsh in their coverage of greed and deception by big businesses, yet they still tend to praise people who develop and grow companies. This is why there has been so much negative coverage of banking and investment companies following the stock market crash and recession in the late 2000s.
4. *Small-town pastoralism* is nostalgia for the old-fashioned, rural community. The agricultural community is where all goodness is rooted, while big cities are dangerous places that suffer from numerous social problems. Suburbs, where many people live, tend to be overlooked entirely.
5. *Individualism* is the constant quest to identify the one person who makes a difference. People like the notion that one person can make a difference, that we are not all cogs in a giant machine. Reporters like to use a single person as a symbol. That explains in part why journalists focused on the actions of Emma González following the Parkland school shooting. Instead of trying to talk about the gun control movement as a whole, the press used González as a symbol to represent all the protesters.[89]
6. *Moderatism* is the value of moderation in all things. Extremists on both the left and the right are criticized. Although the media attempt to present a balance of opinions, they tend to report on views that are mildly to the left and right of center. One of the strongest criticisms the media can make is referring to an individual as an extremist.
7. The value of *social order* is seen primarily in the coverage of disorder. When journalists cover stories that involve disorder, such as protests, floods, disasters, or riots, the focus of the story tends to be on the restoration of order. Once media coverage of the Flint water crisis got started, social order was a big issue, and the press focused heavily on how that order, in the form of clean, running tap water, might be

restored.

8. Finally, the media value *leadership*. The media tend to look at the actions of leaders, whereas the actions of lower-level bureaucrats—which may well be more important—are ignored. This is in some ways an extension of the bias toward individualism, the difference one person can make.

Overall, Gans argues that there is reformist bias to the media, which tend to advocate "honest, meritocratic, and anti-bureaucratic government."[90] Journalists like to argue that since both sides criticize the press, they must be doing a good, balanced job.[91] Perhaps a better explanation for why both conservatives and liberals charge the media with bias is that the eight values Gans found within the media reflect a combination of both liberal and conservative values—again illustrating why people holding a particular viewpoint will see bias in the media's attempt to be neutral and balanced.

Questioning the Media

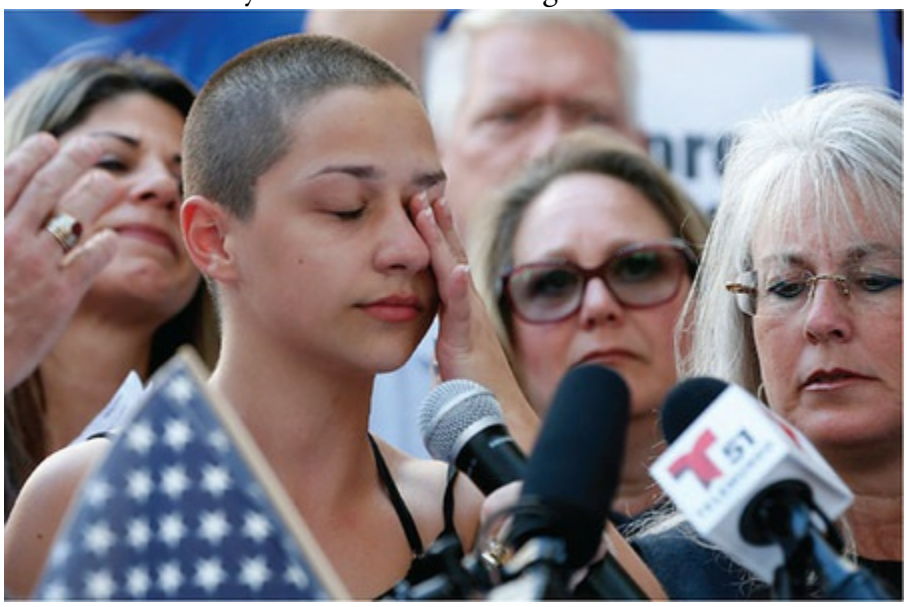
Take a look at a recent news story from a major American news outlet. How many of Gans's news values can you find illustrated in it? Do you think Gans's eight news values still apply to what is being covered by American media? Why or why not?

Patriotism and the Press—Reporters Risk Their Lives to Report the News

The job of being a journalist around the world can be a dangerous one. The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that worldwide in 2017 forty-six journalists were killed "in direct connection" to their work; most of them in Iraq (eight) and Syria (eight).[92] Four journalists were killed in Afghanistan, four in India, and six in Mexico. Journalists were also killed in the Philippines, Russia, Somalia, Yemen, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Maldives, Pakistan, and South Sudan.

The most common cause of death in 2017 for killed journalists worldwide was tied between deliberate murder and being caught in combat crossfire, with each accounting for 39 percent; the final 22 percent were from the journalist being on a dangerous assignment.[93]

▼ Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student Emma González, shown here speaking at a rally for gun control in February 2018, has become the face of the movement that followed—a symbol for survivors of gun violence.



RHONA WISE/AFP/Getty Images

As of July 2018, thirty-three journalists have been killed in 2018, including five journalists shot and killed at the *Capital Gazette* in Annapolis, Maryland. In April 2018, ten journalists were killed in Afghanistan in two separate attacks. Nine were killed in a pair of bombings in Kabul, and another was shot to death in an unrelated attack in Khost province. The Kabul bombings also killed at least sixteen other people.[94] You can read

more about the dangers journalists face in Afghanistan here: www.ralphehanson.com/2018/05/14/4648/.

War zones are always dangerous places for journalists, especially photographers who need to be out on the front lines to capture combat images. Photojournalist James Foley was beheaded by Islamic State militants in August 2014 after having been held hostage since November 2012.[98] British photographer Tim Hetherington and U.S. photographer Chris Hondros were killed by a rocket-propelled grenade while covering fighting near the Libyan city of Misrata in 2011. Two others were injured in the attack. Hetherington was best known for codirecting the Oscar-nominated war documentary *Restrepo*.[99] He was in Libya covering the anti–Moammar Gadhafi rebellion at the time he was killed. This was far from the first time Hetherington had been under attack. Photojournalist Lynsey Addario told the *New York Times* blog *Lens* about a time when she and Hetherington were pinned down by fire in Afghanistan: "We were ambushed from both sides," she said.

> It was a terrifying situation. I was trying to find a place to hide, to shield myself. And I remember looking over and there was Tim—just calmly sitting up, filming the whole ambush on a video camera. And I thought to myself, "Oh my God, I want to be a photographer like him."[100]

▼ U.S. Army photographer Spec. Hilda Clayton (left) was killed while taking pictures during a training exercise in Laghman province, Afghanistan, when a mortar tube accidentally exploded, claiming five lives, including hers. The photo on the right is the last frame she shot. Combat journalists face the same risks as soldiers that they cover.





Mortar explosion that killed Hilda Clayton and 4 Afghan soldiers. July 2, 2013 from Wikimedia Commons.

Spc. Hilda I. Clayton, US Army combat photographer. May 3, 2017 from Wikimedia

Commons.

(We will take a look at the life and death of war photographer Marie Colvin at the beginning of Chapter 15.)

Journalists can also be soldiers. In 2013, Spec. Hilda Clayton, a U.S. Army combat photographer, was killed while photographing a live-fire exercise in Afghanistan when a mortar tube accidentally exploded in front of her. The blast also killed an Afghan military photographer she was training, along with three others. In 2017, the journal *Military Review* published (with her family's consent) the last photo Clayton took an instant before the explosion that took her life. Combat photographers like Clayton face all the same dangers the soldiers they cover face in their efforts to document the troops' operations.[101]

Death or injuries are not the only risks reporters face. BBC journalist Alan Johnston was held hostage for 114 days in the Gaza Strip, Fox News's Steve Centanni and Olaf Wiig were held hostage in Gaza for 13 days, and the *Christian Science Monitor*'s Jill Carroll was held hostage for three months in Iraq.[102] Fox News cameraman Wiig says that the most serious consequence of attacks on journalists is that the stories from war zones won't get told:

> My biggest concern, really, is that as a result of what happened to us, foreign journalists will be discouraged from coming here to tell the story. And that would be a great tragedy for the people of Palestine, and especially for the people of Gaza.[103]

The Alternative Press

Along with the small-town and suburban papers, there is also a wide range of alternative papers that serve specialized communities such as racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, and young people.

Contemporary Minority/Ethnic Papers.

The African American press has had a significant presence in the United States since at least 1827. Nearly four thousand black newspapers have been published in the United States at one time or another.[104]

Freedom's Journal was among the first black newspapers; it was founded in 1827 to show all readers, white and black, that "black citizens were humans who were being treated unjustly."[105] Many black editors of the era faced great danger when they printed articles that contained fact-based accusations against whites. Mobs would destroy the newspaper's offices, and editors who had not left town might be murdered.

Editors of black papers faced further difficulties because much of the intended audience for the papers was illiterate. Moreover, because the majority of the audience was poor, relatively little advertising was available. These editors put their lives and livelihoods at risk publishing a paper that few might read and that probably would lose money.

A variety of emancipation papers followed in the footsteps of *Freedom's Journal*, but none had as great an impact as the *North Star*, which published its first issue in Rochester, New York, on December 3, 1847. Its editor, Frederick Douglass, was known as a gifted writer, and his new paper let readers know that it would be fighting for an end to slavery and the recognition of the rights of blacks. The *North Star* was read and noticed, but it faced the same problems as earlier black papers, including antiblack violence, a shortage of qualified staff, and a chronic lack of money. What it did have was a clear mission and a distinctive journalistic style. The *North Star* was published from 1847 until 1860.[106] Another important African American paper is the *Chicago Defender*. Founded in 1905, the *Defender* was considerably less serious than the *North Star*, modeling its style on the yellow journalism of William Randolph Hearst. It was designed to be a black paper with a mass following rather than a publication for black intellectuals and white elites. It was also designed to appeal to advertisers and even make money for its publisher.

Clearly, the *Defender*'s goals included profit as well as advocacy. The paper was sensational, with large red headlines trumpeting stories of crime. By 1920, the *Defender* had a circulation of more than 280,000, a spectacular number at the time. It reached far beyond Chicago, with two-thirds of its readers located outside the city.[107] The *Defender* encouraged southern blacks to move north to find jobs in Chicago and, not coincidentally,

become loyal subscribers to the paper. In retaliation, it was banned throughout the South, and at least two of the paper's distributors were murdered. *Defender* editor Robert Abbott fought for civil rights and an end to lynchings. Abbott, born in 1868, has been credited with founding "the modern Negro press."[108] He demonstrated that black papers could be profit-making institutions, as well as activist publications.

Questioning the Media

Is there still a market for alternative papers in the age of social media? What function do media perform for minority communities?

▼ John H. Sengstacke, part owner and manager of the *Chicago Defender*, a leading African American newspaper with a national circulation in the middle of the twentieth century, reviews layouts with an assistant.



Library of Congress

In the 1950s, the *Defender* became a daily tabloid. For a while it provided extensive, day-by-day coverage of the civil rights movement. In 2003, following the death of longtime publisher and editor John H. Sengstacke in 1997, the *Defender* and three other papers owned by relatives of Abbott were sold to Real Times Media. In 2011, the *Defender* laid off its executive editor, news editor, and several staffers in an attempt to cut costs.[109]

Currently there are an estimated 150 African American newspaper publishers.[110] These papers have had differing fortunes in recent years. The *Defender*, for example, after dropping to 5,477 in 2014, has recovered back to 11,882. As of 2016, the African American newspaper with the highest readership (by a lot!) was the *Michigan Chronicle* with an average circulation of 22,231, its best circulation since 2009.[111]

Spanish-language newspapers are seeing some of the same declines in circulation that have been affecting the rest of the newspaper industry. According to the Pew Research Center, each of the three Hispanic dailies for which there is reliable data had a circulation decline of at least 11 percent. *El Nuevo Herald*, published as a companion to the *Miami Herald*, had a circulation of eighty thousand at its peak, but that declined to approximately forty thousand in 2016.[112] But the two papers differ in many more ways than just the language. Journalist Dan Grech, speaking on the NPR radio show *On the Media*, said, "The *Miami Herald*, like most U.S. newspapers, prizes objectivity. *El Nuevo Herald* is more like papers in Latin America and Europe that push for social change."[113] (You can read about Spanish-language television networks Univision and Telemundo in Chapter 9.)

The Gay Press.

The *Washington Blade* was the oldest and biggest gay weekly paper in the country.[114] It was started in 1969 as a one-page mimeograph that was distributed in several gay bars at a time when such establishments were routinely raided by police. More recently, a typical edition of the *Blade* ran to more than a hundred pages and included news about health, as well as legal and political issues. In the early 1990s, one of the key features of the *Blade* was the large number of obituaries of men who had died of AIDS; these have become much less numerous in recent years. The *Blade* became such a success that it expanded outside the District of Columbia in 1997 with the *New York Blade*.

But in 2009, the recession hit the media industry hard, including the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) press. The most prominent of the gay papers to be affected was the *Washington Blade*. Just weeks after the *Blade*'s fortieth anniversary party, the paper's parent company, Window Media, shut down after investors were unable to meet financial requirements from their Small Business Administration financing. With the closing of Window Media, a number of gay papers across the country were shuttered along with the *Blade*. The *New York Blade* also ceased publication in 2009, when its parent company, HX Media, closed.[115] While many of these papers stayed closed, the *Washington Blade* did manage a revival under new management in April 2010, and as of 2012 it was back to publishing both on paper and online on a regular basis.[116]

Although the *Washington Blade* has revived itself, it is the exception rather than the rule. Why did these previously successful publications fail? There are several likely reasons:

Like many media companies in the late 2000s, the owners of LGBT newspapers were facing severe financial problems. Even though the *Washington Blade* was reportedly turning a profit up until the time it closed, its parent company was not.

The audiences for LGBT media were early adopters of online social media and web-based publications.

SECRET 3 ▸ Gay culture has moved into the mainstream. Remember Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center. When gay and lesbian papers were founded in the 1960s and 1970s, reporters at the papers feared for their personal safety. Reporter Lou Chibbaro Jr., an employee of the *Blade* since 1976, told the *Washington Post* that, over the course of his career there, he had gone from writing under an assumed name in the 1970s to sitting in the front row at a presidential press conference in 2009. With gay and lesbian issues increasingly being covered by Big Media, there may not be the same demand for gay-specific newspapers now.[117]

"Underground Papers."

A third kind of alternative paper is the so-called alternative weekly. When these papers got started in the 1960s and 1970s, they were known first as underground newspapers, then as alternative weeklies. Today some prefer to be called just weeklies.[118] Among the popular weeklies now are *LA Weekly* and the *Chicago Reader*.

Alternative weeklies, like so much of the newspaper business, face declining circulation. Only two of the top twenty alternative weeklies had an increase in circulation between 2014 and 2015, with some facing drops of 16 to 36 percent. Among the top twenty, circulation numbers ranged from fifty thousand to almost one hundred thousand.[119] Although much of the content of these papers is relatively mainstream, the advertising often includes personals and ads for phone sex lines and massage parlors. Many of these papers, which depend solely on ad revenues, are distributed for free. They attract young people who have left behind daily newspapers and network news in favor of CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, and the internet.

The Future of News

SECRET 2 ▸ Trying to make sense of what is happening to the newspaper business is difficult, in part because of Secret 2—There are no mainstream media. Some of the most visible segments of the newspaper business are facing major challenges, which critics are fond of pointing out. But other portions of the business, especially the more rural community papers, are thriving. So to understand the changing newspaper market we have to look at it as several media, not just one.

News in the Age of Mobile Media

Newspapers may not be selling as many sheets of newsprint as they did in the past, but they are certainly not going away as a place that people turn to for news. Consider the *New York Times*. Over the past several years, *New York Times* owner and former publisher Arthur Sulzberger has been talking about how the paper will be changing. He set off a storm of controversy in spring 2007 with a comment at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland: "I really don't know whether we'll be printing the *Times* in five years, and you know what? I don't care either . . . The Internet is a wonderful place to be, and we're leading there."[120]

This statement generated comments on almost every major press blog, but what few people noticed was that Sulzberger had been saying the same thing for at least eight years. When he was part of an *Ad Age* roundtable in 1999, Sulzberger was asked about the future of the *Times*. He answered,

> I don't care how they get it 100 years from now. And the key is not caring. It goes back to knowing the audience, and being, not ambivalent, but agnostic, rather. Agnostic about the methods of distribution. Because we can't afford to be tied to any production process . . . There will still be communities of interest. There will still be a need, both socially and politically, for common and shared experiences.[121]

Now there is a big difference between "I don't care how they get it 100 years from now" and "I really don't know if we'll be printing the *Times* five years from now." But the basic thought, the real point of his comments, is the same—the *New York Times* is no longer in the business of putting black ink on white paper. Instead, the *Times* is in the news business and the ad sales business, and it is going to be delivering news and advertising in whatever forms will turn a profit. It is worth noting that the Reuters news agency published a story in July 2017 that suggested the *New York Times* was rapidly approaching the time when it would be profitable for the company to quit printing the news on paper and go 100 percent digital.[122]

Under its latest ownership by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, the *Washington Post* is now moving from a strategy of being "for and about Washington" to building a national and international readership, where its targeted audience is the English-speaking world. As *Columbia Journalism Review*'s Michael Meyer wrote in June 2014, Bezos's main objective for the *Washington Post* is "reaching the maximum number of customers by putting the *Post*'s journalism in a package (a tablet, a mobile site) that will draw the greatest number of readers. As it has been with Amazon, his obsession at the *Post* is finding a way to integrate product into millions of people's lives in a way they haven't yet experienced."[123]

SECRET 6 ▸ Marty Barron, the *Post*'s executive editor, argued in a speech back in 2015 that the future of the paper was as an online mobile product: "It's wrong to say we're becoming a digital society. We already are a digital society. And even that statement is behind the times. We're a mobile society."[124] (Yes, even in 2015 Barron was arguing for Secret 6—Online media are mobile media.)

But even with all the changes taking place, Barron said some things need to remain stable in the journalism business. "The press is routinely disparaged and demonized. That leaves many news organizations fearful—fearful that we will be accused of bias, or that we will lose customers, or that we will offend someone," he said.

"Today our profession feels shaken. But fear cannot be our guide. If there is one thing that must remain unshakeable, this is it: That we will publish the truth when we find it and when the public deserves to know."[125]

The world that Sulzberger and Bezos are talking about is already well on its way to being a reality. Data from the Pew Research Center show that while a majority of readers still consume their news exclusively as ink on paper, many others do at least some of their consumption in digital formats as well. For a complete look, see Table 6.1.

▼ Table 6.1

▼ TABLE 6.1

Newspaper Audience by Platform

Platform	Percentage of Circulation
Print only	51 percent
Print/desktop/mobile	14 percent
Print/desktop	11 percent
Desktop/mobile	7 percent
Desktop only	5 percent
Print/mobile	7 percent
Mobile only	5 percent

Source: "The State of the News Media 2016," *Pew Research Center*, 2016, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/06/30143308/state-of-the-news-media-report-2016-final.pdf.

Source: "The State of the News Media 2016," Pew Research Center, 2016, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/06/30143308/state-of-the-news-media-report-2016-final.pdf.

The Future Is Mobile and Social

One thing that is readily apparent is that while legacy channels like newspapers and broadcast television networks are still very important, the future of the news media will be mobile and social. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2015, a majority of the top fifty digital news sites saw drops in the amount of traffic from desktop computers, and almost all had an increase in their traffic from mobile devices.[126]

A study released by the Pew Research Center in May 2016 found that 67 percent of U.S. adults get news from social media, and that 20 percent do so often. The study found that 68 percent of Reddit users, 68 percent of Facebook users, and 74 percent of Twitter users get news through those social media channels. While mobile is the champ in the raw numbers, visitors using a desktop computer still generally spent more time online than people using mobile devices at forty of the fifty studied online news sites.[127]

Even for a major newspaper like the *New York Times*, digital access is beginning to dwarf paper access. The *Times* had an average daily circulation of fewer than 650,000 in the fall of 2014, but in January 2018, it had ninety-two million unique online visitors. Many of those visitors will be making brief visits, having arrived there following a particular story seen on social media.[128]

SECRETS 5 AND 6 ▸ Looking back through this chapter, we can see multiple examples of how online news is being accessed on mobile devices and being shared through social media.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

The first newspapers were published in Europe in the seventeenth century. Numerous papers were published in the American colonies, but they faced extensive censorship from the British government. Newspapers printed before the nineteenth century tended to be partisan publications that were supported through high subscription fees and political subsidies. This changed with the rise of the penny press in the 1830s. The penny papers were mass produced on steam-powered printing presses and contained news of interest to ordinary people. The papers cost one or two cents and were supported by advertisers who wanted to reach the papers' large numbers of readers.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were characterized by the yellow journalism of the New York newspapers published by Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. The two publishers tried to attract circulation and attention by running comic strips, advice columns, and sensational stories about sex, crime, and scandal. This was also the time when newspapers started running extensive headlines and illustrations.

The major classes of newspapers today include the following:

> Newspapers with a national reach that may cover a particular urban area but also try to print material of interest to the entire country, such as *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*. Newspapers of this size may just try to reach their own urban area.
> Community papers that serve a particular town, suburb, or group and provide news that readers cannot get elsewhere; and
> Alternative newspapers that serve specialized populations rather than a broad, general audience. These can serve ethnic populations within a community, groups such as gays and lesbians, or even young people who are not interested in traditional newspapers.

Evolving technology has brought changes to the newspaper business. The rise of television news resulted in a decline in the number of afternoon newspapers, and changes in news-consumption patterns have drawn audiences and advertisers away from both newspapers and broadcast television news. Digital media have given newspapers new opportunities to update the news rapidly and fresh ways to deliver the news. Whatever the method of delivery, reporters struggle with the issue of objectivity, especially when the story is close to home and when they are risking their lives to report the news.

Many people claim that the media are biased toward one political view or another. Conservative critics argue that there is a liberal bias arising from the tendency of reporters to be more liberal than the public at large. The liberals' counterargument is that the press has a conservative bias because most media outlets are owned by giant corporations that hold pro-business views. Finally, some critics argue that the media hold a combination of values that straddle the boundary between slightly left and slightly right of center. The press in the United States began as partisan during the colonial period but adopted a detached, factual, objective style in the 1830s to appeal to a broader audience.

Key Terms ▶▶

above the fold 139
yellow journalism 140
tabloid newspapers 141
broadsheet newspapers 141
jazz journalism 141
chains 144
Watergate scandal 146
community press 149
alternative papers 157

Review Questions ▶▶

1. Why does MSNBC television commentator Rachel Maddow argue that it is essential for her viewers to support their local news media?
2. How was the penny press responsible for creating our modern version of the newspaper?
3. What makes journalists calling out sources for lying so difficult?
4. How does the news media experience differ between people who are politically liberal and politically conservative?
5. What did *Washington Post* executive editor Marty Barron mean when he said, "It's wrong to say we're becoming a digital society. We already are a digital society. And even that statement is behind the times. We're a mobile society."

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PART III Electronic Media

Chapter 7 Audio
Music and Talk Across Media
Chapter 8 Movies
Mass Producing Entertainment
Chapter 9 Television
Broadcast and Beyond
Chapter 10 Online Media
The Internet, Social Media, and Video Games



Kevin Mazur/Getty Images North America/Getty Images

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Describe how major developments in audio technology changed how people experience music
2. Explain how rock 'n' roll developed out of two different music traditions
3. Explain how radio transformed from a channel for interpersonal communication to one for mass communication
4. Describe how different recording formats have given rise to concerns about the purchasing of music
5. Discuss how long-tail audio technology is changing the radio and recording industry for everyone from music fans to international stars

The news that rapper Kendrick Lamar won the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Music for his album DAMN. was seen as somewhat of a shock. The music award had never been given to anyone who is not a classical or jazz musician before, let alone a hip-hop artist. But Lamar's album was the unanimous choice of the Pulitzer jury. *New York Times* culture reporter Joe Coscarelli wrote that Lamar tackled "thorny issues both personal and political, including race, faith and the burdens of commercial success."[1]

In the pool of compositions being considered in 2018 for the Pulitzer, some were more traditional classical compositions that made use of hip-hop. David Hajdu, one of the jurors and a critic for the *Nation*, told the *Times*, "That led us to put on the table the fact that this sphere of work has value on its own terms and not just as a resource for use in a field that is more broadly recognized by the institutional establishment as serious or legitimate."

Lamar's work is not the first time that hip-hop has been recognized by the Pulitzers, however. That honor belongs to Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Hamilton*, which won the award for drama in 2016.

Hamilton, which nearly everyone in the United States must know by now, tells the story of America's first treasury secretary using a multiethnic cast to play the founding fathers with a musical mix that includes lots of rapping, R&B, Brit pop, and good old-fashioned show tunes.

Miranda grew up in a Hispanic neighborhood in Manhattan, the son of Puerto Rican parents who had literally hundreds of Broadway cast albums. But while he was listening to *Camelot* and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* at home, on the school bus his driver was introducing him to rappers Geto Boys and the Sugarhill Gang. So it seemed to Miranda while he was growing up that bringing together show tunes and rapping was the most natural thing in the world.[2]

"There's been lots of theater that uses hip-hop in it, but more often than not, it's used

as a joke—isn't it hilarious that these characters are rapping," Miranda said. "I treat it as a musical form, and a musical form that allows you to pack in a ton of lyric."[3]

Miranda was inspired to write the show when he read Ron Chernow's biography of Alexander Hamilton while he was on vacation following the success of his first musical, *In the Heights*. He said he thought that hip-hop matched the American Revolution because it is "the language of youth and energy and rebellion."

New York Times classical music reviewer Anthony Tommasini writes, "On a basic level, the American Revolution was driven by words: fiery statements of principle; charges of imperialist oppression; accusations of betrayal; fine points of governance; even wordy obfuscations to gloss over disagreements that could have sabotaged the country at its start. What better musical genre to tell this tale?"[4]

Jon Caramanica, Tommasini's pop music colleague, says that at its core, the American Revolution was hip-hop. "[Miranda's] writing about a moment of total political upheaval, when upstart thinkers were building a nation on principles vastly different from the ones they fled . . . It's a position statement about the nation's founding ideals, the revolution that was hip-hop, and also the unrelenting whiteness of Broadway."[5]

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the show is the multiracial cast. Leslie Odom Jr., the African American actor who played the show's villain Aaron Burr on Broadway, said seeing the song "The Story of Tonight" during a workshop production had a big effect on him.

"That's the one that made me a puddle, because it was four men of color onstage singing a song about friendship and brotherhood and love, and I had never seen that in a musical. I had seen white guys do it, in *Jersey Boys*, in *Les Miz.* Never seen a black guy. So I was a mess, and from that point, I was along for the ride."[6]

Daveed Diggs, the rapper who debuted the part of Thomas Jefferson on Broadway, noticed how Miranda could give each character his or her own distinct rap style. "When you're developing your voice as a rapper, you figure out your cadence—your swag—and that's how you write," Diggs told *Rolling Stone*. "Lin managed to figure that out for *all* of those different characters—everyone has their own swag, and it feels germane to them."[7]

When Miranda first started writing *Hamilton*, he envisioned it as more a concept album or song cycle than a stage show. So with the musical selling out nightly in multiple productions across the country, he's gone back to that idea with an album of outtakes and remixes of songs from the show published in the album *The Hamilton Mixtape*. In 2018, he's been continuing to put out show-related music monthly as what he refers to as "Hamildrops"—essentially the second volume of *The Hamilton Mixtape* released serially

online. It includes an *F*-bomb-filled "Benjamin Franklin's Song" performed by The Decemberists, a complete-show polka medley from (who else?) Weird Al Yankovic, and a mashup of "The Story of Tonight" from *Hamilton* and "You Will Be Found" from the musical *Dear Evan Hansen*. There's even an early version of the song "Burn" from *Hamilton* performed by five of the actresses who have played Hamilton's wife, *Elizabeth*.[8]

SECRET 3 ▸ As measured by music sales, by 2017 hip-hop was the most popular musical genre in the United States, according to the Nielsen media measurement company.[9] Eight of the top ten artists were also from hip-hop, including Drake and Lamar as the top two. So this can be seen as an example of Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center. Hip-hop has gone from being a subgenre of R&B music to the dominant sounds of the day. (We'll talk more about the birth and growth of hip-hop later.) In this chapter, we look at how the recording industry and radio developed together as our first electronic media. We then examine how society has changed, how cultures have grown and merged, and how audience members have responded to the production of shared music and talk. Finally, we look at where the industries are headed in the twenty-first century.

History of Sound Recording and Transmission

Before there could be mass consumption of popular music, there had to be a means of recording and distributing it. Those means evolved through the decades via Thomas Edison's early efforts with the phonograph, the development of the gramophone, and the creation of the long-playing record (LP) and the compact disc (CD). The recording industry changed the way people consumed music. Before the phonograph and gramophone, the only way to experience music was to perform it yourself or go to a concert. The invention of the record meant that recordings of professional musicians became the standard way to listen to music.

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Storing Musical Performances: The Development of the Recording Industry

A variety of stories have been told about Edison and his invention of an early sound-recording machine, the phonograph, in 1877. One version has him giving a sketch of the phonograph to employee John Kruesi with the instruction, "the machine must talk."[10] Another has him sketching the phonograph, with a note at the bottom telling his assistant to "build this."[11]

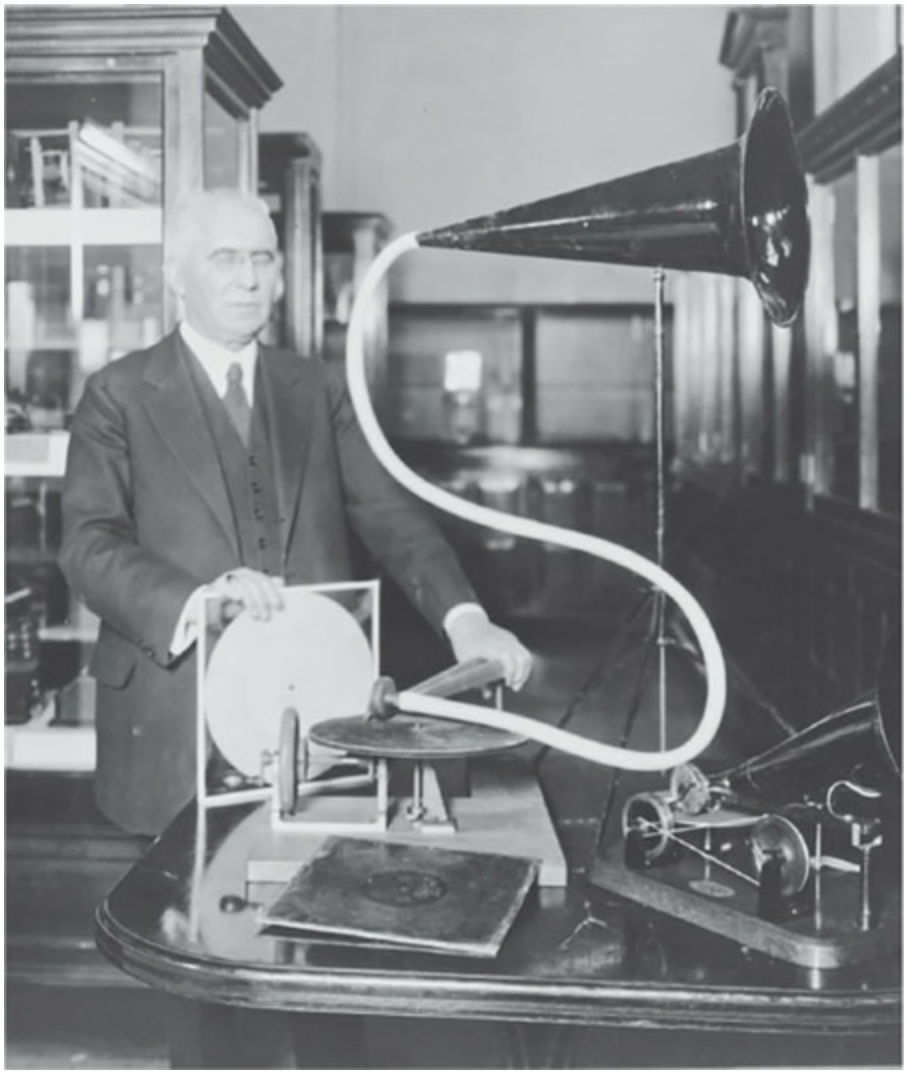
Edison's First Recordings.

These stories do not do justice to Edison's true genius or to the difficulties of creating a machine that could record and play back the voice. Running through these myths is the mistaken notion that Edison came up with an idea for sound recording that worked perfectly the first time it was tried. In reality, Edison and his assistants probably worked as long as ten months on the problem of the phonograph before they finally succeeded in recording Sarah Josepha Hale's children's rhyme, "Mary Had a Little Lamb." This famous first recording lasted no more than ten seconds.[12]

Emile Berliner: Mass-Produced Music.

As with so many media inventions, no one was quite sure what to do with Edison's phonograph. Edison envisioned it as a dictation machine. Reproducing music was only the fourth on his list of possible uses.[13] The biggest flaw with his invention was that Edison's foil cylinders did not hold up to repeated playing and could not be reproduced. It took the work of a young German immigrant to make the phonograph a truly practical device.

▼ Emile Berliner was able to turn Thomas Edison's idea for a phonograph into a commercially viable product that lasted in one form or another for more than one hundred years.



Library of Congress

Emile Berliner arrived in the United States in 1870 at the age of nineteen. By 1888, he had developed a method for recording sound on flat discs rather than on cylinders. Berliner's disc recordings (or records) were louder and more lifelike than the cylinder recordings of Edison or Alexander Graham Bell. Berliner called his device the gramophone. Eventually, however, all record players were called phonographs.

Berliner also helped develop the idea of the recording industry. With Edison's phonograph, every recording was an original. Berliner viewed his invention not as a business dictating machine, but as an entertainment device. His discs could be reproduced from the original etched-zinc master, allowing publishers to mass produce high-quality—at least for the time—musical recordings almost as easily as printers could reproduce books. Because of this, Berliner saw that "prominent singers, speakers, or performers may derive an income from royalties on the sale of their phonautograms."[14]

A New Way of Publishing Music.

By 1935, the term high fidelity (hi-fi) was being used to refer to a combination of technologies that allowed recordings that reproduced music more accurately, with higher high notes and deeper bass, than previous forms of recording had allowed. One of the developments that helped pave the way for hi-fi was the electric phonograph (along with the amplifier and loudspeakers), which began replacing the all-mechanical gramophone. By 1949, magnetic tape recorders were commonplace in recording studios. Musicians no longer had to record directly onto discs.

The phonograph changed the face of music. Previously, there were only two ways to store music. The first, and oldest, was for parents to teach their children the traditional songs of their culture. The alternative was written music, or musical scores, that contained symbols for the musical notes to be played. The phonograph provided a revolutionary way of storing the actual music, not just the symbols written down by the composer. It also made possible the storage of non-notated music, such as folk songs or jazz solos, which did not necessarily exist in written form. Music scholar Charles Hamm has compared the phonograph to a musical time machine that allows listeners to go back and hear the actual sounds.[15]

Transmitting Music and Talk: The Birth of Radio

Around the time the recording industry was getting started, radio was under development as one of the first media to break through the barrier of space. With print media such as books, magazines, and newspapers, the message being transmitted was always on a piece of paper that had to be carried from one place to another. Thus, the fastest form of transportation at the time was also the fastest channel of communication. This meant that it could take weeks for a message to cross the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean, or even to get from New York to California or from London to Moscow. But in the nineteenth century, several inventions separated communication and transportation, starting with the wired media of the telegraph and telephone and moving on to the wireless technology of radio.

Samuel Morse's invention of the telegraph in 1844 allowed messages to be sent electrically, so they didn't have to be carried from place to place. No longer did transportation set limits on communication. Messages could travel at the same speed as electrons traveling along a wire.[16] By 1866, a telegraph cable extended across the Atlantic Ocean, so even that giant barrier had been conquered.

But the wire itself was a serious limitation. Telegraph wires could break (or be cut, as they frequently were during the U.S. Civil War). To communicate with ships at sea, a wireless telegraph was necessary.

In 1888, German physicist Heinrich Hertz found that he could detect the signal created by an electrical spark on one side of a room with a small loop antenna on the other side. What he had created was essentially the simplest possible radio transmitter and receiver. In 1894, Guglielmo Marconi read about Hertz's work and concluded that he could create a wireless telegraph, a point-to-point communication tool that used radio waves to transmit messages. Over a period of several years, he developed a system to send and receive radio signals, with the distance traveled by his signals expanding from the length of his attic to the width of the Atlantic Ocean.[17]

Radio as Mass Communication.

In 1901, physicist Reginald Fessenden started sending voice signals over a radio in his laboratory. On Christmas Eve in 1905, he broadcast poetry and Christmas carols. Since his continuously modulated voice signals could be received by the same equipment that received Morse code, wireless operators up and down the Atlantic coast heard Fessenden's amazing broadcast. Though it would be years before regularly scheduled commercial broadcasts would begin, Fessenden had set the stage for broadcasting something more than just Morse code.

Up until 1905, it was the scientists who were driving the radio business with their new

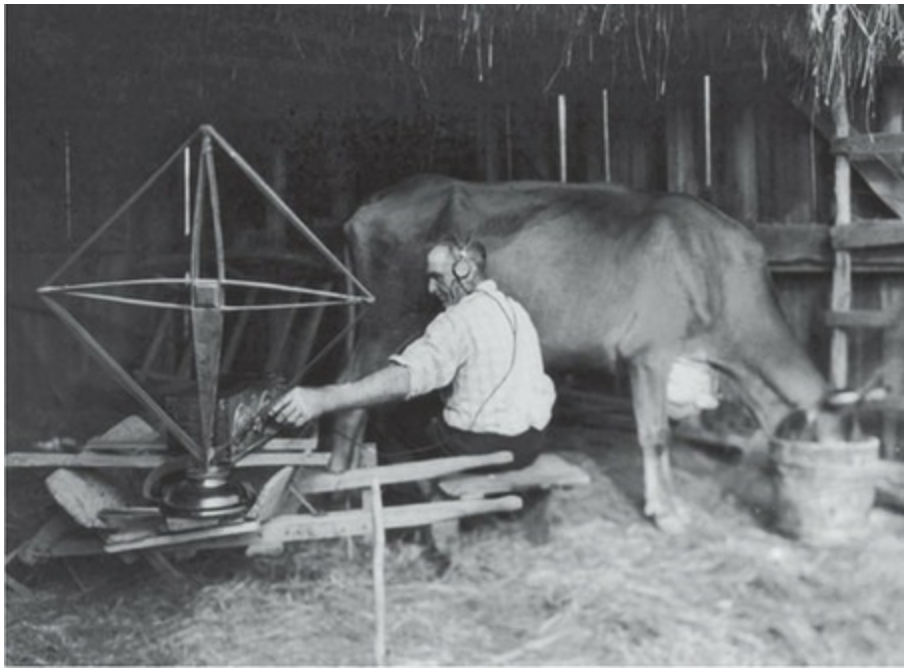
technologies, but a young American Marconi employee saw that radio could be much more than just a way to send messages from one person to another. David Sarnoff, born in 1891, was a good student, but the need to help support his Russian-immigrant family led him to leave school after the eighth grade to work full-time. In a story that seems almost too good to be true, the fifteen-year-old Sarnoff went to the *New York Herald* to try to get a job as a journalist. As luck would have it, the first person he met at the *Herald* building worked for a telegraph company. Sarnoff went to work for the Commercial Cable Company, and from that point on, he never left electronic media.[18]

The Radio Music Box Memo.

In 1915, Sarnoff addressed to the director of American Marconi a document that he considered the most important of his career. The so-called Radio Music Box memo outlined radio's potential as a popular mass medium. While Sarnoff did not invent the technology of radio and was not the first person to send out entertainment over the radio, he did summarize what radio could, and indeed did, become. Sarnoff's insight was that radio could be more than a point-to-point medium, a one-on-one form of communication. As Sarnoff saw it, what was then perceived as the great disadvantage of radio as a telegraph tool—that everyone who listened could hear the message—could be turned into an enormous advantage if one wanted to send out messages that everyone was supposed to listen to. In his memo, Sarnoff wrote,

> I have in mind a plan of development which would make radio a household utility in the same sense as the piano or phonograph. The idea is to bring music into the houses by wireless.
>
> While this has been tried in the past by wires, it has been a failure because wires do not lend themselves to this scheme. With radio, however, it would be entirely feasible. For example, a radio telephone transmitter having a range of, say, 25 to 50 miles can be installed at a fixed point where instrumental or vocal music or both are produced. . . . The receiver can be designed in the form of a simple "Radio Music Box" and arranged for several different wave lengths, which should be changeable with the throwing of a single switch or pressing of a single button.[19]

▼ Listening to music over headphones is nothing new, but in the 1920s, this farmer needed a wheelbarrow to move the radio set (left) from place to place.



Library of Congress

With this memo, Sarnoff essentially invented radio as a social institution. But this new medium would have to wait, because on the eve of U.S. involvement in World War I, the navy was buying all of Marconi's transmitters. Although American Marconi did not act on Sarnoff's memo, the young immigrant did not forget the ideas for radio's potential that he had laid out so clearly.

More Receivers Than Transmitters.

One of the biggest surprises of the radio business was that so many more receivers were sold than transmitters. Manufacturers had assumed at the start that there would be almost as many people sending as receiving messages.[20] In reality, however, electronic communication was following in the footsteps of print. The earliest books had been copied by hand and passed from one person to another. But just as the printing press provided books, magazines, and newspapers to the masses, radio was now becoming a mass medium.

The RCA Radio Monopoly.

During World War I, the navy had taken control of all radio technology, including the patents, and it wanted to maintain control after the war. But civilian government officials in the United States, in keeping with the U.S. tradition of independent media, rejected the idea of all-government control. In an attempt to avoid anarchy in the new medium, the navy advocated creating a private monopoly to control radio development.

The Radio Corporation of America (RCA) was formed as a consortium of four major companies: General Electric, AT&T, Westinghouse, and United Fruit Company. General Electric was included because it made radio transmitters and owned what had formerly been American Marconi. AT&T was the world leader in wired communication, and Westinghouse owned many critical patents. But why was United Fruit Company a part of RCA? United Fruit had used radios to connect its boats to banana plantations in South America and while doing so had developed improved technology that the monopoly needed. These four companies brought together the two thousand or so patents that were needed to make the radio business work. RCA not only became a major producer of radio equipment, but it also founded NBC, the first of the major broadcasting networks.[21] Westinghouse employee and self-educated engineer Frank Conrad started making Sarnoff's dream of the Radio Music Box come true. In 1920, with Westinghouse's support, Conrad started broadcasting music on Sunday afternoons. Westinghouse then built Conrad a more powerful transmitter and put together a broadcast schedule. Pittsburgh's radio station KDKA was licensed for broadcast on October 27, 1920. Others soon followed. Over in Britain, the British Broadcasting Company was created in 1922. It was initially a privately run company owned by the manufacturers of broadcasting equipment, and its first station was licensed in 1923. In 1927, the company became the British Broadcasting Corporation, a public, noncommercial monopoly for broadcasting in the United Kingdom.[22]

Radio Advertising.

Although KDKA was the first commercial radio station, it was not the first station to run a commercial. KDKA existed to provide programming with the goal of getting people to buy radio sets. But WEAF, broadcasting in New York City, was the first station to sell airtime to advertisers. The modest success of these commercials soon led to radio advertising by oil companies, department stores, and American Express.

The radio industry considered several possibilities for making money. One possibility was to support radio broadcasting with a "tithe" (a specified percentage) of revenues from sales of radios by all manufacturers. Another possibility was to support it with a substantial public endowment. The problem was that neither of these schemes would provide enough money to pay for the high-priced entertainers that listeners wanted to hear. This meant that radio stations were going to need advertising revenue. Ultimately, the rest of the media industry would accept advertising as the main source of income for broadcasting. In Britain, by contrast, the original BBC was supported by revenue from selling radio receivers and radio-receiving licenses, and it was prohibited from selling commercials.[23]

Radio Networks.

By 1923, more than six hundred radio transmitters were broadcasting in the United States. These stations were limited to the programming they could produce locally. How did these

stations fill their broadcast day? In big cities, this was no problem because there were plenty of concerts, lectures, and sporting events to put on the air, but rural areas or small towns were limited in their selection of locally produced culture and entertainment. In another of his famous memos, Sarnoff suggested that RCA form a new company, a network, to provide programming to a large group of broadcast stations, thus making a wider selection of programming available to smaller stations.

RCA established the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) on July 22, 1926. It was the United States' first major broadcasting network, and it survives today in the form of the NBC television network. NBC was actually two networks, the "Red" and the "Blue." (See Figure 7.1.) (Due to an antitrust ruling, RCA was eventually forced to sell the Blue network, which then became ABC.)

William Paley and the Power of Radio Advertising.

With the growing demand for radio programming, the two NBC networks soon faced new competition, none more significant than William Paley's Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). Although Paley was born in the United States, his parents were Russian immigrants. He grew up in a wealthy household, and his family owned a successful cigar company. William Paley's father, Sam, had been approached about advertising his cigars on the fledgling United Independent Broadcasters (UIB) network. Sam Paley was not interested, but William was.

William Paley bought his first radio ads while his father was away on business, and although Sam initially chastised his son for wasting money, he soon heard people talking about the wonderful show his company sponsored. That was enough to convince him. William then developed a program called *La Palina Smoker* that featured an orchestra, a singer, and a comedian. It also resulted in increased cigar sales. Before long William, who was not quite twenty-seven years old, had the opportunity to buy UIB, which he did with help from his father. Once he became president of the network, he promptly renamed it the Columbia Broadcasting System.[24] Paley understood better than anyone else that broadcasting was a business that had to make a profit on its own. NBC believed that its mission was to develop programs for the benefit of its listeners, but CBS realized that its real clients were the advertisers who sponsored the programs. Its programs were designed and produced specifically to attract the kind of audience a particular advertiser was looking for. For CBS, the "product" was the audience its programs attracted.

From the Golden Age to the Television Age

The 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s came to be known as the golden age of radio, an era in which radio played the same role that television does today. Radio was the mass medium that served as the primary form of entertainment in the household. This was a big change. It meant that people were getting most of their entertainment from outside the home rather than from within. Instead of being entertained by Aunt Martha and Cousin Sue's piano duets, they were listening to Bing Crosby's crooning or Bob Hope's comedy on the radio.

Golden Age Radio Programming.

A wide range of programming was available on the radio during the golden age. Live music, both popular and classical, was a staple. NBC even had its own orchestra that performed on a regular basis. There were also dramas and action programs, including *Little Orphan Annie*, *The Lone Ranger*, and *The Shadow*.

Some radio programs from the golden age survive today as television programs, most notably soap operas. The soaps, as they are called for short, are daytime dramas targeted primarily at women; they got their name from the commercials for soap and other cleaning products that ran during the shows. For better or worse, soaps were the first programs targeted specifically at women, a key audience for advertisers. It wasn't until the advent of television in the 1950s that soaps ceased to be a major part of radio programming.[25] CBS's *Guiding Light* started on the radio in 1937, moved over to television in 1952, and finished its seventy-two-year run on September 18, 2009. In February 2014, ABC's *General Hospital* officially became the longest-running soap opera still in production, having had its thirteen-thousand-episode spread over fifty years of both radio and television.[26]

▲ Figure 7.1 The Early Red and Blue NBC Radio Networks



Source: Library of Congress.

Test Your Media Literacy

When Is a Radio Show Racist?

▼ One of the most popular, and controversial, programs of the golden age of radio was *Amos 'n' Andy*, which featured white performers Freeman Gosden (left) and Charles Correll playing the part of two African Americans.



NBC/NBCU PhotoBank via Getty Images

A*mos 'n' Andy* has been both praised and criticized. It was condemned as racist by many groups, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), that saw the humor in the show as demeaning and the characters as uneducated and ignorant of city life. The most lasting criticism of the show, however, was that it was produced by whites predominantly for the entertainment of whites. One of my African American students summed up the issue clearly: "So what you are telling me is that the most popular show in the country was about white people making fun of black people?" Clearly a show created under these parameters wouldn't be acceptable today.

But *Amos 'n' Andy* may not have been as racist as it seemed. Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll were guests of honor at an annual picnic hosted by the *Defender*, Chicago's leading weekly black newspaper in 1931. In addition, several members of the black press had good things to say about the show in its early days. It was also one of the few programs that showed African Americans (even if played by whites) in everyday life. The supporting characters in the fictional lodge were middle-class blacks, a social phenomenon many whites at that time didn't even know existed.[27]

WHO is the source?

Who wrote, acted in, and produced the show? Who were the critics of the program?

WHAT are they saying?

What are the central criticisms of the program? What are the arguments in support of it?

WHAT kind of evidence is provided?

What evidence is provided that the show had support in the African American community at the time it was aired? What is the evidence that the program was racist? How did these views change over time?

HOW do you and your classmates react to *Amos 'n' Andy*?

Is it the fact that the stars were white and the characters were black that makes the show racist? If you say yes, why do you think this is so? Is it possible for a program to make jokes about racial issues without being racist? How could it do this?

Amos 'n' Andy.

Despite the popularity of soap operas, no radio show attracted a bigger audience than *Amos 'n' Andy*, the first nationally broadcast daily drama.[28] *Amos 'n' Andy* began in January 1926 on Chicago radio station WGN as *Sam 'n' Henry*. The show was a fixture on the radio, in one form or another, for nearly thirty-five years. Starring on the show were two white actors—Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden—who played the roles of two African Americans, Sam and Henry, who owned the Fresh Air Taxi Company. Correll and Gosden wrote all the scripts themselves and furnished the voices for the title characters and the members of their fraternal lodge, the Mystic Knights of the Sea. Their names were later changed to Amos and Andy when Correll and Gosden syndicated the show nationally, since WGN owned the characters of Sam and Henry. At the peak of its popularity, *Amos 'n' Andy* was played in restaurants and in movie theaters between shows so that people wouldn't have to stay home to listen.

Becoming a Companion Medium.

As television began claiming more and more of the broadcast audience, radio was forced to change. No longer were people sitting down in their living rooms to listen to programs on the radio. Instead, they turned on the radio while they did other things: working, washing dishes, driving. Yet radio did not fade away; instead, it reinvented itself as companion radio, a medium that would always be there to keep listeners company. Radio host Julius Lester put it this way:

> Radio is so integral a part of us now that we do not consciously notice its presence; it is a member of the family, a companion, and the voices issuing through its speakers are those not of strangers but of friends.[29]

Radio's New Look: HD and Satellite

Among the digital technologies closest to terrestrial radio are HD radio and satellite radio.

HD Radio.

Terrestrial radio isn't just sitting still as digital technology takes over the sound business. In many markets, HD radio provides listeners with CD-quality sound and the choice of multiple channels of programming. But HD radio has not really taken off as a new medium. As of 2017, no more than 8 percent of Americans ever expressed an interest in HD radio, and beyond that, a high percentage of people don't even know what HD radio is, confusing it with satellite radio. While increasing numbers of cars are offering HD radios either as options or as standard equipment, buyers now have the option of adding streaming internet audio, such as Pandora or Spotify, to their vehicles. And even without dedicated streaming players in cars, as of 2017, 40 percent of cell phone–owning adults report using their mobile devices to stream music in their vehicles.[30]

Satellite Radio.

In 2008, the two competing satellite radio services, Sirius and XM, merged to become SiriusXM. The two services still offer separate programming but have overlap between them. They've also united their efforts to promote the idea of subscription radio. As of 2017, SiriusXM had nearly thirty-three million subscribers.[31] Neither of the two companies turned a profit as independents, and the newly merged company came close to filing for bankruptcy in February 2009, saved only by an infusion of cash provided by Liberty Media, the owner of major pay TV services.[32] However as of 2017, the service was making close to $650 million of income on $5.4 billion of revenue.

The biggest name on satellite radio is former broadcast shock jock Howard Stern, who moved over to Sirius after his protracted and very public battle with Viacom, which syndicated him, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which fined his stations more than $2.5 million over a ten-year period.[33] Stern seems to be thriving on satellite radio with no corporate or FCC censors to put limits on him. Stern is now in his sixties and has been moving from being primarily a shock jock into being a respected interviewer. "When you go on 'Stern,' you get the best insight into who the person is of any medium other than maybe the New Yorker," writes music industry critic Bob Lefsetz.[34]

SECRET 3 ▸ Of course, not everyone is happy about this transformation from making jokes about the Columbine High School shooting or AIDS to being a serious talk show host. "Howard has become a lot of the things that he always told people not to become," comedian Jackie Martling (formerly of the Stern show) told the *Washington Post*. Stern has essentially become one more example of Secret 3—Everything

from the margin moves to the center.

Satellite radio also provides news and public affairs channels, such as CNN, Fox News, BBC World Service, and NPR. One advantage of satellite over regular radio is that travelers are able to tune in to a channel in New York and listen to it all the way to California. The disadvantage, other than the cost, is that these services can't provide the depth of local content, such as traffic reports, local news, or weather forecasts—the staples of car radio.[35]

Streaming/Downloads: Online and Mobile Audio

The original online alternative to radio was streaming audio. This can take a wide range of forms. Some content is tied to a terrestrial station; others are internet only, such as Pandora, Spotify, and Apple Music. Pandora, for example, was started in 2005, and according to a survey conducted in early 2018, 31 percent of Americans age twelve or older listened to Pandora in the last month, and 20 percent listened to Spotify.[36] In essence, smartphones and other mobile devices are becoming the new portable radio, as well as being players for your personal collection of recorded music.

Cars are also increasingly having internet streaming built into their audio systems, but how much they are getting used is still up in the air. Edison Research's "Infinite Dial 2018" report found that 56 percent of survey respondents still used AM/FM radio the most in their car. In comparison, only 12 percent used streaming the most.[37]

Streaming audio also greatly extends the reach of stations, especially small ones with low-powered transmitters. A 3,800-watt student station that can barely cover fifteen miles over the air can reach an entire city, not to mention the world, through streaming. In essence, streaming can do for a small radio station what cable did for Ted Turner's local Atlanta television station, WTBS—turn it into a radio superstation that anyone in the world can receive.

One new way that people are listening to a wide range of types of audio programs are the new smart speakers. These include Amazon's Echo devices, Google Home speakers, and Apple's HomePods. Although they each offer somewhat different services, they are all about delivering online services (including audio programing) by voice command. You can use them to answer a question, order a product, turn lights on or off, arm your alarm system, or play audio programming.[38] While it might seem great to be able to just ask your speaker to start playing your favorite music or podcast, there are also some creepy aspects to these devices. In order to be able to respond to your commands, your smart speaker has to be always listening to you. And these speakers don't have the capability built in to respond to your commands. Instead, their software, be it Alexa, Google Assistant, or Siri, have to talk to a central server to process your request. That means that Amazon, Google, or Apple is literally listening to everything that happens in your home. Now maybe you trust these companies with all of your most private moments. But think about the implication of someone hacking these speakers and installing malware on them. Your smart speaker could then be used as a wiretap in your house. There would also be the possibility of a government security agency listening in. These may all sound like conspiracy theories, but they are all technically possible when you deliberately install an always-on listening device in your house.[39]

Questioning the Media

How do you listen to audio programs? Do you listen to terrestrial radio? Satellite radio? Podcasts? Streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, or Pandora? Why do you use these sources?

The "Infinite Dial 2018" study from Edison Research and Triton Digital found that an estimated 180 million Americans listen to an online radio station or other streaming audio service on a monthly basis. That's 64 percent of American adults.[40]

Podcasting.

A long-tail alternative to terrestrial radio and prerecorded music is the podcast. Podcasts are audio programs distributed over the internet as MP3 compressed music files that can be listened to online or downloaded to a computer or an MP3 player. They open up distribution of audio programming to anyone with a basic computer and an online connection. An example of a popular podcast would be NPR's morning news program *Up First*, which is available for downloading about the time you get up. It has a couple of popular NPR hosts presenting a ten- to twelve-minute newscast with a bit of depth and analysis.[41]

It is difficult to say exactly when podcasting got started, but the summer of 2004 is the commonly held period because that's when RSS 2.0, which could handle enclosures (essentially attachments) along with straight text, was released. It's also when former MTV VJ Adam Curry and software developer Dave Winer wrote the program iPodder. It was one of the first programs available that could download a podcast off the internet and transfer it to an iPod. It's much easier to say when podcasting became widely known—February 9, 2005, when *USA Today* ran two articles about the new medium and phenomenon in the paper.[42] In May 2005, podcasting became easier when Apple's iTunes software started supporting subscriptions to podcasts. As of 2018, Apple has essentially stopped making iPods, and most people listen to podcasts by downloading them directly onto their phones.[43]

Test Your Media Literacy

Podcasting From the Long Tail

▼ *Brian Ibbott (right) and his podcasting partner Scott Johnson (left) host an episode of* The Morning Stream *together in Las Vegas at the Bunkhouse Saloon*



Courtesy of Greg Skinner

Colorado podcaster Brian Ibbott says that he's always known he wanted to be a DJ. The only question was what kind of music he would play. Back in 2007, he told me:

> I knew if I did my own show, I wanted it to have something unique and not just a sampling of my favorite music. I wanted it to be something that had a theme to it. And one of the types of music I collect are cover songs.[48]

Ibbott was inspired by a program that aired several years ago on the XM Satellite Radio channel Special X. "And every day for two hours they had a show that was all covers with no announcing. It was just cover, after cover, after cover," he said. Then Special X got canceled, and Ibbott started dreaming about creating his own show.

The only problem was that Ibbott didn't have a radio station to use to broadcast his program. But then he heard about former MTV VJ Adam Curry's work on software to distribute audio files over the internet—essentially some of the earliest podcasting software. "I said, I could do this," Ibbott said. "So I just jumped in with both feet." So in September 2004, Ibbott posted his first twenty-six-minute episode of *Coverville* that opened with Jellyfish performing their take on Argent's "Hold Your Head Up."

Now, more than fourteen years later, Ibbott has moved from producing an average of three half-hour shows a week to a single hour-and-a-half to two-hour show each week that has even more of the feel of a conventional radio show. As of this writing, he has posted more than 1,218 episodes, each of which averages about ten thousand downloads.[49] Ibbott works as a freelance designer and podcaster, and he estimates he makes about 40 percent of his income from podcasting. Some of that comes from advertising on his podcasts, but most of it comes from support from listeners who contribute monthly through the crowdsourcing platform Patreon.

Just as podcasts grew out of combining radio-style programing with internet distribution of shows that can be listened to on an MP3 player or smartphone, Ibbott's alternative broadcasting efforts continue to grow. He cohosts a weekday morning show called The Morning Stream with podcaster Scott Johnson, who is located out of Salt Lake City, Utah. This program has about thirty thousand listeners per episode. In addition, Ibbott cohosts

Film Sack—A weekly look at a bottom-of-the-barrel streaming sci-fi, fantasy, horror, or thriller

movie.
Soundography—A weekly in-depth look at a band or artist's work and deep tracks.
The Pokémon GO *Podcast*—A podcast for fans of, you guessed it, the popular mobile phone game Pokémon GO.
So You Think You've Got the Talent to Be America's Next Top Podcasting Idol!—As of this writing, this show was still in development. Ibbott describes it as "the world's first reality podcast competition to find the next great podcast host."

You can find links to all of Ibbott's podcasts here: www.ralphehanson.com/2018/05/24/ch7brianibbott/.

WHO are the sources?

Who is Brian Ibbott? What does he do for a living?

WHAT are they saying?

How long has Ibbott been podcasting? What are the podcasts he hosts? Why does he do this?

WHAT evidence exists?

Looking back earlier in the chapter, how many people listen to podcasts? How do they listen to them? How do podcasts and streaming media programming differ from what you can get on the radio? Think about both content and how you listen.

WHAT do you and your classmates think about podcasts?

Do you or your friends listen to podcasts? If so, which podcasts do you listen to? What kind of content do you listen to? What do you use to listen to your podcasts?

Rob Cesternino became reasonably well known as a two-time cast member of the hit CBS reality game show *Survivor*. But since competing on the show, he's gone from being a star of the short head to being a force in the long tail. He has created the popular site "Rob Has a Website" and a series of podcasts on reality TV under the brand "Rob Has a Podcast."

▼ Rhythm and blues records produced by African American artists (then known as "race records") were more likely to be played on jukeboxes in clubs than on the radio in the 1940s.



Library of Congress

He has a crowdfunding Patreon account that brings in more than $8,000 a month and even beat out *Serial* for a People's Choice Podcast Award in 2015. Cesternino started Rob Has a Website several years ago when he was unemployed and wanted to do something reasonably secure to earn a living for his family. "For me, it came down to a conscience shift: I wanted to do what was safest for me and my family," he told the news site *24 Hours Toronto*. "But then it hit me that working for some random company without any security wasn't any safer, either. So I invested all my time into Rob Has a Website. I thought, 'Hey, it may not work, but I'm not going to be in any risker position if I were employed in a media company because those people are let go all the time.'"[44]

Cesternino says that one of the essential parts of working in the long tail is being involved with your fans. He told *24 Hours Toronto*, "I want the people listening to me to know they're in this thing with me. That's why I'm very responsive on social media and integrate their questions into the show."

That's not to say that podcasting is anywhere nearly as popular as radio. As of 2018, a Nielsen marketing report stated that 50 percent of American homes had a podcast fan living in it. The report also shows that podcast fans are diverse—36 percent of listeners are Hispanic, African American, Asian American, or other. This shouldn't be surprising considering the wide range of specialized topics allowing podcasts to target narrow audiences.[45] Edison Research's "Infinite Dial 2018" report estimated that slightly more than a quarter of Americans listen to a podcast each month.[46] Probably the most important

statistic about podcasts is the rate of growth. Back in 2006, when you likely had to use a computer or MP3 player to listen, only 11 percent of the population had ever listened to a podcast. By 2018, that percentage was up to 44 percent with people most likely listening on their almost universally owned smartphones.

Thirty-six percent of all Americans have listened to an audio podcast, and 21 percent (approximately fifty-seven million) listen to them on a monthly basis. But podcasts have a long way to go to come even close to terrestrial broadcasting in popularity, as 91 percent of Americans aged twelve or older report using AM/FM radio at least once a week.[47]

Music, Youth Culture, and Society

Though recorded music was on the market long before there was rock 'n' roll, rock 'n' roll was born alongside modern recording technology and flourished on the radio. It was amplified from the start, featured new instruments such as the solid-body electric guitar, and brought together a host of traditions from white hillbilly music to black rhythm and blues. World War II spurred the development of rock 'n' roll as a cross-cultural phenomenon because blacks and whites mixed socially during the war more often than they had before and because the Armed Forces Radio played a range of white and black musical styles.

Rock 'n' Roll and the Integration of Music

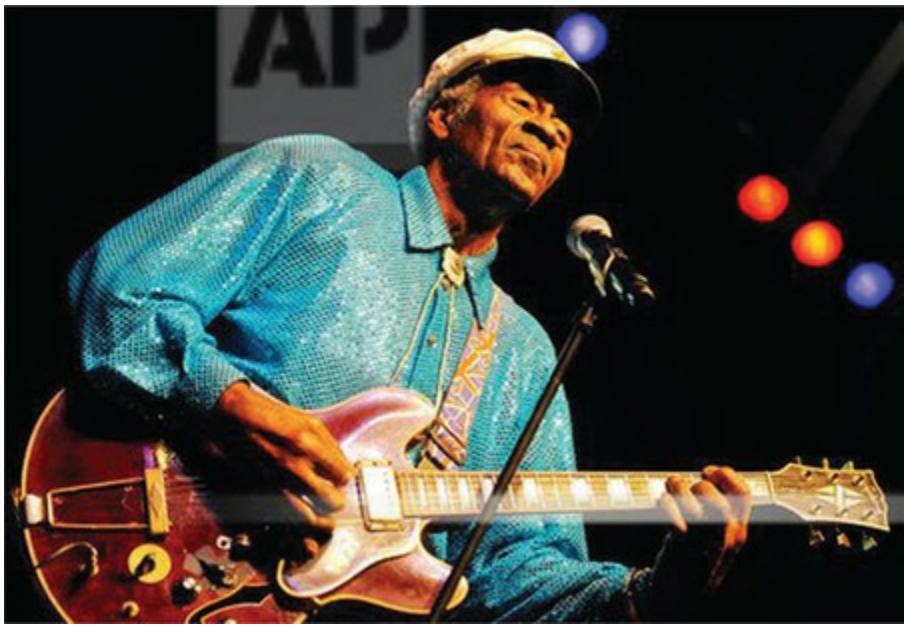
Before 1948, recordings by popular black musicians were referred to as race records and included everything from blues to gospel to jazz. But in 1949, the editors of *Billboard* magazine, which ranks sales of all types of records, started calling the genre rhythm and blues (R&B).[50] It was at the same time that "folk" records began to be called "country and western."[51]

Why did R&B emerge when it did? There are a number of reasons. One is that the big bands that played jazz and swing (popular in the 1930s and 1940s) were expensive because there were so many musicians. An amplified blues band with a singer, an electric guitar, an electric bass, and a drummer could make a lot of sound, and great dance music could be built around the strong bass beat.[52] Also, African American musicians gained respect when white artists recorded cover versions of black songs.[53] On December 28, 1947, a black R&B singer named Wynonie Harris recorded "Good Rockin' Tonight" in a studio in Cincinnati, Ohio. The song would become a big hit on black jukeboxes and radio stations. Was this the first rock 'n' roll song? Entire books have been devoted to answering that question, but "Good Rockin'" is as likely a candidate as any. It was a jukebox hit for Harris, and later became a radio hit when covered by young Elvis Presley. It certainly helped give this new kind of music its name. The following year brought a series of songs with the word *rock* in the title, including "We're Gonna Rock, We're Gonna Roll," "Rockin' at Midnight," "Rock the Joint," and "Rock and Roll."

By and large, these songs were not played on white radio stations. The problem wasn't the color of the musicians; it was the meaning of the word *rock*. As record promoter Henry Glover put it,

> We were restricted with our possibilities of promoting this song because it was considered filth. . . . They had a definition in those days of the word "rock," meaning the sex act, rather than having it known as "a good time," as they did later.[54]

▼ Rock 'n' roll legend Chuck Berry performs in Germany in November 2008. Berry (and others like Elvis Presley) combined elements of hillbilly and R&B into their music, which ultimately led to the creation of a brand new genre.



Ronald Wittek/picture-alliance/dpa/AP Images

Blending Black and White Musical Traditions.

While Harris and numerous other R&B singers were performing rock 'n' roll in the late 1940s and early 1950s, two stars—one white, the other black—would put rock 'n' roll on the national and international map. Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry demonstrated what could be done with the blending of hillbilly (or country) and R&B.[55]

Presley made his first recording in 1953, although no one knows the exact date. Marion Keisker, the woman behind the desk at Memphis Recording Service, remembered a young man who recorded a couple of songs on a ten-inch acetate disc for his mother. When she asked Presley whom he sounded like, his response was "I don't sound like nobody."[56] Keisker had the good sense to make an extra copy of Presley's recording and file it under the heading "good ballad singer." "The reason I taped Elvis," she explained, "was this: Over and over I remember Sam [Phillips, Keisker's boss] saying, 'If I could find a white man who had the Negro sound and the Negro feel, I could make a billion dollars,' [and] this is what I heard in Elvis."[57]

The man who would become known as "the king" soon started performing hillbilly music in Memphis and recording for Phillips, starting with "Good Rockin' Tonight." To Presley, performing was almost a religious experience: "It's like your whole body gets goose bumps," Presley said. "It's like a surge of electricity going through you. It's almost like making love, but it's even stronger than that."[58]

Just as hillbilly singer Elvis Presley borrowed from R&B, so blues guitarist Chuck Berry

borrowed from the white hillbilly singers. The song "Maybellene" was based on an old fiddle tune called "Ida Red" and supposedly got its name from a mascara box. Others claim that Maybellene was the name of a cow in a third-grade reading book. Either way, the song combined a hot guitar, a hot car, and a hot woman.

Berry wanted to break out of some of the restrictions of traditional blues. While his audience at the clubs wouldn't stand for any change in the basic blues style, they had no problem with Berry's original rendition of an old white fiddle tune. Berry's unconventional style made people sit up and take notice. Berry recalls people talking about his music at an African American club:

> Some of the clubgoers started whispering, "Who is that black hillbilly at the Cosmo?" After they laughed at me a few times, they began requesting the hillbilly stuff and enjoyed trying to dance to it. If you ever want to see something that is far out, watch a crowd of colored folk, half high, wholeheartedly doing the hoedown barefooted.[59]

Presley started playing "Maybellene" in Louisiana while Berry was playing it in New York. This illustrates a key feature of the birth of rock 'n' roll: Two previously segregated types of music were coming together and becoming a new musical form—one that teens couldn't get enough of.

Rock Radio.

Another reason for rock 'n' roll's growing popularity was that DJs such as Alan Freed and Dewey Phillips were playing rock 'n' roll and R&B records on their radio shows.

On October 29, 1949, Phillips started a show on WHBQ in Memphis called *Red, Hot & Blue* that played R&B records. The show became an instant hit and quickly went from forty-five minutes in length to three hours. WHBQ's program director remembered it this way: "He got something like seven requests his first night. Well, the next night, I don't know the exact amount, but it was more like seventy requests. Then, even more incredible, the next night, it was closer to seven hundred."[60] Although Phillips was white, he played music by black artists and had a substantial audience of black radio listeners in Memphis. This was unusual at a time when most stations appealed to either the white or the black community, but not to both.

The Changing Face of Popular Music

The 1950s were a period of transition for popular music, with tastes shifting from the Tin Pan Alley songs of an Irving Berlin or Cole Porter to the songs of a Chuck Berry or Buddy Holly that were rooted in R&B. Already firmly established through concerts and radio airplay, rock 'n' roll now took center stage with records produced by artists ranging from girl groups to the Rolling Stones.

Motown: The Sound of Young America.

No record label was more important in bringing R&B to the masses than Detroit's Motown Records. Motown, founded by Berry Gordy Jr., was the most successful of the independent record labels and one of the most successful black-owned businesses.

> SECRET 3 ▸ Popular culture scholar Gerald Early says that the real importance of Motown was that it took black music and sensibilities and made them important for the public at large. He also credits Motown with establishing a black popular culture at a time when jazz—especially the improvisational work of Miles Davis and John Coltrane—was becoming highbrow culture. One of the big accomplishments of Motown was that it no longer published songs by black artists for white artists to cover, as was common practice in the 1950s and early 1960s. Instead, the African American Motown artists themselves turned out the hits. Motown moved black music into the mainstream and out of the world of race records, thus illustrating Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center.[61]

▼ Motown Records put together a number of African American girl groups, including the Supremes (pictured) and Martha and the Vandellas.



Diana Ross and Cindy Birdsong. GAC-General Artists Corporation-IMTI-

International Talent Management Inc. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons.

The move of soul music and artists out of just the African American community and into more predominantly white areas mirrored larger changes in society. In May 1961, African American Freedom Riders staged sit-ins to desegregate restrooms and lunch counters in bus stations in the South. In October 1962, the Motown Revue was doing its part to promote desegregation with such established acts as the Marvelettes, Marvin Gaye, and the Supremes. While the Motown artists were not Freedom Riders, they broke some of the same ground on their tour. Mary Wilson of the Supremes put it this way:

> Our tours made breakthroughs and helped weaken racial barriers. When it came to music, segregation didn't mean a thing in some of those towns, and if it did, black and white fans would ignore the local customs to attend the shows. To see crowds that were integrated—sometimes for the first time in a community—made me realize that Motown truly was the sound of young America.[62]

Motown's years as an independent company came to an end in 1988 when Gordy sold the label to Boston Ventures for $61 million. Motown was subsequently sold to PolyGram in 1993 for $301 million. It still exists, but it is now a small unit within media giant Universal Music Group.

The lasting effect of Motown artists can be seen with the huge outpouring of affection for Michael Jackson following his death in 2009.

The British Invasion: A Rougher Rock.

In the 1960s, rock underwent a number of changes. The most significant of these were brought about by groups that came to the United States from England. The so-called British invasion began in 1964 and brought a rougher edge to white rock 'n' roll with the music of the Beatles, Dusty Springfield, the Hollies, the Who, and, of course, the Rolling Stones. To appreciate the influence of these British bands, one need only look at the charts. In 1963, only one British band made it onto Billboard's charts; in 1964, thirty-four did so.[63]

Traditionally, recorded music by popular groups was a means of promoting their live shows. But by 1966, it had become almost impossible for the Beatles to perform live because their screaming fans drowned them out. In fact, Beatles scholar Allan Moore notes that by 1966 the band had ceased touring because they couldn't hear themselves play. Instead, they became a studio band whose music was heard primarily on records and the radio.[64] In 1967, the Beatles recorded an album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, that transformed rock in a number of ways: It was one of rock's first concept albums—an

album that brought together a group of related songs on common themes. It was also one of the first rock albums that was more than a collection of hit singles and their flip sides.[65]

What exactly is the concept of this album? Many of the songs have autobiographical themes derived from John Lennon's and Paul McCartney's childhood memories of Liverpool, England. Also, the songs are supposedly being played by the fictional band of the title.[66]

▼ The Beatles' album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, along with the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* and Frank Zappa's *Freak Out!*, was among the first rock concept albums that brought together a set of songs on a common theme.



Michael Ochs Archive/Getty Images

Sgt. Pepper gave rise to albums that were designed to be played from beginning to end, though these two-sided vinyl records had to be turned over at the twenty-three-minute mark. The seamless presentation of seventy minutes of music would have to wait for the 1980s and the advent of the CD.

Sgt. Pepper highlights a change that was starting to take place in the music business: The LP was replacing the single as rock music's main format. Moore notes that in 1967 bands still relied primarily on singles to promote themselves and albums were of secondary

importance. But that was changing with groups such as Cream and Led Zeppelin focusing on albums. Led Zeppelin's greatest hit, "Stairway to Heaven," was never released as a single, probably because it wouldn't fit the short format of the 45.[67]

The Growing Importance of Producers.

As popular music increasingly became a studio creation, the albums' producers became as important as the artists themselves. The main job of a producer is to put together the right songs, songwriters, technicians, and performers in the creation of an album.

Rock historian Charlie Gillett argued that the producer is the person who is responsible for making hit records. Producer Rick Rubin revitalized Johnny Cash's career near the end of his life with a series of albums that included songs by U2, Nine Inch Nails, and Tom Petty, among others. He's also produced albums for other artists including Kanye West, Jay-Z, Adele, Lady Gaga, Lana Del Rey, Ed Sheeran, and the Avett Brothers. Producer Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds has created or revived the careers of such artists as Aretha Franklin, Toni Braxton, Whitney Houston, Beyoncé, Zendaya, and Ariana Grande. Unlike the producers and writers of the Motown era, Edmonds occasionally goes into the studio himself. Although he has produced more than 125 top-ten R&B and pop hits, Edmonds is quick to give praise to the artists who perform his songs.[68] With rock, the producer shapes the sound and becomes an integral part of the musical process. Few albums demonstrate this as clearly as Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*. Starting in 1973, *Dark Side of the Moon* spent 741 weeks on the Billboard Top 200 album chart, far longer than any competitor (though other albums have sold more copies). Alan Parsons produced the album, released in 1973, which paints a bleak picture of "alienation, paranoia, schizophrenia." But more than any message of the songs, *Dark Side of the Moon* presents an incredible sonic picture. It uses stereo to its fullest extent, sending sounds swirling around the listener's head. Parsons recorded a wide variety of voices talking, laughing, and screaming, which were mixed in at various times and speeds.[69] Pink Floyd continued the direction of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* album, in which rock was music made to be recorded and constructed as much as performed.

The role of the producer continued to grow throughout the 1970s with the advent of disco and a range of heavily produced club music, including rap, house, and techno. Disco was primarily a means of getting people to dance. It came out of the gay male subculture in New York City and was popularized in the 1977 hit movie *Saturday Night Fever*. Disco was in many ways the ultimate producer music, in which the beat and the overall sound created by the producer mattered more than the vocals or talents of the instrumentalists.

Why does disco matter today? First and foremost, it was an entire genre of music that depended on technology and the producer, building on trends started by bands such as Pink Floyd and the Beatles. It also made black and Latino music more important commercially and led the movement toward the splintering of pop music into a range of

genres.[70]

Hip-Hop Brings Together DJing, Dancing, Rapping, and Art.

While the terms *hip-hop* and *rap* are often used interchangeably, rapping is really just a single facet of the larger world of hip-hop. According to English professor Mickey Hess, the hip-hop sound got started in the 1970s, when DJs began name-checking where they were from, including their cities, streets, or even neighborhoods. Although the music went national, it was still local in its orientation and was a statement of pride about the rapper's home. As Mr. Cheeks from the Lost Boyz put it, "It's only right to represent where I'm from."[71]

▼ Kendrick Lamar performs at the Coachella Festival, April 2017, in Indio, California. Lamar's album DAMN. won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2018, and was one of the most successful albums commercially that year.



Amy Harris/Invision/AP

Where did hip-hop begin? Many sources point to a block party in the Bronx, New York, on August 11, 1973, at which DJ Kool Herc is credited with inventing the breakbeat, "using two turntables and two copies of the same record to loop the same instrumental break over and over."[72] But Hess argues that it wasn't so neat and clear-cut of a start. He claims instead that credit goes to a series of DJs working in Harlem nightclubs using similar techniques along with doing "call-and-response" from the audience. Hess lists four main elements of hip-hop culture:

- MCing—The spoken word or rapping over recorded music
- DJing—Playing recorded music from multiple sources, oftentimes overlapping

- B-boying—Physical movement, a style of hip-hop dancing, often referred to as breakdancing
- Graffiti art—The visual images of the culture

These separate elements show how hip-hop evolved from a variety of areas of the country, with DJing coming out of New York, graffiti art growing out of styles popularized in Philadelphia, and the dancing coming from both New York and Los Angeles. The MCing, or rhyming, is credited as coming from the work of a variety of rhyming radio hosts in cities such as Detroit, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Austin.

SECRET 3 ▸ Rap music started to spread out of the Bronx via cassettes that were passed from person to person. Remember, however, that these were analog recordings that couldn't be copied repeatedly like digital recordings can today. There was also a high level of borrowing/stealing/remixing going on even at the very beginning. Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," which introduced rap and hip-hop into the mainstream, used lyrics from a Bronx MC who hadn't released a record. Blondie's rap hit "Rapture," which came out in 1980, was among the first rap songs to receive radio airplay on stations that appealed to white audiences[73] (thus showing us another example of Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center). Sugarhill Gang were also among the rappers who brought *Hamilton* composer Lin-Manuel Miranda into the world of hip-hop as a junior high student.

Understanding the importance of a rapper's roots and locale is key to understanding how hip-hop has spread around the world. Global rappers give shout-outs to homes as varied as Norway, Japan, Egypt, and Korea. Linguistics professor Marina Terkourafi talks about how hip-hop has followed in the footsteps of rock and jazz in moving out of the United States and then blending with traditional and regional musical styles from around the world.[74] She writes that while the central themes of hip-hop in the United States have typically centered on race and gender, globally it has been used to protest against the status quo and raise awareness of local issues.

Syrian exile Mohammad Abu Hajar tells *Huck* magazine about how he came to use hip-hop as a way of expressing his rebellion against the political problems in his native country along with the issues of honor crimes and interfaith marriages. His path to hip-hop was a bit rocky given that he didn't even like rap to begin with. "I thought it was just [crappy] American music only concerned with promoting drug use," he says.[75] But he soon learned that hip-hop could be a tool for social awareness.

Mohammad's music eventually got him in trouble with the Syrian government, and he fled to Lebanon. "When the cops showed up at my door to arrest me over a song I had written I knew this wouldn't end well," he said. "I jumped the fence in the backyard and managed to lose them." He now makes his home in Berlin where he works as a project coordinator for a nongovernmental organization and continues to rap about refugee issues. "I've got nothing left to lose at this point. . . . And I will not be intimidated into silence."[76]

Questioning the Media

Do you listen to hip-hop or other sampled music? Do you think hip-hop artists are stealing from the musicians who created the sampled music? Why or why not? Is music created with samples something original?

Country: Pop Music for Adults

Country music was born in the late nineteenth century, evolving out of a range of musical forms that included Irish and Scottish folk music, Mississippi blues, and Christian gospel music.[77] It was originally called "old-timey" or hillbilly music. Country grew in the 1950s and 1960s with the so-called Nashville sound that was popularized by musicians such as Jim Reeves, Eddy Arnold, and Patsy Cline. It was at about this time that Elvis Presley took the hillbilly sound in another direction with early rock 'n' roll, but country never disappeared.

▼ Country legend Merle Haggard helped bridge the gap between electric country and country rock.



Stephen Lovekin/Getty Images for Big Barrel

In 1980, many Americans rediscovered country music due to the hit film *Urban Cowboy*, starring John Travolta, and the 1990s and 2000s saw the further growth of country music thanks to songs from artists such as Rascal Flatts, the late Johnny Cash, and Carrie Underwood, as well as the soundtracks of movies such as *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* and *Walk the Line*.[78] In 2017, *Rolling Stone* magazine published a list of the top hundred country artists of the modern era. The top five were these:

5. The Carter Family of A. P. Carter, his wife Sara, and his sister-in-law Maybelle created modern country music in the late 1920s with their folk vocals over guitar, autoharp, and banjo.
4. Loretta Lynn, who was proud to be a coal miner's daughter, brought a whole new

world of scorned wives and "women who weren't in the mood for lovin'."
3. Johnny Cash, the man in black, really had multiple careers in music, being rediscovered by many young people with his Rick Rubin–produced *American Recordings* series. Cash was also connected to the Carter family by way of his second wife, June Carter Cash.
2. Hank Williams died at age twenty-nine from alcohol and pills, but he left behind a legacy of songs and musical style that lives on today.
1. Merle Haggard's electric-tinged music helped country for generations of rock bands from the Beatles to the Eagles.[79]

Why does country music continue to be so popular? "Country music is about lyric-oriented songs with adult themes," according to Lon Helton, a music journalist. "You've probably got to be 24 or 25 to even understand a country song. Life has to slap you around a little bit, and then you go, 'Now I get what they're singing about.'"[80] Unlike the sex and drugs of rock 'n' roll, country deals with suburban issues like "love, heartache, family ties, and middle-aged renewal."[81]

▼ Table 7.1

▼ TABLE 7.1

Top Ten Popular Radio Formats

Format	Audience Portion
Country	13.2%
News/Talk (Commercial and Noncommercial)	12.3%
Adult Contemporary (AC)	8.1%
Pop Contemporary Hit Radio (CHR)	7.1%
Classic Rock	5.9%
Classic Hits	5.7%
Hot Adult Contemporary	4.9%
Urban Adult Contemporary	4.3%
All Sports	3.8%
Contemporary Christian	3.8%

Source: "Audio Today 2018: How America Listens," *Nielsen,* April 2018, http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2018-reports/audio-today-report-apr-2018.pdf.

Note: Audience portion is of 6+ persons. Stations include AM, FM, HD radio, and streamed stations. You might wonder why this chart shows country at the top when you saw hip-hop at the top of the charts at the beginning of the chapter. That's because hip-hop was at the top of music sales, but country is topping the charts for radio airplay.

Source: "Audio Today 2018: How America Listens," *Nielsen*, April 2018,

http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2018-reports/audio-today-report-apr-2018.pdf.
Note: Audience portion is of 6+ persons. Stations include AM, FM, HD radio, and streamed stations. You might wonder why this chart shows country at the top when you saw hip-hop at the top of the charts at the beginning of the chapter. That's because hip-hop was at the top of music sales, but country is topping the charts for radio airplay.

Finding a Niche: Popular Radio Formats

With the coming of television, radio was forced to change and no longer tried to be all things to all people. Instead, each station now appeals to a particular audience. Teenagers don't have to listen to the same programs as store clerks; stockbrokers don't have to listen to the same programs as college students. Want rock 'n' roll? There's a station for it. Oldies? Another choice or two. News? Talk? Classical music? Soul? If you live in an urban area, chances are you can find stations providing all these different radio formats. Over the past decade, radio has continued to change, undergoing a massive change of ownership and seeing the growth of numerous new competitors.

The most popular radio format in 2017 in the United States was Country (a combination of Country and New Country), with 13.2 percent of stations carrying it (see Table 7.1), followed closely by News/Talk (both commercial and noncommercial), which command 12.3 percent of the national audience. Adult Contemporary (AC) and Soft AC consist of light and soft rock and are designed to appeal to listeners aged twenty-five to forty, especially women; this format draws about 8.1 percent of the audience. Pop Contemporary Hits format radio is what used to be known as Top 40 and is made up of a range of current hits; while it would seem to be primarily a teen format, more than half of its audience is older than twenty-five. While audience members might call lots of what they listen to oldies, the radio business breaks it down into a variety of categories, including Classic Hits, Classic Rock, and Oldies. Rhythmic Contemporary Hits Radio was a format developed to appeal to the United States' changing ethnic makeup, with listeners spread fairly evenly among black, Hispanic, and "other."[82]

Questioning the Media

Do you listen to radio? If so, what kind of programing? Music, talk, news, sports? Do you listen to local broadcast stations, satellite radio, or streaming stations? Why do you use radio instead of other sources of music or talk?

Spanish-Language Broadcasting.

As the Hispanic population in the United States, especially in the Southwest and Florida, continues its rapid growth, Spanish-language stations have been an important part of the market. But the recession of 2009 hit Spanish-language stations hard. Audience data are not available for Spanish-language news radio, but revenue for these stations has remained steady, according to a report from the Pew Research Center.[83] Spanish-language formats include multiple styles of music, news/talk/information, and religious programming.[84] The Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team has two sets of play-by-play announcers, one for English broadcasts, and the other for the team's Spanish-language network. And ESPN has a Spanish-language, all-sports radio network based out of Miami that focuses heavily on soccer games and news.[85]

While Spanish-language stations have traditionally gotten substantial listenership from the immigrant community, the fact that an increasing proportion of the American Hispanic population was born in the United States means that larger proportions of the population are either English speakers or bilingual.[86]

Talk Radio: Politics, News, Shock Jocks, and Sports

As mentioned earlier, news and talk is among the top radio format. Talk radio has exploded during the past three decades. In 1985, only 200 stations carried the format; in 1995, that number had grown to approximately 1,900. By 2018, news/talk was available on 1,315 stations, compared with 1,882 stations carrying country music.[87] Marvin Kalb, formerly with CBS News, credits talk radio with providing a sense of community that people don't find anywhere else: "If we still gathered at town meetings, if our churches were still community centers, we wouldn't need talk radio. People feel increasingly disconnected, and talk radio gives them a sense of connection."[88]

▼ English-speaking soccer fans have turned to Spanish broadcasts because of the energy in the commentary. Throughout his successful career, Enrique Bermúdez has coined a series of phrases that are well known by soccer fans including *como jefe* ("like a boss") and *tenla, te la presto* ("here, you can borrow it").



Icon Sportswire Via AP/AP Images

Political Talk.

Talk radio is a major source of political information, and the political information they are getting from talk radio is largely conservative.[89] Although journalism generally values balanced coverage, New York radio host Brian Lehrer notes that such coverage doesn't mesh well with the nature of talk radio:

> Some people's views don't fit neatly into traditional conservative or liberal labels. But

> that's not what's wanted in the media these days, especially in talk radio. They want you to be 100 percent confident that you have the truth and 100 percent predictable in your views.[90]

Carl Anderson, then market president at iHeartMedia, said in 2008 that radio stations are looking for entertaining hosts who have a strong point of view and the ability to "connect with an audience."[91] Overall, talk radio leans strongly conservative, with Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity being the two most important hosts, according to industry magazine *Talkers*. If you look at the publication's list of the top ten hosts, six are clearly conservative, one covers financial issues, two lean progressive, and one is Howard Stern.[92]

Shock Jocks.

Not all talk radio is political; some is just plain rude. The shock jocks, including Opie and Anthony (whose real names are Gregg Hughes and Anthony Cumia) and Todd Clem (known as "Bubba the Love Sponge"), have been described by critics as "disgusting," "racist," and "repulsive."[93] Nationally syndicated Opie and Anthony were fired after airing the sounds of two people having sex in a New York cathedral, but Clem was kept on the air after slaughtering and barbecuing a wild boar during his show. Opie and Anthony are apparently off the air for good as a team following repeated firings by radio services and fights between the two hosts. Howard Stern, the most controversial of the shock jocks, left terrestrial radio in 2006 for satellite broadcasting, where he had a multiyear contract worth $500 million. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, while Stern can still be outrageous on SiriusXM satellite radio, he has focused more in recent years on high-quality in-depth interviews. In 2015, Stern signed a new five-year contract with SiriusXM reportedly worth $80 million a year for him and his staff.[94]

All-Sports Radio.

All-sports is similar in popularity with all-talk, with 844 stations commanding 3.8 percent of the national audience.[95] The cable television network ESPN provides sports radio programming and simulcasts on the ESPNews cable/satellite television. (And, yes, this is exactly what you think it is—a couple of hosts and their guests sitting in a radio studio in front of microphones talking.)[96]

Although it's a narrow segment of the radio-listening public, the dedicated, loyal, and fanatic fans are very attractive to advertisers. "What separates sports radio from other radio is the passion of its listeners, and that makes it fertile hunting ground for us," says one major guy radio advertiser. "These are men who scream at their radios instead of punching the dial looking for the next cool song."[97]

▼ Ira Glass, host of *This American Life*, has become one of the most distinctive and

popular voices on the U.S. public airwaves.



Scott Olson/Getty Images

Public Radio

With approximately eleven thousand commercial stations, radio is a big business in the United States. But for all the power and reach of the commercial radio business, public radio provides a significant alternative.

NPR.

Public radio was authorized by the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act, which was designed primarily to create educational television. The act allocated stations at the lower end of the FM dial for noncommercial broadcasting, and most of the station licenses went to colleges and universities. In 1971, National Public Radio (NPR) went on the air with its first program, the evening newsmagazine *All Things Considered*.[98]

One thing *All Things Considered* can do that other news shows can't is present the news in depth. Eight-minute-long stories are not unusual, and twenty-minute stories are broadcast when the topic merits the length. This occurs in a medium in which thirty seconds is considered a long story.

The public radio network remained relatively small until two major developments occurred. The first was the growth of the satellite delivery of network programming. Satellite allows good signals to go out to all stations no matter how remote they are. The second development was the installation of FM radios in most private cars. Since public radio was almost exclusively on the FM band, the advent of FM car radios made it possible to reach interested people with enough time to pay attention. Not surprisingly, NPR's biggest audiences are in cities whose workers have long commutes.[99] By 2018, there were 996 NPR member stations reaching a monthly audience of 37.7 million.[100] NPR launched the two-hour news program *Morning Edition* in 1979, and since then it has become the most-listened-to morning news show in the country, with 14.9 million listeners tuning in every week.[101] This is more than the *Today* show and *Good Morning America* audiences combined.[102] Of course, this isn't a completely fair comparison because *Morning Edition* is on radio and the other two shows are on television.

One of the major challenges facing public radio is funding. For fiscal year 2018, NPR had revenue of $221 million, and of that money, approximately 26 percent came from sponsorship, which allows corporations, organizations, and individuals to run short messages during programs. While most of these underwriting announcements promote the companies themselves as institutions, there are also announcements promoting particular books or television programs. The largest sources of revenue for NPR are programming fees paid by local member stations (38 percent of the budget) and the above-mentioned sponsorship fees (26 percent). While NPR gets relatively little money directly from the

federal government, it does get government funds indirectly through the programming fees paid to its member stations, which do get federal funds.[103]

SECRET 6 ▸ You may have noticed that this section of the chapter is headed "NPR" and not "National Public Radio." That's because in 2010 the network changed its name from National Public Radio to just NPR to reflect the fact that much of its programming is delivered over the web or via apps for mobile devices and tablets. So to understand the full reach of NPR, it should be noted that in addition to its 37.7 million radio listeners, it has 41 million average monthly unique visitors to its website, and 6.8 million weekly unique downloaders of NPR podcasts, the majority of which are being listened to using mobile devices. It has also launched the NPR One app in partnership with Apple—which simply goes to show that online media are mobile media.[104]

Concerns About Effects of Music on Young People

Some of the biggest controversies surrounding rock have involved not the music but the words—from 1950s lyrics dealing with "rocking and rolling" to references to drugs in the 1970s to derogatory comments about women in contemporary rap.

It is difficult to know what the influence of a song's words will be. Adults often read metaphorical meanings into a song while young people see only the literal meaning of the lyrics. Understanding music also goes beyond the content of the lyrics. Listeners pay as much attention to the melody, rhythm, and style of music as they do to the lyrics. Finally, songs are often as much about feelings as they are about rational thought. They set a mood rather than transmit a specific message.[105]

Since rock's inception, parents and other concerned adults have wondered about the effects of its lyrics on impressionable listeners. This questioning has led to product liability trials, congressional hearings, and movements to label and/or ban certain albums for objectionable content.

Few music formats have engendered as much controversy as rap and hip-hop. Rap can be partially understood as an outgrowth of several trends, dating back to the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* and Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*. With the advent of multitrack recording, producers were adding layers of talk and ambient sound to the music created by band members. Rap simply extended this process, making the DJ part of the music and sampling from a range of already completed musical recordings. There was no longer a single "correct" mix of the various tracks; instead, the final version was constructed by whoever wanted to work with it.

Among the controversies surrounding rap is the complaint that it is misogynistic and violent. Rappers defend the violence in their recordings by noting that we live in a violent world; the violence in the recordings is simply "keeping it real." Michael Fuchs, a former executive of media giant Time Warner, says that he sees some of the criticism of rap as racist:

> It's a fact that white kids are buying black music and are being influenced by it, and that frightens their parents. It's not very different than the feeling my parents had thirty years ago when rock and roll came out—about the influence of black music.[106]

The Importance of Pop Music. Popular music today goes well beyond just the composition; it is an entire social statement. Besides the music, there are the photos on the cover of the album, the text within the electronic booklet that comes with the download,

the music video, the gossip on TMZ, the posters, the mobile app, and the fashion. It is through popular music that young people often have their first contact with much of our culture. It provides young people not just with music, but with an entire identity.[107] Our identification with the music of our youth is something that sticks with us throughout adulthood. Alternative rocker Liz Phair points out:

> There's something that happens to people as they reach adulthood. They spend a lot of time trying to figure out what first hit them about rock 'n' roll. It's like the first time you took a drug. You want that first time back.[108]

Changing the Musical Experience: From Social Music to Personal Soundtracks

Being able to store and transmit musical performances was extremely important, but that may not have been the biggest change brought about by the invention of the phonograph and radio. Rock historian James Miller writes that the phonograph (and eventually radio) represented a vast expansion of people's access to music: "Symphonies that a person living in the nineteenth century would have been lucky to hear once were available for repeated listening on home phonographs."[109] Before the invention of the phonograph or radio, people had to go to a concert hall, theater, or club to hear music if they didn't play it themselves.

> SECRET 5 ▸ *The Death of "Social Music."* The phonograph and radio brought a wider range of music into the household, but this led to the loss of so-called social music, or music that people play and sing for one another in the home or in other social settings. Prior to the new technology, people had to play an instrument or sing to have music in the home. Sheet music was a popular feature in magazines like *Godey's Lady's Book*, along with recipes and sewing patterns. For most people, there was little social distance between the performer and the audience, and musical instruction played a greater role in the education of the upper and middle classes. With advances in technology over the years, however, the social connections available through a shared musical experience changed profoundly. This could be seen as a very early example (and a sadly lost one) of Secret 5—All media are social.

Akio Morita's "Personal Soundtrack."

Akio Morita is not a household name, but the Japanese engineer who invented the Sony Walkman has influenced how people listen to music as much as anyone since Thomas Edison and Emile Berliner.

When the Walkman was introduced in 1979, it was available in two versions—either as a tiny tape player or as a stereo FM radio. They were relatively expensive, with the tape player version costing upwards of $200, but they allowed each person to live in his or her own "personal musical cocoon."[110] Until 1979, the only way to take music away from home was with either a poor-quality pocket AM radio or a giant boom box. Writer RiShawn Biddle points out that the Walkman was more than just a way to protect your fellow bus passengers from your choice of music: "It's also been a coach, concert hall, and personal reader for millions of workout warriors, housewives, and retirees. For travelers, it is a trusty companion, something to ward off talkative salesmen and grandmothers loaded with wallet-size photos."[111] Media scholar Michael Marsden notes that the Walkman gives people privacy in public areas: "It's your personal space that you've created, in a world in which we don't have a lot of personal space. It's a totally private world."[112] Not everyone is so enthralled with the effects of the Walkman, however. Critic John Zerzan argues that the Walkman is one of a number of technologies that lead to a "sort of withdrawal from social

connections."[113] One thing the Walkman has clearly done, however, is contribute greatly to the trend of personalized media use characterized by downloads, podcasts, and streaming audio.

Questioning the Media

How do personal music players, from the original Walkman to iPods to smartphones, change how we interact with people? Does walking around with headphones on isolate us from each other? Do you use your headphones or earbuds to keep people at a distance?

From Singles to Digital Downloads: Making Money in the Recording Industry

For as long as there have been methods for recording and playing back sounds, there have been debates over how to make money selling music. Berliner's 78-rpm discs were fragile, held only three and a half minutes of music, and had only marginal sound quality by today's standards. So while there was no question that 78s needed to be replaced, there was no consensus on what the new format should be.

LPs Versus 45s

The LP was developed by Columbia Records and introduced in 1948. The discs were labeled unbreakable; this was not quite true, but the vinyl LPs were much less delicate than the 78-rpm discs. More importantly, an LP could reproduce twenty-three minutes of high-quality music on each side. CBS demonstrated the system to RCA president David Sarnoff and offered to let RCA, its competitor, use the system. But RCA declined the offer and put out its own format, the 45-rpm disc. It had high-quality sound, but the 45 could play only about four minutes of music at a time.[114] Eventually, record players were sold that could play both 45s and LPs, and both formats existed side by side, with the LP used for longer compositions and the 45 for single popular songs.

Vinyl LPs have staged a resurgence in recent years, as both artists and consumers have latched onto the twelve-inch discs containing analog music. Vinyl LPs made up 14 percent of all physical recording sales in 2017. Music fans bought 14.32 million of the old-school recording in 2017, up 9 percent from the year before. This is the highest number of vinyl sold since Nielsen started tracking this information in 1991. It also represents the twelfth straight year of growth of vinyl sales. While release of the fiftieth-anniversary edition of the Beatles' masterpiece *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* certainly didn't hurt, there were almost as many copies sold of *Guardians of the Galaxy: Awesome Mix Vol. 1* and Ed Sheeran's *Divide*. (Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* also was on the top-ten-selling vinyl album list as well.)[115]

Why are LPs regaining their popularity? Part of it is their size. The discs come with big covers that have plenty of room for dramatic art and liner notes. Recording artists, from big names like Justin Timberlake and Pink to obscure indie acts, like the prestige and "specialness" that a vinyl release brings. And consumers often get a code for a free digital download with the premium- priced analog recording so they can still listen to the music on their computer or phone.[116] Doug Williams of the Americana band Wild Ponies, whom you will meet shortly, said in an interview, "Vinyl is great for us. We can't skip it. We have fans who specifically want it. It's good to us." He noted that there can be as much as a year-and-a-half wait for "normal" people to get their albums pressed at Nashville's biggest vinyl pressing factory.[117]

Questioning the Media

Do you listen to independent artists or big recording stars? If you listen to independent artists, who are they? How did you find out about them? How did you find their music? What makes independent artists more interesting to you? Do you think long-tail distribution of indie artists makes it harder to find their work? Why or why not?

CDs and Digital Recording

Work on the CD was started by Philips Electronics physicist Klaas Compaan as early as 1969. Compaan had the idea of photographically recording music or video on discs that could be read with a laser. Not wanting to get into the kind of format war that raged between the 45 and the LP in the 1940s, Philips joined with Sony to create a standard for the compact disc. The CD was launched in Europe in 1982 and in the United States in 1983.

While we have generally talked about new media being scary to consumers, digital recording (a method of recording sound that involves storing it as a series of numbers) has been the scariest of the new media to people in the music industry. With analog recording (the original method of recording that involved cutting a groove on a record or placing a magnetic signal on a tape that was an image of the sound wave being recorded), copies were not as good as the originals, and copies of copies showed further degradation in quality. Thus, the prospect of home digital recordings, which are exactly the same as the originals without loss of quality, upset companies whose livelihood depended on the sales of original recordings.

For several years, home digital copying was held up by the recording industry, which wanted CD players to include security chips that would stop people from making copies. Of course, as soon as the industry came up with a way to stop people from copying digital music, hackers responded with ways of breaking the system. Ultimately, home CD copying emerged from the computer industry rather than the music industry. People wanted to be able to "burn" CDs with their own data, programs, and music.[118]

Economics of Streaming and Downloads

The most recent format for music is a compressed music file known as an MP3. MP3s can be played on a computer or on a portable MP3 player, such as an iPod, or they can be burned onto a recordable CD. The files can be easily shared over the internet by email, on websites, or through music-sharing services.

SECRET 2 ▸ Aside from allowing people to share music files, one of the biggest effects of this new distribution channel has been to allow new groups to publicize their music by delivering it directly to consumers through the internet, through either their own website or social networking sites, thus illustrating Secret 2—There are no mainstream media.

▼ Beyoncé's *Lemonade* was released on Saturday, April 23, 2016, through Tidal's streaming service, and amassed 485,000 album sales and 115 million streams within its first week.



Larry Busacca/PW/Getty Images

Radio Consolidates and Goes High-Tech

Prior to 1985, broadcast owners were restricted nationally to seven AM radio, seven FM radio, and seven television stations.[119] During the 1980s, with the growth of cable and satellite television, the FCC relaxed some ownership rules, which resulted in greater consolidation of ownership through media mergers. The trend toward broadcast deregulation was accelerated greatly with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Although most of the law dealt with the cable television and telephone industries, the law lifted the restrictions on overall broadcast ownership. A single company could now own unlimited numbers of radio stations, with up to eight stations in a single market.[120]

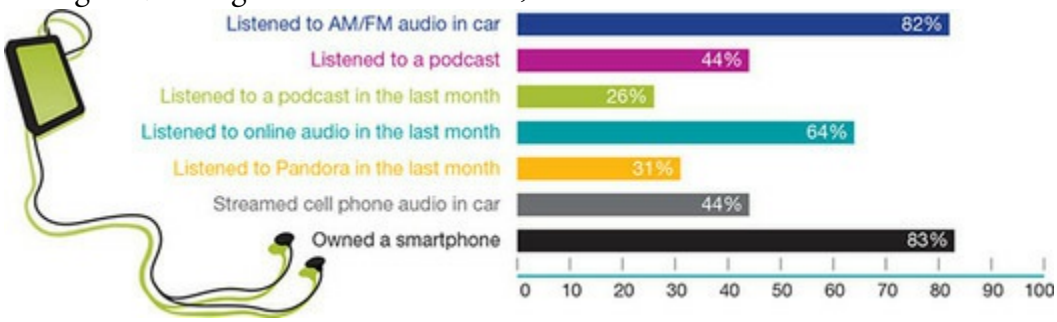
The impact on radio was almost immediate. Within a year and a half, radio ownership had become far more concentrated and far less diverse. By 2003, the number of radio stations on the air had grown by 5.9 percent, but the number of station owners had fallen by 35 percent.[121] Clear Channel used the rule change to buy up $30 billion worth of radio stations nationwide, going from owning 42 stations in 1995 to more than 1,200 stations by 2003.[122] As of 2014, when Clear Channel changed its name to iHeartMedia to highlight its streaming audio business along with its legacy radio stations,[123] the company was still the largest station owner in the United States, with 862 stations reaching more than 250 million listeners. In addition to owning all those stations, iHeartMedia provides syndicated programming for more than 5,000 stations through its Premiere Networks. It also sells advertising spots for about 4,000 radio stations (and 600 television stations) through Katz Media.[124] As of this writing in the spring of 2018, iHeartMedia was preparing to file for bankruptcy because of difficulty in making required interest payments on $15 billion of corporate debt.[125]

Many stations now operate with virtually no staff other than a few people to sell and produce advertising. The music, news, weather, and talk all come from either a satellite service or a computer hard drive, with automation software serving up the local commercials, announcements, and programming. If it sounds like programming on the radio is the same from one side of the country to the other, it could be because the stations you are listening to all get their programs from the same centralized source.[126]

The Future of Sound

For the past hundred years or so, the recording industry has been making money off the sale of little packages, either discs or cartridges of some sort. The coming of radio created the first blip in the market, leaving sellers wondering why people would buy records when they could get the music for free on the radio. The record companies soon learned that they could earn revenue from licensing the music to the radio stations and from promoting their records by having them played on the radio. Then came computers and the internet, which allowed people to burn copies of CDs on blank media or transmit them to other people as MP3 files.

▲ Figure 7.2 Digital Audio Audiences, 2018



Source: Edison Research, "The Infinite Dial 2018," https://www.slideshare.net/webby2001/infinite-dial-2018.

Now radio—the recording industry's old nemesis—is facing new competition and transformations of its own. Radio started with AM broadcasting as the primary medium for news and entertainment. Then, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, television displaced radio and transformed it into a companion medium that people listened to in the background rather than something that dominated their attention. A third round of change came when FM broadcasting became popular in the 1970s, bringing stereo and high fidelity to broadcasting. FM eventually surpassed AM in popularity, especially in the realm of music, leaving AM radio to be dominated by sports, talk, and news—formats that don't suffer from low fidelity and the lack of stereo.[127] People used to listen to radio predominantly in their cars and at home. Now people are listening in the office using radio stations' web streams. They also download audio podcasts or go to pay satellite services. Despite the new options, analog broadcasting remains by far the most popular choice—91 percent of Americans age twelve or older still listen to terrestrial radio every week. But traditional radio is facing stiff competition. According to the Edison Research and Triton Digital "Infinite Dial 2018" report, up to 50 percent of Americans listen to audio on digital devices every week.[128] (See Figure 7.2.)

There is no question of whether the entire sound industry is going through a massive change. The only real question is what will emerge.

Music and the Long Tail: Alternatives to Broadcasting

Terrestrial radio is also facing competition from the new audio media that are redefining how we view radio. The Project for Excellence in Journalism (now known as the Pew Research Center Journalism Project), which has been discussing the state of American media since 2005, replaced its chapter on "radio" with one on "audio" in 2009. Pew said at the time that radio can handle the transition to the digital world better than other media because "voice and music are mobile and move easily among new platforms. And audio has done better as a medium of holding its audience than some other sectors."[129] It would be a mistake, though, to just look at the Big Media alternatives such as HD radio and satellite radio. Individual audience members can now become message providers by setting up their own webcasts or podcasts with nothing more than a computer, a microphone, and a connection to the internet. With these technologies, even programming that extends deep into the long tail of media content can be distributed easily.

Media Transformations

Working and Living in the Long Tail

There's a popular trope out there these days that with streaming music and file sharing, there's just no way for musicians to make a living as musicians. Game over. Done. Unless you're already big and famous.

But don't tell that to Doug and Telisha Williams, aka the band Wild Ponies. In 2017, the Williamses released an album they recorded in a family shed in rural Virginia called *Galax*. The album featured a number of their favorite musicians from Nashville along with several local players from Galax, Virginia.

They've also been touring throughout the United States and Europe. They even completed a two-week tour of the Yukon. Yes, northwestern Canada, where they traveled from the airport on a trailer attached to a snow machine. (That's north country speak for a snowmobile.)

Doug and Telisha met in high school where he was the drum major and she was a majorette. They then played together in a rock 'n' roll cover band. "We eventually got married and tried day jobs, and that didn't work, so we went to being musicians," Doug said in an interview.[130] They've now been married more than nineteen years. Wild Ponies play roots and Americana music—sort of a mix of country, bluegrass, blues, folk, and rock. When they got started, everything was acoustic, but their latest album is all electric for Doug's guitar, though Telisha still plays the upright bass. They are often accompanied by drummer Megan Jane and multi-instrumentalist Fats Kaplin.

"We've never been with a traditional record label," Doug said. "We've never courted any of the major labels. And while we've flirted with the small indie labels, we've now formed our own small label. When you have your own label, it means you spend more time on the business side than you want to. But it also gives you the responsibility. You have to do your own work with radio promoters and the promotion person.

"It also means you have to raise your own capital, which is tough. It means you have to have a closer relationship between you and your fans."

Doug says that principles for success he and Telisha count on come from the work of *Wired* magazine founder Kevin Kelly and his theory of the "1,000 True Fans." This is the idea that artists can be successful apart from a large company or media organization if they can find a thousand true fans. Kelly writes:

> A True Fan is defined as someone who will purchase anything and everything you produce. They will drive 200 miles to see you sing. They will buy the super deluxe re-issued hi-res box set of your stuff even though they have the low-res-version. They have a Google Alert set for your name. They bookmark the eBay page where your out-of-print editions show up. They come to your openings. They have you sign their copies. They buy the t-shirt, and the mug, and the hat. They can't wait till you issue your next work. They are true fans.[131]

Doug says that artists who have a thousand or so true fans can have "a pretty good middle-class life. We don't survive without fan engagement. We don't play a show anywhere where we don't know someone in the audience on a first-name basis. Anywhere in the world. Amsterdam, London, southern Germany—little towns in southern Germany." (Full disclosure: Your author and his wife are true fans of Wild Ponies.)

Wild Ponies inhabit a part of the music business (media business, really) located somewhere between the megastars who bring in enormous numbers of fans and the garage bands who hope to get a hundred plays on YouTube. They inhabit a spot between the long tail and the short head on the media distribution curve. (We'll talk about this at the end of the chapter.)

For *Galax*, the Ponies raised more than $24,000 from 344 backers through the crowdfunding website

Kickstarter. To get funding through Kickstarter, musicians (like everyone else seeking Kickstarter funding) put together a video pitch along with written details about their qualifications and the album they intend to make. Potential contributors pledge to fund projects they find interesting, but they only get charged if the project reaches the financial goal the creators set. If the project doesn't reach its funding goal, no money is exchanged.[132] Assuming the project does reach its goal and gets funded, the people who pledge do not get an investment in the album; instead, they get the satisfaction of supporting the project and very often some kind of reward, such as a copy of the album, a T-shirt, or even a weekend-long creativity workshop with the band. Contributions to fund the *Galax* album ranged from $1 to $1,000.[133]

Doug says that he and Telisha are pretty happy with the way their professional life is going. "People say, 'I hope you guys make it.' But we are doing well. I don't even know what 'make it' means. We're paying our bills. You can be a successful lawyer without arguing a case before the Supreme Court. But I consider us successful. I love what we do."

WHO are the sources?

Who are Doug and Telisha Williams? What do they do? Who is Kevin Kelly? What does he do?

WHAT are they saying?

How do Doug and Telisha make a living as musicians? How do they pay for recording albums? What is the theory of "1,000 True Fans"?

WHAT evidence exists?

How much money did Wild Ponies raise to produce their latest album? How many people supported them? Where do they travel on their tours?

WHAT do you and your classmates think about supporting musicians?

Have you or your friends ever contributed to help crowdfund the production of a new album? Are there any small-scale musicians you would consider yourself a "true fan" of? What have you done that demonstrates your fandom?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

New Economic Models for the Music Industry

There can be no question that the many sectors of the sound industry are currently facing a massively changing media world. The issues of file sharing, user-generated content, and music videos (topics also covered in Chapters 9 and 10) are forcing changes in how radio and the recording industries can make money.

The debate over how to make people pay for music has changed to how to make people want to pay for music. Young people are listening to music streaming over their computers or phones rather than buying discs or downloads. And yet . . . according to the 2017 Recording Industry Association of America, revenue from recorded music has been increasing in recent years instead of declining as it had for years.[134]

Recorded music revenue for 2017 increased 16.5 percent to a retail value of $8.7 billion. This follows an increase of 11.4 percent for 2016. According to the RIAA, this is the first time since 1999 that the recorded music revenue grew substantially for two years in a row. This puts the industry back to the same level it was back in 2008.

The driving force for this growth were from paid music subscription services such as Spotify, Amazon, Tidal, Apple Music, and Pandora. The RIAA says that streaming accounted for almost `two-thirds of recorded music revenue for 2017. Physical sales of media accounted for 17 percent, and digital downloads from services such as Amazon or Apple accounted for 15 percent. Music synchronization services accounted for the remaining 3 percent.

▼ Béla Fleck has had great success with a small management company rather than a major record label.



Karl Walter/Getty Images

It can be argued that piracy and file sharing hurt the record labels more than they do the musicians. File sharing may even help musicians. Classical and jazz banjo player Béla Fleck, of Béla Fleck and the Flecktones, makes the majority of his income touring across the United States in the summer. Fleck says his band makes 70 percent of its income from concerts, 20 percent from album sales, and 10 percent from merchandise. The CDs are mostly made to help fans discover his music.[135] Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails offers his recordings as free downloads online to save his fans from having to go to file-sharing sites.

He also helps them share fan videos through his website. But according to *Techdirt*'s Mike Masnick, Reznor also offers his music for sale in a variety of packages. With his album *Ghosts I–IV*, fans wanting to pay for the music could buy everything from a pair of CDs for $10 to an autographed "Ultra-Deluxe Limited Edition Package." The $300 edition sold out in thirty hours. Now, granted, Reznor is not a typical musician, but he does illustrate how by interacting with fans in a meaningful way he can make them want to pay him for his music.[136] Media technology journalist Mark Glaser writes that record labels and artists don't have a "god-given right" to sell CDs for $13 to $18 apiece. He outlines the wide range of choices consumers have now:

> As music lovers, we now have many more choices for how we can get our music fix. We can listen to the radio, to satellite radio, to Internet radio, to streaming services, or hear new music on TV shows like The Voice or on commercials. We can download free music from file-sharing networks [though that can be illegal]. We can hear music straight from the websites of artists, buy their money from iTunes, or listen to them on Spotify. We can buy physical albums from the dwindling number of retail music stores or Wal-Mart and Target.[137]

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

The ability to record sounds began in 1877 with Thomas Edison's invention of the phonograph. Though Edison's machine could record and play back sound, it was relatively fragile, and the foil-covered cylinders could not be reproduced and did not stand up to repeated playing. Emile Berliner's gramophone, however, played music on flat discs that were stronger than Edison's cylinders and could be mass produced. This technology allowed musical performances to be stored and replayed. As prerecorded music became widely available, the nature of music consumption changed. People's major contact with music became recordings by professional musicians rather than live performances by amateurs.

Radio was an outgrowth of work done on the telegraph by Samuel Morse. Physicists such as Heinrich Hertz conducted early experiments on the detection of radio waves, but it was Guglielmo Marconi who developed the commercially viable wireless telegraph.

Radio was used initially as a tool for sending messages from one person to another. David Sarnoff was among the first to see radio's potential as a tool for mass communication; CBS founder William Paley saw its potential as an advertising medium that incidentally provided entertainment. KDKA, the first commercial radio station, went on the air in 1920, ushering in the golden age of radio, in which radio was the dominant medium for home entertainment. Radio was also a major source of news, offering an intimacy and immediacy that newspapers couldn't match.

A wide range of recording formats has been used over the years, including the 78-rpm disc, the 45-rpm single, the LP, the CD, and the MP3 computer file. Each has given rise to concerns about changes in the purchasing and use of music.

Rock 'n' roll is a hybrid style of music that grew out of white hillbilly music and black rhythm and blues in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Because rock 'n' roll crossed racial lines, it became part of the integration of American society in the 1950s and 1960s. Rock 'n' roll became popular largely through recordings sold in record stores and played on the radio rather than through live performances. It evolved into an art form that existed primarily for recorded playback rather than live performance.

In the 1960s and 1970s, rock music became more heavily produced, and there was a shift from hit singles to albums. Music by groups such as the Beatles and Pink Floyd brought the role of the producer to the forefront, a move that accelerated with the development of disco and rap. Hip-hop culture brought together playing music, talking over the songs, dancing, and a distinctive graffiti art style.

Parents and other adults have expressed concern about lyrics that include profanity, references to suicide and violence, and sentiments that are derogatory toward women.

As television displaced radio as the dominant broadcast medium, radio was transformed into a companion medium with a wide range of formats designed to appeal to narrow, specific audiences. These formats include many types of music, Spanish-language broadcasting, talk, news, and sports.

FM has gradually replaced AM as the dominant radio band. Although FM has a shorter broadcast range, it has much higher-quality sound (higher fidelity).

Although the majority of radio stations are commercial, public radio—a staple of FM radio programming—provides an important alternative. Terrestrial radio is still the dominant sound medium; however, it faces growing competition from digital alternatives such as HD radio, satellite radio, streaming audio, and podcasting.

Key Terms ▶▶

long-playing record (LP) 166
compact disc (CD) 166
phonograph 166
gramophone 167
high fidelity (hi-fi) 167
non-notated music 167
telegraph 168
wireless telegraph 168
Radio Music Box memo 168
network 170
golden age of radio 171
soap operas 171
terrestrial radio 173
HD radio 173
satellite radio 173
shock jock 173
Federal Communications Commission (FCC) 173
streaming audio 174
podcast 174
MP3 174
rock 'n' roll 176
race records 177
cover 177
girl groups 178
British invasion 179
concept album 179
producers 180
disco 180
hip-hop 181
rap music 181
country music 182
format radio 183
social music 187
45-rpm disc 188
digital recording 188
analog recording 188

Review Questions ▶▶

1. How has the musical *Hamilton* helped bring hip-hop music to a new audience?
2. Is radio still a distinct, separate medium, or is it just part of a larger world of audio programming? Why or why not?
3. What is the role of a producer in music like rock, R&B, and hip-hop? Why do producers seem to have such a big influence on the music industry?
4. Can musicians still make a living in the music industry today? Why or why not? How has this changed over the last twenty years?
5. How are musicians using long-tail tools to create new ways of sharing their music while still making money?

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Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures/Photofest

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Explain what the studio system was like and why it ended
2. Discuss how the growth of television and home video transformed the movie industry
3. Explain what is meant by the "blockbuster era' in the movie industry and how movies have become brands
4. Explain how digital production and projection have changed filmmaking
5. Discuss the evolution of the ratings system using examples of different movies
6. Explain how the internet and other long-tail tools have changed the movie promotion and distribution process

When the Marvel movie *Black Panther* opened in February 2018 as the first big-budget superhero film to have a black director and star a black hero, people had high expectations. Experts thought the movie might bring in as much as $165 million its opening weekend. But that turned out to be a serious underestimate—it brought in $218 million. And that was just North America. Globally, *Panther* brought in $387 million—more in that first weekend than any other black-directed movie featuring a predominantly black cast over its entire run.[1] The previous record was held by *Straight Outta Compton* directed by F. Gary Gray, which brought in $214 million globally over its entire multimonth run.

Among the many reasons for the film's huge opening-weekend success was that there were many school and church groups going to see it.[2] An AMC multiplex theater in the Atlanta area reportedly had eighty-four showings its opening day. There were also numerous sponsored screenings of the film paid for in poorer neighborhoods by a range of celebrities. Kendrick Lamar, the Pulitzer Prize–winning rapper and soundtrack designer for *Panther*, sponsored five screenings of the film for one thousand kids from the Watts housing projects in Los Angeles.[3] *Hidden Figures* actress Octavia Spencer sponsored a showing of the film in a theater in Mississippi so that children of color could afford to see the movie, and African American philanthropist Frederick Joseph set up a crowdfunding campaign to sponsor screenings in Harlem and other black communities, with funds coming from a range of celebrities including J. J. Abrams, Viola Davis, and Ellen DeGeneres.[4]

Panther had a largely black cast hailing from the United States, Britain, and across Africa. It also had a particularly diverse crew, having far more women and people of color working on it than most movies.[5] As an example, Hannah Beachler, *Panther*'s production designer, in 2017 was Hollywood's only top-level black female production designer. "A couple of years ago, the thought hit me, like, 'I can't be the only female of color working at this level. That can't possibly be right!'" she told the *Refinery29* blog. "But talking to friends of mine and just being on sets, I haven't seen women like me in this kind of position."[6] Along with many others, the movie featured Rachel Morrison, a white female cinematographer, and

rapper Kendrick Lamar as the musical soundtrack designer.

The Black Panther was created by two New York Jewish comic book writers—Jack Kirby and Stan Lee—and was introduced as a character in *Fantastic Four* #52, having supplied an advanced aircraft to Mister Fantastic, Reed Richards. The dialog at the time was not particularly enlightened, with The Thing asking, "How does some refugee from a Tarzan movie lay his hands on this kinda gizmo?" But while the dialog may have reflected white attitudes from the time, Kirby and Lee created T'Challa the warrior king as both a genius and an incredibly wealthy man.[7]

It was three months after this that the Black Panther Party political action group was founded in Oakland. (It is worth noting that Erik Killmonger, the sympathetic villain of the *Black Panther* movie played by Michael B. Jordan, grew up in the 1990s in Oakland, thirty years later.)

The Panther got his own series of comics in 1973, again authored by a white writer, this time Don McGregor. Among his exploits was fighting the Ku Klux Klan in the American South.

In the 1990s, *Black Panther* got its first black writer, with Christopher Priest; and it was Priest's run with the character that was likely director Ryan Coogler's first exposure to the character at a comic book store in his native Oakland.[8]

Monique Jones, writing for */Film*, says that *Black Panther* has had an outsized importance to black audiences. "For many black viewers, *Black Panther* will be a major dream deferred finally realized. For the first time in the [Marvel Cinematic Universe], us black fans will finally have a film that features characters who not only look like us, but feel many of the hopes and anxieties specific to the African-American experience."[9]

Jones writes that all too often the black character is the sidekick or the friend in the blockbuster film, not the main person. "It's normal for black audiences to just hope a black character gets enough screen time and doesn't die at the end . . ."

While *Black Panther* was the first big-budget superhero movie to star a black hero, there have been the smaller-budget *Blade* films starring Wesley Snipes as a vampire hunter and the eclectic *Hancock* starring Will Smith.[10]

Of course, Black Panther isn't the only black character in the Marvel Universe—there's Storm from the X-Men; Nick Fury, who runs the Avengers in the Marvel movie series; and Falcon and War Machine; but none of them have moved to the forefront of starring in a movie, though one could argue that Samuel L. Jackson's Nick Fury is a pretty big deal. Black Panther made his cinematic debut as a supporting character in 2016's *Captain America: Civil War*.[11]

During the 2016 Oscars, there was a hashtag campaign #OscarsSoWhite to highlight that none of the acting nominees in any of the four categories were nonwhite. Since then, things have obviously improved. The Oscar-winning Pixar-animated film *Coco* told a Hispanic story with a largely Hispanic cast. The Oscar-nominated horror/comedy film *Get Out* has a black writer/director and a black leading actor. It was also a big commercial and critical success. *Moonlight*, telling a black coming-of-age story, won best picture in 2017.[12]

The problem is turning these individual successes into a long-term trend. Darnell Hunt, who works on the annual UCLA movie diversity study, said the number of women and people of color in front of and behind the camera doesn't change much. "Every year we see a series of exceptional films like 'Moonlight' that tells a different story and features women or POC [people of color], but they have always prove[d] to be exceptions to the rule. We see a bump here and there, but nothing that points to a sustained trend."[13]

Regardless of the size of a film's budget, profits, or cast, we still go to the movies for the same basic reason: to escape from the world around us. We spend a couple of hours in a darkened room with a group of people and share a created experience—a bit of excitement, sentiment, or romance. In this chapter, we look at how the movie industry developed from peep show kinetoscopes to today's IMAX theaters. We examine the roles of movies in society, public concerns about movies, and efforts by government and industry to regulate the content of films.

The Development of Movies

The movie industry has its roots in the 1880s, but it wasn't until the early twentieth century that movies became a major source of public entertainment. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, movies gradually grew from ten-minute silent films into talking films up to two hours long. Although movie attendance peaked in the 1940s, viewing movies in theaters remains popular today, despite competition from television and home video.

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The First Moviemakers

Thomas Edison is generally credited with developing the American motion picture industry, but like other media, movies came into being because of the work of many people; Edison was just one of several scientists and engineers who created the new medium of film.

Edison, Marey, and Muybridge.

In the 1870s and 1880s, at least two people were working on the problem of capturing and portraying motion. The first was Étienne-Jules Marey. Trained in medicine, Marey sought to measure and transcribe motion, starting with blood and the heart and then progressing on to how animals move. While Marey was never able to project moving pictures, he did help develop systems for taking repeated photos of people and animals in motion.[14]

British photographer Eadweard Muybridge was the second major influence on Edison. Muybridge, like Marey, wanted to capture the motion of animals on film. To settle a bet, the governor of California hired him to establish whether all four hooves of a horse leave the ground when it is galloping.[15] Muybridge set up twenty-four cameras at evenly spaced locations around a racetrack. Tripwires allowed the passing horse to trigger the cameras. Muybridge then projected the images using a type of zoetrope, a child's toy that put a series of images on a spinning cylinder. He was thus able to establish that all four hooves do leave the ground during a gallop.

▼ The photos of a woman in motion in this collection are typical of the images Eadweard Muybridge created for his book *Animal Locomotion*. With these repeated photographs, Muybridge demonstrated that you could create an illusion of motion by displaying a series of still images.



Eadweard Muybridge/George Eastman House/Getty Images

Muybridge eventually photographed both animals and humans moving against a black-and-white grid; his photos were published in 1887 in a book titled *Animal Locomotion*. He became a celebrity, touring the country to lecture and display his photographs.

At about the same time, Edison assigned an employee to work on the motion picture project. The first movies were not projected on a screen; instead, they were viewed by an individual viewer on a peep show–like device that Edison called the kinetoscope. The moving picture was first demonstrated to the public on May 9, 1893, at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences in the form of a thirty-second film called *Blacksmith Scene*. Other early films showed a man sneezing, "Sandow the Strong Man" displaying his muscles, and Annie Oakley riding her horse.

The kinetoscope was soon replaced by a system in which films were projected on a screen, and the viewing of movies was transformed from a solitary activity to a group experience. The first American theaters grew out of the penny arcades where kinetoscopes had been located. These early theaters came to be known as "nickelodeons" because tickets cost five cents. By 1900, the nickelodeon theaters were a popular form of entertainment throughout American cities.

Early French Filmmakers.

In France, brothers Auguste-Marie and Louis-Jean Lumière started working with Edison's motion picture ideas in 1894. They created what they called a *cinématographe*, a portable movie camera that could also be used as a projector. The brothers also set the standards for the speed at which film would be shot and for the format of the film, details that Edison would eventually adopt. On December 28, 1895, they opened their first theater, where they showed short movies portraying everyday life in families, at factories, and on the street.

One of the earliest films to tell a story rather than record everyday life was created by another Frenchman, Georges Méliès. His most famous film was 1902's *A Trip to the Moon*, which featured special effects such as a spaceship hitting the man in the moon in the eye. But although it told a story, it was essentially a stage show captured on film.[16]

Edwin S. Porter Telling a Story With Film.

Edwin S. Porter expanded on Méliès's ideas to create one of the first hit movies in the United States. While working as a projectionist for Edison, Porter saw Méliès's *Trip to the Moon* many times. He soon started making movies for Edison, most notably the 1903 film *The Great Train Robbery*. Porter laid out almost every element of the action in the film, which tells the story of a group of outlaws who get on a train, rob the strongbox and the passengers, kill everyone who gets in their way, and are eventually shot and killed by the posse hunting them down. The movie, containing twelve separate scenes shot in a variety of locations, tells a realistic story. *The Great Train Robbery* helped establish how stories could

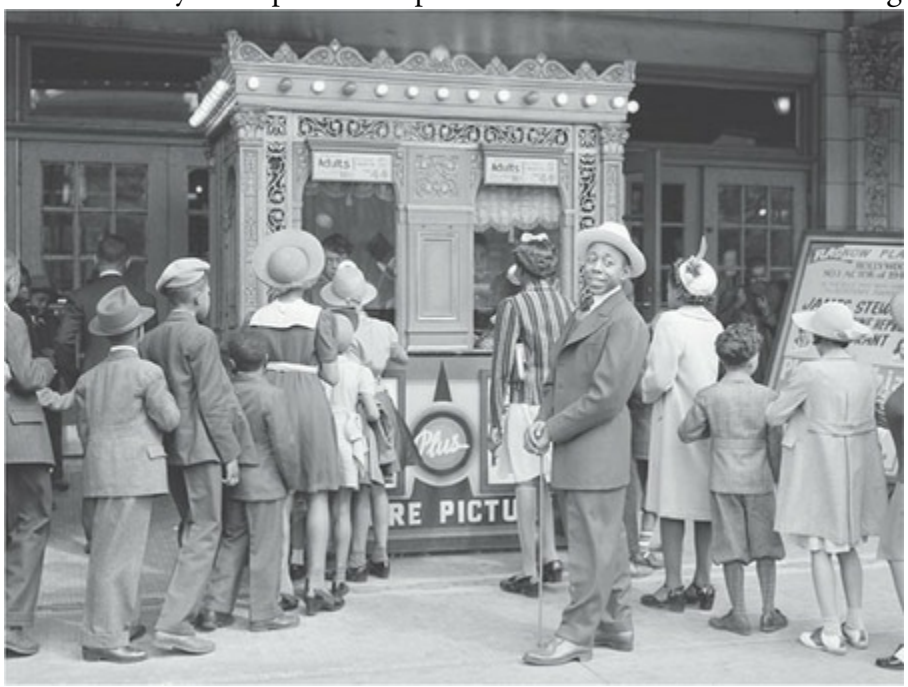
be told through film.[17]

D. W. Griffith: The Birth of the Blockbuster.

Director D. W. Griffith was the George Lucas or Steven Spielberg of the silent-movie era, creating epic films that captured the entire nation's imagination. At a time when most directors were making movies that ran for twenty-five minutes at most, Griffith produced films that ran for an hour or more. In essence, Griffith created the first modern feature-length film. Griffith's most significant film—*The Birth of a Nation*, released in 1915—tells the story of the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the years following the Civil War. The film runs for over three hours and, at a cost of more than $110,000, was the most expensive movie to date. It also cost audiences more to see it; tickets were $2 in the big cities at a time when admission to most pictures was less than $1.

Based on Thomas Dixon's book *The Clansman*, Griffith's film is blatantly racist. At the time of its release, the film was criticized for a range of reasons, including its portrayal of African Americans as "nothing but beasts" and its attack on the North. One critic, referring to the three miles of film used in making the movie, called it "three miles of filth."[18] Griffith soon outdid himself with another movie, *Intolerance*, which ran even longer than *The Birth of a Nation*. It cost nearly $500,000 to make and tells four separate stories spread out over a period of 2,500 years. It is a bold, dramatic film, but it was a financial failure, costing Griffith the fortune he had made with *The Birth of a Nation*.

▼ Young people in the 1940s dressed a little more formally when they went to the movies than do today's movie audiences, but these Chicago moviegoers were still looking to have fun away from parental supervision for an afternoon or evening.



Library of Congress

Intolerance marked the point at which outside financial backing became necessary for a movie to get produced. Today the only exceptions to this are low-budget movies, such as *The Blair Witch Project*, and movies made by very wealthy directors, such as George Lucas. (Lucas financed the *Star Wars* prequel series, Episodes I, II, and III, in part with profits from *Star Wars* merchandise and his special-effects house, Industrial Light & Magic. He eventually sold his company Lucasfilm to Disney in 2012.)

Outside financing means that directors are accountable to the people who control the purse strings. Few directors today have the right to a "final cut," or final version, of the movie. That right is generally reserved by the people who control the money.[19]

Movie Stars.

In the early days of the movie industry, studios were reluctant to give actors screen credit for fear that this would encourage them to ask for more money. But the studios soon discovered that the public liked some actors and actresses better than others and were more likely to go to a movie featuring one of their favorites.

Directors such as D. W. Griffith employed a group of regular players in all their films. Florence Lawrence was one of the first to break out of this anonymous group; Griffith's studio, Biograph, paid her a stunning (for the time) $25 a week. Linda Griffith, D. W.'s wife, wrote in a memoir, "[Florence's] pictures became tremendously popular, and soon all over the country Miss Lawrence was known as 'The Biograph Girl.'"[20] After Lawrence left Biograph for a rival studio, Independent Moving Pictures, she became one of the first actresses to receive a screen credit.[21]

The Studio System

Why are so many movies made in Hollywood? Although the earliest movies were filmed in New Jersey and New York, the appeal of southern California soon became apparent. One argument for going west was to get away from Thomas Edison's "patent police," who tried to control the use of movie technology. But California also offered almost constant sunlight, as well as the varied settings of ocean, desert, and mountains. In addition, the new movie studios needed a great deal of space, and at the beginning of the twentieth century, land in California was still relatively cheap.

▼ Silent movie stars "sweet" Mary Pickford and "swashbuckling" Douglas Fairbanks were one of the first Hollywood power couples and were two of the founders of the United Artists movie studio.



Library of Congress

At about the same time, the movie studios figured out that the most effective way to produce movies was with a factory-like process known as the studio system, in which all of the talent worked directly for the movie studios. Paramount Pictures, MGM, Warner Bros., and other major studios controlled every aspect of the production process, from writing to editing. They employed a number of writers, directors, and actors ("stars") who were under contract to work for a weekly salary. The movies were put together in assembly-line fashion. The studios also had almost absolute control of the distribution system.

Distribution was carried out in two ways. The first way was block bookings, in which theater owners were required to book a whole series of movies in order to get a few

desirable films. The studio package might offer four headliner movies with big-name stars, ten mid-range pictures, ten more low-level films, and twelve no-star, bottom-of-the-line pictures. Sometimes salespeople insisted that theaters take the studio's entire package of fifty-two films, one for each week of the year. The second, and even more effective, way for studios to guarantee that their movies would be shown was to buy up theaters.[22]

United Artists.

Actors and directors soon rebelled against the controls placed on them by the studio system. Despite being pampered and well paid, they had to make the movies the studios told them to make. By 1919, several of the most popular performers and directors, including D. W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks, joined forces to create their own company, United Artists.

Instead of producing movies as the other major studios did, United Artists acquired and distributed movies after independent film producers had completed them. United Artists was essentially a model for the modern film studio—not a maker of films but a distributor and a source of financing.

United Artists remained a significant independent force in the movies until 1981, when one of its movies, Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate*, managed to lose almost its entire cost of production—$44 million—forcing the nearly bankrupt studio to merge with MGM. (*Heaven's Gate* is a dusty, confusing, and depressing western that was relatively expensive for the time it came out.[23])

Talking Pictures.

In terms of technological developments in the movies, color and black-and-white movies coexisted for many years, but movies with sound replaced silent films almost immediately. Once people had both seen and heard their favorite stars, there was no turning back.[24]

Although many people point to *The Jazz Singer*, released in 1927, as the first talking film, it was actually a silent film with two talking (and singing) segments. The first successful demonstration of the talking picture was a series of short films that accompanied the feature *Don Juan* in 1926. *Don Juan* was a silent film, but it had a synchronized soundtrack (wherein sounds are synchronized with the pictures in a movie) with musical accompaniment, and the accompanying films demonstrated the equipment that would make talking films possible. This set of short films included performances by opera singers and a talk by Will H. Hays, president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America.

The Jazz Singer was called a talkie—a movie with synchronized sound—but it was the singing as much as the talking that impressed most people. In the movie, Al Jolson, talking

to his mother, delivered one of the cinema's most prophetic lines, "Come on, Ma. Listen to this."[25] The public loved it. It was talking (and singing) pictures such as *The Jazz Singer* that helped build Warner Bros. into one of the nation's premier movie studios. Until then, Warner Bros. had been a relatively small player. The studio's breakthrough came with the realization that talkies were about more than talk. As Harry Warner put it, "If it can talk, it can sing."[26] The movie industry as a whole was leery of talking pictures for a couple of reasons. On the simplest level, talking pictures in the early days required stars to speak well while acting, something that wasn't necessarily easy to do. (In the contemporary movie industry, much of the dialogue is rerecorded after the photography is finished.) A bigger problem was that talking pictures were expensive. Not only did theaters have to upgrade their equipment, but the noisy movie projectors had to be muffled in soundproof booths. Sound issues existed during the filming process as well, as noisy equipment that allowed cameras to swoop around the actors couldn't be used. This problem restricted the camera's mobility in the early talkies and kept them from being as visually interesting as the best of the silent films, such as *Metropolis* or *Nosferatu*. There was also the problem of noise in the vicinity of the studios (such as the roar of passing trains). Even the bright arc lights used to light the sets made a sizzling sound that had to be eliminated. As one industry observer noted, "It was easy to make pictures, easy to make records; but another matter to make them together."[27]

The influence of talking films soon gave rise to concerns like those familiar to us today. One newspaper columnist complained,

> The talkies will make Hollywood the slang center of the United States. . . . A wisecrack recorded in Hollywood will be heard in all corners of the country months before the same quip could travel from town to town across the continent with a road show or a vaudeville troupe.[28]

It took awhile for the talking movies to find their way. As one critic pointed out in *Harper's* in 1929, the talkies were neither plays nor silent movies. They were something new, and Hollywood had to determine what that was. Writers, directors, and actors had to figure out what could be done with the new medium. Animation pioneer Walt Disney, for example, saw sound more as a way to add music and sound effects to his cartoons than as a way to make them talk.[29] In recent years, the quality of sound has become increasingly important, both in theaters and at home. George Lucas's *Star Wars*, released in 1977, broke new ground not only with its visual effects, but also with its sound effects. It was among the first movies to fully exploit the Dolby sound system, and the Lucas-developed THX theater sound system has become a standard for high-quality movie sound.

▼ The congressional hearings on communists in Hollywood extended over a several-year period. This photo shows actor Lionel Stander testifying before the House Un-American

Activities Committee in 1953.



Library of Congress

The End of the Studio System.

By 1938, the U.S. Department of Justice was starting to view the movie studio system as a monopoly that needed to be brought under control. It decided to make a test case of Paramount Pictures. Paramount and the other major studios were charged with conspiring to set the terms for theaters renting their films—requiring them to charge certain minimum prices and to accept block booking—and discriminating in favor of certain theaters. The studios also worked to keep independent films out of theaters they owned.

An early portion of the settlement of what became known as the "Hollywood Antitrust Case"[30] required studios to show theater owners films before booking them, limit block bookings to five movies at a time, and no longer force theaters to book short films. But the power of the studios was not truly dismantled until 1948 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the studios must sell their theaters. This final portion of the case's settlement led to the system in use today, in which the studios primarily finance and distribute films produced by independent companies rather than make movies themselves with their own staff.[31]

The Blacklist

The years following World War II were a dark time for the movie industry. The studios' power was diminished by the Supreme Court's rulings in the antitrust case, and some politicians had an overwhelming fear that Hollywood and its movies might be playing a role in spreading communism. In 1947, a congressional committee known as the House Un-American Activities Committee, under the leadership of J. Parnell Thomas, held hearings on possible communist influences in Hollywood.

In his introductory remarks, Thomas laid out the fears quite clearly:

> We all recognize, certainly, the tremendous effect which moving pictures have on their mass audiences, far removed from the Hollywood sets. We all recognize that what the citizen sees and hears in his neighborhood movie house carries a powerful impact on his thoughts and behavior.
>
> With such vast influence over the lives of American citizens as the motion-picture industry exerts, it is not unnatural—in fact, it is very logical—that subversive and undemocratic forces should attempt to use this medium for un-American purposes.[32]

It is this legacy of fear—fear that the movies and other media could have undesirable effects on unsuspecting audience members—that led to the research and controls on the movie industry. (This topic is discussed in depth later in this chapter.)

Two weeks of committee hearings were held, the most divisive of which involved ten "unfriendly witnesses" who questioned the right of the committee to ask them about their associations and beliefs. The committee repeatedly asked the question, "Are you now, or have you ever been, a communist?" Instead of answering, the witnesses, known as the Hollywood Ten, challenged the constitutionality of the hearings. They were jailed for contempt of Congress, and the movie industry instituted a blacklist that banned anyone from working in Hollywood who was a known communist, a suspected communist, or a communist sympathizer.[33] In December 1949, Thomas was convicted of padding his payroll and went to jail himself. But hearings continued under new leadership in the early 1950s, and by 1953, the blacklist contained the names of as many as 324 suspected communists. The contracts of those who were blacklisted could be canceled; if they were freelancers, the studios simply wouldn't buy their work.[34] The hearings tore Hollywood apart. Some of the unfriendly witnesses had to move. The uncooperative witnesses lost their jobs and were ostracized, and those who had provided names were viewed as informers.

While the blacklist was in place, several writers continued to sell screenplays under assumed

names or wrote screenplays without receiving any credit at all. In 1956, Dalton Trumbo, writing under the name Robert Rich, won an unclaimed Academy Award for his screenplay for *The Brave One*. In 1957, David Lean's epic movie *The Bridge on the River Kwai* won an Oscar for best screenplay. The script, written by Carl Foreman and Michael Wilson, was based on a novel by the French author Pierre Boulle. But since the scriptwriters were blacklisted, the credit went to Boulle, who could not write or speak English.[35] (And in case you were wondering, Boulle also wrote the novel that inspired the *Planet of the Apes* movie series.) The blacklist was finally broken in 1960, when Trumbo received screenwriting credits for the films *Spartacus* and *Exodus*.

Television and the Movies

In the 1950s, people began turning to television rather than movies for routine entertainment. The exodus of families to the suburbs also contributed to a decline in movie audiences, especially in the old urban Art Deco movie palaces. Sports, both professional and collegiate, started drawing audiences away from the movies as well.[36] In 1946, movie audiences reached their peak, and eighty million tickets were sold every week. But by 1953, ticket sales had dropped by almost half, to forty-six million a week. It was clear that Hollywood would have to do something to reverse this trend.

Larger-Than-Life Movies.

One thing Hollywood did to entice viewers away from television was to make the movies shown in theaters bigger and better than before. Hollywood tried 3-D movies, but they required special projection equipment and 3-D glasses. The gimmick started out successfully, but people soon became bored with the novelty, which ultimately added little to the movie experience. Almost the only serious movie to be released in the 3-D format in its first incarnation was Alfred Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder*. The 3-D format experienced a revival in the 2000s, especially with movies targeted at children, such as Pixar's *Up* and Brendan Fraser's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.[37] But now many big-budget action movies get a 3-D release as well, whether they were designed for 3-D or not, with goal of drawing in the higher ticket prices that 3-D movies command. And, of course, there are the rare films envisioned as 3-D movies from the start, such as James Cameron's *Avatar*, Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*, and Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity*.

After the first effort to popularize 3-D films fizzled out, more successful were attempts to project a larger picture on the screen. The most extreme of these was the Cinerama process, in which each scene was filmed from three slightly different angles and projected on a huge curved screen using three projectors. The purpose was to create the feeling of realism through the use of peripheral vision. The Cinerama theaters could also handle smaller wide-screen systems such as CinemaScope.

▼ Steven Spielberg's *Ready Player* One was a 3-D IMAX celebration of all that could be done technically with an immersive summer action film. Though it doesn't quite have the same level of virtual reality its protagonists (Parzival/Wade, left, and Art3mis/Samantha, right) experience in the movie, it did provide a step in that direction for viewers.



Warner Bros./Photofest

Along with the larger screens came larger movies, including epics such as *The Ten Commandments* and the gladiator movie *Spartacus*. Today, widescreen HDTV is passé with 55- to 70-inch Ultra HD 4K screens being the go-to standard with streaming in 4K resolution from the major sources as well as 4K Blu-ray discs. What is Ultra HD or 4K? It's television set that displays 3,840 pixels by 2,160, as opposed to the HD standard of 1,920 by 1,080. In a more meaningful comparison, 4K televisions have four times the resolution of a standard HD TV.[38]

The Advent of Color.

Television also helped bring about the conversion to color movies. During the 1950s, television was almost exclusively black-and-white. Color was first used in Hollywood in the 1920s at about the same time that sound came in, but it was expensive, the studios were focusing on the conversion to sound, and black-and-white film was easier to work with. Still, there are some important color movies from this era. Both *Gone With the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz* made effective use of color: Think of the vivid images of Dorothy's ruby red slippers—silver in the original L. Frank Baum books—and Scarlett O'Hara's green velvet dress made from the parlor drapes.

One factor that delayed the conversion to color movies was that they initially required a complex camera that shot simultaneously on three separate reels of film (one for each of the three additive colors—cyan, magenta, and yellow). After World War II, American studios adopted a process used in Germany to shoot in color using a single reel of film, which made color filming much easier. Competition from television forced Hollywood to start using

color in virtually every film from the 1950s on.[39] Occasionally, period-piece movies are released in black-and-white for effect—think of 2011's multiple-Oscar-winning *The Artist* (which was also largely a silent film with a musical soundtrack); the 2005 Oscar-nominated *Good Night, and Good Luck*; or *Schindler's List*, which won the Oscar for best picture in 1993. (Come to think of it, maybe shooting a movie in black-and-white is a good way to get an Oscar . . .) More recently, there have been movies reissued in black-and-white at the time they are being released for home video. *Mad Max: Fury Road* got what director George Miller called a "Black & Chrome" edition. Miller says he had wanted to film the postapocalyptic story in black-and-white to begin with, but the studio was never going to agree with that. But with movies always having their color digitally manipulated, it was not difficult to create a black-and-white version for the home video version and for a short theatrical release. (The fact that most movies are delivered to theaters digitally means there isn't a high cost of making film prints to stand in the way.)[40] *Logan*, featuring the final appearance of Hugh Jackman as Wolverine in the *X-Men* franchise, also got a black-and-white version for home video, along with a single-night theatrical run, under the title *Logan: Noir*.[41]

▼ Theaters have started attracting audiences by offering a wide variety of food and drink options while promoting high-end experiences. Here, a bartender serves beer to two customers seated on plush, leather recliners.



Ricardo DeAratanha/Getty Images

The Growth of Multiplex Theaters.

In recent decades, movie theaters themselves have been changing to meet the needs of a changing audience. As large numbers of people moved from cities to suburbs, the vast Art

Deco movie palaces that seated as many as two thousand people were no longer being filled. Gradually, these megatheaters have been replaced by smaller theaters grouped together in what is known as a multiplex. These have a single box office and concession stand, but contain anywhere from three to twenty screens. Each of the auditoriums is relatively small, but when a major movie is released, it can be shown in several of the theaters.[42] The number of theater screens declined in 2001 to approximately thirty-five thousand but has grown in recent years to over forty thousand. Many of these new theaters feature stadium seating, improved sound systems, and premium refreshments, such as real butter on the gourmet popcorn.[43]

The Movie Business

If the early 1900s were the silent-film era and the 1930s and 1940s were the studio era, then the period from the late 1970s to the present day is the blockbuster era, in which studios try to make relatively expensive movies with a large, predefined audience. These movies are packaged with cable deals and marketing tie-ins, such as McDonald's Happy Meal toys.

The Blockbuster Era

Steven Spielberg is generally credited with creating the blockbuster era with the release of his 1975 summer hit *Jaws*. It was the first movie to gross more than $200 million, and it set the stage for the big summer movies. Prior to *Jaws*, it was believed that a movie had to be released during the Christmas season to be a major success. *Jaws* had a number of things going for it: It was directed by one of the most popular directors of the late twentieth century, it featured a compelling musical score by John Williams, and it was based on a best-selling novel by Peter Benchley.

Jaws was accompanied by a giant television advertising campaign that began three days before the movie's release. But the marketing of the movie had started two years earlier with an announcement that the movie rights had been acquired and speculation about the stars. Journalists were taken to the production site in record numbers to keep the stories flowing. The movie's release was scheduled to occur within six months of the publication of the paperback book, and the book's cover included a tie-in to the movie. As the release date for the movie approached, copies of the paperback were sent out to waiters, cab drivers, and other ordinary people to build word of mouth. Finally, the movie was given a summer release date to capitalize on the beach and swimming season.

The *Jaws* campaign was designed to get people to the movie and talk about it. If the talk had been negative, all the advertising in the world couldn't have saved the movie. But with everyone talking up the movie, *Jaws* took off.[44] The success of *Jaws* started a tradition of larger-than-life summer movies that continued with the *Star Wars* trilogies, the *Indiana Jones* series, Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight* trilogy, and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series.[45] There is an argument to be made that we have moved out of the blockbuster era and into the franchise era. That is, it's not enough for an individual movie to stand out in its own right—it needs to be part of a complex, consistent universe containing multiple movies, such as the ten (so far) *Star Wars* movies, the twenty or more Marvel Cinematic Universe movies, and the five DC Extended Universe films (with at least five more in development). These movies come with a built-in market of fans waiting to see them. Paul Bettany, the British actor who plays Vision in the *Avengers* movies, says the series is so successful because the films are made by and for fans. "[The people at Marvel] really love those characters," he said. "Their love for these stories is really infectious and you become really invested, and there's a lot of invested people beyond the financials of it all. . . . This movie is made by geeks. They love them, they feel it when they're talking about it."[46]

▼ The overwhelming success of the Marvel Universe feature films, with complex, interwoven, character-driven plots as well as all of the usual merchandising extensions, may mark a shift from the blockbuster era to that of the franchise. Shown here are Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch), Iron Man/Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.), The

Hulk/Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo), and Wong (Benedict Wong) in Avengers: *Infinity War*.



Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures/Photofest

Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens is currently the most commercially successful movie in U.S. history (see Table 8.1), but it didn't have the biggest audience.[47] That honor belongs to the Civil War epic *Gone With the Wind*, which sold more than one hundred million tickets in 1939 and countless more for multiple rereleases over a decades-long period (see Table 8.2).[48] One reason the 2015 *Force Awakens* is at the top of the box office charts is that tickets to see it cost much more than the Depression-era tickets for *Gone With the Wind*. Adjusted for inflation, GWTW ticket prices would have brought in a total of $1.62 billion, considerably more than the domestic box office receipts of *The Force Awakens*.

Home Video

VCRs started becoming an important source of movies in the 1980s, and by 1994, over 85 percent of all U.S. homes had one. However, by about 2005, DVDs and high-definition Blu-ray discs had largely displaced the VCR. As of 2006, nearly 81 percent of all households had a DVD player, whereas 79 percent had VCRs. This was a big change from 1999, when 89 percent of households had VCRs, and fewer than 7 percent had DVD players.[59] DVDs provide a higher-quality image and dramatically better sound than videocassettes, and they have popularized the letterbox (or wide-screen) format. Pixar's *Incredibles* brought in $261 million in theaters, making it one of the most successful films of 2004. When it was released on DVD, it made an additional $368 million.[60] By 2012, more people were streaming movies over the internet using services such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon than were playing DVDs or other physical media. Digital home media is now the biggest slice of the entertainment pie, accounting for $13.66 billion in sales, followed by theatrical tickets at $11.2 billion and physical media coming in a distant third at $6.83 billion.[61]

Previously, movie lovers could see a film only when it first came out or was rereleased, when it was shown in 16mm format on a college campus or in a revival house, or when it finally appeared on late-night television. With the wide range of home video options now available, people can watch movies again and again, whenever they want.

Digital Production and Projection

The revolution that started with desktop publishing—which enabled people to produce books, newspapers, and magazines on their computers and laser printers—has begun transforming the production of movies.

Computers first came to Hollywood in a big way with *Star Wars* (*Episode IV: A New Hope* for those of you geeky enough to care). Director George Lucas used a computer-controlled camera to shoot the space battle scenes. He was able to create multiple layers of images more easily because he could make the camera move exactly the same way on each shot. Lucas's *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* was the first big-budget feature to be shot entirely using high-definition video.

Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, released in 2004, was the first mainstream American movie in which all the backgrounds and sets were computer animated in an otherwise live-action movie.[62] Director Kerry Conran wrote his own software to create backgrounds using computer-generated imagery (CGI) that would meld with the live-action footage of the actors shot before a blue screen, in much the same way that computer special effects are added into movies. In this case, though, without the computer-generated backdrops, there would be nothing other than the actors. There were no "sets" to speak of. The only "real" things in the film were the actors, their costumes, and the props they were holding.

While the technology might have allowed Conran to make a movie he couldn't have otherwise, the film did not come cheap, costing a reported $70 million. But Conran saw that $70 million price tag as a bargain compared to the much more expensive action thrillers.

At the time the film came out, no one had seen anything quite like it, and veteran movie producer Jon Avnet proclaimed the process "a version of the virtual studio" and "unquestionably the wave of the future."[63] Unfortunately for the film's creators, audiences neither in the United States nor anywhere else in the world were particularly interested in the film. With a domestic gross of only about $38 million and a worldwide gross of $58 million, the film did not make back its production costs through ticket sales.[64]

▼ Table 8.1

▼ TABLE 8.1

Box Office Receipts of Top Movies (Actual Domestic Revenue)

Film	Year Released	Revenue
1. *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens*	2015	$936,662,225
2. *Avatar*	2009	$760,507,625
3. *Black Panther*	2018	$699,931,862
4. *Avengers: Infinity War*	2018	$676,835,522
5. *Titanic*	1997	$659,363,944
6. *Jurassic World*	2015	$652,270,625
7. Marvel's *The Avengers*	2012	$623,357,910
8. *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*	2017	$620,181,382
9. *Incredibles 2*	2018	$557,335,440
10. *The Dark Knight*	2008	$534,858,444

Source: "All-Time Box Office: Domestic Grosses," *Box Office Mojo,* July 2018. Available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/domestic.htm. Used with permission.

Source: "All-Time Box Office: Domestic Grosses," *Box Office Mojo,* July 2018. Available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/domestic.htm. Used with permission.

▼ Table 8.2

▼ TABLE 8.2

Box Office Receipts of Top Movies (Adjusted for Inflation)

Film	Year Released	Revenue
1. *Gone With the Wind*	1939	$1.87 billion
2. *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*	1977	$1.65 billion
3. *The Sound of Music*	1965	$1.32 billion
4. *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*	1982	$1.31 billion
5. *Titanic*	1977	$1.25 billion
6. *The Ten Commandments*	1956	$1.21 billion
7. *Jaws*	1975	$1.18 billion
8. *Doctor Zhivago*	1965	$1.15 billion
9. *The Exorcist*	1973	$1.02 billion
10. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*	1937	$1.01 billion

Source: "Domestic Grosses: Adjusted for Ticket Price Inflation," *Box Office Mojo*, July 2018. Available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/adjusted.htm. Used with permission.

Note: Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens was ranked eleventh on the inflation-adjusted list as of July 2018, coming in just behind *Snow White* (1937). At the time it was initially released, *Snow White* was the most expensive and biggest box office movie ever. But it was replaced the following year by *Gone With the Wind*.

Source: "Domestic Grosses: Adjusted for Ticket Price Inflation," *Box Office Mojo,* July 2018. Available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/adjusted.htm. Used with permission.Note: *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens* was ranked eleventh on the inflation-adjusted list as of July 2018, coming in just behind *Snow White* (1937). At the time it was initially released, *Snow White* was the most expensive and biggest box office movie ever. But it was replaced the following year by *Gone With the Wind*.

As You Like It: Movie Viewership in the Digital Era

Even in the age of streaming video, tablets, smartphones, DVD and Blu-ray players, pay-per-view cable, and home theater systems, going to the movies is something special. People go for a variety of reasons—to learn things, to escape from everyday life, to enjoy a pleasant activity, to pass the time, to avoid feeling lonely, to fit in with others, or to learn about themselves.[49] Young people who are dating may go to the movies for no other reason than to be alone in the dark away from parental supervision.

But there are other things that make going to the movies unique. Movies are typically "edgier" than what is shown on television, although cable and home video have changed this substantially. There is also the larger-than-life aspect of movies such as the Marvel, *Wonder Woman/Justice League*, and *Star Wars* series, which bring people into theaters for an overwhelming visual and sonic experience. While the giant-screen Cinerama system has died out, large-format IMAX theaters that were traditionally used for science and nature films at museums are now showing popular releases on their screens that can be several stories tall. Numerous movies are being filmed now with segments or even the entire film being shot natively in IMAX format. Action and science fiction movies can bring in more than $100 million globally from IMAX showings, in part because IMAX theaters can charge $15 a person (or more!) for tickets.[50] (Your author has a history of driving up to 180 miles each way to see movies at large-format theaters.)

Movies can also be a group experience. People watching the *Insidious* horror movies at home may not have the overwhelming sense of dread that comes from being in a theater full of terrified people.

According to movie scholar Garth Jowett,

> Teenagers and young adults will probably always want to escape the confines of the home, and others will more than likely continue to be motivated to seek out an experience which allows intense individual involvement with little risk within an appealing social context.[51]

As noted elsewhere in this chapter, movie theater attendance has stayed relatively stable over the last several years, averaging between 1.24 and 1.4 billion tickets sold per year. The size of the box office varies from year to year, but is trending slightly upward, due primarily to increased ticket prices. The box office hit its peak in 2016 with a record $11.4 billion. The box office had a 2 percent decline in 2017, dropping to $11.1 billion. And perhaps somewhat worrying for the movie industry, the number of tickets sold was down 6 percent. But the increase in ticket prices and the growing popularity of premium large-format theaters have helped keep the box office up. Although they only made up 3 percent of the screens in 2017, the number of premium large-format screens is growing rapidly, going from 763 in North America in 2014 to 1,115 in 2017. These theaters can typically charge more for tickets and often show movies in their pricier 3-D format.[52]

According to a study by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA—the same people who produce movie content ratings), three-fourths of Americans went to the movies at least once in 2017.[53]

But movies are no longer exclusively, or even primarily, a theatrical experience. As of 2017, 35 percent of American entertainment spending was on theatrical entertainment, 22 percent was on physical media home entertainment (such as DVDs and Blu-ray discs), and 43 percent was for digital home entertainment (streaming services and downloads).[54] And it's really important to remember that it isn't an either/or situation for movie viewing. A study by the MPAA found that three-quarters of frequent moviegoers own at least four "key technology products, including tablets, smartphones, laptops, and gaming consoles."[55] The same study found that mobile device users also watched more paid and free movies at home. And the MPAA study showed that frequent moviegoers were also more likely than the general population to own

computers, Blu-ray or DVD players, smartphones, tablets, video game systems, and video-streaming devices.

IMAX CEO Richard Gelfond, speaking with Deadline, said he and his business partner have worked hard since 1994 to grow IMAX from being a source of nature and science documentaries into a spectacular format for blockbuster "fanboy" movies. They have been so successful with their large-format cameras and theaters that top directors like Christopher Nolan (*Dunkirk*, the *Dark Knight* trilogy), the Russo brothers (*Captain America: Civil War, Avengers: Infinity War*), and J. J. Abrams (*Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens*) shoot substantial portions of their films in the IMAX format.

When directors shoot their film in IMAX, they get exclusive access to premium theaters. "So one of IMAX's powers is because we can help deliver a large number of screens for a particular filmmaker, that encourages the filmmaker to make the film with special DNA—IMAX DNA. So whether it's Christopher Nolan using the camera or Sam Mendes shooting to our aspect ratio, the fact that they know they're going to get close to 1,000 theaters in the world enables them to do special things."[56] Nolan shot his World War II story *Dunkirk* almost entirely in the IMAX format. (The only parts not shot in IMAX were some boat interiors where the large IMAX cameras wouldn't fit.) *Captain America: Civil War* had the big airport battle sequence shot entirely in IMAX format.[57]

Gelfond told *USA Today* that the blockbuster movies will tend to draw audiences in to see movies in theaters, while smaller movies will appeal to people viewing at home or on the go: "When you have blockbuster movies, people are still going to want to go to a theatre and see them. When you have more independent movies, or more movies that rely [more] on plot than on special effects, I think people will see them on devices."[58]

HOW many times did you go see a movie in a theater over the last twelve months? Were any of them at a large-format (i.e., IMAX) theater?

HOW did you decide to see a movie at the theater?

DO you deliberately wait to see certain movies at home? What kind of movies are they?

DO you ever watch movies on a mobile device? Why or why not?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

SECRET 3 ▸ The surprise hit *300*, based on a graphic novel, would likely never have been made if not for the budget economies of digital production. The movie, which features an over-the-top re-creation of the Battle of Thermopylae with all-digital sets and backgrounds, cost only $65 million to produce, cheap compared to the sword-and-sandal epic *Troy*, which cost $175 million, and *Gladiator*, which cost $103 million. With that low cost of production, *300* was able to earn back its basic budget the first weekend of release, and it eventually earned more than $210 million domestically and $456 million worldwide.[65] What made the film so cheap? First, it was shot in Canada, where production and labor costs are lower. Second, it was shot completely on high-definition video on a blank soundstage using the technology pioneered in *Sky Captain*. With the success of *300*, we see avant-garde techniques becoming mainstream, providing yet another instance of Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center.[66]

Star Wars creator George Lucas wrote in 1999 that he believed that film and projectors would soon be replaced by digital computer projection. Aside from questions about the quality of the images, digital projectors give a better 3-D image than do conventional

projectors, and they drastically lower the cost of distributing prints to theaters.[67] The initial conversion over to digital projection was seen as risky and expensive, costing between $20,000 and $100,000 per screen, but by 2017, virtually every theater in the United States was projecting digitally.[68]

▼ Retired Australian projectionist Brian Davis loaned his personal projector to a Melbourne-area theater wanting to show Quentin Tarantino's film *The Hateful Eight* in the 70mm film format. The format was popular for major movies in the 1950s and '60s.



Simon Odwyer/Fairfax Syndication

Despite the efforts of the studios to kill off film, some directors still want to work with it. Cult director Quentin Tarantino shot his neo-western *The Hateful Eight* in the old film format Ultra Panavision 70mm, a format that saw limited use in the 1950s and 1960s. The film has a much wider aspect ratio than conventional film or digital projection, and it creates a dramatic image when projected on a big screen.[69] Although *Hateful Eight* showed in most theaters using standard digital projection, it was shown in 70mm on ninety-six screens in the United States and four in Canada at a cost of about $80,000 per theater. Nolan's *Interstellar* showed at eleven theaters in the same format, which is not to be confused with the somewhat different 70mm IMAX film format.[70] Aside from the issue of projecting movies using film, many more movies are shot using film. The video game movie *Ready Player One*, directed by Steven Spielberg, had the "real world" portions of the movie shot on film and the virtual reality portions shot on video to make the two separate worlds stand out from each other. It also played in twenty-two theaters in the 70mm film format.[71]

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Are practical effects "more real" than digital effects?

In the 2015 summer movie hit *Mad Max: Fury Road*, there's no doubt who the coolest character is. Tom Hardy's Mad Max is stoic and strong, and Charlize Theron's one-armed Imperator Furiosa is clearly the star of the film; but when the audience walks out of the theater, it's Australian musician iOTA's Doof Warrior that everyone is talking about. He is, as MTV's Alex Zalben puts it, "a blind mutant wearing a red onesie, riding a truck made out of amps and speakers who wields a flame-throwing guitar and never stops playing rock music."[72]

The images and the sound are all unforgettable, and one of the main reasons it all feels so real is because it is. iOTA really is strapped to the front of a truck covered with speakers while playing a double-necked guitar that shoots out real-life flames. All the while, the music he's playing is coming out of giant speakers that would do a Grateful Dead concert proud.

Production designer Colin Gibson started with an eight-wheel-drive rocket-launcher truck, equipped with tiger drummers with giant drums in the back and Doof Warrior on the front. Director George Miller is famous for wanting the props in his movies to actually work, so Gibson had to make the whole rig operate at speed. iOTA had a month to learn how to play on it, shooting out flames and bungee jumping off it while blind.

Gibson prides himself in making the physics of his scenes real. He wants to make his effects "believable, and logical," so that the viewers feel they are really there in the movie. Over the several years, directors, critics, and even fans have complained about how "fake" digital special effects look. This is sometimes based on the effects being poorly done, but more often this is because these effects make impossible things happen—superheroes fly, and cities (even entire planets) collapse into themselves. The so-called real special effects are known in the trade as practical effects—things that are done with sets, props, and stunt people.[73]

Of course, nothing in a giant summer special effects–driven postapocalyptic movie is going to be real.

While Miller likes to point to all the vehicles he sent out on a desert chase in *Mad Max: Fury Road*, there were still about 2,000 visual effects shots out of a total of 2,400 shots in the entire film. So where's the truth here? The truth is more complicated than CGI is fake and practical is real.[74] Digital effects are often used to give us things that couldn't exist in real life, so our brains apply a reality filter to them and say they look fake. Practical effects tend to be used for things that can exist in the real world, so they look more "real." One of the reasons that *Mad Max* looked so real was that the trucks and stuntmen were physically there; the reason it looked so great was that giant dust clouds and explosions could be brought in digitally.[75] Visual effects supervisor Andrew Jackson said that it was always worthwhile to shoot scenes with actual vehicles, just to keep it grounded:

> You shoot the layout and vehicles and gradually everything might get replaced except the camera and the positions of where things were. You may end up with nothing left of what was actually filmed, but the shot still inherits something real from the plate you shot originally.[76]

Oscar-nominated visual effects artist Andrew Whitehurst writes that the real problem isn't with CGI; it's with badly done CGI: "No one complains about the mountain of a well-planned and well-executed CGI, because no one's attention was drawn to the fact that it was CGI in the first place. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the studios' publicists are now frequently keen to emphasize how much of a film was shot 'for real,' and play down the use of CGI on a production. A cursory glance through the credits of the film will tell you how true those claims are."[77]

Watch how the visual effects were put together from Mad Max: Fury Road: http://ralphehanson.tumblr.com/post/157862052923/mad-max-liamw-special-effects.

WHO is the source?

Who is Colin Gibson? What does he do?

HOW does Hollywood do special effects?

What is the difference between practical and digital effects? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

WHAT makes the special effects from Mad Max: Fury Road stand out?

Why are the special effects in Mad Max so effective? What makes them look "real"?

WHAT do you and your classmates think about special effects?

Do the techniques used to create fantastic action sequences matter to you? Do you think filmmakers try to make too big of a deal out of whether effects are practical or digital? Why or why not? What is your favorite special effects sequence from a movie?

What Makes a Movie Profitable?

Although a blockbuster movie can be enormously profitable, a relatively low percentage (20–30 percent) of movies actually make money. Movies can be financial failures even if they make $200 million and can be successful even if they make only $2 million—it all depends on how much the movie cost to produce and promote.[78] The best-known way to make money in the movies is to produce a big-budget blockbuster with big stars and a big-name director, have a giant domestic and international box office, sell lots of licensed products, sell millions of DVDs, and generally turn the movie into a Fortune 500 corporation. Sometimes this process even produces a pretty good film.

Let's look back at the movie *Black Panther* that we started this chapter with. It had a reported production budget of $200 million.[79] It had been given a larger-than-usual budget for a Marvel nonsequel film, such as *Doctor Strange* or *Ant-Man*, despite there being concerns about the sale of *Black Panther* toys.[80] But it brought in $659 million domestically and $1.34 billion globally. When you spend that much money making a movie, it has to be a success. Of course, with talent such as up-and-coming writer/director Ryan Coogler and some of the top black actors in the world, it was bound to be a success. Sometimes the international box office can help redeem a domestic stinker. That was the case with actor Tom Cruise's remake of *The Mummy.* Cruise has a reputation for reliable box office, but *Mummy* did not live up to it. The movie cost an estimated $195 million to produce and had a disastrous $31 million opening weekend. Over the course of its theatrical run, it brought in only $80 million domestically. But the additional $329 million internationally kept the movie from being a total disaster.[81]

The alternative approach is to make a movie with a tiny-to-small budget that has a clear target audience, have a modest box office, and make a great return on investment. A good example of this is 2014's *The Fault in Our Stars*. The movie started with a built-in audience of fans of the best-selling young adult novel that tells the story of two teens who fall in love while suffering from cancer. The movie was filmed for $12 million and had huge social media buzz from its target audience of teen and twentysomething women. The film had a spectacular opening, earning $48.2 million over its first weekend, and it went on to earn more than $124 million in the United States, and $182 million internationally. The movie was not one of the top-ten grossing movies of 2014, but it was one of the most profitable, earning more than ten times its cost of production.[82]

Questioning the Media

Why do you go to the movies? Do you feel that the experience of going to the movies is worth the cost? Why or why not?

On a smaller scale was the faith-based *I Can Only Imagine*, which tells the true story of successful Christian singer Bart Millard, the lead singer of MercyMe, who writes a hit song about his reconciliation with his abusive father. Produced for a budget of only $7 million, it had a $17 million opening weekend. While that would be disastrous for a bigger-budget movie, this was fantastic for such a low-budget film. But even more impressively, *I Can Only Imagine* held onto that audience with minimal fall-off for several weeks, likely indicating that it was drawing a general movie audience interested in a compelling biopic, not just those looking for a Christian-themed film. It finished its run with a total domestic box office of $82 million, more than ten times its production budget.[83] (For lists of top movies, by revenue, refer back to Tables 8.1 and 8.2.)

The problem for studio executives, of course, is figuring out in advance which movies can support a large budget and which ones can't. It's easy to figure out the big-budget movies that are likely to be blockbusters (well, maybe, at least those that ought to be blockbusters, if they are done right). But why do little movies like Jordan Peele's *Get Out* or M. Night Shyamalan's *Split* break out to become hits?

According to *USA Today* movie critic Susan Wloszczyna, these movies, and others like them, are ones that "grab the people who actually part with money to see movies."[84] The basics are pretty straightforward: Make an interesting film that doesn't fit a big-budget mold, keep its costs under control, and be savvy about how you promote it. If it does well, the upside is almost unlimited. If you miss, the movie is still likely to make back its cost through video, cable, and broadcast rights.

Questioning the Media

If you wanted to be a successful movie producer in Hollywood, what kind of movies would you make? How much influence do budget and promotion have on a movie's success? Why do some big-budget movies fail and some micro-budget movies make it big?

Take, for example, two movies from legendary director Steven Spielberg—both were profitable, but quite different from each other. *The Post*, which tells the story of the *Washington Post*'s involvement in the Pentagon Papers case, took a prominent story from journalism history, had a pair of top stars with Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks, and had a modest budget of $50 million. It brought in $81 million domestically and another $92 million internationally. The serious, historical movie was never going to be a big hit, but with an A-list director, a good story and cast, and a modest budget, it was clearly a success. In the spring of 2018, Spielberg released another movie—*Ready Player One*. The virtual reality-themed movie was based on a popular novel, had a flashy and exciting look, and had a respectable, but not excessive, budget of an estimated $150 million. While it was not a huge hit domestically, bringing in $135 million as of this writing, its international box office topped $440 million. Not a hit for the record books, but still a solid success. Two movies from one director over a four-month period—both were successful, at very different levels.[85]

Movies and Society

The possible negative effects of movies have long been a source of concern. Although movies are attended by people of all ages, they appeal most strongly to adolescents and young adults, who are perceived as particularly vulnerable to media influences. But as film critic Glenn Kenny points out,

> Since film is by and large a popular (and terribly expensive) art, the vast majority of moviemakers want to give the audience the pictures they think the audience wants to see, or the pictures that preview cards and focus groups tell moviemakers the audience wants to see. This kind of give-and-take makes it difficult to tell the dancer from the dance, as it were; add to that the fact that certain movies affect the way we look at other movies, and the puzzle of how we're changed by them becomes more complex.[86]

How Much Influence Do Movies Have?

The debate over how movies affect people is contentious, even today. Moviemakers claim that they don't shape society; they just reflect it. But this ignores the fact that movies are a central part of society, and even mirrors have effects. Movie historian Gerald Mast notes that "movies have . . . been an immensely powerful social and cultural force. . . . They have produced social changes—in ways of dress, patterns of speech, methods of courting. And they have mirrored social changes—in fashion, sexual mores, political principles."[87]

A well-known example of the purported effects of the movies comes from the 1934 Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert movie *It Happened One Night*. Counter to the standard of dress for men at the time, Gable's character took off his shirt and exposed a bare chest; he wore no undershirt. After the movie was released, sales of undershirts reportedly plummeted because of Gable's example,[88] though whether this fall-off ever really happened is a matter of some debate.[89]

Research Results.

As movies grew in popularity in the 1920s, people became concerned about their effects on viewers, especially young people. The Payne Fund, a private foundation, sponsored a series of thirteen studies, several of which analyzed the content of movies, who was going to the movies, and what, if any, effects the movies were having on the audiences. The researchers found that a small number of basic themes appeared in movies over and over again: crime, sex, love, mystery, war, children, history, travel, comedy, and social propaganda. More than three-fourths of all movies dealt with crime, sex, or love.

A second major finding was that people could remember a surprising amount of what they had seen in movies, even six months after seeing them. Why such a high level of recall? Perhaps it was because movies were novel at the time, but another explanation was that movies gave people something to talk about, thus stimulating recall.

Some critics had suggested that movies might be responsible for moral decay, and one of the studies looked at whether the morals portrayed in movies were at odds with those of the viewing public. Not surprisingly, the moral standards of characters in movies tended to be lower than those of viewers. After all, people who behave differently from us are the most interesting to watch.

SECRET 5 ▸ Herbert Blumer, a noted social psychologist, conducted a major study that examined the diaries of young people who recorded how they thought they had been influenced by movies. He found that participants reported imitating the behaviors they saw in movies and copying the actions of their favorite stars in their games and play. Young people reported that they saw movies as a source of ideas about action, romance, and standards of beauty. In essence, they were using the movies to learn how to behave as an

adult.[90] In short, Blumer was looking at how social interaction shaped young people's reaction to the movies, thus demonstrating Secret 5—All media are social.

Hooray for Bollywood: India's Movie Industry.

The biggest source of movies in the world is not California or even the United States as a whole. That honor belongs to Bollywood—the filmmakers of India, especially the city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay). Although Bollywood films are popular worldwide, they are not seen frequently in the United States. But 2009's Oscar winner for best picture may help change that. *Slumdog Millionaire*, a British movie set in India that makes use of a lot of the stylistic conventions of Bollywood, won eight Oscars and made more than $140 million in the United States.[91]

Each year, Bollywood produces more than one thousand films that are distributed throughout Africa, China, and the rest of Asia. A 2002 *BBC News* online poll found that the world's most popular movie star at that time was not Harrison Ford or Julia Roberts; it was Indian actor Amitabh Bachchan, who had starred in more than one hundred Bollywood movies.[92] More recently, Bachchan has been replaced as the world's biggest movie star by another Bollywood actor—Shah Rukh Khan, who in 2014 was making more than Tom Cruise. He has made more than eighty films, owns his own production company, and—because he's a movie star from India—owns his own cricket team, the Kolkata Knight Riders.[93]

Typical of India's films are the masala, or spice, movies. They feature several musical numbers, a strong male hero, a coy heroine, and an obvious villain.[94] The movies have as many as ten separate story lines—a contrast to American movies, which typically tell one or two stories.

One reason for the musical numbers in Indian films is that they help break through language barriers. India alone has more than twenty-five languages. Anupam Sharma, who works in the Indian movie industry, says that Bollywood movies touch people throughout the world: "Because of the distances and different dialects in India, music is the universal language."[95] When it comes to romance and sex, Bollywood films tend to be far more conservative than American films. "India is still clinging on to its social values, which explains Bollywood's success everywhere but in America," said Priya Joshi, an Indian cinema scholar. "Bollywood films don't have any kissing in them or tend not to. Warner Bros. used to make movies like this in the past. . . . If it's ready to return to its roots, then it's ready for Bollywood."[96] Movie critic Roger Ebert wrote that American audiences could enjoy these films:

> It is like nothing [Americans] have seen before, with its startling landscapes, architecture and locations, its exuberant colors, its sudden and joyous musical

numbers right in the middle of dramatic scenes, and its melodramatic acting (teeth gnash, tears well, lips tremble, bosoms heave, fists clench).[97]

Bollywood is increasingly coming into competition in India with American imports that are being dubbed into multiple Indian languages, including Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu. Indians, like Americans, are also increasingly doing their movie watching on Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hotstar—an Indian streaming service.

Diversity in the Movies

#OscarsSoWhite. The 2016 Academy Awards ceremony was as notable for who wasn't there as for who was. Pull out a photo of all the nominees for an acting award, and you'll immediately notice something. All of the nominees are white. Not just all the winners, but all of the nominees. And 2016 wasn't a fluke. That was also the case in 2015. It's not as though there weren't any great performances by nonwhite actors. Idris Elba got rave reviews for starring in *Beasts of No Nation*, Michael B. Jordan was well regarded for playing the lead in the boxing movie *Creed*, and the entire cast of the NWA rap biopic *Straight Outta Compton* got good reviews—not to mention a really good box office.[100]

Of course, both *Creed* and *Straight Outta Compton* did get Oscar nominations—to white actor Sylvester Stallone for *Creed* and to the white screenwriters of *Straight Outta Compton*.[101]

The lack of recognition for nonwhite actors led attorney April Reign to establish the social media hashtag #OscarsSoWhite to point out the lack of diversity, and several movie figures stayed away from the ceremony, including filmmakers Spike Lee and Michael Moore, along with actors Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith.[102]

Has Hollywood gotten better since the 2016 Oscars? Depends on how you try to measure things. Ryan Coogler didn't get an Oscar nod for *Creed*, but he did get the chance to write and direct *Black Panther* for Marvel, which as of this writing in 2018 had the third-largest domestic box office of all time. Actor Michael B. Jordan didn't get a nomination for *Creed*, but he got the role of *Panther* villain Erik Killmonger.[103] Clearly the success of *Black Panther*, as well as 2017 Best Picture–winning *Moonlight*, and the critical and commercial success of Jordan Peele's horror/comedy *Get Out* would seem to say that things are getting better for people of color both in front of and behind the camera.

But the success of several black-themed movies is not a long-term solution to the problem of diversity, says film professor Todd Boyd. He says that management in Hollywood needs to be more diverse if filmmaking is going to get more diverse in the long term. "It's more important that there are people in positions of power throughout the industry who reflect diversity—in executive suites, in agencies—and when you see that, I think we can talk about long-lasting change."[104] While Boyd says that *Panther* was certainly a positive development, its not a major change. "I ultimately see it as exploiting a profitable niche. To me, there is real change afoot when diverse actors are cast in roles that are not inherently diverse."[105]

▼ The web comic *Dumbing of Age* tells the story of a group of students at a Midwest college. In this strip, the characters are discussing movies in a women's studies class.



David Willis

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Does It Look As If Women Have Major Film Roles?



Universal Studios/Photofest

Warner Bros./Photofest

There are lots of movies that feature great relationships between men. There are a number of movies with interesting roles for women. But how many movies out there feature multiple major female characters that interact with each other? That's the question the Bechdel Test for Women in Film tries to answer.

The Bechdel Test, named after cartoonist and graphic novel artist Alison Bechdel, attempts to test whether women have a meaningful presence in a movie.[98] It does so by asking three questions:

1. Are there two or more women who have names in the movie?
2. Do they talk to each other?
3. Do they talk to each other about something other than a man?

Not surprisingly, male-centric movies such as *The Revenant, 42*, and *Spectre* don't pass. Movies focusing on the activities of multiple women, such as *Bridesmaids, Trainwreck*, and the action-oriented *Hunger Games* series, clearly do pass. But as media critic Anita Sarkeesian points out, some not-so-obvious fails include

- The original *Shrek*
- *The Big Lebowski*
- *Slumdog Millionaire*
- And even *The Princess Bride*

Remember, the Bechdel Test doesn't judge the quality of the movie or whether it treats women with respect. It only requires that the movie have two or more women who talk to each other about something other than a man.

Oddly enough, even in the most female-centric movies—the Disney princess films—a majority of the

dialog goes to male characters. While female characters dominate the dialog in classic Disney princess films like the original animated Cinderella and *Sleeping Beauty*, the princess movies from the 1980s and 1990s are a different story. Male characters have 68 percent of the dialog in *The Little Mermaid*, 71 percent in *Beauty and the Beast*, and 76 percent in *Pocahontas*. (Don't even think about Aladdin, where 90 percent of the lines go to male characters.)[99]

WHO is the source?

What is the Bechdel Test? By whom was it developed?

WHAT are they saying?

What is the goal of the Bechdel Test? What does it tell us? What doesn't it tell us?

WHAT evidence is there?

Watch a recently released movie and take notes on the Bechdel questions. Which of the questions does your movie pass? What are some examples of why the movie does or does not pass the Bechdel Test?

WHAT do you and your classmates think?

Were you surprised by how your analysis turned out? Does thinking about the Bechdel Test change how you view movies? Does the Bechdel Test address an issue we should be concerned about? Why or why not? Does the lack of female dialog in the Disney princess movies surprise you?

The problem is clearly not an unwillingness of audiences to go to movies starring people other than white males. *New York Times* critic at large Wesley Morris notes that audience members are more than happy to pay "to see women, films with mostly black actors and racially diverse casts."[106] He points to the success of *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens* (young woman and black man as leads), *Furious 7* (featuring a multiethnic cast), the *Pitch Perfect* series, the *Hunger Games* movies, and *Straight Outta Compton*.

Todd VanDerWerff, writing for *Vox*, notes that the problem isn't just casting people other than white men: "It's about acknowledging that white men don't have a lock on good stories, and letting others' stories be told as well as possible."[107]

Whitewashing.

The problem isn't just with Hollywood not creating parts for nonwhite performers; it extends to casting white actors in parts intended for people of color—a process known as whitewashing. A prime example of whitewashing was the remake of the Japanese anime cyberpunk classic *Ghost in the Shell* as a live-action movie, staring the white actress Scarlett Johansson as Major Motoko Kusanagi. Johansson's character is a cybernetic organism holding the brain of a dead female Japanese agent. Fans of the manga and the original animated film argued that the film should have had a Japanese actress. Whether it was backlash or just because the movie was not particularly good, *Ghost in the Shell* only brought in $43.8 million domestically with a $110 million production budget.[108] In the Marvel Studios film *Doctor Strange*, a character who was a Tibetan monk in the comic was remade into a Celtic mystic played by Tilda Swinton. While Marvel points out that there

are a variety of race and gender swaps in its movies, Asian American actor George Takei was not impressed. "It's all too plainly outlandish," he told the *New York Times*. "It's getting to the point where it's almost laughable. . . . Hollywood has been casting white actors in Asian roles for decades now, and we can't keep pretending there isn't something deeper at work here."[109] Interestingly enough, it appears that the whitewashing of the *Doctor Strange* character was deliberately done to remove a Tibetan character from the movie so that the film would not offend the Chinese government. The Chinese government has occupied Tibet since 1951, and Disney (which owns Marvel) has been careful in recent years to not endanger its access to the Chinese box office.[110]

▼ The movie *Ghost in the Shell*, based on a popular Japanese manga (or comic book) featuring the Japanese character Major Motoko Kusanagi, was criticized for whitewashing for hiring Scarlett Johansson, a white American actress, for the part.



Paramount Pictures/Photofest

In an interesting counterexample, white actor Ed Skrein turned down the offer of playing Major Ben Daimio in an upcoming *Hellboy* reboot. Skrein writes that at the time he accepted the role, he was unaware that his character was of mixed Asian heritage. He therefore stepped down from the role so an Asian actor could be cast in the part. Korean American actor Daniel Dae Kim, known best for long-term parts in the TV series *Lost* and *Hawaii Five-0*, was cast instead. Kim praised Skrein for "championing the notion that Asian characters should be played by Asian or Asian American actors."[111]

The Production Code: Protecting the Movies From Censorship

Movies are somewhat different from other media in that their producers have always been conscious of the need for limits on what they can portray. In 1909, theater owners formed the New York Board of Censorship (now the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures) to establish a national standard for movies. The idea was that the board would ban offensive films, with the implication that approved films were suitable to be shown. Ironically, the board was formed primarily to protect the theater owners from trouble rather than to protect their audiences from offensive films.[112] What was considered objectionable content in movies of this era? Prostitution, childbirth, and masturbation were all decried in the 1920s, as was drug use.[113] One critic argued that there was no question that censorship was necessary. The only question was whether the censors should be controlled by the industry or by the government.[114]

Hollywood and Morality.

One of the factors prompting censorship efforts was that the behavior of stars off screen was considered as immoral as some of the movies themselves. When Mary Pickford, a silent-movie star who made a specialty of heroines with ringlets, such as Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, quietly divorced her husband to marry her costar Douglas Fairbanks, her behavior became the talk of the nation. Actor Fatty Arbuckle became entangled in scandal after it appeared that he had bribed a district attorney to cover up the presence of a dozen "party girls" at one of his parties. He was later accused of murdering one of his guests—a young aspiring actress—at another party. Although he was eventually acquitted after three trials, the public never fully forgave him, and he didn't appear on screen for over a decade.[115] A 1922 pamphlet charged that Hollywood was a mass of "wild orgies," "dope parties," "kept men," and "kept women."[116]

The Birth of the Production Code.

The motion picture industry began formalizing its morality rules with "The Don'ts and Be Carefuls," a set of guidelines passed in 1927. The impetus for this action was a series of hearings by the Federal Trade Commission and the threat of government regulation.[117] As has generally been the case with the movie industry, censorship of the movies came from within the industry for economic reasons. Movie historian Gerald Mast described the moral dilemma in which the moviemakers found themselves:

> Because the movies have sold sex and violence from the beginning (what extremely popular and public art ever sold anything else?), and because they were created within

> and supported by a society that condoned neither the doing nor the display of sex and violence, the motion picture industry has been in the paradoxical position of trying to set limits on how much it would let itself sell.[118]

Facing a range of accusations of immorality, the studios looked for someone who could improve the industry's image. They found that person in Will H. Hays, who had been U.S. postmaster general from 1921 to 1922. Hays was named president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America and became famous for his development of the Production Code, which controlled the content of movies from the 1930s until movie ratings came into use in 1968. The purpose of the code, in its early days, was primarily to convince people that Hollywood was doing something about morality in the movies. But by 1933, Hollywood was forced to start living up to the standards it professed to support.[119]

Among other things, the code required that evil not be made to look alluring and that villains and lawbreakers not go unpunished: "Crime shall never be presented in a way that might inspire others with a desire for imitation. Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail." Also, there could be no profanity or blasphemy in the movies. The code was also fairly strict about sex, noting that scenes of passion needed to be handled carefully: "Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown." Interracial romance was also forbidden.[120] Only occasionally could anything "immoral" get past the code, and big-budget movies from major studios were more likely to get away with pushing the edge of acceptability. Rhett Butler's closing line in *Gone With the Wind*, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn," was shocking to audiences in 1939 because nothing so raw had previously been allowed by the censors.[121]

The Ratings System

By the 1960s, many movies were violating provisions of the Production Code, and some were even released without the code's approval. This forced a reevaluation of how movies were judged. Otto Preminger's 1953 movie *The Moon Is Blue* was the first major American movie to be released without code approval. Although it was controversial at the time, it would be considered mild today—imagine a movie causing a stir for including the words *virgin* and *mistress*.

In 1968, under the direction of its new president, Jack Valenti, the MPAA scrapped the increasingly outdated Production Code. The code was replaced with a system of voluntary ratings indicating the audience for which the movie was most appropriate.

How Are Movies Rated?

Movie ratings are assigned by a panel of ten to thirteen parents who live in the Los Angeles area. In 1999, the panel consisted of seven women and five men ranging in age from twenty-eight to fifty-four. It included homemakers, carpenters, a teacher, a food and beverage manager, and a manicurist. On a typical workday, the raters screen and discuss three movies. They then assign each movie one of the following ratings:

- G: General audiences. All ages admitted.
- PG: Parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.
- PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under age 13.
- R: Restricted. Persons under age 17 will not be admitted unless accompanied by a parent or adult guardian.
- NC-17: No one under age 17 will be admitted.

This system evolved from the original system of four ratings: G, M, R, and X. The rating of M (mature audiences) was soon changed to GP (general audiences, parental guidance suggested) and then to PG (parental guidance).

Certain kinds of content usually prompt particular ratings. Drug use generally requires at least a PG-13 rating. Sexually oriented nudity results in an R rating. (*Titanic* got by with a PG-13 rating because its nudity occurred when an artist sketched his model, and not in a later love scene.) Violence that is rough and persistent requires an R. A single use of the "*F* word" requires a PG-13. If that word is used more than once, or used in a sexual sense, the movie is supposed to be rated R, though the board may override that rule by a two-thirds vote. (As an example, the Julia Roberts movie *My Best Friend's Wedding* used the *F* word in a sexual sense and still received a rating of PG-13.)

Some critics charge that gay sex is more likely than heterosexual sex to receive a severe rating. It appears likely that the 1969 Oscar-winning movie *Midnight Cowboy* was given an X rating primarily because actor Jon Voight portrayed a male prostitute who serviced male clients. Others have charged that female sexuality is more likely to receive restrictive ratings than is male sexuality; interracial sex is also considered inflammatory.

Indiana Jones and PG-13.

In the mid-1980s, it became clear that the rating system had a weakness. Movies were being released with a PG rating that did not merit an R but nevertheless included content that went beyond a PG rating. A new rating was proposed, PG-13, which would inform parents of the content of the film but not set limits on who could be admitted.

The rating change was supported strongly by director Steven Spielberg, who forced the issue with *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* and *Gremlins*. Both movies were attacked for being too violent and intense for preteens, although they did not include content that would require an R rating. Spielberg observed ironically, "I've never made an R movie and hope never to make one, so I've been one of the first to appeal for a ratings change that would take the onus off the filmmaker as parent to America. That's not our role."[122] (This was back when Spielberg was making youth-oriented summer blockbuster action films rather than his more serious films dealing with World War II, the Holocaust, and terrorism.)

Traditionally, PG-13 is seen as the most desirable rating because teenagers see these movies as more sophisticated than those rated G or PG.[123] As of the spring of 2018, all ten of the top-ten box office movies had a PG-13 rating. You have to go all the way down to number thirty-eight—*The Passion of the Christ*—to find an R-rated movie, followed closely by Marvel's wisecracking and rude *Deadpool* at forty-two. All of the top-ten box office G-rated movies are either Disney or Pixar.[124]

Writer and director James Mangold broke with conventional wisdom of PG-13-rated movies with his brooding finale to the Wolverine story with the R-rated *Logan.* He says, "It wasn't because of the violence and it wasn't because of the language, but because I didn't have to write a movie, and neither did my compatriots, for 11-year-olds. If we had a rated-R movie there were gonna be no Happy Meals. There can be no action figures . . . so that suddenly you're not making a movie written for someone under 14, 15. And that changes the length of the scenes. It changes what they're talking about."[125] Mangold says the R rating gave Wolverine and Professor X time to talk about mortality in an extended scene that would never be tolerated in a PG-13 film.

The X Problem.

A second major problem with the rating system had to do with the X rating. The trouble

began when the MPAA did not trademark the X rating and therefore could not control its use. The pornography industry began labeling its unrated films XXX on the theory that if X was adult, XXX would be really adult. Because the X rating became associated with pornography, many newspapers and television stations refused to carry advertisements for X-rated movies, and many theaters pledged not to show such movies, despite the artistic merit that some movies receiving the rating might have.

In 1990, the MPAA threatened to assign an X rating to *Henry & June*, which portrayed the relationship between writer Henry Miller, his wife, and writer Anaïs Nin. The producers protested, and the MPAA responded by creating a new rating, NC-17, which supposedly was less prejudicial than X. In reality, little changed; theaters and media outlets treat the new rating as equivalent to X.

Movies that receive the dreaded NC-17 rating often must be reedited to qualify for the more commercially viable R rating. But the producers of *Midnight Cowboy*, the first and only X- or NC-17-rated movie to win an Oscar for best picture, decided against reediting the film. Producer Jerome Hellman notes that after the movie won the Oscar, the film board offered to give the film an R rating if the producers would cut one frame from the movie so that it could be advertised as a "re-cut" version. The producers refused, but the board relented and changed the movie's rating to R.[126] Some people in the movie industry have speculated that Steven Spielberg's World War II film *Saving Private Ryan* should have received an NC-17 rating for the violence in the opening scene, which depicts the D-Day invasion of France, but avoided it because of Spielberg's reputation. Filmmaker Spike Lee, speaking at the Cannes Film Festival, said,

▼ *Deadpool*, part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, proved that a superhero movie could find success with an R rating if it brought a clever script that matched the comic book's edgy style.



Deadpool/Photofest

> The MPAA has two different standards: one for violence, one for sex. I mean, I like Saving Private Ryan very much, especially the first hour. But if that's not an NC-17 film, I don't know what is. That's the way war should be depicted. But when people walk around picking up their severed arms and stuff like that, that's an R?[127]

Former MPAA president Jack Valenti defended *Private Ryan*'s R rating:

> Saving Private Ryan was a reenactment of one of the most crucial days in American history. I think every 13-year-old in the country ought to see it, even though it was rated R, to understand that the freedom you take for granted was paid for in blood.[128]

In 2007, the MPAA made some slight revisions to the rating scheme. These include a new warning to discourage parents from bringing young children to more intense R-rated movies. The ratings board now reveals the demographics of the people who do the ratings. There have also been calls to expand the acceptability of the NC-17 rating so that the R rating is not applied to movies that children shouldn't be allowed to see. But the updates to the rating system did not go so far as to create an official "hard R" rating that would ban all viewers under the age of seventeen from attending the movies.[129]

Regardless of the criticisms, parents appreciate the rating system. A 2015 survey showed that 93 percent of U.S. parents find the ratings useful in deciding what their children should be allowed to see.[130]

The Future of Movies

The movie business is facing an uncertain future. In 2005, the U.S. box office was down by 6 percent from the year before.[131] There were a lot of explanations for what caused the downturn. Conservative critics claimed that Hollywood was too liberal and was making movies that didn't appeal to the American public.[132] Others claimed that the problems were too many sequels and remakes. While sequels, remakes, and raunchy movies have continued to draw big audiences, the total size of the movie audience has stayed below the 1.58 billion ticket level it hit in 2002. (Keep in mind that audience size peaked back in the 1940s, with sales of just over 4 billion tickets a year.[133]) Since 2005, movie ticket sales have hovered in the area of 1.24–1.4 billion tickets per year.[134] Although the Hollywood box office has continued its climb in dollars earned, that has been driven more by increased ticket prices than by an increase in audience size.

Why are movie audiences declining, or staying the same? The sharp decline in movie audiences back in the 1940s and 1950s was clearly a function of the rise of television as a new medium.[135] Currently, movie audiences have many more alternatives than they did in the 1950s, due to cable/satellite television, home video, pay-per-view, and streaming sources. In its latest report on the state of the industry, the MPAA is reporting on movies' combined income from theatrical box office, physical disc sales, and digital sales.[136]

Regardless of the reasons for it, the movie industry has to react to this changing economic reality. The studios are doing so by building up franchise mega-movies major brands, using the internet to promote their products, and finding new ways to distribute small movies to a dispersed audience.

Movies as a Brand

In the 1980s, domestic box office receipts accounted for more than 50 percent of movie income for studios; by 1995, this figure had fallen below 15 percent. Today studios earn as much or more from ancillary, or secondary, markets as they do from domestic ticket sales. These are movie revenue sources other than the domestic box office. For example, home video rights may be worth twice the theatrical box office total.[137] Ancillary markets include the following:

- International distribution rights
- Pay-per-view rights
- Premium cable channel rights
- Network television
- Home video
- Book rights
- Toys and clothes
- Product placement

Summer and holiday blockbuster movies have evolved into more than just films. They've become entire cottage industries—brands, if you will—in and of themselves. Take the 2009 hit movie *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*. It was one of the highest-grossing movies for the year, producing $402 million in domestic box office; it also did $434 million in international ticket sales for a total of $836 million.[138] Electronics company LG created a limited-edition *Transformers* phone. *Transformers* director Michael Bay then directed a thirty-second television commercial for the phone, using the talents of Digital Domain, the same special-effects company that brought the robots to life in the movie. Digital Domain also did the effects for *Transformers*-themed commercials for fast-food company Burger King.[139] Prior to the movie's release, Kmart had a promotional tie-in giving away free tickets to the movie to people who bought at least $50 in menswear, as well as a promotion of *Transformers* toys, video games, and clothing. The 7-Eleven convenience store chain offered *Transformers* Slurpee cups, character straws, and movie-themed flavors.[140] On a much larger scale, the 2010 Chevy Camaro was featured in the movie as the Transformer called Bumblebee. Bumblebee served as a major character in video games developed for the Sony PlayStation 3, Microsoft Xbox 360, and Nintendo Wii. And if the toy version wasn't enough, Chevrolet built a special-edition Camaro with Bumblebee paint and a *Transformers* badge.[141]

The *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* brand example illustrates how important marketing tie-ins can be for a big-name movie and how the brand can become as important—and lucrative—as the movie itself.

Movie Promotion on the Internet

When Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez headed out into the Maryland woods in October 1997 to film *The Blair Witch Project*, they had no idea they were creating what would become one of the big hits of 1999 or that they would change how movies are promoted.

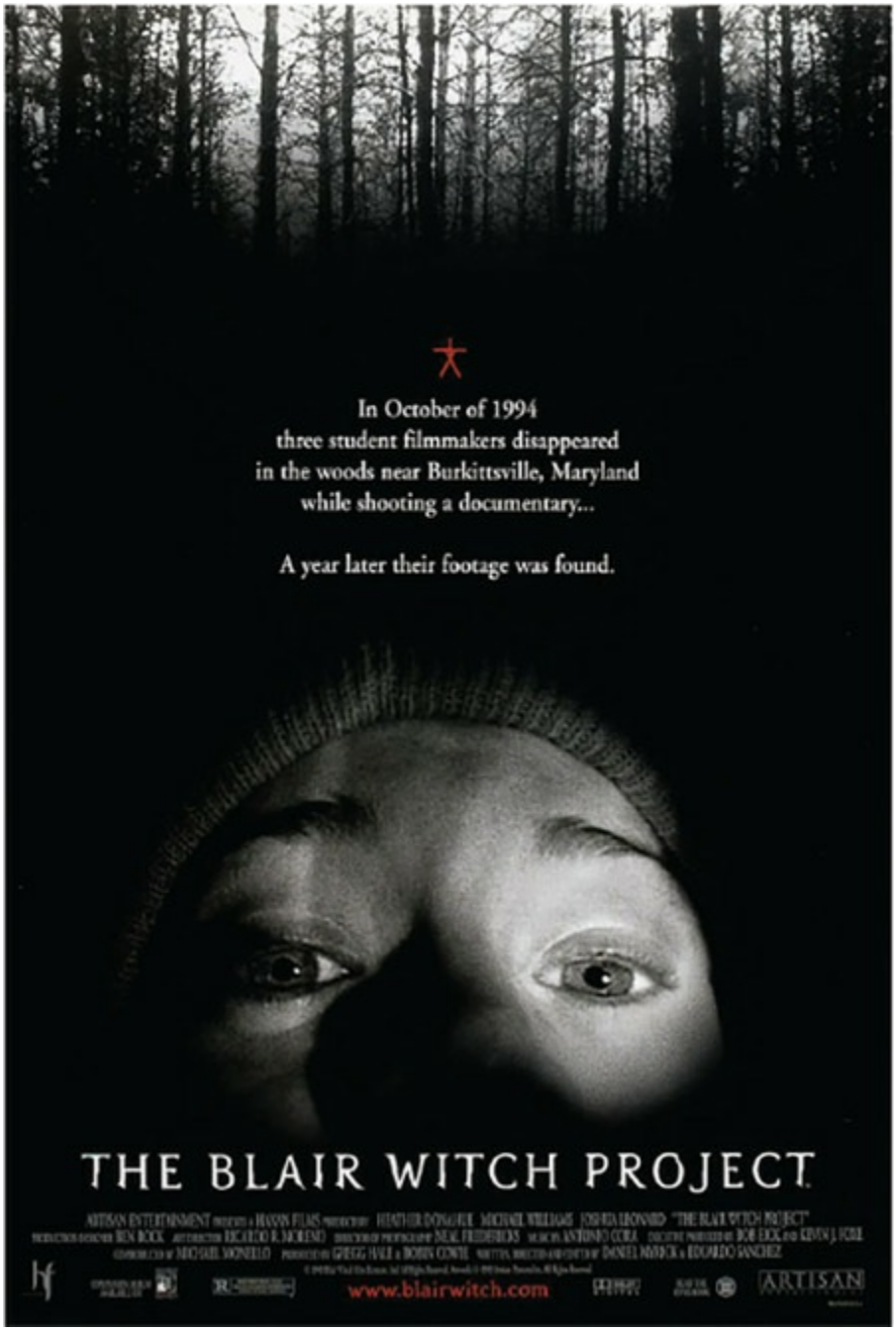
Blair Witch purports to be a documentary filmed by three students investigating the legend of a murderous witch who lived in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland. The movie did not even have a script; instead, the actors started with only a thirty-five-page plot outline. The actors were also the film crew, using an old 16mm film camera and a $500 Hi8 video camera. The total cost of filming the movie was between $35,000 and $60,000, although some critics wonder how it could have cost even that much.[142] The movie eventually grossed more than $248 million worldwide.

Questioning the Media

Movies can make a significant income through both product placement and merchandise based on the movie. Do you buy products with movie tie-ins? (Be honest—*Star Wars* and Disney toys?) Can you give an example where product placements were intrusive in the movie? Are some movies really just feature-length commercials?

The performers shot twenty hours of film and tape over an eight-day period while wandering about in the woods. The directors left notes for the actors each day, but the performers were given a lot of latitude. "We let [them] do what they wanted to do," Myrick says. "We gave them little clues as to where we wanted the scenes to go, but most of it was improvised."[143] Myrick and Sánchez, along with production company Artisan, promoted *Blair Witch* in the same low-budget way in which it had been filmed, making use of cable television and the internet rather than mainstream media. The pair created a mock documentary about the making of the movie, *The Curse of the Blair Witch*, which aired on the Syfy channel, and many viewers took this as evidence that the events recorded in the film had actually occurred. The promotional campaign capitalized on the confusion over whether the movie was fact or fiction, and many people who saw the film during the first week or two after its release thought that it might be real.[144] Ten years after the movie scared movie fans and producers alike, *Los Angeles Times* blogger Glenn Whipp argued that the biggest impact of *The Blair Witch Project* was the effectiveness of the web-based viral marketing campaign put together for the movie. The movie had good buzz coming out of showings at the Sundance and Cannes film festivals, and marketing materials made it sound like the footage for the film was real footage that had been found. Horror film director Scott Derrickson told Whipp, "The blurb on the poster said this was 'found footage,' and there was nothing in the marketing to lead you to believe it was anything but that."[145] Websites are now being used to court fans months or even years before a movie comes out. In many cases, the site is designed to maintain awareness of the movie even after the advertising is done and to build awareness once again when the movie is released on video. Independent film producer Mark Duplass (*The Puffy Chair*) says that in addition to changing how movies are promoted, *Blair Witch* changed how movies look, with "the semi-improvised nature, the hand-held digital camera work, the naturalistic acting inside a genre piece, the idea of 'We don't have a [lot] of money, so let's build a budget that's appropriate, so we can execute it correctly.'"[146]

▼ The *Blair Witch Project* is considered the first widely released movie marketed primarily through the internet.



Artisan Entertainment/The Blair Witch Project

Movies and the Long Tail

The long tail is going to have a bigger and bigger effect on the movie industry in the years to come, but 2007 marked the point at which it jumped to the forefront. Before then, unless you lived in New York or Los Angeles, you were not likely to have seen the Oscar winners for best animated short film and best live-action short. But in 2007 the films were available as digital downloads from Apple's iTunes Store for $1.99 each. This means that for less than the price of a movie ticket in an urban market, you could download and view all five nominated films in either category, even if you live in Kearney, Nebraska. What you are seeing here is nothing less than the full impact of the long tail hitting the mainstream movie industry.

When *Long Tail* author Chris Anderson tries to explain the central concepts of his book, he often points to the online DVD rental store Netflix as a prime example. In 2012, Netflix carried one hundred thousand different DVD and Blu-ray titles. It also had more than twelve thousand titles available for immediate viewing over either a computer or a streaming video box that connects the subscriber's television set to the internet. Today, Netflix is primarily a streaming service that also rents discs. Anderson found that audiences aren't just interested in a few big hits; they are interested in a deep pool of choices. The problem has always been distribution. Movie theaters are great for showing a limited number of movies to a lot of people. That's why theater owners love the summer blockbusters. But when you can draw from audiences nationwide, even movies with a limited appeal can be successful.

The popularity of Netflix has led to more competition in the streaming market, with Amazon Prime Video and Hulu being the digital natives, and Showtime and HBO jumping in to offering streaming services along with their cable products. (We'll talk more about these streaming services in Chapter 9 on television.)

Questioning the Media

What movies do you watch at home? How do you find them? Does the easy access to movies from Netflix or Amazon affect the number and types of movies you watch?

Netflix reports that about 80 percent of its business comes from licensed content and about 20 percent comes from its original shows and movies like *House of Cards* and *Stranger Things*. What's more, 42 percent of Netflix viewers watch mostly licensed content, and only 18 percent watch mostly Netflix original content.[147]

In an effort to retain subscribers, Netflix works hard to figure out, based on your viewership and movies you've reviewed, what kind of movies and TV shows you've enjoyed. It then uses that information to recommend other movies you would probably like. Anderson says that if Netflix can use consumer data to recommend films, the cost of marketing small movies to consumers is lowered to almost zero:

> Advertising and other marketing can represent more than half of the costs of the average Hollywood blockbuster, and smaller films can't play in that game. Netflix recommendations level the playing field, offering free marketing for films that can't otherwise afford it, and thus spreading demand more evenly between hits and niches.[148]

Famed film critic Roger Ebert found that on his website, www.rogerebert.com, no one posted review accounts for more than 1 percent of the page views. Instead of the blockbusters dominating the traffic, almost all of the ten-thousand-plus reviews on the site are attracting some level of attention.[149]

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Ways of recording motion on film were first developed by photographers Étienne-Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge in the 1880s. Inventor and entrepreneur Thomas Edison applied their ideas in building the first practical motion picture display system, the kinetoscope. In France, the Lumière brothers invented the first portable movie camera and the first projector that could be used to display movies to a crowd.

Early directors such as Edwin S. Porter developed movie storytelling techniques that were expanded eventually into the feature-length film by D. W. Griffith. Griffith demonstrated that the public was interested in and willing to pay for larger-than-life films with longer running times. Griffith was also one of the first directors to seek outside financing for his movies.

From the 1920s through the 1940s, the studio system dominated moviemaking in the United States. Under the studio system, all the talent—from writers to directors to actors—was under contract to the studios. The major studios, such as Paramount and Warner Bros., ran the movie industry like a factory assembly line, controlling which movies were made and how they were distributed. The studio system ended when the U.S. Supreme Court broke up the studios' monopoly in 1948.

A troubled time followed for the movie industry. The 1950s brought new competition from television and a controversial blacklist of writers, directors, and actors who were suspected of being communists. Hollywood responded by producing bigger, more spectacular movies; making almost all movies in color; and breaking up giant theaters into smaller, multitheater complexes known as multiplexes.

The movie industry is currently dominated by high-budget blockbuster movies with a large, predefined audience and marketing tie-ins. Although the initial domestic box office receipts are still important, movies often make more income from ancillary, or secondary, markets, such as foreign rights, video rights, and cable television rights. Blockbuster movies are now seen as a brand of interrelated products rather than just a movie. Yet smaller, low-budget movies often carry less risk of failure because they don't have to make nearly as much money to be profitable. Movies targeted at niche audiences can also be profitable if they have a controlled budget.

Moviemakers are increasingly relying on digital technology to make and promote movies. In addition to being used for special effects, digital technology makes it possible to shoot and edit low-budget movies using digital video rather than more expensive film. Directors can even shoot the movie on a blank soundstage and insert the sets and backgrounds digitally. Digital technology in the form of the internet is also being used to promote movies directly to consumers.

Since the 1920s, there have been concerns about the effects that movies may have on young viewers. Hollywood has attempted to protect itself from criticism, initially by limiting the content of movies through its Production Code and more recently with age-based ratings.

Theatrical movies are facing increased competition from home video. While the total box office has risen in recent years, the number of people attending the movies has declined. Moviemakers are responding with innovative new ways of promotion and by finding audiences for movies of more limited interest.

Key Terms ▶▶

kinetoscope 199
feature-length film 200
studio system 201
block bookings 201
synchronized soundtrack 201
talkie 202
House Un-American Activities Committee 203
Hollywood Ten 203
blacklist 203
multiplex 205
blockbuster era 205
computer-generated imagery (CGI) 207
practical effects 210
whitewashing 216
Production Code 217
ancillary, or secondary, markets 220

Review Questions ▸▸

1. Does the success of the movie *Black Panther* mean that Hollywood no longer needs to worry about diversity? Why or why not?
2. What is the difference in the "realism" of practical and CGI effects?
3. How did the coming of television change the nature of the movies? How has the rise of online media transformed this process?
4. Explain how blockbuster movies become more than just movies for the companies releasing them. What products are developed to go with them?
5. What are the consequences of having a movie industry that is mostly controlled by white men? How would the movie industry be different if the people running the industry looked more like the people in the audience?
6. How does having access to a wide range of both popular and obscure movies change our movie-viewing habits? Is this level of choice a good thing or a bad thing? Why?

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Deadspin, "Sinclair's Soldiers in Trump's War on Media" April 2, 2018. Retrieved from YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fHfgU8oMSo.

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Discuss the development of television from its invention to HDTV today
2. Explain how cable/satellite television, recorders such as VCRs and DVRs, and the adoption of digital television have transformed the television industry
3. Discuss the issue of racial and ethnic diversity on television
4. Identify three key reasons why viewers watch television
5. Discuss the problem of broadcast decency, using examples
6. Explain how streaming video services are changing TV in the twenty-first century

Sinclair Broadcast Group is likely one of the most important media companies in the United States you have never heard of. Although it has been a major player in local television ownership for decades, the company, until recently, was not well known outside the industry.

While the family-run group of 173 television stations in 81 different markets has properties located all across the country, Sinclair does not currently own stations in many of the major metropolitan areas, including New York City, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, or Los Angeles. Its stations are affiliated with a wide range of networks, including Fox (59 stations), ABC (41 stations), CBS (30 stations), NBC (25 stations), and the Spanish-language Univision network (9 stations).[1]

The bulk of Sinclair's stations are located in conservative areas of the country, according to the *Washington Post*'s Philip Bump. The areas covered by Sinclair's signal voted for President Donald Trump over his challenger Hillary Clinton by a 19-point margin.[2]

Sinclair was founded in 1971 by Julian Sinclair Smith, starting with a single radio station and an ultrahigh-frequency station in Baltimore. (This is not that different from how Turner Broadcasting founder [CNN/TBS/TNT] Ted Tuner got started.) Like many media owners, Sinclair has a history of cutting staff size and budgets at its stations. The company is still run by the Smith family and has a history of conservative politics.[3]

It was questions about "must run" programming segments produced by Sinclair that brought the company into the news. While many broadcast groups provide "must run" segments to their stations, they are generally station promotions. But the segments from Sinclair are generally conservative-themed commentaries that are required to run during the local news shows.

Among these are "Bottom Line With Boris," hosted by former Trump administration official Boris Epshteyn. The company produces nine segments of the program a week that feature a mix of political commentary, "talk backs" with local stations, and interviews with

members of Congress.[4] Another is hosted by former Sinclair executive Mark Hyman. In a segment about college campuses, Hyman said, "Listen up closely, snowflakes, yes, I'm talking to you, you the social justice warrior who whines for trigger warnings and safe spaces. College isn't a babysitter service."[5]

A second action has been the company's effort to buy Tribune Media's collection of 42 local television stations, including those in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City. Current Federal Communications Commission regulations limit a single station owner from reaching more than 29 percent of the national television audience and no more than two stations per market. As of July 2018, FCC chairman Ajit Pai was expressing concern about Sinclair's "lack of candor" in its application for permission to acquire the Tribune stations, although he had previously expressed support for lifting ownership limits. If Sinclair were allowed to go through with the $3.9 billion purchase of the Tribune Media stations, the company could potentially reach as much as 70 percent of the country.[6]

By far the biggest controversy the station group has faced was when the company sent out a script disparaging "fake news" to all of its stations that local news anchors were required to read on the air as though it were a local news commentary. A portion of the script reads like this:

> But we're concerned about the troubling trend of irresponsible, one sided news stories plaguing our country. The sharing of biased and false news has become all too common on social media.
>
> More alarming, some media outlets publish these same fake stories . . . stories that just aren't true, without checking acts first.
>
> Unfortunately, some members of the media use their platforms to push their own personal bias and agenda to control "exactly what people think" . . . This is extremely dangerous to a democracy.[7]

The controversy came to national attention when the blog *Deadspin* posted a video assembling local Sinclair anchors across the country all reading the same one-minute script. The video, which has been viewed more than 9 million times, attracted attention from a wide range of people. HBO talk show host and news commentator John Oliver, on his weekly show *Last Week Tonight*, played the *Deadspin* video and then said, "Yeah. Nothing says 'We value independent media' like dozens of reporters forced to repeat the same message over and over again like members of a brainwashed cult."[8]

Scott Livingston, Sinclair's senior vice president for news, defended the statements, saying, "It is ironic that we would be attacked for messages promoting our journalistic initiative for

fair and objective reporting, and for specifically asking the public to hold our newsrooms accountable."[9]

President Trump defended Sinclair with a tweet:

> The Fake News Networks, those that knowingly have a sick and biased AGENDA, are worried about the competition and quality of Sinclair Broadcast. The "Fakers" at CNN, NBC, ABC & CBS have done so much dishonest reporting that they should only be allowed to get awards for fiction![10]

Interestingly enough, many of the Sinclair stations that President Trump praised are affiliates of the "Fakers" at ABC, NBC, and CBS. In addition, many of Sinclair's stations are also CNN affiliates who share stories with the network.[11]

While a number of Sinclair anchors have privately objected to the statement and the "must runs," in part because they eat into their limited local news time, most have been reluctant to say anything publically. A local Sinclair anchor told CNN media reporter Brian Stelter, "At my station, everyone was uncomfortable doing it." The anchor requested anonymity because of fear of being fired for speaking out.[12]

One question that gets frequently raised is, if Sinclair local journalists object to the statement they were required to read, why don't they either refuse to read it or quit? According to *Los Angeles Times* reporter Matt Pearce, the anchors' contracts prevent them from doing that. The typical Sinclair contract reportedly says that anchors who quit have to pay back 40 percent of their salary to the company. They also have a noncompete clause that keeps them from being able to work in the same market.[13]

Sinclair has been involved in political controversies in the past. In 2004, following the Janet Jackson "wardrobe malfunction" at the Super Bowl halftime show, the FCC appeared ready to fine broadcast stations that aired indecent material during prime time. At the time, the ABC television network had a tradition of airing the Steven Spielberg World War II film *Saving Private Ryan* on Veterans Day. But because of fear of new FCC enforcement, one-third of the ABC affiliates refused to air the film, filled with combat violence and soldiers swearing. Among those declining to run the movie were the stations owned by Sinclair.[14]

The station group also attracted controversy when it showed portions of a strongly anti–John Kerry film on 40 or so of its stations two weeks before the 2004 presidential election between Democrat Kerry and Republican president George W. Bush.[15]

The television environment today has radically changed from the time when CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite was the most respected broadcaster in America. We've gone from

three nationwide broadcast networks to at least six, gone from no cable-only stations to hundreds, and gained multiple formats for viewing prerecorded movies and shows at home. In this chapter, we look at how this new television world came about and how it has influenced society. We start with the development of broadcast television and then cable/satellite television. We then consider who controls the television industry, how the world portrayed on television compares to the "real" world, and how television is reinventing itself in an era where people are binge-watching shows on Netflix.

Television: Broadcast and Cable/Satellite

Television has gone through massive changes since its birth in the 1930s. Initially, it provided a limited number of options that were broadcast at no cost to viewers. Viewers could watch only the programs offered by the major networks, and only at the times when those programs were being broadcast. But in the 1980s, the balance of power between audience and broadcasters began to change. Not only did VCRs allow viewers to choose when they would watch programs, but a range of broadcast, cable, and satellite channels allowed viewers a wider choice of what programs to watch. Television has in effect become two media: broadcast and cable/satellite.

▼ Philo T. Farnsworth developed the central principles of television broadcasting at age fourteen, and by the age of twenty-one, he had produced a working television transmission system.



Harris & Ewing collection at the Library of Congress

Broadcast Television

Broadcast television in the United States is based on the idea that programming should be available to all viewers and should be paid for through advertising. Although today broadcast television is just one part of our TV diet, for many years it was the only item on the menu.

The Invention of Television.

The story of Philo T. Farnsworth, the man who invented electronic television, is almost too good to be true. He was born in a log cabin, he rode a horse to school, and he developed the central concepts of television at the age of fourteen. Unlike Thomas Edison or even Samuel Morse, Farnsworth did not become a household name, yet he invented one of the most significant devices of the twentieth century.

Farnsworth was born in Utah in 1906. When he was twelve, his family settled in Idaho, and in their new house were magazines about radio and science, which fueled Farnsworth's creativity and imagination.[16] Farnsworth's heroes were Edison and Alexander Graham Bell, but he wanted to do them one better. He wanted to send out moving pictures as well as sound, and he wanted to do it all electronically, without any moving parts.

Farnsworth came up with the idea of breaking a picture into lines of light and dark that would scan across a phosphor-coated screen like words on a page. The electrons that would paint the picture on the screen would be manipulated by an electromagnetic field. According to television scholar Neil Postman, legend has it that Farnsworth's great idea came to him "while he was tilling a potato field back and forth with a horse-drawn harrow and realized that an electron beam could scan images the same way, line by line, just as you read a book."[17] By age twenty-one, Farnsworth had developed an all-electronic system for transmitting an image using radio waves. On September 7, 1927, he successfully transmitted an image of a straight line. "There you are, electronic television," he commented.[18] Farnsworth, however, was not the only person working on the concept of television. Vladimir Zworykin, a Russian immigrant with a doctorate in engineering, was trying to develop television for David Sarnoff at RCA. Although he had made progress on electronic television and had filed for a patent on it in 1923, the U.S. Patent Office eventually ruled that Farnsworth had been the first to make a working television transmitter. The ruling was based in part on testimony from Farnsworth's high school chemistry teacher, who presented drawings that Farnsworth had made when he was sixteen showing almost exactly how to build a television transmitter. RCA kept fighting Farnsworth and promoting Zworykin and Sarnoff as the inventors of television, but Farnsworth eventually prevailed. For the first time, RCA had to pay royalties to an outside inventor.[19] Just when all looked rosy for Farnsworth, World War II broke out, and for four

years, nothing was done with commercial television. Farnsworth's patents expired in 1947, right before television took off. Yet it was not missing out on the chance to cash in on his invention that Farnsworth came to regret. Farnsworth's son Kent later noted that his father was rather bitter about his invention in general:

> I suppose you could say that he felt he had created kind of a monster, a way for people to waste a lot of their lives. Throughout my childhood his reaction to television was "There's nothing on it worthwhile, and we're not going to watch it in this household, and I don't want it in your intellectual diet."[20]

The Beginning of Broadcasting.

The first significant television broadcasts using all-electronic systems occurred in 1939, when NBC started sending out television broadcasts from the New York World's Fair. But U.S. involvement in World War II halted the manufacture of television sets in 1942, and most stations went off the air. Peace came in 1945, and by 1946, RCA had television sets back on the market.

From 1948 to 1952, the licensing of new television stations was frozen to give the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and television producers time to figure out how the technology should be used and controlled. Because of the freeze, only some cities had television. The television cities saw drastic drops in attendance at movies and sporting events. Restaurant owners hated the popular variety program *Your Show of Shows*, which aired on Saturday nights, because customers rushed home to watch television instead of staying out to eat and drink.[21] During the same period, the Supreme Court issued its ruling in *United States v. Paramount Pictures* that broke the studios' control over the movie industry (see Chapter 8). Television was ready to take over the entertainment industry.

A number of shows characterized this early period of television. Milton Berle, host of the *Texaco Star Theatre*, came to be called "Mr. Television" and was known for his funny costumes and physical humor. *The Ed Sullivan Show* (originally called *Toast of the Town*) became the place to see new and innovative talent. In later years, Sullivan would feature the Beatles and Elvis Presley. The 1950s also saw a number of anthology dramas, essentially short plays or movies, with a new cast and story each week. One show that made a successful leap from radio to television was Edward R. Murrow's CBS news documentary series *Hear It Now*, which became *See It Now* on the new visual medium.

Lucy, Desi, and the End of Live Television.

No other entertainment program of the 1950s would have a longer, more lasting impact than one produced by a brash redheaded actress and her Cuban American husband.

When Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz created their groundbreaking sitcom *I Love Lucy* in 1951, they had to overcome two major obstacles. The first was persuading CBS to let Arnaz play Lucy's television husband. At that time, this was controversial because Ball was white and Arnaz Hispanic. The second challenge was that most television shows at the time were being broadcast live from New York City studios, but Lucy and Desi wanted to continue to live in California. Their solution was to film the show before a studio audience, edit the program like a movie, and ship it to New York to be broadcast. Within a year, *I Love Lucy* was the most popular show on television.

Being filmed rather than performed live meant that there were high-quality copies of *I Love Lucy* that could be shown again and again. Arnaz held the rerun rights to the show, which gave the couple the money to build their own television production company, Desilu Studios. More than fifty years after *Lucy* first went on the air, audiences are still laughing at the show.

▼ Lucille Ball and her husband, Desi Arnaz, helped create the modern situation comedy in 1951 with their show *I Love Lucy*, which was filmed rather than performed live.



CBS Photo Archive/Getty Images

The format Ball and Arnaz helped pioneer, a half-hour comedy filmed with three cameras before a live studio audience, became a mainstay of television programming. Today, the situation comedy remains one of the most popular program formats.[22]

The Arrival of Color Television.

The networks started experimenting with color television as early as 1954, but by 1959, only three shows were regularly being shown in color. (The familiar NBC peacock logo was initially created to show black-and-white viewers that they were missing programs in color.) It wasn't until 1965 that all three of the original television networks were broadcasting in color. One reason for the slow acceptance of color was the price of the television sets. The *Boston Globe* notes that in 1965 color televisions cost the equivalent of what a midline HDTV set cost in 2000 (between $2,500 and $5,000).[23] The switch to color was not completed until the early 1970s.[24]

Cable and Satellite Television

Today, cable and satellite television constitutes almost a separate medium from broadcast television, but initially cable was designed as nothing more than a delivery system for broadcast channels.

Community Antenna Television.

In the early days of television, people in remote areas or in communities sheltered by mountains frequently could not receive the new signals. Among these was Mrs. L. E. Parsons of Astoria, Oregon. Parsons wanted to have television, but the nearest station was 125 miles away. Her husband solved the problem by placing an antenna on top of a local hotel and running a cable into their apartment. Once word got out that the Parsons family had television, the hotel, local bars, and even the neighbors started asking for connections to their antenna. This early form of cable television, which simply retransmitted broadcast channels, came to be known as community antenna television (CATV).[25]

Connecting to these early cable systems was expensive; the cost ranged from $100 to $200. Although there were isolated experiments with subscription channels, for the most part cable remained a way to serve areas with poor reception, and the FCC devised restrictive rules to keep it that way. Until the 1970s, cable was primarily a way to get a good TV signal, not additional programming.[26]

Satellite Distribution and the Rebirth of Cable.

By 1975, the face of cable television was beginning to change. The FCC began loosening the rules on cable companies, and new channels were being distributed via satellite.[27]

Home Box Office (HBO) was the first service to make the leap from merely providing access to providing programming. In 1975, it requested permission from the FCC to start sending out its programming nationwide via satellite. Surprisingly, not one of the Big Three networks (NBC, CBS, and ABC) objected to the upstart service as it gained access to their viewers across the country. After all, HBO was just an office, some videotape machines, and a satellite uplink. It had no affiliates, had no stations, and could reach only people who were on cable, a small fraction of the viewing market. But the satellite system had a key advantage. Five hundred cable systems could obtain the programming as cheaply as one. They just had to put up a dish to bring in the signal.

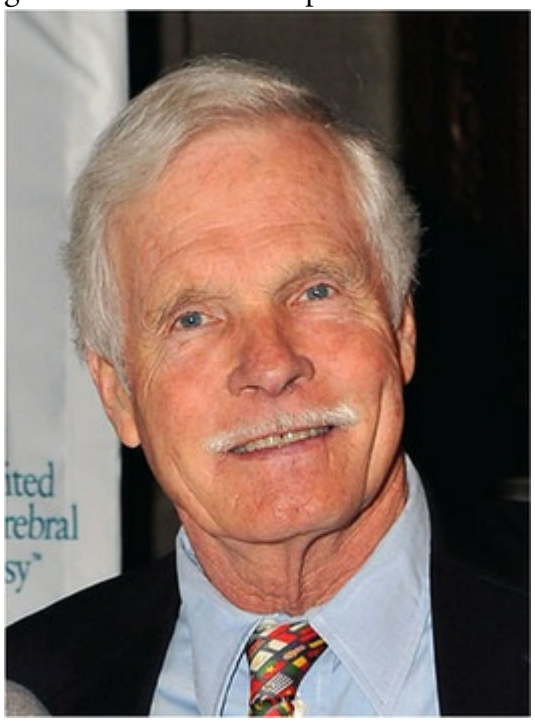
Although HBO was the first to go nationwide, no one has done more than Ted Turner to create modern cable television. After his father's suicide in 1963, the twenty-four-year-old Turner inherited a billboard company that was in financial trouble.[28] Turner was not content with running one of the nation's largest billboard companies, so in 1970, he

bought Channel 17 in Atlanta. The ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) station was in serious financial trouble, largely because it was located on a part of the broadcast band that many television sets couldn't receive and many people didn't bother to look at. Turner promptly renamed the station WTCG, which stood for Turner Communications Group.

Turner's next big step was buying the last-place Atlanta Braves baseball team and the Atlanta Hawks basketball franchise, thus guaranteeing him exclusive rights to a pair of shows (the teams' games) that would run more than two hundred episodes a year. It was also programming that would motivate Atlantans to make the effort to find Channel 17.

When RCA launched a television satellite in 1976, Turner saw his next big opportunity. He realized that he could use the satellite to send his station nationwide and provide programming to the growing number of cable systems. On December 27, 1976, WTCG became Superstation WTBS (Turner Broadcasting System). With that step, Turner became one of the first of a new breed of television entrepreneurs who were turning local stations into national powerhouses.

▼ Cable television pioneer and CNN founder Ted Turner created a media empire with global reach that attempts to fulfill the ideal of the global village.



Jude Domski/Wire Image/Getty Images

At this point, Turner made the riskiest move of his career: He created Cable News Network (CNN), the first twenty-four-hour news channel. In its early years, CNN had many technical problems and no reputation to speak of. Critics, in fact, referred to CNN as the

"Chicken Noodle Network" because it paid its employees poorly and was run amateurishly.[29] Despite the network's problems, however, viewers soon discovered that if they wanted breaking news, they could find it immediately on CNN. Unlike ABC, NBC, and CBS, CNN did not have to interrupt soap operas or sitcoms to put news on the air.

When ABC and Westinghouse tried to start a competing cable news service in 1982, Turner launched his second news network, CNN Headline News, which featured round-the-clock, half-hour newscasts. Since then, CNN has expanded to provide CNN Radio, CNN International, CNN Airport Network, and CNN en Español.

Turner took his idea of repackaging material a step further by buying up the MGM movie library and the Hanna-Barbera cartoon library, which gave him control of the *Flintstones*, the *Jetsons*, and *Scooby-Doo*. He used these pop-culture figures, along with additional sports broadcasting rights he acquired, to program WTBS, along with Turner Network Television (TNT), the Cartoon Network, and Turner Classic Movies.

In 1996, Turner Broadcasting was acquired by media giant Time Warner, and although Turner lost direct control of his networks, he did get access to the Warner Bros. library of movies and classic cartoons. When *Time* magazine's editors declared Turner their "Man of the Year" in 1991, they wrote that he had fulfilled Marshall McLuhan's ideal of the global village. CNN has not made all people brothers and sisters, but *Time* said that the network has given people a window on the world:

> In 1991, one of the most eventful years of this century, the world witnessed the dramatic and transforming impact of those events of live television by satellite. The very definition of news was rewritten—from something that has happened to something that is happening at the very moment you are hearing of it. A war involving the fiercest air bombardment in history unfolded in real time—before the cameras.[30]

Before long, numerous channels were available to cable companies via satellite, including Black Entertainment Television (BET) and the children's network Nickelodeon. In 1978, amid much ridicule, the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) was launched as a twenty-four-hour-a-day sports channel carrying such little-known sports as Australian-rules football and curling. But ESPN quickly grew into one of the most popular channels on cable.[31] During this period, nine out of ten viewers were watching prime-time programs on the networks, which were still controlled by the people who had started the first radio networks: William Paley at CBS, David Sarnoff at NBC, and Leonard Goldenson at ABC.[32] However, the 1980s saw the growth of a new kind of cable—a service that brought new channels into the household along with the original networks. Cable television viewers now have access to a wide range of programming, most of which

can be grouped into a few major categories:

- Affiliates of the Big Four broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox)
- Independent stations and smaller network affiliates
- Superstations—Local independent stations that broadcast nationwide via satellite (WTBS, WGN, etc.)
- Local-access channels—Channels offering local government programming and community-produced shows
- Cable networks—Advertiser-supported networks that may also receive small fees for each subscriber on a particular cable system (MTV, CNN, BET, etc.)
- Premium channels—Extra-cost channels that don't carry advertising (HBO, Showtime, etc.)
- Pay-per-view channels—Channels showing special events, concerts, and movies that subscribers pay for on an individual basis
- Audio services—High-quality music services[33]

Cable services offered massive competition to the broadcasters and created a new television landscape. Approximately 44 percent of all U.S. households (about fifty-two million) subscribe to cable service.[34] By way of comparison, in the United Kingdom, cable was in 15 percent of all homes by the end of 2017.[35] (Direct-broadcast satellite service is much more popular in the United Kingdom than cable, reaching roughly 41 percent of TV viewers there.) (See Figure 9.1.)

Questioning the Media

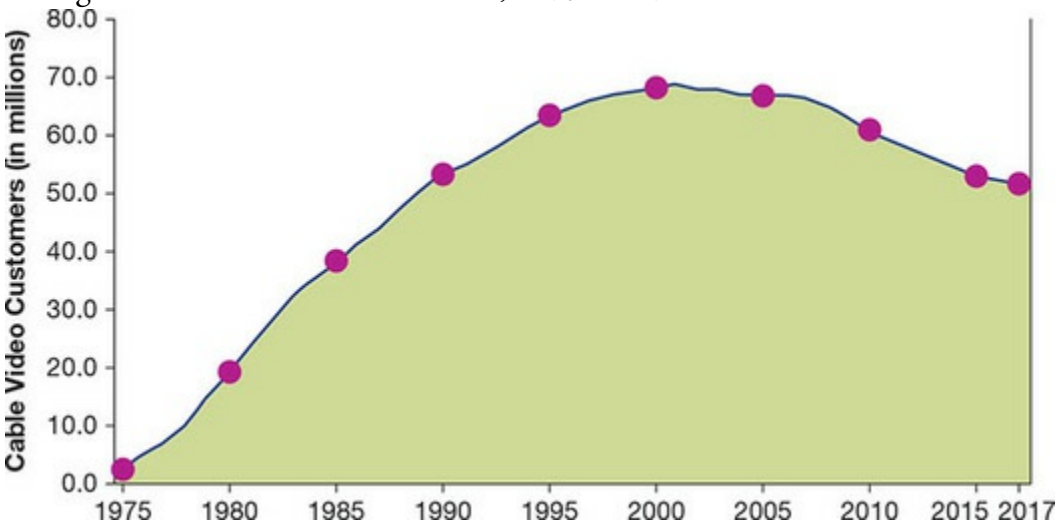
In the home where you grew up, did you have cable/satellite television or just broadcast television? If you had cable/satellite, do you know how much your bill for it was per month? If you had to give up one, which would it be, and why?

Hollywood and the VCR.

Although videotape has been used in television studios since the 1950s, it was not until the late 1970s that the videocassette recorder (VCR) became a household appliance that allowed viewers to make permanent copies of television shows. VCRs took time to catch on. Initially, there were two incompatible formats (VHS and Beta), and the machines themselves were expensive, costing $800 or more. In 1985, only two out of ten U.S. homes had VCRs, but by 1991, they could be found in seven out of ten homes.

Consumers loved the fact that they could record programs and watch them later, but movie and television producers were upset that people were recording—and keeping—programs without paying for them. They were also concerned that movies and programs would be duplicated and resold around the world. Universal and Disney sued Sony over its promotion of the VCR for recording movies, but in 1984, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that television viewers had the right to record copyrighted programs for their own personal use. Piracy of the programming was clearly illegal, but this was not the fault of the equipment manufacturers.[36]

▲ Figure 9.1 Basic Cable Customers, 1975–2017



Source: Data are from SNL Financial. © SNL Financial LC; NCTA, "Cable's Customer Base," March 2018, https://www.ncta.com/chart/cables-customer-base.

▼ Although cable television remains the largest alternative to broadcast programming in the United States, satellite delivery is much more common throughout much of the world, as is illustrated by these rooftops in Fez, Morocco.



©iStockphoto.com/Necip Yanmaz

Direct-Broadcast Satellites.

Satellite programming providers have been competing with cable since the 1980s, but their success was limited initially because of the rapid growth of cable, the large dish antennas required, and the limited number of channels consumers could receive. All this changed in the 1990s with the advent of the low-earth-orbit direct-broadcast satellite (DBS). Several DBSs were launched to deliver programming through a new kind of antenna about the size of a pizza.

While it is difficult to find accurate current estimates of the number of DBS subscribers, approximately thirty-eight million U.S. households get satellite programming from either Dish Network or Direct TV.[37] Satellite service in the United States grew rapidly from the mid-1990s until about 2007, when adoption of the new delivery system stabilized. With the rise of online-based video sources, the use of both cable and satellite programming is expected to drop.[38] In Europe, which has less of a tradition of cable television than the United States, DBS services are very popular.

DBS is now competing head-to-head with cable. A problem the satellite services face in this competition is that their subscribers still have to put up an old-fashioned antenna to get local broadcast stations. To address this drawback, in major markets DBS companies provide local stations via satellite as well.[39] Satellite providers are also starting to offer their programming as an online streaming service.[40]

Digital Television

Just as sound recording has moved to digital formats with CDs and MP3 files (see Chapter 7), so is television shifting from the analog technology of Farnsworth and Zworykin to computerized digital technology. All television broadcasting in the United States was scheduled to be digital by February 17, 2009, but in January 2009, the federal government decided that people weren't ready for the transition, despite several years of warnings that the change would be taking place. Critics of the move to digital broadcasting pointed out that many of the households that rely on broadcast signals for television have incomes under $30,000 and may have trouble affording the set-top box that converts digital broadcast signals into analog signals that old-fashioned television sets can display. To help solve this problem, the government issued coupons to help poor families buy the converters. In fact, a shortage of the coupons was among the reasons that the conversion was delayed.

SECRET 4 ▸ VCR ownership peaked in 1999, with nearly 89 percent of households owning a VCR. By the end of 2013, a survey by Gallup found that 58 percent of households still had a VCR. These were likely there to play old tapes in people's collections rather than to record new programing. VCRs were replaced predominantly by DVD or Blu-ray players, which were reported in 80 percent of all homes. While still very popular, disc players are down from 83 percent in 2005, likely because of the increased popularity of streaming content provided by companies like Netflix and Hulu.[41] VCRs are also facing competition from the new digital video recorders (DVRs), such as TiVo, that record television programs on a computer hard disk. The DVR lets a viewer jump in to start watching a recorded show fifteen minutes after it comes on the air. The viewer can then fast-forward through the commercials, and by the time the show is over, the viewer has caught up with the "live" broadcast. DVRs are seen as easier to use than VCRs but typically require a monthly subscription fee to use. As of 2017, DVRs were in 53 percent of U.S. households, up from 40 percent in 2010 and 23 percent in 2007.[42] (This gives us another example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.)

As you may have noticed from those figures, the rate of growth of DVR adoption has slowed dramatically in the last few years. Why? It's probably not that people don't want to be able to watch shows on their own schedule. Instead, people have many more options now than just prerecording shows to watch. For example, a 2015 study showed that 76 percent of U.S. households had access to a DVR or some form of video on demand (VOD), including streaming services like Netflix or an on-demand system from their cable or satellite provider.[43] In fact, in 2017 more people had Netflix subscriptions (54 percent) than had DVRs (53 percent).[44] (We'll come back to this at the end of the chapter.)

On Friday, June 12, 2009, the last of the analog television broadcast stations was shut off. That doesn't mean that everyone started using new digital sets, however. Instead, many people will continue to get their television from a digital cable or satellite box, or get a converter box. On the two days following the shutdown of analog broadcasting, the FCC received approximately four hundred thousand calls to its hotline, considerably below the

six hundred thousand to three million calls it was expecting.[45] There are two distinct digital formats. High-definition television (HDTV) is in a wide-screen format (like a theater movie) and features an ultra-clear high-resolution picture with superior sound. The other digital format is standard digital television, which makes it possible to broadcast up to six channels on the same frequency space that now carries one channel. (However, the picture is no better than that produced by existing signals.[46]) Using standard digital, a PBS station can choose to put out a single HDTV program or four digital programs at the current resolution, giving children a choice at any given time between *Arthur*, *Splash and Bubbles*, *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*, and *Dinosaur Train*.

▼ Since all television broadcasting went digital in 2009, HDTVs have become increasingly popular. Viewers need either a cable/satellite connection or a converter box if they want to keep using old-school analog sets.



Scott Olson/Getty Images

The development of HDTV began in the 1980s, and on November 1, 1998, the launch of the space shuttle *Discovery* was the first event to be covered in a nationwide broadcast using a digital television signal. The broadcast was viewed by a tiny audience of just a few hundred people in twenty cities, with forty-two stations carrying digital signals.[47] As of March 2015, approximately 81 percent of U.S. homes had at least one HDTV set, and 52 percent of U.S. homes had more than one HDTV. Overall, 79 percent of the televisions in use in the United States in 2017 were HDTVs, up from 59% in 2014 and just 11 percent in 2007.[48]

From Broadcasting to Narrowcasting: The Changing Business of Television

Television got its start with the three networks that dominated the radio industry in the 1940s: NBC, CBS, and ABC. There were some independent stations as well, such as WGN in Chicago and WOR in New York, which had grown out of major independent radio stations, but for the most part, everyone in the country was watching NBC, CBS, or ABC. This would remain the status quo until cable and VCRs exploded in popularity in the 1980s.

Networks and Affiliates

The Big Three television networks are the companies that have provided programs to local stations around the country since the start of the television industry. These affiliate stations require a license from the FCC, equipment, and a local staff. The choice of what shows to carry is up to the local station. If a station carries a particular program, the station receives a fee from the network, along with the revenue from selling local commercials during the show. The network makes its money from the national commercials that run during the program. If an individual station decides that it could make more money running a locally produced program, such as a college basketball game, or a program from an independent producer, it can do so. In that case, the station pays for the program but keeps all the advertising revenue. The only exceptions are the dozen or so stations that each network owns and operates; although they have a certain amount of independence, these stations must please their network owners.[49]

Educational Broadcasting Becomes Public Broadcasting

Noncommercial broadcasting in the United States was conceived as a way of delivering educational programming. Then Congress passed the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, which established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to provide funds for a wide range of noncommercial programs, including public service and educational programs. The noncommercial, or public, stations came to share programming through a new network, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). This nonprofit broadcast network is funded by government appropriations, private industry underwriting, and support from viewers.[50]

While PBS stations eventually became widely available, they tended to have small audiences except for their daytime children's programming, which included the groundbreaking *Sesame Street*.[51] *Sesame Street*'s creator, Joan Ganz Cooney, says that the goal of the show was to give disadvantaged inner-city children a head start on school: "We argued that it would make all the psychological difference in their success in school if [disadvantaged children] came in with the same kind of skills as a middle-class child."[52] *Sesame Street* was also designed to have a slick, fast-paced, commercial look. It even had "sponsors," such as the number 5 and the letters *Q* and *U*.

When the show premiered on November 8, 1969, it immediately grabbed a significant audience, and even now it is among the most watched of all children's shows. But was it a success at helping disadvantaged children develop reading and math skills? That question is difficult to answer. At least one major study found that *Sesame Street* was successful in preparing children for school, but that "advantaged" children gained fully as much from it as disadvantaged students; thus, the show was not closing the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

In the summer of 2015, Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit group that produces the show, announced that it was signing a five-year agreement with premium cable network HBO to air thirty-five new episodes a year, up from the eighteen new episodes per year it had made for PBS. After a nine-month period of being exclusively on HBO, the new episodes would appear for free on PBS. Officials from Sesame Workshop said they signed the contract to give the production company a more stable financial footing and to make the show available on mobile devices. Critics charged that airing the new episodes first on HBO would undermine the educational goals of helping low-income children with the show.[53]

▼ *Sesame Street* features guests from a wide range of backgrounds, including James Earl Jones with regular cast members Big Bird, Mr. Hooper, and Maria.



Afro Newsaer/Gado/Getty Images

In the 1990s, PBS started attracting a significant audience with programming such as the Ken Burns documentaries *The Civil War* and *Baseball*. Those larger audiences, in turn, led to support from a number of large corporations that hoped their brief underwriting announcements would reach the upscale audiences who watch PBS. These announcements are not quite commercials, but they do allow corporations to present a short message to viewers. Among recent PBS underwriters are oil giant BP, GMC Trucks, AT&T, and State Farm Insurance. More recently, PBS has been attracting big audiences with British imports such as *The Great British Baking Show*, *Victoria*, and *Poldark*.

The Fox Network

The 1980s brought numerous changes to the broadcasting market. Not only were VCRs and cable becoming popular, but there was also a new broadcast network. Australian newspaper publisher Rupert Murdoch started the Fox broadcast network after buying 20th Century Fox and incorporating it into his mammoth global media empire (see Chapter 3). He put the new network on the air in 1986 by buying stations in six of the top ten television markets. Although companies had tried to set up alternative broadcast networks before, none had really succeeded. Murdoch had an advantage in that during the 1980s people were becoming accustomed to watching cable channels, which meant they were no longer wed to regular network programming.

Fox was able to attract independent stations because it was offering them free programming rather than making them rely on syndicated material, most of which consisted of network reruns. The offerings were initially limited, with a late-night talk show starring Joan Rivers followed by Sunday-evening programming beginning in 1987.

While Fox managed to attract viewers with shows such as *The Simpsons* and *Married . . . With Children*, what put it on the map was stealing NFL football away from the Big Three. NFL football was a show that people were accustomed to watching; now they just had to watch it on a new network. Fox also brought in the under-thirty viewers coveted by advertisers with hit programs such as *The X-Files* and *Melrose Place*.[54] The Big Three broadcast networks were becoming the Big Four networks.

More recently, Fox has been attracting large audiences with hit shows such as *The OT*, *Empire*, *Bob's Burgers*, and *The Simpsons* (which as of this writing has been on the air more than twenty-nine years!).

Defining Ratings

One of the biggest concerns for television networks, whether broadcast or cable, is the size of their audiences. Rates for commercials, which provide all the income for broadcast networks and a substantial portion of the income for cable services, are determined by how many people are viewing a show at a given time.

Measuring television audiences used to be pretty simple, at least in principle. You found out how many people watched a given show at a given time on one of three major networks, and you had your answer. The fact that you depended on a limited sample of people who had to fill out complex diaries or use a set-top "people meter" may have complicated things a bit, but basically it was simple. But now we have four major English-language broadcast networks, the Univision Spanish-language broadcast network, PBS, several minor broadcast networks, dozens of major cable networks, and hundreds of specialized cable networks. There is also the issue of measuring the alternative methods for viewing these programs, the most important of which is delayed viewing on DVR.

Due to the expansion of viewing choices, the ratings required for a show to be a success have gotten smaller. In 2017, the top-rated show on broadcast television was NBC's *Sunday Night Football* with 18.5 million viewers. The top scripted show was the long-running *Big Bang Theory*, also with an average of 18.5 million viewers.[55]

Now that DVRs are in more than 53 percent of all homes, the number of people watching shows on a delayed basis has become more important. Nielsen, which measures television audiences, now considers the following:

- Live only—People who are watching the program live as it happens.
- Live + SD—People who watch the program the same day as it airs. If you record a program on your DVR and start watching it fifteen minutes after it starts, this is you.
- Live + 3—People who watch the program live or within three days of airing.
- Live + 7—People who watch the program within seven days of its airing. This is the most complete measure of a show's popularity. (It does not, however, account for the episode of the Food Network's competition show *Chopped* that I recorded three months ago but finally watched last night.[56])

The major provider of viewership data, known as ratings, is Nielsen Media Research. The company keeps track of the shows watched in nine thousand homes located across the United States. Although the Nielsen families receive a token payment for their participation, they are essentially volunteering to keep track of all their television viewing. Nielsen uses a combination of methods to measure audience size. In the largest urban markets, the company uses a people meter. Viewers push buttons on the machine to record who is watching programs at specific times. In smaller markets, viewers fill out daily diaries,

listing what they watched.

While Nielsen tracks overall network viewership throughout the year, the company looks at the audience size of individual stations four times a year (November, February, May, and July) during periods known as sweeps. Networks and individual stations often schedule their best—or at least most popular—programming during sweeps periods to attract the highest possible ratings. These higher ratings allow them to charge more for commercials. Nielsen also tracks the ages and sex of audience members, and advertisers are oftentimes as concerned about the demographics of their audience as they are about the absolute size of it.

Nielsen provides networks and stations with several different measurements. The most important of these is the rating point, the percentage of the total potential television audience actually watching the show. For example, Nielsen estimated that there were 119.6 million households with televisions in use in 2017. If 1,196,000 homes viewed a particular program, that would produce a rating of 1 (1,196,000 / 119,600,000 = .01, or 1 percent of the total potential audience). A program viewed in 15 million households would have a rating of 12.5.[57]

The second major measurement Nielsen provides is the share, the percentage of television sets in use that are tuned to a particular show. Instead of telling producers how many households are watching the show, the share measures how popular a particular show is compared to everything else that is broadcast at the time. Although a show that airs at 1:00 a.m. might have a relatively low rating (say, 3 or 4), it could have a high share (15 or 20) because a large portion of a small audience is watching it.[58]

An Earthquake in Slow Motion

Fox, cable, and the VCR changed everything for the television industry—a set of changes that media writer Ken Auletta has called "an earthquake in slow motion." In 1976, the prime-time viewing audience belonged to the Big Three, with nine out of ten viewers watching network programming. By 1991, the Big Three had lost a third of their viewers. These viewers hadn't stopped watching television; they had just moved to other channels. In 1976, the typical home had a choice of seven broadcast channels; by 1991, it had a choice of thirty-three cable channels.[59] Today, homes with digital cable programming can have access to hundreds of channels.

Another part of the earthquake was that the original Big Three networks were sold to new owners in 1985. NBC was taken over by General Electric, CBS was purchased by investor Larry Tisch, and ABC was purchased by Capital Cities Communications. Since that time, ABC has been acquired by Disney, CBS has been purchased and spun off by Viacom, and Comcast has bought NBC. The networks are no longer controlled by the people who started them.[60] The earthquake also affected profits. Revenues for the broadcast networks plummeted in the 1990s, whereas cable network revenues grew. Cable channels typically make more profit than the broadcast networks. Cable channels are the most profitable part of Walt Disney Co., NBCUniversal, News Corporation, and Time Warner.

The ESPN group of sports networks has long been one of the most profitable parts of the Disney empire, but it may be facing challenges in the changing television environment. ESPN spent nearly $8 billion on sports broadcast rights in 2018, but, as we discussed back in Chapter 3, the network declined from 100 million subscribers in 2012 to just under 90 million in 2017.[61] Given that each subscriber pays an average of about $8 per month, that's a loss of $80 million a year of income. Despite their lower profitability, the broadcast networks generally have much bigger audiences than cable services. The most popular basic cable show of 2017 was AMC's zombie drama *The Walking Dead*, which attracted an average of 14.7 million viewers per week, while more typical shows attract audiences of 4 to 5 million. Top-rated network shows such as *NCIS* typically attract 17 to 18 million viewers.[62]

Questioning the Media

Do you use a DVR to time shift your television viewing? Do you skip commercials when you watch programs on the DVR? If you are skipping commercials, how should television networks make money? Or do you just watch programs on a streaming service like Netflix, Amazon Prime, or Hulu?

Why, then, are cable channels making more money than the broadcast networks? Traditionally, cable programs have cost less to produce than network programs, but spending on cable shows has been growing rapidly over the last several years. But the biggest difference is that broadcasters have a single source of revenue—advertising—whereas most cable channels have both a subscription fee and advertising revenue. The cable channels collect their subscription fees whether a given subscriber actually watches the channel. Those fees range from $7.86 a month for ESPN, to $2.09 for TNT, to $1.55 for Fox News, down to 22 cents for the Food Network.[63] (You see the subscription revenue for many of the top sports networks in Table 9.1.)

While Ken Auletta initially wrote about the earthquake in slow motion in the 1990s, the changes that got started then have not gone away. In the last decade, we have seen the rise of a whole new form of television—streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime. Netflix is the most popular of these services with approximately 118 million subscribers globally and 55 million in the United States.[64] Each of those U.S. subscribers pays approximately $11 per month to access a host of movies, old TV shows, and original programming.[65] Sound a lot like cable? Except that Netflix doesn't require a cable contract to watch—only access to a high-speed online connection— and viewers can choose what they want to watch and when they want to watch it.[66] *New York Times* media writer Farhad Manjoo poses the question that he thinks should be keeping Disney CEO Bob Iger or Comcast's Brian Roberts up at night: "How worried are you about Netflix? And more to the point: Are you worried enough?"[67]

One of the issues that is likely at the top of Iger's and Roberts's worries is the size of Netflix's audience. Netflix does not participate in Nielsen ratings, so the Big Media companies can't easily compare themselves to them. There are at least two reasons for this. For one, Netflix doesn't carry any advertising, so it doesn't need Nielsen data to share with advertisers to help it decide how much it is willing to pay to reach its desired audience. For another, Netflix already knows exactly who is watching which programs, and when. Every time you watch video on Netflix, its servers note who is watching and for how long.

▼ Table 9.1

▼ TABLE 9.1

Top Sports Networks Owned by Major Cable Network Companies

Network	Owner	Fee	Subscribers	Subscription Income
ESPN	Disney	$7.86	87,437,000	$8,247,057,840
TNT	Turner	$2.09	90,332,000	$2,265,526,560
Fox Sports 1	21st Century Fox	$1.30	84,159,000	$1,312,880,400
ESPN 2	Disney	$0.98	87,349,000	$1,027,224,240
Golf Channel	NBCUniversal	$0.38	75,678,000	$345,091,680
NBCSN	NBCUniversal	$0.32	83,790,000	$321,753,600
ESPNU	Disney	$0.25	68,574,000	$205,722,000
Fox Sports 2	21st Century Fox	$0.33	50,164,000	$198,649,440

Source: Compiled by author from data in infographic, "Net Worth," in Cynthia Littleton and Daniel Holloway, "TV's Dead Zone: How the Cable Sector Is Killing Off Struggling Networks," *Variety*, March 21, 2017, https://variety.com/2017/tv/features/overcrowded-cable-sector-esquire-spike-fyi-1202012647/ and https://pmcvariety.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/0321_041-nu.pdf.

Source: Compiled by author from data in infographic, "Net Worth," in Cynthia Littleton and Daniel Holloway, "TV's Dead Zone: How the Cable Sector Is Killing Off Struggling Networks," *Variety*, March 21, 2017, https://variety.com/2017/tv/features/overcrowded-cable-sector-esquire-spike-fyi-1202012647/ and https://pmcvariety.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/0321_041-nu.pdf.

SECRET 3 ▸ Reed Hastings, the founder and CEO of Netflix, said at his announcement of Netflix's expansion into more than 130 countries, "Right now you are witnessing the birth of a global TV network . . . Whether you are in Sydney or St. Petersburg, Singapore or Seoul, Santiago or Saskatoon, you can now be part of the Internet TV revolution."[68] With Netflix's massive growth, it has moved from its origins as a mail-order DVD rental service into one of the major subscription video services in the world, providing one more example of Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center.

(We'll talk more about streaming and how it's transforming television later on in this chapter, including how Disney is preparing to launch its own streaming service.)

Diversity on Television

Broadcast television and the major cable networks have been roundly criticized for presenting a distorted view of reality. Aside from the issue that people on television comedies and dramas not only are attractive and funny but also resolve problems in less than an hour, there are complaints that television presents a world that is overwhelmingly white, male, and middle class.

In 1999, the Big Four networks introduced twenty-six new shows; not one of them featured a nonwhite lead character. This led to protests and threats of boycotts by African American and Latino groups. Ralph Farquhar, an African American television producer, told the *Arizona Republic*,

> I don't believe they're intentionally [excluding minority talent]. But people have to pay attention, you know? The makeup of America . . . has changed radically over the past 20 or 30 years, and yet TV doesn't necessarily reflect the diversity and the composition of the American population.[69]

Scott Sassa, a Japanese American network television executive, recalls being upset as a child when he saw an Anglo playing an Asian character. "I've got to tell you, growing up, seeing David Carradine as a Chinese guy [ticked] you off," Sassa said, referring to the martial arts series *Kung Fu*. (For more on the practice of having white actors play characters of color, see the section of Chapter 8 on whitewashing.) Sassa says that the networks will have to reach out to nonwhites in a meaningful way if they want to hold on to their audiences:

> You not only want to see someone that looks like you on TV—you want to see someone that is a role model, someone that you want to aspire to be. That's what we need to do—create role models that are diverse, that make people in these minority groups feel good.[70]

▼ ESPN sideline reporter Maria Taylor interviews Grayson Allen of the Duke Blue Devils after a game against the North Carolina Tar Heels in March 2018. The cable channel's declining subscription numbers are indicative of the challenges facing the cable networks today.



Lance King/Getty Images

Huffington Post pop culture blogger Meron Mogos noted in 2013 that most recent shows on television had at least one supporting ethnic character, but few had nonwhites in starring roles. This started to change in 2012 when the hit ABC show *Scandal* went on the air, the first show in four decades to have an African American woman as the lead.[71] The show, starring Kerry Washington, was created by Shonda Rhimes, who also did *Grey's Anatomy*. Washington's character is based on real-life African American woman Judy Smith, who was a communication director for the George W. Bush White House and then went to work as a crisis management expert.

(It has been accurately pointed out by some media literacy students in California that the popular kids' series *That's So Raven* was fronted by Raven-Symoné Pearman, who played an African American girl with psychic powers that let her see briefly into the future.[72] The show ran on The Disney Channel from 2003 to 2007.)

Washington told CNN in an interview that her character Olivia "is someone who happened to be born female and black and those elements add to who she is as a human being. Do I think another person of another race could play her? Yes. Do I think it would change the story a little bit? Do I think it would change the character a little bit? Yes."[73] Washington told *BlackAmericaWeb*:

> It's really exciting that the business of storytelling is beginning to understand that people respond to inclusivity. You don't make a success of yourself by leaving people out. You don't make a success of yourself by leaving people off the table. We are starting to see more diversity and it's really great. It's great for everybody. It's great for

Black people, it's great for white people, it's great for everybody.[74]

Scandal has been followed with several more shows featuring black female leads (or as leading characters), including Viola Davis of *How to Get Away With Murder*, Tracee Ellis Ross in the ABC series *Black-ish*, and HBO's *Insecure*, which is based on Issa Rae's web series *The Misadventures of an Awkward Black Girl*. Madeline Berg, writing for *Forbes*, notes that these shows all draw substantial nonblack audiences. *Black-ish* has a 79 percent nonblack viewership, and *Insecure*'s audience is 61.5 percent nonblack. Marketing professor Miro Copic told Berg, "The notion that consumers and viewers would be resistant to seeing a show with main characters that are African American or another ethnicity is finally starting to decline."[75]

One channel that manages to have a higher level of diversity is the Food Network. While its hosts are not that different from the rest of television, the contestants in the chef competitions, such as *Chopped* and *Cutthroat Kitchen*, have a wide range of racial, ethnic, and sexual identity diversity.

One of the things that cooks on the Food Network need to be good at is telling the story of their food, and people of differing backgrounds generally have interesting stories to tell, whether that of being an immigrant, growing up facing adversity, or simply being a determined young person trying to succeed.

▼ Peppermint (aka Agnes Moore) was the runner-up in season nine of the VH1 show, *RuPaul's Drag Race*. The show moved to the more mainstream channel VH1 from the gay-themed LOGO network that season.



VH1/Photofest

Huffington Post Black Voices blogger Deborah Plummer notes that as of 2012, *Chopped* had nine judges, three of whom were women, one of whom was Ethiopian, one of whom was Mexican, and one of whom was Indian. The shows also feature competitors who are of varying sizes, accents, and sexual orientations.[76] A major research project at UCLA's Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies found that despite some recent improvements, minorities are still radically underrepresented on television, ranging from one-twelfth to one-half their actual share of the population.[77]

SECRET 3 ▸ LGBTQ programming may not be particularly common on broadcast television, but it is finding more of a home at streaming services like Netflix. In April 2018, the LGBTQ arts and culture website *Autostraddle* ran a list of "53 Queer TV Shows to Stream on Netflix." Dr. Candice Roberts, who teaches and researches media studies along with queer theory, writes, "A few years ago 53 different queer-themed television shows on any single media platform would have seemed implausible if not impossible." Not all of the movement of LGBTQ content into the mainstream (Secret 3) has been seen as positive, however. There are certainly critics and consumers who would prefer not to see such material and wish that they could block it from showing up in their search. But there's been pushback from the gay community as well. Roberts writes, "Eve Ng, a media researcher at Ohio University, often discusses what she calls 'media gaystreaming,' the process by which queer narratives are appropriated in mainstream media." The move of *RuPaul's Drag Race* from the gay-themed LOGO network to VH1 is an example of this.[78]

On the management side of things, in February 2016, Disney announced that Channing Dungey, an African American woman, was named president of ABC Entertainment. Dungey is the network's first African American president and has been involved with the development of hit shows such as *Scandal*, *Criminal Minds*, *How to Get Away With Murder*, and *Once Upon a Time*.[79] If you want to make some comparisons on your own, 2017 U.S. Census Bureau estimates break down the current population as follows:

White, not Hispanic—61.3 percent
Hispanic—17.8 percent
African American—13.3 percent
Asian—5.7 percent
More Than One Race—2.6 percent
American Indian—1.3 percent
Pacific Islander—0.2 percent

(These values add up to more than 100 percent because some people overlap in categories.)[80]

Univision and Spanish-Language Broadcasting.

Although Latinos are seriously underrepresented on the Big Four English-language networks, there has been substantial growth in Spanish-language television. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Univision, a Spanish-language broadcast network, is actually the fifth-largest network, something it trumpeted in a 2005 full-page ad in the *New York*

Times. Univision tends to do particularly well in the highly prized eighteen- to thirty-four-year-old demographic. The network's popular telenovelas *Amores con trampa* (*Fooled Into Love*), *Lo imperdonable* (*The Unforgivable*), and *Yo no creo en los hombres* (*I Don't Trust Men*) helped take the network to the number-four spot in the ratings for a week in August 2015 in the eighteen- to thirty-four demographic; and in 2013, Univision got the critical fourth place in the Nielsen February sweeps period among the prized audience demographic of adults aged eighteen to forty-nine. For 2017, Univision was tied for fifth place with The CW among all broadcast networks, but was suffering the downturn that much of Spanish-language media has as larger portions of the Hispanic community are native born rather than immigrant, and are either bilingual or speak English exclusively.[81]

▼ Univision news anchor Jorge Ramos has said that his work involves drawing attention to issues that are important to Latinos and immigrants, people he says don't ordinarily have a voice.



Charles Ommanney/Getty Images

News on Univision tends to take a clear point of view of that has more in common with Latin American and European journalism than that of the more detached, objective American broadcast-network reporting. Anchor Jorge Ramos says his journalistic role model is really Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, who was famous for her confrontational interviews with Yasir Arafat, Moammar Gadhafi, and Ayatollah Khomeini. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Ramos battled with Republican candidate Donald Trump, even getting thrown out of one of Trump's press conferences in Dubuque, Iowa, during the primary season. But confronting difficult sources is nothing new for Ramos. He and his cameraman once tried to do an ambush interview with Cuban leader Fidel Castro outside of a summit meeting in Mexico, which led to Ramos being knocked to the ground by

Castro's bodyguard. On another occasion, Ramos got death threats after questioning Colombian president Ernesto Samper about taking campaign contributions from the Cali drug cartel.[82]

Ramos has been criticized for engaging in advocacy journalism by the conservative media watchdog group Media Research Center, and he's been accused of being a "Democratic pundit," but Ramos defends himself, saying that he is a tireless advocate for Latino and immigrant groups.

> "Our position is clearly pro-Latino or pro-immigrant. We are simply being the voice for those who don't have a voice," Ramos told the *Los Angeles Times*.[83] When he interviewed President Barack Obama during his 2012 reelection campaign, Ramos confronted the president on his policies that have led to the deportation of more than 1.4 million undocumented immigrants. And he did that confrontation in English so clips from it could be easily replayed on English-language stations. "I am emotionally linked to this issue," Ramos told the *LA Times*. "Because once you are an immigrant, you never forget that you are one."[84]

In addition to Univision, the Spanish television market includes the smaller Telemundo network, along with a host of independent stations. Most markets offer no more than two Spanish-language television stations, but Phoenix, Arizona, has at least five.

The most popular programs on Univision have been the telenovelas, or soap operas, which make up fifteen of the top twenty Spanish programs and are popular in both Latin America and the United States. Produced primarily in Mexico and Brazil, the telenovelas are exceedingly detailed and involved miniseries, with each story lasting six months to a year.[85] But Telemundo is doing a good job of attracting a younger audience with its so-called *narconovelas* about Mexican drug lords that target bilingual American-born Latinos. As the *Wall Street Journal* noted in 2018, Latino immigration has slowed significantly over the last ten years, the direction of flow being more from the United States to Mexico than the other way around. Journal television reporter Keach Hagey writes that Telemundo is dealing with the fact that the American Hispanic population has become increasingly dominated by Hispanics born in the United States. "Telemundo has developed a more dynamic content that is more attuned with U.S.-based Latinos than is the case with Univision content, which has been more traditional, with an emphasis on the values of traditional Mexico," said Latino media consultant Federico Subervi.[86]

Black Entertainment Television.

Cable television also has networks that attempt to appeal to nonwhite audiences. The most significant is Black Entertainment Television (BET). The twenty-four-hour network

reaches nearly 85 million households. For 2017, the network was ranked 49th among basic cable networks, averaging a viewership of 475,000, up 7 percent from the year before.[91]

Started in 1980 as a local Washington, D.C., channel, BET was the nation's first black-owned cable network.[92] BET initially carried primarily talk shows and music videos; more recently, the network found considerable success in 2017 with the hip-hop reality wedding series *Gucci Mane & Keyshia Ka'Oir: The Mane Event* along with a range of dramas, comedies, competition shows, awards shows, and reruns of programs from other networks.[93]

SECRET 3 ▸ Aside from the network's success in attracting viewers, BET became profitable because major advertisers such as General Motors were looking for media to reach nonwhite consumers. The *New York Times* says that this is part of an ongoing trend of multicultural marketing aimed at African American, Hispanic, and Asian American consumers, which account for increasing segments of the U.S. population. BET's Louis Carr says that nonwhite consumers have to be taken much more seriously, not as a secondary target but as a primary target. In places like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, and Philadelphia, if you add up the African American population, the Hispanic population, and the Asian population, they're not minorities anymore. They're majorities (another example of Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center).[94]

Television and Society

Few new social institutions have become an integral part of society faster than television did in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1948, there were fewer than one hundred thousand televisions in use; a year later, that number was more than one million, and by 1959, there were fifty million sets in use. In less than ten years, television had become a part of everyday life in the United States. Television viewership tended to grow more slowly in the highly regulated European market, something we talk about in depth in Chapter 15.

As television became commonplace, people started to worry about its effects on viewers: How much time were people spending viewing television? What activities would it replace? Why were people watching television? Most important, what effect, if any, would the content of television programs have on viewers? Would it lead to violence and juvenile delinquency? Would it take children into the world of adults too early? Would it transform society?

Television as a Major Social Force

In *Tube of Plenty*, Erik Barnouw argues that television had a revolutionary impact on society:

> The advent of television was widely compared, in its impact, with that of the Gutenberg printing press centuries earlier. Television was beginning to be seen as the more revolutionary innovation. The reasons were so obvious that they had seldom been discussed. Television viewing required no skill beyond normal human functions. Reading, on the other hand, was a skill acquired over years via effort and drilling—and not acquired by everyone. It generally involved the mediation of father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, teacher, priest, and others, a factor favoring social continuity, a transmittal of values. Television short-circuited all this. It could begin in cradle or playpen, and often did. It could bypass father, mother, grandfather, grandmother. It reached the child long before teacher and priest. Their role in the acculturation process had been sharply reduced. They had sporadically, fitfully, sought to recapture a more decisive role by seeking to control the images on the tube—but that control had slipped elsewhere, to the world of business. In a development of historical significance, the television's messages had become dominant social doctrine.[95]

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

What Does a TV Show Look Like?

▼ *Orange Is the New Black*, Netflix's cutting-edge drama, is making the news for a wide range of reasons. Perhaps the most noteworthy thing about it is that Netflix is a streaming service, not a broadcast or cable network, so Netflix releases the entire season of the series all at once, so fans who want to can binge-watch all the episodes in a single weekend. But the prison drama is also notable for its cast of characters. As you look at the stills from 2017's season five, what do you notice? What would you expect from a show with this cast?



Netflix/Photofest



Netflix/Photofest

Broadcast television has long been criticized for lacking racial and ethnic diversity. But the Netflix prison drama *Orange Is the New Black* has a diverse range of characters including a transgender African American woman. Laverne Cox, who plays a transgender prisoner, says that the show is a breakout because of the range of faces in the cast. "We don't see enough multidimensional portrayals of trans women and women in jail who are different races, ages, body types. . . . We don't see enough multidimensional portrayals of women in general, that show the diversity of womanhood."[87]

Even with its high level of diversity (which some complain gets talked about too much), the core of the series is based on a memoir by Piper Kerman, a "privileged white woman serving a prison sentence." But, as critic Roxane Gay points out, "Unfortunately, we will never see a similar show about a woman of color as a stranger in a strange land, bewildered by incarceration."[88]

In the summer of 2018, the show was entering into its sixth season with a seventh on order. The show is known for its dramatic twists, with major characters being killed off and the fifth season ending with a prison-riot cliffhanger.[89]

WHAT does this photo say?

Orange Is the New Black is the story of a twenty-four-year-old white woman college graduate who was convicted of carrying money for a West African drug lord. She was eventually imprisoned in Danbury, Connecticut.[90] Does the cast photo look like the people you usually see on television? Why or why not?

WHAT do these messages mean?

Does the fact that this show has a racially diverse cast with a range of sexual orientations matter? Does the show represent diversity because it has a transgendered woman in the cast? Does it matter that the portrayal of these characters is sometimes stereotypical?

HOW do you and your classmates respond to these images?

Before you started this exercise, had you noticed how diverse the cast of Orange Is the New Black is? Does that change how you feel about the show? Is it important to have diverse casts on television? Why do you think this way? What other types of diversity (beyond racial and ethnic) should television be concerned about? Why? Do you think that television has become more diverse since OITNB started back in 2013?

Barnouw is arguing that although television audiences have fragmented with the growth of cable, satellite, and home video, television is still the dominant shared experience in the modern world, reaching more people than schools, families, and churches.

Time Spent Watching Television.

One reason social critics have been so concerned about the influence of television is that Americans spend a lot of time watching it. The *Recode* blog reports that in 2017, Americans multitasked themselves to a little more than 12 hours of media use per day. Conventional television (broadcast, cable, and satellite) makes up about 4 hours a day, 3 hours and 17 minutes on mobile devices, 2 hours on a desktop computer, and 36 minutes a day on other connected devices. Keep in mind that binge-watching a program on your computer, tablet, or phone would not be considered watching television by this study, even though you might see it that way.[96] The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that people age 15 and older spent an average of 2.7 hours a day watching television. This study did not account for time on mobile devices or other streaming sources.[97]

Television viewing can also be looked at in terms of how it dominates our free time. A study of the functions of television in everyday life notes that on average Americans spend half of their leisure time watching television. The same study showed that at any given moment in the evening more than one-third of the U.S. population is watching television; in the winter, that proportion rises to over 50 percent.[98] A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that children spend an average of four and a half hours a day watching television content. This is despite the fact that they are spending less time in front of a television set. How is this possible? While television sets are still the most popular media device among young people, the TV set is gradually losing ground to video they can watch on their computer screens, tablets, or phones.[99] (For more on these figures, turn back to Chapter 1.)

Television as Competition for Other Activities.

Although television viewing is often reported in terms of average amounts of time spent viewing, such figures don't always give a complete picture. The differences between heavy and light television viewers can be significant. A 1990 study found that people who watch a lot of television tend to spend more time home alone than light viewers. The study also showed that light viewers spend more time walking than heavy viewers.

Unfortunately, these studies usually cannot determine why people behave in these ways. Do heavy viewers stay home specifically to watch television, or are they unable to get out of the house for one reason or another? Perhaps busy people who like to walk don't have time to watch television. One finding that is not difficult to interpret was that people who watch sports on television also tend to participate in sports. The study also found that the amount of time people spend reading does not seem to be affected by how much television they watch.[100]

Questioning the Media

When and why do you watch television? Do you watch specific shows or just whatever is airing? Do you think it's possible to watch "too much" television? Why or why not? What did you watch last night?

How Do Viewers Use Television?

In addition to examining how much television people are watching, researchers have studied how and why people watch television. These uses and gratifications studies seek to determine what uses people make of television viewing and what gratifications (or benefits) they gain from it. The central premise of these studies is that television (like other media) is not an actor that does things to viewers. Instead, audience members are active participants who select programming to meet particular needs.

What might these needs be? The study *Television in the Lives of Our Children* found that children watch television for many of the same reasons that adults do:

- To be entertained.
- To learn things or gain information. In many cases, this information relates to socialization: how to act like an adult, how to be a better athlete, how other people live.
- For social reasons. The content of TV doesn't matter so much as the fact that they watch it with friends or talk about it at school the next day.

The researchers also found that different children watched the same program for different reasons. One child might watch a cartoon show because he was lonely and the show provided company, another might watch it because it made her laugh, and a third might watch it because his friends were watching it.[101]

Standards for Television

In the 1950s and 1960s, networks and advertisers imposed strict controls on what could be shown on television. For example, Mary Tyler Moore and Dick Van Dyke played the married couple Laura and Rob Petrie on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, which aired from 1961 to 1966. Although married, the Petries had to sleep in separate twin beds. Sponsors also raised their eyebrows when Moore wore jeans and capri pants on the show because these garments might be considered suggestive. Moore fought the sponsors and won, saying, "I'll dress on the show the way I dress in real life."[102] This was the era when comedian Lucille Ball had to use the word *expecting* rather than *pregnant* on her show when she was obviously carrying a child.[103] What could be shown was determined by each network's own standards and practices department. The goal of these departments, which at one time had as many as sixty people working in them, was to make sure the network did not lose viewers or sponsors because of offensive content. Since the 1980s, they have decreased in size by 50 percent or more. This change is due partly to a loosening of societal standards throughout the 1970s, but it is also a response to the more explicit content of cable television programming.[104] Alfred Schneider, who served as a censor for ABC television for more than thirty years, observes that the networks feel freer to deal with difficult topics today than in earlier decades:

> Sometimes the quality of a particular program allows you to do things that you would not permit in other programs. I once said that in my lifetime there would never be full frontal nudity on network television. I was wrong. I lived to see *War and Remembrance*, where I permitted full frontal nudity in the concentration camp scenes. I finally justified it by saying that this was not nudity, this was death.
>
> As we see the growth of more distribution systems, the growth of independents, my position will have to change. As the populace becomes more educated, more inquisitive, more concerned about issues, I will be more comfortable taking greater risks knowing that people will seek out their choices.[107]

Test Your Media Literacy

No Sense of Place

Media scholar Joshua Meyrowitz, in his book *No Sense of Place*, argues that the very existence of television is an influence on society because it breaks down the physical barriers that separate people. In the past, he says, people were limited to interacting with those whom they could see and hear face-to-face. Meyrowitz describes how the coming of electronic media, and television in particular, changed this:

> The boundaries marked by walls, doors, and barbed wire, and enforced by laws, guards, and trained dogs, continue to define situations by including and excluding participants. But today such boundaries function to define social situations only to the extent that information can still be restricted by restricting physical access.[105]

These boundaries can be broken at many levels. A child watching television can see people talking about adult topics such as infidelity, pregnancy, or cross-dressing. A teenager in New York City can see the impact of drought on people in Iowa. Young men can listen in on what women say on a "girls' night out." In each of these cases, in the pretelevision era, the viewer would have been isolated because of his or her "place," whether it was geographic location, age, sex, or socioeconomic status. But television gives everyone an equal view into these formerly separate worlds.

This breakdown of place has occurred not just within the United States, but throughout the industrialized world. As we discussed in Chapter 3, the United States is the world's largest supplier of entertainment programming; it is also the largest supplier of imagery to the world. The most important effect of CNN and other satellite-based television news services is that they give people everywhere in the world access to the same information at the same time, whether those people are heads of state, diplomats, soldiers, or citizens. The late Don Hewitt, longtime producer of the CBS newsmagazine *60 Minutes*, has said that this global sharing of information is changing the world:

> When there was a disaster, it used to be that people went to church and all held hands. Then television came along, and there was this wonderful feeling that while you were watching Walter Cronkite, millions of other Americans were sharing the emotional experience with you. Now the minute anything happens they all run to CNN and think, "The whole world is sharing this experience with me."[106]

WHO is the source?

Who is Joshua Meyrowitz? What book has he written?

WHAT is he saying?

According to Meyrowitz, how has television transformed society? What does Meyrowitz mean when he says television and other electronic media break down the barriers of place? What kind of barriers does Meyrowitz suggest are being broken by television?

WHAT evidence is there?

What examples of this process does Meyrowitz provide? When and where does this process take place?

WHAT do you and your classmates think about Meyrowitz's arguments?

List some examples of how television has let you see aspects of everyday life that would normally remain hidden from you. Does television take you "places" you couldn't go to otherwise? If so, list some examples.

Do you ever use television to deliberately watch worlds you wouldn't be able to see otherwise?

In 1997, broadcasters fundamentally changed their programming controls; instead of placing an occasional warning before programs considered inappropriate for children, they implemented a two-part rating system modeled after the one used for movies. There is an age-appropriateness rating that closely matches the movie system, with ratings of G, PG, TV-14 (for fourteen-year-olds and older), and TV-MA (for mature audiences). Many networks also provide a content rating of S (sexual content), V (violence), L (crude language), and/or D (adult dialogue).[108] It was also in 1997 that the so-called V-chip, an electronic device allowing parents to block programs with certain content ratings, began to be included in television sets.

▼ Actress Mary Tyler Moore raised havoc with network censors in 1961 when she danced on *The Dick Van Dyke Show* wearing capri pants. Moore defended her outfit, saying, "I'll dress on the show the way I dress in real life."



CBS Photo Archive/Getty Images

Television producers were initially concerned that shows with ratings for violence or sexual content might be harder to market. But rather than restricting television content, broadcasters have used the ratings to warn viewers that material on a program will be

explicit. As Robert Thompson, director of Syracuse University's Bleier Center for Television and Popular Culture, has noted,

> The people who wanted ratings to put the brakes on this new explosion of raunchy television saw just the opposite happen. Anybody should have seen this coming. If you give producers the opportunity to use a TV-MA rating, it's an invitation to make TV-MA programs.[109]

For the most part, the R-equivalent TV-MA rating has been confined to cable and streaming shows such as History's *Vikings*, HBO's *Westworld* and *Game of Thrones*, Netflix's *13 Reasons Why*, Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale*, AMC's multiple *Walking Dead* series, and, of course, Comedy Central's raunchy cartoon *South Park*.[110] The Big Four broadcast networks have rarely aired programs with the TV-MA rating, the most notable exceptions being uncut broadcasts of serious R-rated movies such as *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan*.

The Problem of Decency

The line of what was acceptable on broadcast television was redrawn following the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show on CBS when Justin Timberlake exposed Janet Jackson's breast for nine-sixteenths of a second. The FCC received more than five hundred thousand complaints.[111] Immediately following the broadcast, the FCC started talking about the problem of indecency on television. References to sexual or bodily functions are considered to be indecent. FCC rules say that broadcast radio and television stations can't air indecent material between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., when children are most likely to be listening or watching. This differs from obscene programming (discussed further in Chapter 13), which "describes or shows sexual conduct in a lewd and offensive way" and has no "literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."[112] Obscene material is not protected by the First Amendment. Rules about indecency apply to broadcast materials but not to cable or satellite material. On June 29, 2012, the case regarding CBS finally came to a conclusion with the U.S. Supreme Court declining to review a lower court decision throwing out the fine.[113] As a side note in this case, cable news host Nancy Grace also exposed her nipple on the reality show *Dancing With the Stars*, this time for almost an entire second. But so far the FCC has not acted on any complaints, and it appears unlikely to lead to any fines or other legal action.[114] There is no single standard for what constitutes broadcast indecency, and this standard clearly changes over time. During the 1990s and early 2000s, bare bottoms became common on shows such as *NYPD Blue*. But since the Janet Jackson fuss, even this minimal nudity has been digitally blurred when shown on broadcast television, and reality programs such as *Survivor* have become careful to digitally blur any hint of nudity that occurs during the programs' competitions as well.

There has been some serious fallout from the Janet Jackson stunt. Several CBS affiliates hesitated to rebroadcast the documentary *9/11* because of the rough language used by firefighters in the film.[115] In 2004, sixty-six ABC affiliate stations refused to air the R-rated movie *Saving Private Ryan* for fear they would be fined for the movie's graphic violence and extensive profanity, including several of the Sinclair stations mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.[116]

(Congress raised the fines from $32,500 to $325,000 per "incident" following the Jackson case, which is why smaller stations are cautious about any program that might trigger an FCC response.) Broadcast standards in Europe are far more likely to regulate hate speech, advertising, and materials that are harmful to children than to control nudity.[117] Gene Policinski, executive director of the First Amendment Center, questions whether television can really tell the story of events such as the 9/11 attacks or the invasion of Normandy during World War II within the limits of decency rules:

▼ In 2012, during the halftime show for Super Bowl XLVI, rapper M.I.A. pointed up

her middle finger during her performance. That incident drew comparisons with the brief exposure of Janet Jackson's breast in the Super Bowl halftime show eight years prior.



Christopher Polk/Getty Images

War is a bloody hell, and *Private Ryan* brought home the terror and anguish, as well as the heroics and sacrifices, of the heralds of the "greatest generation" who stormed ashore at Normandy in a manner no sanitized depiction had done previously. Who

can view any veteran of that invasion in the same manner after seeing that film?[118]

Moving Beyond Broadcasting

Whether it is delivered by broadcast, cable, or satellite, television is changing so quickly that it might be unrecognizable to Philo T. Farnsworth. The cable industry, for example, has largely replaced copper wire with fiber-optic cable that uses light rather than electricity to send out video and other types of signals. Fiber-optic cable has the advantage of being able to carry much more information than copper wire can, but more importantly, it has the capacity to allow audience members to send signals back to the program providers.[119]

Defining Television in the Twenty-First Century

If I were to ask you what you mean when you say you are going to watch television, your answer would likely be quite different from what your parents might say. Every semester I ask my media literacy students a fairly simple question: What is television? The answers that come back are revealing, to say the least. One time the first word that came up was *box*. And by *box*, my student meant a big, old-school analog TV with a big ol' picture tube. Literally, a giant box. But I think that's informative—television is seen as a device for consuming video wherever it comes from.

After that comes some more use-based terms—*entertainment* and *reruns*. But then comes the description that really grabs my attention: "moving pictures that you stream."

I don't know that the student who said *stream* was really talking about online streaming; more likely, she was just talking about the unending flow of images that stream out of the television box. But the one term that didn't come up much was *broadcasting*. And there's a good reason for that. The young people in my class don't really distinguish between broadcast and cable/satellite channels, or even from streaming channels. They are all just television.

One big step in our redefinition of television occurred in 2005 when Apple started selling an iPod that could play video, and it offered current television shows the day after they aired for $1.99 an episode through the iTunes Store. At first, it was primarily ABC programming, owned by Disney, that was available on iTunes.[120] (Remember, at the time of his death, Apple founder Steve Jobs was a member of the Disney board of directors and the company's biggest single stockholder.) But by 2007, all of the Big Four networks were selling episodes through iTunes, as were many cable powerhouses. So Apple got broad acceptance of the idea that people would pay cash to download current television shows and that they could use portable devices to view those shows almost anywhere.

That was also the year that DVD rental service Netflix started streaming movies and TV shows over the internet. Initially, the streaming was just to computers, but it soon expanded to devices such as the Roku box, Blu-ray players, and video game consoles that could play Netflix programming instantly on a television set.

Now Netflix and other streaming services, such as Amazon Prime Video and Hulu, can be accessed on smartphones and tablets.[121] And premium cable giant HBO, home of the massive hit *Game of Thrones*, can be accessed from the HBO Now streaming service for $14.95 per month.[122] Traditional television viewership peaked in 2010 and has been declining in the years since. Young people are increasingly watching streaming video on smartphones, tablets, streaming boxes, or game consoles. Over 2015, use of these devices increased by 25 percent while traditional TV viewing declined by 10 percent.

All of these developments raise the question as to whether people are ready to disconnect from a traditional pay video service such as cable or satellite and replace it with content streamed over the internet. Do you really need a cable or satellite subscription to watch a wide range of television programming anymore? Among those who have cut the cord is famed media blogger Jim Romenesko, who writes that he made the change when his cable bill hit $203 a month in February 2011. At that point, he says he sold his three flat-screen TVs and took to doing all of his television viewing on his iPad. He says he has no regrets about making the switch, though he might feel differently if he were a big sports fan.[123]

There has been talk for years about the eventual declining fortunes of traditional satellite/cable packages. The basic idea is that you pay a fee for a big group of cable channels, most of which you don't watch. But you get them all as part of a single package —or perhaps a basic package with a group of add-ons. There has been talk about "a la carte" pricing of cable, where subscribers would buy each channel individually. The problem is that cable economics depend on everyone buying the same group of channels, even if they never watch them. Les Moonves, former CEO of CBS, told an investor conference in March 2015, "Clearly the bundle is changing. The days of the 500-channel universe are over. The days of the 150-channel universe in the home are not necessarily over but they're changing rapidly. People are slicing it and dicing it in different ways."[124]

▼ Alden Ehrenreich (as Han Solo) and Joonas Suotamo (as Chewbacca) star in 2018's *Solo: A Star Wars Story*. Disney's launch of its new streaming service would include the *Star Wars* franchise as well as Marvel, Pixar, and other popular offerings.



Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures/Photofest

But even if cable companies are unwilling to change, with cord cutting, consumers are

increasingly able to do their own a la carte packages. ESPN, HBO, Showtime, and many others are now available for purchase individually. And Apple is widely expected to eventually offer a streaming bundle of programming through its Apple TV device, though when, if ever, that might happen is not clear.[125]

Big Media companies are responding to the threat from streaming by starting their own services. CBS has its All Access service that runs both on mobile devices and on streaming boxes hooked up to TV sets. All Access provides more than ten thousand episodes on demand, dating back as far as *I Love Lucy* and as current as the network's online-only *Star Trek: Discovery*. The service also live streams the network.[126] But the big player here is clearly Disney. As mentioned back in Chapter 3, Disney has been making a play to buy out most of the TV and movie assets from 21st Century Fox. If successful, that would give Disney a controlling interest in Hulu. (Comcast, however, is also, as of this writing, trying to buy those same properties.)[127] In addition, Disney is also preparing to launch a stand-alone streaming service offering Disney content exclusively. This would include the *Star Wars* franchise, the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Disney animation, Pixar animation, and (if the purchase of 21st Century Fox assets goes through) all of the varied *X-Men* properties. "We have an opportunity to spend more on original product, but not necessarily to go into the volume direction that Netflix has gone in because we have this unique brand," Disney CEO Bob Iger said during an investor call in 2018.[128]

Media Transformations

The Earthquake in Slow Motion Continues

▼ Georgia Rep. John Lewis, center, led a sit-in of more than two hundred Democrats that effectively shut down the House's legislative work on June 22, 2016. The sit-in was live streamed by Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-CA) via Periscope.



ASSOCIATED PRESS/AP Images

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed Ken Auletta's "earthquake in slow motion"—how the cable and satellite revolution brought about massive changes to the television business in the 1980s and 1990s. This earthquake has continued to shake up television into the twenty-first century due to the growing importance of broadband video and alternative viewing devices. We can see this transformation with an event that took place on June 22, 2016.

The reason that C-SPAN exists is to provide live coverage of the U.S. House of Representatives when it is in session. At other times, C-SPAN carries a variety of speeches, campaign events, and original programming. The key words here, however, are "when they are in session." When the House is not in session, the majority party (currently the Republicans) controls whether the cameras are on or off. So, it is no surprise that Speaker of the House Paul Ryan shut off the House feed to C-SPAN while the Democrats held an out-of-session sit-in on the House floor on June 22, 2016, to call for votes on gun legislation.[131]

But just because the official cameras were turned off didn't mean there wasn't video coming out of the House. Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-CA) used his Periscope streaming video account to live stream the sit-in from his smartphone, thus bypassing the Republican's efforts to limit the sit-in's exposure, as did Rep. Scott Peters.[132] To be fair, the majority party always has control of the cameras in the House, and Democrats shut off the cameras, as well as the lights, in August 2008 to stop feeding attention to the Republicans who wanted votes on energy legislation.[133]

That Swalwell would stream the sit-in isn't particularly surprising—he's also known as the House's king of Snapchat. He's a young, hip representative from tech-savvy California. What was amazing was when C-SPAN started carrying Periscope feeds on its cable, satellite, and streaming channels.[134]

C-SPAN spokesman Howard Mortman told the *Washington Post*'s Erik Wemple (whose blog covers media issues), "This is the first time we've ever shown video from the House floor picked up by a Periscope

account."[135] This is a big deal because now mobile social media is providing programing straight into a legacy media channel. We are seeing how members of Congress can use their mobile devices to feed video out to their followers, and how long-tail media can pick up a much broader audience through short-head media.

The flow can also go the other direction—with legacy media being retransmitted through social media like Periscope. While these apps are certainly used to create original content, they are also used to bypass Big Media contracts and rebroadcast sporting events that others are paying as much as $100 to receive. In 2015, there was a major boxing match between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao. Pay-per-view audiences were charged $100 per screen to have access to the fight, but dozens of paying customers live streamed the fight via Periscope, and anyone who wanted to could watch for free. While many of these illegal streams were shut down, the *Washington Post* reported it was not difficult to see the fight without paying. Individuals are also streaming MLB baseball games and NFL football games live over both YouTube and Facebook. Sometimes these are going out openly, and other times the streams are only available to private groups. In either case, the streamers are bypassing multibillion-dollar contracts between legacy media and the sports leagues.[136]

If you look carefully, you can see a large number of the Seven Secrets coming into play here:

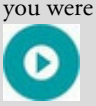
- Secret 2—There are no mainstream media: A social channel was getting the news out nationwide, and sports programs were going from Big Media to social streams.
- Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center: A new social media channel was taking a stunt protest from inside the beltway to the entire country.
- Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again: In November 2008, terrorists hit Mumbai, India, and there were not Western legacy media channels there to report the news. In that absence, news organizations like CNN, Fox News, and the New York Times relied on images and reports coming from social media. (Obviously, the similarity here is not because of terrorist attacks but because of reports coming from places where legacy media cameras can't reach.)
- Secret 5—All media are social: The story about the protest going out on C-SPAN from Periscope spread through social media, word of mouth, and people talking about it on legacy media. The same happened when boxing matches or ballgames popped up on social media. It was a social interaction.
- Secret 6—Online media are mobile media: This one was perhaps the most obvious. Members of Congress took their always on/on everywhere mobile devices to send out a stream that could be seen on television, computers, and mobile devices. And sports fans used mobile devices to take closed-access sporting events and make them available to nonpaying audience members.

WHAT did Rep. Eric Swalwell do with Periscope that was so revolutionary?

HOW did his actions change C-SPAN?

WHAT do personal streaming services like Periscope mean to broadcasters with exclusive sports contracts?

HOW do you use personal streaming services like Periscope? Have you ever used it to broadcast something you were doing or attending? Who was your audience?



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Some internet providers are responding to this change by putting a limit on how much data you get per month. This is something like the limits we've had on our mobile device accounts. Comcast is experimenting with charging customers between $30 and $35 more

per month to have unlimited data, as compared to its normal cap of 300 GB. This is one way that multiplatform media companies like Comcast can profit from the cord cutters, who won't be buying cable services directly from them.[129]

SECRET 3 ▸ Video on Demand. Video on demand has followed Secret 3, moving from the margin to the center. As mentioned earlier, more than 54 percent of Americans have access to Netflix—just slightly more than those who have DVRs. Taking a look at the bigger pictures, the Leichtman Research Group, which does some of the most in-depth commercial research on television behavior, found that 82 percent of Americans have access to some kind of video on demand, including the DVR, Netflix or another streaming service, or video on demand from a cable/satellite provider. Leichtman also found that 30 percent of households used two of these services, and 14 percent used all three. Streaming from any of the major providers (Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu) was used by 64 percent of adults.[130]

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Television was developed in the 1920s and 1930s by independent inventor Philo T. Farnsworth and RCA engineer Vladimir Zworykin. Commercial broadcasting began in the United States in 1939, but its development was put on hold by the outbreak of World War II. By the early 1950s, television was established as the dominant broadcast medium. Color television broadcasts came into widespread use in the 1960s.

Although primitive forms of cable television existed in 1948, cable did not become a significant medium until the early 1980s when satellite distribution of channels became common. Among the early cable channels were a number of networks created by Ted Turner. Viewers gained access to additional choices in the form of VCRs and direct-broadcast satellite service. Television broadcasting has switched from analog signals to multiple digital formats, and VCRs have almost completely been replaced by DVRs, DVDs, video on demand, and streaming technology.

Television networks have been criticized for failing to include women and minorities in their programming, but cable channels have delivered more programming that addresses diverse interests. Networks have also been criticized for carrying too much violent and sexually explicit programming. But television has been praised for breaking down geographic and social barriers. Broadcast television is currently going through a cycle in which "indecent" content is being suppressed by the government.

Television is changing rapidly, with audience members getting many new options to control how and when they receive programming. With VCRs, DVRs, interactive television, and broadband video, viewers can choose what they watch and when they watch it. They are also able to interact with the programming through online and mobile resources.

Key Terms ▶▶

community antenna television (CATV) 231
Big Three networks 231
videocassette recorder (VCR) 233
direct-broadcast satellite (DBS) 234
video on demand (VOD) 235
high-definition television (HDTV) 235
standard digital television 235
television networks 236
Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) 236
Big Four networks 237
people meter 238
sweeps 238
rating point 238
share 238
telenovelas 243
cut the cord 251

Review Questions ▶▶

1. How has Sinclair Broadcast Group been generating controversy?
2. How did Ted Turner transform cable television?
3. What does media journalist Ken Auletta mean by "an earthquake in slow motion"? How is that earthquake still going on today?
4. How did Janet Jackson's 2004 Super Bowl appearance transform our standards for decency on broadcast television?
5. How have technological changes transformed how we think of "watching television"?

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Twitter/@Keah_Maria

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Explain how internet technology developed
2. Identify the three levels of communication on the internet
3. Describe three defining components of the World Wide Web and the nine principles on which it is based
4. Describe five characteristics of social media
5. Explain how legacy media are reacting to the growth of new online media
6. Describe the four elements of the hacker ethic and how they apply to the contemporary internet
7. Discuss conflicts over content, intellectual property, and privacy on the web

In May 2017, Keah Brown published an essay in the black fashion/beauty/lifestyle magazine *Essence* where she wrote, "There are three things I never thought I'd be: tall, successful, or cute. . . . I assumed they were impossible because I was just a Black girl with a disability who thought she would never be worthy of anything."[1] Brown has cerebral palsy, which affects her motor skills and coordination. Her disability gives her weakness on the right side of her body, and it bothered Brown that she couldn't put her hair up into a ponytail by herself the way her identical twin sister or friends could.[2]

But it turned out that 2016 was a pretty good year for Brown professionally, with several major magazines publishing her essays, and Twitter giving her the treasured blue check mark showing she was important enough to be verified. Around the same time, Brown says she looked into the mirror and decided that she liked who she saw, that she felt cute. The feeling stayed with her, and so on February 12, 2017, she created the hashtag #DisabledAndCute. Once Brown tried out the hashtag, lots of other people with both visible and invisible disabilities started posting the tag, often with photos of themselves. While Brown started the hashtag on Twitter, it quickly spread over to photo-sharing service Instagram, where as of this writing it has been used more than twenty-nine thousand times. (Which shows us Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center.)

"The hashtag went viral, and magazines I had never felt beautiful enough to belong in, like *Shape*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Allure*, to name a few, were suddenly interviewing me," Brown wrote.[3]

But not everyone is the broader disability community was happy with the tag. Brown writes, "[S]ome members of the community were upset with my use of the word 'cute' because the word can be very infantilizing when non-disabled people call us cute when we do anything." As is almost always the case in social media, some started attacking Brown. She wondered whether she had done the right thing. Could she have chosen a better word? And then she realized she couldn't make everyone happy. She says she chose *cute* rather than *sexy* or *fine* because that was the word she felt described her.

The photos in the initial wave of posts showed young people with a wide range of disabilities, some visible, some not. Alice Wong, who tweets as @SFdirewolf and is part of the Disability Visibility Project, had a hip-hoppy image of herself wearing a breathing mask in front of a graffiti-painted wall with the caption "Here's my fierce take on #DisabledAndCute."[4]

Brown's hashtag has had a positive effect across the online disability community. Dayna Troisi was born without a left hand. Since blending in was never really an option for her, she never really tried, adopting an all-black "goth chic" look. But throughout her teens and early twenties, she says she was frustrated with people who, in trying to compliment her, ended up insulting her by saying she was "still pretty" with her bionic prosthetic hand. "It was when I saw Keah Brown's hashtag #disabledandcute that something clicked for me. . . . It wasn't disabled BUT cute, it wasn't cute BECAUSE disabled. It showed that we can be both disabled AND desirable. . . . The most important part of the hashtag is that we get to decide to participate. We pick the pictures. We pick the caption. We can decide how the world sees us."[5]

Another example is Shruti Rajkumar, a Connecticut native whose family is from India. For her senior prom, she dressed in a traditional *lehenga choli*—an embroidered skirt with a midriff-baring blouse—and then decorated her forearm crutches with flowers. When she posted her photos on social media, they were with the #DisabledAndCute tag.[6]

Of course, #DisabledAndCute is not the only body-positive/disability hashtag on social media. YouTuber and disability activist Annie Segarra is a wheelchair user who started the hashtag #hotpersoninawheelchair after she saw an old tweet from seventy-four-time *Jeopardy* star Ken Jennings that read, "Nothing is sadder than a hot person in a wheelchair." The hashtag then spread with other Twitter users, including Australian para-athlete Robyn Lambird, sharing their photos. Lambird treated the tag as not just a statement of affirmation but a response to critics. In an Instagram post, she also included the tags #allbodiesargoodbodies, #cripplepunk, and #babewithamobilityaid. (If you start searching for some of these tags, be forewarned. Some of them will include marginally NSFW posts.)

Brown says her body positivity movement involves a range of issues including size, race, gender, sexual orientation, and age, as well as disability.

She is using the hashtag as "a conversation starter between the disabled community and the mainstream media."[7] Brown argues that disabled people, and especially disabled people of color, tend to be marginalized by the media with very sparse representation. A study released in 2016 showed that 95 percent of the characters with disabilities in the top ten TV shows are being played by able-bodied performers rather than actors who actually have the disability.[8] One recent notable exception was 2018's surprise hit horror film *A Quiet Place*, starring deaf actress Millicent Simmonds as a deaf character living in a postapocalyptic world where you have to remain perfectly quiet or risk being eaten by

monsters. Simmonds is from Utah and lost her hearing as a baby.[9]

In December 2017, Brown sold her first collection of essays, *The Pretty One*. Her publisher, Atria, said the book will "explore what it means to be a black woman with cerebral palsy living in an able-bodied, white-centric society."[10]

The internet is in the process of establishing itself not just as a new medium of mass communication, but also as one where individuals can easily respond to what they see and hear. On the internet, the lines between the sender and receiver are increasingly blurred. You can play video games online, you can watch other people play video games, and you can even interact with other people as you watch them playing video games. In this chapter, we look at the origins of the internet, how it has changed from its original government roots, how it has evolved from a tool for computer sharing into a major new mass medium, and how it has caused social change everywhere from the corporate boardroom to the Middle East.

The Development of the Internet

SECRET 4 ▸ The internet is the most recent of the mass media. It is still rapidly evolving and changing, just as radio did in the 1920s and television did in the 1950s. (Remember Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.) Like radio, the internet was not conceived initially as a mass medium. Instead, the first wide-area computer networks were designed to enable academics and military researchers to share data. But these early users soon found that the most useful benefit of the network was being able to send electronic mail to one another instantly.

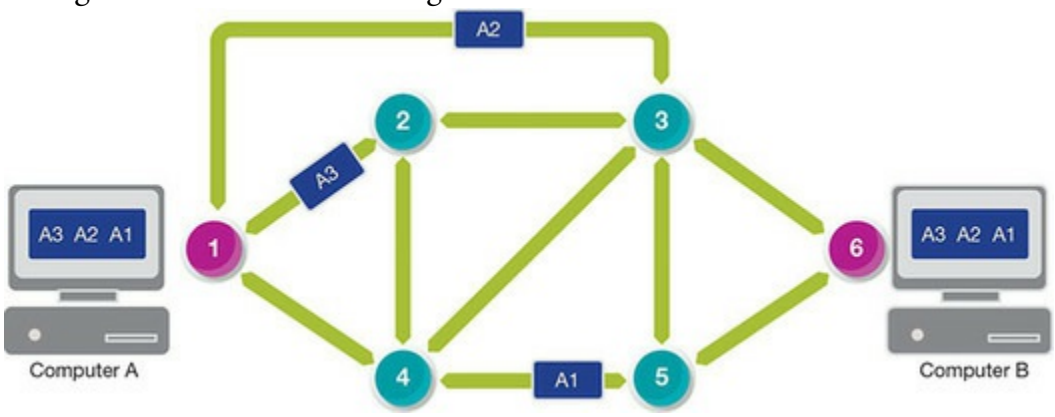
Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

Although the earliest components of the internet were in use by 1969, the net was limited largely to interpersonal communication until 1991, when Tim Berners-Lee released the World Wide Web as an easy and uniform way to access material on the internet. Since then, the internet has become a medium unlike any other because it is the only one that incorporates elements of interpersonal, group, and mass communications.

So what is the internet? A national panel on the future of the internet defines it this way: "The Internet is a diverse set of independent networks, interlinked to provide its users with the appearance of a single, uniform network."[11]

The net starts with the link from your computer to an internet service provider (ISP). For an ISP, you might choose AOL, a cable company, your telephone company, or possibly a small local company that sells internet service in one or two counties. The messages then flow from the smaller links into bigger and bigger digital pipelines (the internet's "backbone") that carry millions of messages across the country.

▲ Figure 10.1 Packet-Switching Networks



Packet switching is at the core of how wide-area computer networks operate. The sending computer breaks down the message into a number of smaller pieces, or packets, that can be sent separately across the network. These packets each follow their

own routes to the destination computer, where they are reassembled into the original message.

The backbone was initially a set of high-speed data lines controlled by the National Science Foundation as part of a replacement of its original network, but these lines have since been replaced by high-speed fiber-optic lines run by about a dozen major communication companies.

Packet Switching: Letting Computers Talk to Each Other

Today, people use the internet to communicate with other people, but the technology was originally developed to let computers talk to one another. In the early 1960s, researchers on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean were working on the problem of how to transfer information stored on one computer to another.

In 1964, engineer Paul Baran was designing a military communication network that could survive a nuclear strike. He sought to design a network in which every computer was connected to several other computers so that if one computer failed, an alternative route using different computers could be established. Baran's second insight was that computers could break large messages into a number of smaller message blocks, or packets, which could be sent independently across the network. Packet switching, as Baran's scheme came to be known, cuts messages into little pieces and sends them along the easiest route to their final destination (see Figure 10.1). The receiving computer starts reassembling the messages and asks for any missing packets to be resent.[12]

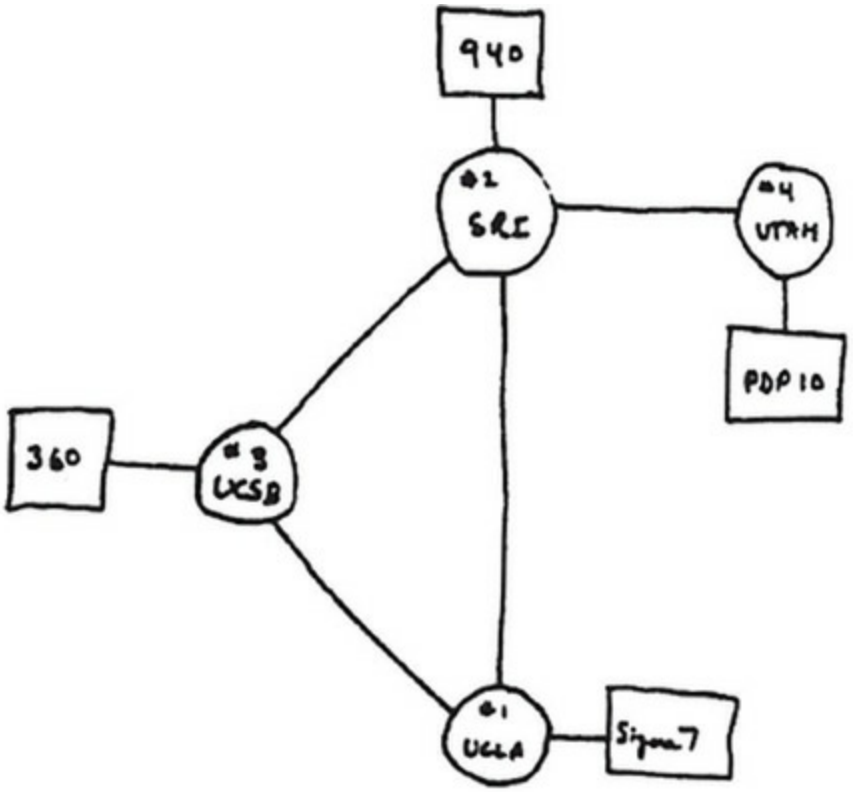
The U.S. Air Force was initially willing to implement Baran's network, but AT&T, which had a monopoly on long-distance phone service at the time, refused to cooperate, so Baran put his idea on hold.[13] Meanwhile, in England, researcher Donald Davies was working on a proposed public communication network. Davies and Baran, working independently, came up with remarkably similar notions for packet switching.[14]

ARPAnet

Eventually the U.S. military built the first nationwide packet-switching network. However, the network that was built was intended to serve the needs of academic researchers, not to survive nuclear war.

The network was built by a farsighted division of the Pentagon called the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA).[15] In 1968, the contract to build the network was given to a Boston-based consulting firm on the condition that it be built in under one year. By the fall of 1969, ARPAnet connected four different institutions, and the first component of the internet was running. As the hand-drawn map of ARPAnet in Figure 10.2 shows, the initial nodes were University of California–Los Angeles, Stanford Research Institute, University of California–Santa Barbara, and University of Utah. ARPAnet came online at about the same time as the first moon landing. Whereas Neil Armstrong's "one small step" was noted throughout the world as one of the great achievements of humanity, no one outside of ARPA was aware that a new, world-changing medium had just been born.[16]

▲ Figure 10.2 Drawing of Four-Node Network



This is a schematic of the original four-node ARPAnet, including University of California–Los Angeles, Stanford Research Institute, University of California–Santa Barbara, and University of Utah.

Source: Courtesy of Computer History Museum.

Connecting Incompatible Networks

As ARPAnet expanded to more and more universities, other networks were formed. Each of these small networks worked well in its own limited and defined sphere, but they couldn't communicate with one another. How could they be linked together?

Creating the Internet's Protocols.

The answer came from work done by Bob Kahn and Vint Cerf. The pair envisioned a box, or gateway, that would serve as a translator for all the various incompatible networks. The individual networks would talk to the gateways using a common set of rules, or "protocols." Their protocol was known as TCP/IP. TCP stands for *transmission control protocol*, which controls how data are sent out on the internet. IP stands for *internet protocol*, which provides the address for each computer on the internet. The term *internet* was coined in 1973 as an abbreviation for "internetworking of networks."

Commercial Networks.

As academics started making personal use of the internet, nonacademics became interested in computer communication and started buying access to network services through companies such as CompuServe, Prodigy, and AOL.[17]

The Next-Generation Internet.

With all the public and commercial traffic flowing on the internet, next-generation networks are now under construction to serve the same purpose as ARPAnet—to provide academics and other researchers with high-speed links to computers around the world, especially the limited number of supercomputers. These new and improved networks have the potential to move data ten to twenty times faster than the conventional internet, given ideal conditions. Their primary advantage is that they make possible video and interactive applications that are of much higher quality. For example, students at medical schools in different parts of the country can view an interactive medical simulation simultaneously using the new network, something that would have been impossible with the older, slower lines. As of 2018, more than 562 member organizations, including universities, corporations, government agencies, and nonprofits, belonged to the Internet2 consortium, one of the leading next-generation networks, which connected to a broader, ninety-four-thousand-institution community spread across more than one hundred countries.[18]

Questioning the Media

Let's see how well you know the newest medium: What is the internet? Who owns and controls it? Where did it come from?

What Are Online/Mobile Media?

With the coming of networks, and especially the internetworking standards, computers were transformed. Bob Taylor, who helped oversee the creation of ARPAnet, said, "Computers were first born as arithmetic engines, but my own view . . . is that they're much more interesting and powerful as communication devices because they mediate human-to-human communication."[19] The thing that makes computer-based communication so powerful is that it includes virtually every level of communication, from the interpersonal communication of email and instant messaging to the mass communication of the World Wide Web.

Email

Although its original purpose was the sharing of resources, the most important factor in the development of the internet was electronic mail (email), defined simply as a message sent from one computer user to another across a network. Primitive email existed prior to the internet, but people could send messages only to other users on the same physical computer. There was no way to send a message from one computer to another.

In 1972, ARPAnet's Ray Tomlinson wrote a simple file-transfer program that could send a message from one system to another.[20] When the software that operated ARPAnet was updated, Tomlinson's email application was sent out over the net so that everyone would have the same materials. Tomlinson also created the form of address using the @ symbol. It was a way of saying, "This is a message for a person 'at' a particular computer." The other reason was that the @ symbol did not appear in users' names or locations. It was the one symbol that meant what Tomlinson wanted it to mean and that was not already in use.[21] Even with all the growth online communication has undergone throughout the decades, email continues to be one of the most important online applications for the largest number of people, even if it isn't as trendy as newer technologies.

Texting and Direct Messaging

Interpersonal communication on the internet has expanded beyond email through a variety of texting and "chat" services accessed through mobile phones or other mobile devices. These originated with text messages that could be sent using Short Message Service, or SMS. The protocol for sending these messages over mobile networks first went online in 1992, and by 2010, it was the most widely used application on mobile phones.[22] While SMS is convenient and can be used as a way of connecting to numerous social media networks, there are also alternative ways of sending instant messages, or ways of engaging in instantaneous communication with others over online and mobile networks. The granddaddy of these was AOL's Instant Messenger (AIM). At one point in the 1990s, it seemed as though AIM was everywhere. But as the former dial-up internet giant gradually lost relevance, it also neglected the development of its instant messaging (IM) product. On December 15, 2017, following a twenty-year run, AOL shut down AIM.[23] In the late 2010s, the two most popular apps in this category belong to Facebook—Facebook Messenger and the globally popular WhatsApp.[24] (You can read more about the rise and fall of AOL in Chapter 3.)

The World Wide Web

Until 1990, using the internet for anything more than email was a challenge. Information was scattered about in various places, with no easy way to access it. All that changed with the invention of the World Wide Web by British physicist Tim Berners-Lee. Berners-Lee, who built on the ideas of several internet pioneers, created the software that allows the internet to work as a medium of mass communication. He developed a system that is easy to use, allows users to access any type of information, and has a simplified single addressing system for accessing any document located on the web anywhere in the world.

Predecessors of the Web.

The idea of the web dates back to the 1960s. In 1968, Stanford researcher Doug Engelbart staged a demonstration of his vision of an interactive computer. He used a pair of computer terminals in an "online" session that included word-processing documents, hypertext documents, and live video images (sent over closed-circuit analog lines). Engelbart was ahead of his time and largely ignored, but his work was the first expression of what would come with the Macintosh, Microsoft Windows, and videoconferencing.[25]

▼ Tim Berners-Lee is the British physicist who created the World Wide Web software as a side project while working at the CERN high-energy physics lab in Switzerland.



AP/ Associated Press/ Elise Amendola

Another early vision of the web, more philosophical than technical, came from Ted Nelson. Nelson described a form of "nonsequential writing" that he called hypertext—material formatted to contain links that allow the reader to move easily from one section to another and from document to document. The most commonly used hypertext documents are web pages.

Tim Berners-Lee and the Birth of the World Wide Web.

When Tim Berners-Lee was a child, his parents owned a Victorian-era advice book called *Enquire Within Upon Everything*. What would it be like, Berners-Lee wondered, if there really was a book that contained everything you might want to know? In 1980, he made his first attempt to create such a resource by writing a program called Enquire to organize documents, lists of people, and projects on his computer. The hypertext program would let him find and connect any of his documents. Although Enquire was limited to Berners-Lee's computer, the young British physicist thought about the possibilities of the program extending beyond his own computer to every computer in the world:

> Suppose all the information stored on computers everywhere were linked . . . Suppose I could program my computer to create a space in which anything could be linked to anything. All the bits of information in every computer . . . on the planet would be available to me and to anyone else. There would be a single, global information space.[26]

Berners-Lee was never asked to create the web; he simply thought it would be a good idea for researchers to be able to find documents they needed regardless of which computer those documents resided on. In 1989, he returned to his Enquire idea and started writing the software for a system he called the World Wide Web, which allows users to view and link documents located anywhere in the world using standard software.

By 1990, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), where Berners-Lee was working at the time, had the first web server and a simple browser. (A web server is a program that makes web pages available on the internet. A browser is a program for viewing web pages.)

The World Wide Web has three major components:

1. The uniform resource locator (URL)—the address of content placed on the web. An example is www.mysite.com.
2. The hypertext transfer protocol (http)—the standard set of rules used by web servers and browsers for sending and receiving text, graphics, or anything else on a website. When you type http://, you are telling your web browser to use this protocol, or set of rules.
3. The hypertext markup language (HTML)—the programming language used to create web pages. It consists of all the tags (brief computer commands) that say how text ought to be presented, where graphics should be placed, and what links should be included.

Although the web has grown immensely in complexity since it was invented, these three basic elements remain central to how it operates.

Berners-Lee released the web software in the summer of 1991 on several internet newsgroups. These early users helped him test and debug the program and made suggestions for improvement, and the web started spreading around the world.

▼ Mobile devices, such as the one being used by this Uygur woman in a Chinese bazaar, bring internet access to developing areas without easy access to traditional computers.



Zhang Peng/Getty Images

Whereas Berners-Lee developed the web on a NeXT computer system, the development of browsers for a wide range of computers was done on a volunteer basis by people around the world. These individuals were willing to share their work, but language barriers sometimes posed a problem. One of the early browsers had documentation only in Finnish. (You can read more about Steve Jobs and the NeXT computers in Chapter 3.)

The most surprising thing about the World Wide Web may be that it was developed almost entirely as a collaborative, nonprofit venture. "What amazed me during the early days was the enormous amount of free energy that went into developing that technology," says Michael Folk, one of the early web developers. "People from all over the world contributed huge amounts of time and ideas in a surprisingly noncompetitive, collaborative way."[27]

A Vision for the Web.

Although the World Wide Web has grown far beyond what anyone could have imagined and has changed immeasurably, it is still shaped by the basic vision of Tim Berners-Lee. His goal was to create a completely decentralized system for sharing information that would have no central hub. With no central control, the whole system could scale—that is, grow

almost indefinitely—yet still work properly. Berners-Lee was looking for a system in which any computer could link to any other computer: "The power of a hypertext link is that it can link to absolutely anything. That's the fundamental concept."[28]

The success of the World Wide Web illustrates one of the major strengths of the internet: Although users can buy a web browser or web server, the basic technology is free. According to Dave Walden, who worked on the original ARPAnet software,

> [Berners-Lee] brought out something, he gave it to a few of his friends, they tried it, they saw that it was good, and he gave it away. It went all over the world. That's how the World Wide Web standard came on the world.[29]

The next time you go surfing on the web, look for evidence of the principles—openness and accessibility—on which it is based:

- Information of all kinds should be available through the same window, or information space. This means that you don't have to use one program to look up phone numbers and another to find the news.
- All documents on the web must be equally accessible.
- There must be a single address that will take users to a document.
- Users should be able to link to any document at any space.
- Users should be able to access any type of material from any type of computer.
- Users should be able to create whatever types of relationships between information that they want to. It should be possible to link a document to any other document.
- The web should be a tool not just for information, but also for collaboration. It is designed for interaction, as well as publication.
- There is no central control of the web.
- The web software should be available free to anyone who wants to use it.

Bringing the Net to the Public.

Before 1993, the internet and the World Wide Web belonged primarily to university and military personnel who had used ARPAnet. But in his history of the internet, *Nerds 2.0.1*, Stephen Segaller notes that three things happened during the early 1990s to turn the internet into a significant social force: The World Wide Web code was posted to the internet, commercial users were allowed onto the net for the first time, and the first easy-to-use graphical web browser was written and posted to the net. With these changes, the internet outgrew its military and research origins and became a public medium.

▼ What's the first thing we do when we wake up? For many of us, it involves checking our phone and clicking through Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and maybe even Snapchat.



Bloomberg/Getty Images

Mosaic.

Although Berners-Lee had created a browser as part of the original World Wide Web, it was limited in terms of the computers it would run on, and it could not display anything other than text. Mosaic, the first easy-to-use graphical web browser, was created by a group of student programmers led by Marc Andreessen at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The developers wanted to create a tool that would make it easier to find things on the internet and that would provide an incentive to put information on the web. As with the original web software, Mosaic was posted on the internet, free for users to download. More than one million users downloaded Mosaic in 1993 (the year it was released), and Andreessen, then twenty-one and a graduate, founded Netscape Communications.[30]

Search as a Medium

The question of whether the internet's search capability is a news medium is significant because various governments around the world want to put limits on internet searching. And companies such as Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo all seem willing to build limits into their portals as part of the price of doing business in countries that have more restrictions on free speech than the United States. Sometimes the censorship of searches is relatively noncontroversial, such as France's attempts to make Yahoo filter out all references to Nazi paraphernalia.[31]

But despite the fact that major tech companies would love to have access to the massive Chinese market, they are largely blocked from doing business there. Google was blocked starting in 2010 when it allowed Chinese users access to its uncensored search engine. Facebook and Twitter have been blocked since 2009, though apparently President Donald Trump was able to tweet during his visit to China in 2017.[32]

Blogs

When Tim Berners-Lee created the World Wide Web, he viewed it not just as a convenient and inexpensive place to access published materials, but also as a forum where people could interact and create their own materials. "We ought to be able not only to find any kind of document on the Web, but also to create any kind of document, easily," he wrote in his history of the web. "We should be able not only to follow links, but to create them—between all sorts of media. We should be able not only to interact with other people, but to create with other people."[33]

Blogs are in many ways a throwback to the early days of magazine publishing, when authors wrote without expecting to be paid. While there are subsidized blogs, the vast majority are run simply to give the writers a forum.[34]

SECRET 2 ▸ I made the case earlier in this book that blogs can be almost as mainstream as what we consider to be the mainstream media. (Remember Secret 2—There are no mainstream media). One test of the importance of a news source is whether it is included in the LexisNexis online news database. LexisNexis is part of a giant subscription service that gives clients access to the full text of major newspapers, magazines, financial reports, and court documents. As of 2006, LexisNexis started including text from selected blogs, including NPR's *Planet Money* economics blog and *Goats and Soda*, a global health and development blog.[35]

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Humans of New York

▼ This is one of the thousands of portraits Brandon Stanton has shot and posted online as part of his *Humans of New York* blogging project.



Brandon Stanton

Back in 2010, Brandon Stanton was a young bond trader working in Chicago. He had a semiprofessional camera and spent some of his free time taking photos around Chicago. Then he lost his job and suddenly had a lot more free time, so he started taking a lot more photos. "Instead of updating my resume and looking for a similar job, I decided to forget about money and have a go at something I really enjoyed."[38]

After traveling around taking photos in a number of U.S. cities, he moved to New York City with the goal of taking ten thousand portraits of ordinary people. Anyone who has tried going up to random people on the street and asking them if he or she can take their picture knows how hard that can be. The project came to be known as *Humans of New York*, and Stanton posted his best photos, along with a short caption/story, on Facebook and Tumblr. It took about a year, but finally he started getting followers, and talk. His blog got some positive comments from Tumblr founder David Karp, but the *Washington Post* says that most of the credit for *Humans of New York*'s fifteen million followers goes to Stanton himself.

In a 2014 speech in Ireland, Stanton said it's all about being willing to just go up and talk to people:

> The way I figured this out was just by doing it 10,000 times and getting beaten down, beaten down, beaten down, beaten down. There was no way I'm the best photographer in the world, no way that I'm the best journalist in the world, but I have approached over 10,000 people on the streets of what is stereotypically . . . one of the colder cities in the world and have asked them for their photograph. So I'm thinking by about this time I might be just about the best in the world at stopping random people on the street and getting them to let me take their photograph.[39]

Stanton's blog posts take a standard format—they have a photo of one or two people along with a quote that tells a very short story about the person(s).

While *Humans of New York* clearly exists and is shared on social media, it also illustrates the importance of social interaction outside of the online component. As Stanton says, the thing that makes *Humans* such a success is not the brilliant quality of the photos or writing, but the fact that he is socially interacting with all these people. Karp says, "It's become this community effort where people actually send in stories about the dude that makes them a bagel every morning who just always has a great story to tell or the dude with an epic mustache that I see walking down the street every day. They send in these stories about these people and Brandon goes, finds them [and] takes these gorgeous portraits of them, and uploads them with that

story that led him to that person."[40]

Since his start in 2010, Stanton has traveled around the world taking *Humans* photos in a range of countries including Iran and Pakistan.

You can see the entire blog on Facebook or at www.humansofnewyork.com.

WHO is the source?

Who is Brandon Stanton? What did he do before he was a photographer?

WHAT is he doing?

Of whom is Stanton taking photos? How does he present them?

WHAT evidence is there?

How does Stanton find the people he takes photos of? How does he get their cooperation? How is his work on the *Humans of New York* project social media?

WHAT do you and your friends think about this?

Take a look at several of Stanton's photographs and read the captions that go with them. Which one is a favorite of yours? Why? How does it capture your attention? Have you ever tried to go up to strangers to try to interview them or take their photograph? Was it easy or hard? Why? If you want, you can try doing your own *Humans* photos and post them through your social media channels.

Berners-Lee's original idea was that every web browser would also be an editor that ordinary people could use to create content as well as to view it—a vision that the early web browsers did not support. But the late 1990s brought a new development called the weblog (or blog for short), which is a collection of links and commentary in hypertext that can be created and posted on the internet with relatively little effort. Blogs can be public diaries, collections of photos, or commentaries on the news. They often also allow readers to comment on and annotate what the owner has posted.

A prominent example of the influence of bloggers came when Dan Rather, on the CBS newsmagazine *60 Minutes II*, reported on a set of memos that seemed to show that President George W. Bush's superior officer had been critical of his service in the Air National Guard. The story ran a couple of months before the 2004 election, and it drew immediate criticism from the conservative blogs *Power Line* and *Little Green Footballs*. The bloggers pointed out inconsistencies in the typefaces used in the memos, suggesting that they looked more like the product of a modern word processor than that of a 1970s vintage typewriter. They also raised questions about the motives and honesty of the source of the documents. Criticisms coming from these and other blogs led to Rather stepping down as the anchor of the *CBS Evening News*.[36]

Blogs have also given readers different perspectives on stories than they might receive otherwise from independent voices. Obsessed Apple blogger John Gruber runs *Daring Fireball*, which Recode.net calls "the world's most powerful one-man media company." Gruber publishes tech and business news about Apple, comments on related issues, and

discusses whatever else he wants to. Gruber makes his decisions about what to write about based on the idea that his audience is himself. "It's somebody out there who's exactly like me and isn't writing Daring Fireball," he said.[37] Everest and Himalayan climbing blogger Alan Arnette is one of the world's leading sources on news about Himalayan mountaineering, and he posts daily updates during the peak climbing season. Aside from delivering information you would have a hard time finding anywhere else, Arnette uses his blog to raise money and awareness about Alzheimer's disease. If you do a search on Arnette while people are summiting in the Himalayas, you will find him being quoted in newspapers from Minneapolis to Nepal to Borneo to London. (He's also personally summited Everest and K2.)

Podcasts and Streaming Media

The internet, through blogs, podcasts, and user-video sites such as YouTube, has opened up the options for long-tail news that doesn't get out through legacy (or mainstream) channels. Take the concept of citizen journalism. Often when we talk about citizen journalism, we're talking about a newspaper-like blog that posts reports about hyperlocal issues, such as neighborhood events or elementary school sports. These provide valuable alternatives to stories carried in traditional newspapers or on local television news. But they have more in common with the old-time community newspapers that ran stories about who had dinner with whom than with cutting-edge journalism.

But news video posted through sites such as YouTube can lead to amateur cell phone video having international implications. Following the disputed elections in Iran during the summer of 2009, a large number of protesters took to the streets. These protests were suppressed by police, who did not allow journalists to cover the events taking place. But that didn't stop people from shooting cell phone video and then posting it to the internet.

One of the most dramatic examples of this was the news about the murder of Neda Agha-Soltan, a twenty-six-year-old Iranian woman who was studying philosophy and vocal music. Though accurate details about Agha-Soltan are scarce, the *New York Times* reported that she was engaged, valued freedom, and was killed while stopping to get some fresh air after driving home from a singing lesson.[41] When she got out of the car near where protesters were marching, she was shot by a sniper. Her death was captured on cell phone video. The person who captured the video emailed it to a friend, who then forwarded it to the Voice of America, the British newspaper the *Guardian*, and several other friends. One of those friends, who lives in the Netherlands, posted the video to Facebook. From there, it moved on to a report on CNN.[42] All of this allowed the person who shot the video to bypass official Iranian censorship efforts to block internet, cell phone, and text message traffic.[43]

The first use of the internet by the movie industry was to promote films through brochure-like web pages. Then came *The Blair Witch Project*, which showed how interaction on the web could draw in viewers (see Chapter 8). But this has evolved into the internet being used as the screening venue for short films. But now film sites on the web have become the minor leagues of the movie and television industry. Aspiring filmmakers first establish themselves with a short, low-cost internet film in the hope that someone in the industry will notice them.[44] Of course, on user-generated content sites, such as YouTube, the short films can be beyond low budget.

▼ *Eagle vs Shark* director Taika Waititi, center, on the set with stars Loren Horsley (left) and Jemaine Clement (right). Waititi would go on to make the blockbuster Thor:

Ragnarok, but this earlier indie film can be streamed on Fandor.



Eagle vs. Shark (2007)/Photofest

Another thing the internet can do is air films that may be too avant-garde for conventional media. The streaming service Fandor serves up an eclectic mix of art house film, vintage B movies, and offbeat documentaries. But *New York Times* film critic Glenn Kenny says what really makes the streaming site stand out is its interesting menu structure. Look for action/adventure, and you'll see subchoices of "Martial Arts," "Sword and Sandal," "Wilderness," and "Treasure Hunting." The viewer can also search by running time of the movie or year of release. The choices here are clearly different from what pops up on Netflix or Amazon Prime. On the front page as this is being written is a promo for the 2007 New Zealand comedy *Eagle vs Shark* by Taika Waititi, who burst onto the world stage in 2017 with *Thor: Ragnarok*.[45]

But, of course, as we discussed in Chapter 9, online is definitely the place for watching mainstream television and movie programming from services such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime. Programs can be had through streaming video podcasts and digital downloads of movies and television shows through online services such as iTunes or Amazon.com. From there, users can view their video on computers, smartphones, tablets, or smart televisions. Back in 2000, Martin French, who worked for the internet film site MeTV, put it this way: "Let's be honest, nobody wants to sit in front of the PC and [watch movies]. It's not a comfortable position."[46] Obviously, people are willing to view video on their computers, tablets, and even smartphones. It is true that alternative devices have gotten better, but there is an ongoing cultural change on how people view video.

Social Media: Sharing Our Lives Online

SECRET 1 ▸ Like so much of the media, social networks (also known as social media) are a central part of how we live (remember Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives). While time and distance used to be barriers to communication, these can now be crossed with relative ease if you have access to some basic online technology, whether through desktop computers or mobile devices. We think of mobile phones as a transformational technology, but the social networks we can access through these phones can transform things even further.

What Makes Media Social?

What is a social network? According to researchers M. Chethan and Mohan Ramanathan, "Social networks connect individuals or groups over a common platform. Once connected, the human tendency to share information or chat (talk?) trivia becomes the driving force, creating a mind-boggling amount of information and traffic."[47] What do social media have that makes them social? Chethan and Ramanathan write that there are five basic characteristics that make social media social:

- User-created generated content—Social networks aren't websites where you go just to consume content; you go there to create it. This content can include written words, photos, podcasts, and streaming audio and video.
- Comments—The communication doesn't just flow from one creator to other consumers. Everyone who is active on the social network is commenting on what others are posting. This interaction can range from extensive online debates to things as simple as "liking" a photo on Facebook.
- Tagging—People tag, or mark, photos and text in which they are featured. They can also tag ideas or keywords within their posts, such as the hashtags in Twitter. Although the hashtag is now seen as an essential part of Twitter culture, it was more than a year after the service started that the hashtag was first created as an organizing principle on social media.[48]
- Social networking—People are able to share what they post online with groups of friends or like-minded people. These can be groups of friends on Facebook, stories on Snapchat, or followers on the simple blogging service Tumblr.
- Customization—People can make their social network pages unique. For example, on your Facebook page, you get to choose a small profile photo and a larger "cover" photo. On your Twitter page, you get a small "avatar" image, and you can set the colors and background.

Among the most popular social networks are Facebook, the giant of the field; microblogging site Twitter; the professionally oriented LinkedIn; and pinboard site Pinterest. A 2018 study of teen and twentysomething social media use found that Snapchat was the most popular social network at 28 percent, followed closely by photo-sharing service Instagram at 27 percent. Unsurprisingly, the study found that teens are more interested in sharing photos and video than text.[49]

While we often think about social media as being primarily for recreational or social purposes, they can also be used by businesses and organizations for collaboration, public relations, and crowdsourcing—a fancy term for getting other people to do your homework.

Questioning the Media

How many different social media accounts do you have? Whom are they with? With whom do you communicate using social media? Do you ever think you share too much through social media? Why or why not?'

Who Are Our Social Media?

YouTube.

YouTube was founded by three friends who were early employees at Elon Musk's internet payment company PayPal. When eBay bought out PayPal in 2002, Chad Hurley, Steven Chen, and Jawed Karim had their chance to try something new.[50] The three got the idea for YouTube after a dinner party at Chen's house where many of the guests, who were shooting video using video cameras or cell phones, wanted to share their videos.

"We found it very easy to share the photos with one another," Chen says. "But when we tried to share the movies, and we tried to e-mail the movies, they kept getting rejected, bounced back . . . This was going to be more and more of a problem for different people."[51]

"We saw an opportunity to help people with video," Hurley said. "People have access to devices that have video capability from digital cameras to cell phones and don't have an easy way to share those clips with one another. So we went about simplifying this process to empower everyone with the ability to use video online."[52]

▼ Table 10.1

▼ TABLE 10.1

Top Social Media Sites

Channel	Ages 18–24	All Adults
YouTube	94%	73%
Facebook	80%	68%
Snapchat	78%	27%
Instagram	71%	35%
Twitter	45%	24%
Pinterest	31%	29%
LinkedIn	25%	25%
WhatsApp	25%	22%

Source: Data are from Aaron Smith and Monica Anderson, "Social Media Use in 2018," *Pew Research Center*, March 1, 2018, http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/.

Source: Data are from Aaron Smith and Monica Anderson, "Social Media Use in 2018," Pew Research Center, March 1, 2018, http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/.

The following year, Google bought out the founders, and YouTube has grown into the biggest video-sharing site online. And while much of the content now is entertainment programming put up to make money with advertising, the roots of the social video-sharing site that it started as are still there. YouTube is considered to be the most popular social media network, used by 94 percent of people ages 18–24.[53] (See Table 10.1.)

▼ In 2018, Facebook announced that 1.3 billion people are using Messenger each month. The app that everyone hated when it was announced in 2014 is now one of the

most used messaging platforms.



Josh Edelson/AFP/Getty Images

Facebook.

As anyone who has seen the movie *The Social Network* knows, Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook while he was a student at Harvard back in 2004. As a child, Zuckerberg created a simple messaging program that solved the problem of how his father's front office could announce that a dental patient had arrived. Instead of playing computer games, he created them, according to a profile of him that ran in the *New Yorker*.

While there is controversy as to who developed the idea of Facebook, there can be little doubt that Zuckerberg turned the concept into an incredibly popular tool for communicating with friends. He told journalist Jose Antonio Vargas (whom we will talk about further in Chapter 14) that when he was in college, he and his friends would speculate about how people would use the internet. "We'd say, 'Isn't it obvious that everyone was going to be on the Internet?'" he said. "'Isn't it, like, inevitable that there would be a giant social network of people?' It was something that we expected to happen."[54] As of 2018, more than 68 percent of the American adults who were online were on Facebook, and more than 2.2 billion people were active on Facebook worldwide, making it far and away the biggest social network.[55] Facebook differs from much of the web and has more in common with the old AOL than with the web in general. It is a "walled garden" where people can play games, share articles, and post cute videos of cats. Central to Facebook is the idea that advertisers will be able to reach exactly the consumers that they want to based on information people have shared on Facebook. I can't be certain, but I'm pretty suspicious that the ad offering a good deal on the Blu-ray set of the *Alien*

movies was targeted at people like me who are tagged as fans of director Ridley Scott. In any event, the ad worked. I ordered the set. (You can read more about Facebook and concerns over its privacy policies at the beginning of Chapter 3.)

Instagram.

Instagram was born on July 16, 2010, and for all the photo-sharing site's evolution and growth into a social media powerhouse, in some ways, it hasn't changed that much. The very first post was by cofounder Mike Krieger with a filtered image of a marina shot through a window. The second was a workplace photo of cofounder Kevin Systrom. Later in the evening, there was a photo of beer and dinner, puppies, and people having fun for the evening. Everything except the selfie![56]

Instagram changed a lot over the following years, adding video, full frame as an option to the original square photo, and more and more and more filters. One important change has been the addition of tools to make it clearer when social media stars are putting up sponsored posts, where they are being paid to feature a product in their photo.[57] The other big change happened in 2012 when Facebook paid $1 billion for Instagram. At the time, Instagram only had thirty million users and no revenue. Five years later, however, it had more than six hundred million users, and it is making significant income for its owners. It also paved the way for Facebook to buy the global messaging app WhatsApp and the virtual reality company Oculus.[58]

Like Snapchat, Instagram is much more heavily used by young people than adults (see Table 10.1). Instagram users also are likely to visit the site frequently.[59]

Snapchat.

Snapchat is among the most popular social media channels among young people, but once you get out of that demographic, its usage falls way off. Among Americans ages 18–24, the instant message and photo-sharing service is used by 78 percent, but only 27 percent of the overall adult population uses Snapchat. To those who use it, however, it is incredibly popular, with 71 percent of its young users visiting it multiple times a day.[60]

While Snapchat is wildly popular among young social media users, it's had trouble making money. Part of the reason is that its stripped-down design makes it harder to use for those who aren't on it several times a day. The app recently underwent a major, and somewhat controversial, redesign that simplified using the service. The design has been accused of making it look more like Facebook. Although Snapchat has a significant audience with 178 million global users, it's still an order of magnitude smaller than the 2-billion-subscriber Facebook. *New York Times* reporter Kevin Roose writes that it was Snapchat's differences from Facebook that always made it stand out, with its auto-disappearing photos and messages. It was, as Roose writes, "temporary instead of permanent, private instead of

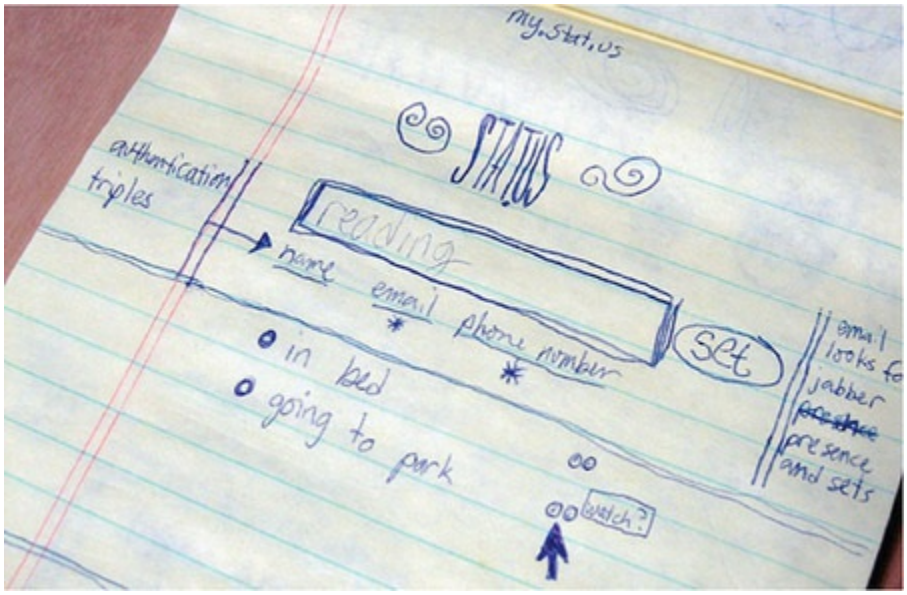
public, candid instead of rehearsed."[61]

Although Snapchat is seen heavily as a youth-oriented social media service, thirty-five-year-old California congressman Eric Swalwell, who live streamed a Democratic anti-gun sit-in on the House floor using Periscope, uses the app to connect with constituents. Unlike most politicians, Swalwell does his snapping himself rather than relying on his staff. Swalwell started sharing short videos, photos, and details about his daily life in a format where the material would be gone in a day as a way to connect with younger voters. "I realized that so many of our constituents were on Snapchat," he told the *Hill*. "It wasn't just young people, but their parents had figured out that's where their kids are."[62]

Twitter.

In 2006, three college dropouts developed Twitter, a medium that combines elements of mobile text messaging, online instant messaging, and a good dose of blogging. By 2017, it had more than 330 million people answering the question, "What are you doing?"[63] Evan Williams, Jack Dorsey, and Biz Stone started the microblogging Twitter service as a project while they were working for the podcasting company Odeo.[64] Twitter is designed to let people communicate with their friends, family, and coworkers using messages no longer than 140 characters. The little messages, known as tweets, can be delivered to your friends, your acquaintances, or anyone in the world who can be bothered to read them. You can send and receive tweets as emails, on Facebook, through a widget on a web page, or on your cell phone as text messages.

▼ Jack Dorsey's original sketch of what would become Twitter. In this version, he called it stat.us.



Jack Dorsey, "twttr sketch" from Flickr. Licensed under CC BY 2.0,

https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/.

Technology consultant Charlene Li told the *Sunday Times* of London that Twitter can be valuable to businesses because they can use it to set up a two-way relationship with their customers, creating a sense of interaction. At a time when many consumers decide not to watch television commercials by fast-forwarding through them using their DVRs, they are still willing to receive messages such as electronic coupons. "Twitter is a great platform to push out those messages," Li said. "I don't mind Starbucks making an announcement on my Twitter page but I don't want them in my inbox."[65]

Test Your Media Literacy

Should the President Be Tweeting?



Twitter/@realDonaldTrump

Twitter/@realDonaldTrump

A year following his election to the White House, real estate developer and former reality television host Donald Trump credited his use of social media, and Twitter in particular, for getting him elected. The president told Maria Bartiromo at Fox Business Network, "I doubt I would be here if it weren't for social media, to be honest with you."[67] Trump said he liked using Twitter because he could respond immediately and directly to his critics: "So when somebody says something about me, I am able to go bing, bing, bing, and I take care of it. The other way I would never get the word out."[68]

Communications professor David Gerzof Richard says President Trump has made a major transformation, going to social media rather than news media to get his messages out. "President Trump uses the platform to tell his story, his way," he said. "There is no editorial board, no fact checkers, no advisers, not filters—just a direct conduit to tens of millions of followers."[69]

Trump's effective use of Twitter harkens back to the work of Canadian economist and media theorist Harold Innis who wrote back in the 1950s that new media that are biased toward rapid distribution of information rather than lasting a long time will tend to upset the social order.[70] (You can read more about Innis and his ideas back in Chapter 2.)

President Trump's most popular tweet of 2017 was of a video from 2007 that had Trump body slamming someone at WWE's WrestleMania. The video had been altered so that the man Trump slammed had his head replaced with a CNN logo. The tweet was discussed on the Sunday morning talk show, and so it got amplification from the legacy media.

His second most popular tweet was part of an exchange of insults between the president and the head of North Korea. President Trump wrote: "Why would Kim Jong-un insult me by calling me 'old,' when I would NEVER call him 'short and fat?' Oh well, I try so hard to be his friend—and maybe someday that will happen!"[71]

The president's use of a social media channel to handle much of his public communication has been controversial at a number of levels. In addition to his reputation for saying anything he wants to on social media, President Trump has had a history of blocking people who are critical of him. That means that not only does he not see what his critics post, but his critics can't see or comment on his posts.

In May 2018, federal district court judge Naomi Reice Buchwald ruled that President Trump's Twitter feed

is a public forum, and so therefore he cannot block people from seeing or interacting with it. Judge Buchwald had previously suggested that if the president or other politicians did not want to see what critics were saying, they could "mute" them. Muting controls what the president would see but not what his followers would see.[72] This has First Amendment implications because presidential tweets are likely official government communication that must be freely available to everyone.

In November 2017, for eleven minutes, a rogue Twitter contract employee disabled President Trump's Twitter account on his last day on the job. While the president's account was quickly restored, the company faced extensive criticism for allowing it to happen in the first place.[73]

There have been suggestions that Twitter should block President Trump because some of his messages (such as the one apparently threatening nuclear war against North Korea) violate the company's terms of service. But the company says it does not intend to block any world leaders. In an unsigned blog post, Twitter said, "Blocking a world leader from Twitter or removing their controversial Tweets, would hide important information people should be able to see and debate. It would also not silence that leader, but it would certainly hamper necessary discussion around their words and actions.[74]

WHO is the source?

Who is Donald Trump? How does he differ from other people on Twitter?

WHAT is he saying?

What is President Trump saying on Twitter and social media? Why is what he is saying controversial?

WHAT evidence is there?

Should the president be able to block people on Twitter? Why or why not? Why is it different from you blocking someone you don't like? Why does Twitter not control what the president and other world leaders post?

WHAT do you and your friends think about this?

Do you think that the president of the United States should be on Twitter? Why or why not? Is that an appropriate place for him to comment on world affairs or to criticize people he doesn't like?

In November 2017, Twitter made its biggest change to its microblogging service by doubling the maximum character count from 140 to 280. Twitter reports that the increased length did not cause most people to write longer tweets, but it did increase levels of traffic and engagement.[66]

Going Mobile

The World Wide Web, which even in the age of mobile apps is still a major part of how we go online, is now nearly thirty years old. And over that time, our access to computers and computer-based media has changed dramatically. If we go back to 1983 in the years before the World Wide Web, a Harris poll found that 10 percent of adults had a home computer and that 14 percent of that small number had a modem to go online using a slow landline phone connection. (If you solve out that story problem, you find that 1.4 percent of American adults were online that year.) Tim Berners-Lee launched the earliest version of the web in 1989, and by 1995, 14 percent of American adults had internet access, primarily using dial-up. But perhaps more significantly, 42 percent of Americans had not even heard of the internet.[75]

By the year 2000, 37 percent of us were online, but only 3 percent had the fast, always-on broadband connection. Broadband service, such as a cable modem from a cable television provider or a digital subscriber line (DSL) from a phone company, offers connections that are many times faster than dial-up service. But broadband offers more than just increased connection speed. With a broadband connection, subscribers are connected to the net whenever their computer is turned on. This means that they don't have to download their email; it's always there. It means that things such as online radio, instant messaging, and streaming video are easily accessible.

By 2018, 89 percent of American adults were using the internet in one way or another. But it's that "another" that is transformative. More than two-thirds of Americans (68 percent) go online with mobile devices like smartphones or tablets. Beyond that, one-third of all cell phone owners say their mobile device is their primary way of going online. And in its own way, the move to mobile connectivity is just as revolutionary as the move from dial-up to broadband. For while broadband gave us "always on" connections, mobile internet gives us "anytime-anywhere" access to information.[76]

Mobile Apps

Back in 2010, *Wired* magazine ran a bright red cover with large black type proclaiming "The Web Is Dead." Chris Anderson, the same man who is responsible for the book *The Long Tail*, was arguing that the age of open-standard web pages was on the decline, leading the way to going online with specialized mobile apps. He wrote:

> You wake up and check your email on your bedside iPad—that's one app. During breakfast you browse Facebook, Twitter, and *The New York Times*—three more apps. On the way to the office, you listen to a podcast on your smartphone. Another app. . . . At the end of the day, you come home, make dinner while listening to Pandora, play some games on Xbox Live, and watch a movie on Netflix's streaming service.
>
> You've spent the day on the Internet—but not on the Web.[77]

Now, in the second half of the decade, some of what Anderson predicted has come true. Apps are a big part of how we interact online. Especially a few apps like Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat—our social media. On the other hand, much of our interaction online is done through the mobile web—scaled-back versions of websites designed to work on everything from a nine-inch iPad screen, to a giant seven-inch Samsung phone, down to the smallest four-inch smartphone.

Apps are clearly important, but they aren't necessarily an either/or proposition with the web. The Pew Research Center's 2018 "Digital News Fact Sheet" notes that all forty of the top digital news sites have a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.[78]

What there can be no doubt about is that mobile devices are becoming the dominant way of going online. Just look at where the money is coming from online. In 2015, of the top fifty newspapers, forty-four had more mobile traffic than desktop computers; of the top national TV news outlets, all eight of eight had more mobile than desktop traffic, and for the top forty digital native publishers (those that don't have a legacy media component), thirty-eight had more mobile traffic.[79]

Video Games as Mass Communication

In my own media literacy class, I used to raise the question as to whether video games and video game consoles count as mass communication and whether they are a new mass medium. I think the answer is a definite yes, for a number of reasons[80]:

Video game consoles are media content delivery devices. The PlayStation 2 was a DVD player as well as a game console, and the PlayStation 3 was among the early Blu-ray players. Microsoft's Xbox One is now pitching itself as a general-purpose media entertainment hub that can be used to stream television programs and movies, play video games, and stream video game play back onto the internet.[81] Video games, like television shows or movies, have stars. They have mascots. The most prominent of these is Super Mario, who has been a force in the gaming world for Nintendo since 1981, but the list also includes characters such as Sonic the Hedgehog for Sega, *Pokémon*'s Pikachu, and *Halo*'s Master Chief for the Microsoft Xbox.

Video games are a new venue for advertising. Just like newspapers, magazines, and websites are funded by ad revenue, many game publishers are turning to the advertising world to help manage costs. Companies such as IGA Worldwide are devoted entirely to securing deals for companies to advertise in games, which have a near-perfect saturation in the eighteen- to thirty-four age market. When Barack Obama was making his first run for the presidency back in 2008, he advertised in video games—the first presidential candidate ever to do so.[82] Video games, now more than ever, are the site of entire communities. One needs only to look to online-specific games, such as *World of Warcraft*, or to online versions of console games, such as the *Halo* or *Call of Duty* series. The concept of online communities has become commonplace today. Now, instead of gathering around the water cooler to discuss the latest news or entertainment item, people are using Bluetooth headsets to talk to friends and family while playing capture the flag or fighting bosses to help their character rise to the next level.[83]

Media Transformation

Video Games as a Spectator Sport

Opening weekend for the eSports arena at Caesars Entertainment Studios in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Bryan Steffy/Getty Images

Video games are no longer just something you play. They are now a legitimate spectator sport. Back in the summer of 2014, a fish named Grayson captured the attention of gaming fans nationwide by playing the video games *Pokémon Red* and *Blue* on a Game Boy emulator using a motion sensor aimed at his fish tank. That a pair of technically oriented college students in New York would rig some equipment to allow their fish to randomly play a video game is not surprising. The fact that as many as twenty-two thousand people at a time would watch the fish play *Pokémon* using the video game streaming service Twitch is kind of amazing.[90]

After some initial uncertainty, video game manufacturers have gotten on board with their games being streamed and viewed. In fact, the latest consoles from Sony and Xbox (Microsoft) are designed to stream on Twitch. In May 2014, stories originating in the entertainment press came out saying that Google was preparing to buy video game streaming service Twitch, but in the end, online retail giant Amazon bought the company for $970 million.[91] Twitch was founded in 2011 as an outgrowth of the live-streaming video site Justin.tv, and it now has more than 15 million daily viewers watching an average of 106 minutes of live gaming, and more than 2.2 million gamers streaming their play monthly.[92] Amazon's purchase of the video game streaming service is part of its larger commitment to gaming. It has an in-house gaming studio, and is one of the largest video game vendors in the world. (Note that while Amazon paid close to $1 billion for Twitch, legacy news provider the *Washington Post* sold for only $250 million to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.)

Among the most popular games to watch streaming are the so-called battle royale games. What's a battle royale? Video game streamer Aaron Blackman, whom you met back in Chapter 1, compares them to the competition in The Hunger Games, where one hundred players enter a digital arena to fight to the death until only one player or team is left standing. In the spring of 2018, the most popular of these was the free-to-play game Fortnite found on the PC, PlayStation 4, and Xbox One.[93]

At the time, Blackman writes, the most popular *Fortnite* streamer was Tyler Blevins, also known as "Ninja." A former pro gamer, Ninja had been streaming since 2011. His stellar play was noticed by Canadian rapper and fellow gamer Drake, and the two began to plan to play *Fortnite* one night. On March 14, 2018, the two began streaming Fortnite together without any fanfare or lead-up promotion. Word spread quickly about the matchup over Twitter, and the pair set a new record for concurrent viewing with 628,000 people watching the stream live. As the evening progressed, rapper Travis Scott and Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster joined in.

Then in April, Ninja hosted a live night of *Fortnite* at the new eSports Arena at the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas. Fans paid $75 to enter, and were promised a spot in two of the evening's ten games. Ninja played in each of the ten games and paid $2,500 to the last player standing in each game. He also paid a $2,500 bounty to whoever killed his character in each game. The live stream on Twitch broke his old record with more than 667,000 viewers at its peak. As of late April 2018, Ninja had more than 202,000 Twitch subscribers, each paying $5 a month that gets split between Ninja and Twitch. That means that Ninja is making more than $500,000 a month to stream video games.

SECRET 3 ▸ Broadcast of live video game play isn't limited to long-tail channels like Twitch, however. In 2016, for the second year in a row, cable giant ESPN skipped showing traditional physical sports during prime time on an April Sunday night. Instead of showing an NBA game, viewers instead watched ten college students competing in the Grand Final round of the Heroes of the Dorm tournament, playing for a chance at free college tuition. The tournament began with more than four hundred teams from universities across the country, and ended with students from Arizona State winning up to $75,000 each in tuition for the rest of their college careers. Hulu is also streaming four eSports shows including commentary, tournament highlights, and competitions. Both Hulu and ESPN are interested in getting some of the attention Twitch is getting with the broadcast of eSports (that is, organized team competition in video games for spectators), thus illustrating Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center.[94]

Before you read this chapter, would you have considered video games to be a form of mass communication? Why or why not? In your mind, what does or does not make video games a mass medium?

WHAT are eSports?

WHO plays them?

WHO are the spectators, and how do they watch these games?

HOW big are the audiences for eSports?

HAVE you watched video game streamers? Who are your favorites? What games do you like to watch?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

Video games can be more profitable than the movies. In 2013, the controversial video game *Grand Theft Auto V* was released. It has sold at least ninety million copies at an estimated price of $60 a copy. That means over the last five years the game has earned more than $6 billion.[84] Compare that with the movie global box office champ *Avatar* from 2009 that's grossed nearly $2.8 billion. In fact, if you combine that with the global box office of the number-two movie, *Titanic*, which brought in $2.2 billion, *Grand Theft Auto V* still brought in more money.[85] In 2015, the movie industry had a record year when it came to total box office dollars, hitting more than $11 billion for the North American market. This was a year with really big movies being released, including *Jurassic World*, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, and *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens*. But video game software sales were $16.5 billion for the U.S. market. And that's not including system sales—just the games themselves. Total video game revenue topped $23 billion. (As *Fortune* magazine notes, while sales of games systems are important, software sales are considered the best measure of

success in the gaming industry.)[86]

▼ *PokPokémonmon* GO, the augmented reality game, became the most downloaded mobile app in its first week of release in the history of the App Store. Since then, the app has been downloaded one hundred million times on Android and iOS (combined) and generates about $10 million in revenue each day.



PG/Bauer-Griffin/Getty Images

Video games are protected by the First Amendment. A U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2011 determined that states cannot pass laws that restrict the sale of video games to minors. (This does not, however, limit the right of the industry to set standards for who can buy which games.) The case *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association* struck down a California law that prohibited the sale of video games to minors that depict "killing, maiming, dismembering or sexually assaulting an image of a human being."[87] The opinion from conservative justice Antonin Scalia states that while these games may be disgusting, "disgust is not a valid basis for restricting expression."

Given all this, it's hard not to see video games as a mass medium or a form of mass communication. According to the Pew Research Center, 97 percent of teens aged twelve to seventeen play video games in one form or another, with fully 50 percent reporting having played "yesterday." Of those who play video games, 86 percent play on consoles, 73 percent play on computers, and 60 percent play on portable game systems.[88] Among adults aged eighteen and older, 53 percent play video games, and 21 percent play daily. Computers are the most popular place for older users to play video games; consoles are more common among younger players.[89]

Diversity and Representation in Video Games

Video games have traditionally not been a hot spot for representational diversity. The characters in games are typically portrayed as white, male heterosexuals (to the degree that sexuality enters into gaming characters). A 2015 study by media research company Nielsen (the folks who do the television ratings) found that lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) and Asian American gamers feel that they have limited opportunities to create game characters who represent them in real life (IRL).[95]

▼ *The Sims 4*, the latest installment of EA's simulation game, introduced a new update that allows unprecedented gender customization options. Players can now create avatar characters with any type of physique, walk style, and tone of voice and then accessorize them in any way they choose—regardless of gender.



The Sims 4

Among LGBT gamers, 65 percent do not feel that all sexual orientations are given adequate opportunity for representation, while only 28 percent of heterosexual gamers feel that opportunity is lacking. Asian American gamers are much more likely to feel video game characters are not inclusive than are Hispanic, African American, and non-Hispanic whites.

Interestingly enough, LGBT consumers are slightly more likely to play video games than are heterosexual consumers, and Asian American consumers are more likely to game than all other ethnicities. For the percentages of various populations who play video games, see Table 10.2.

There are, of course, games that are exceptions. The Xbox series *Saints Row* has in some

editions of the game allowed for a wide range of body diversity, including extensive variation in body weight and level of masculinity and femininity. Comic artist Kiva Bay, an obese woman who has a nonbinary approach to gender identity, writes that having the opportunity to truly create a character in an open-world game who really represented her was liberating and life affirming. She writes, "In Saints Row 2, I am not a hero. But I am me. . . . And that's a powerful feeling that I should get to have more often."[96] One game that has engendered a high level of controversy is the survival game *Rust*. The game has always randomized character features such as skin color, limb length, and other characteristics we won't get into here. All of the characters in the game, however, were male. That is, they were up until the spring of 2016 when the game designers gave many players a female avatar to play with, whether they wanted the gender swap or not.

Developers Garry Newman and Taylor Reynolds addressed the sometimes ugly complaints about the gender swap on their blog:

> We understand that this is a sore subject for a lot of people. We understand that you may now be a gender that you don't identify with in real-life. We understand that this causes you distress and makes you not want to play the game anymore. Technically nothing has changed, since half the population was already living with those feelings. The only difference is that whether you feel like this now is decided by your [game ID] instead of your real life gender.[97]

(We'll talk more about gender and online conflict in Chapter 14.)

▼ Table 10.2

▼ TABLE 10.2

Percentage of Consumers Who Play Video Games

Demographic	Users
LGBT	65 percent
Heterosexual	63 percent
Asian American	81 percent
African American	71 percent
Non-Hispanic whites	61 percent
Hispanics	55 percent
Men	68 percent
Women	56 percent

Source: "How Diverse Are Video Gamers—and the Characters They Play?" *Nielsen*, March 24, 2015, http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2015/how-diverse-are-video-gamers-and-the-characters-they-play.html.

Source: "How Diverse Are Video Gamers—and the Characters They Play?" Nielsen, March 24, 2015, http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2015/how-diverse-are-video-gamers-and-the-characters-they-play.html.

The Internet and Society

Despite having its roots in the world of military research, the internet works primarily to permit the independent use of computers. The earliest users of time-sharing computer systems, in which several people on separate terminals could share a single computer, started seeing these large institutional computers as "theirs." Stewart Brand, author of the *Whole Earth Catalog*, said that users soon began to understand how they could use computers for their own purposes:

> Kennedy had said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask rather what you can do for your country." . . . Basically we were saying, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Do it yourself." You just tried stuff and you did it yourself. You didn't ask permission.[98]

This would become the rallying cry of the internet: Take control of it for yourself. This attitude sent shock waves throughout the media industry because it transformed the model of mass communication from one in which a minimal number of producers delivered news, entertainment, and culture to a public whose choices were limited. Instead, it became one in which consumers can choose for themselves what news they want to learn about, what movies they want to see, what music they will listen to, and when they will do so.

This environment of uncontrolled information is not all bliss, however. Some critics point out that the same giant media companies that dominated the older forms of media produce much of the content available on the internet. Others complain that information on the internet is uncontrolled, unreliable, and often unsuitable for young people to view.

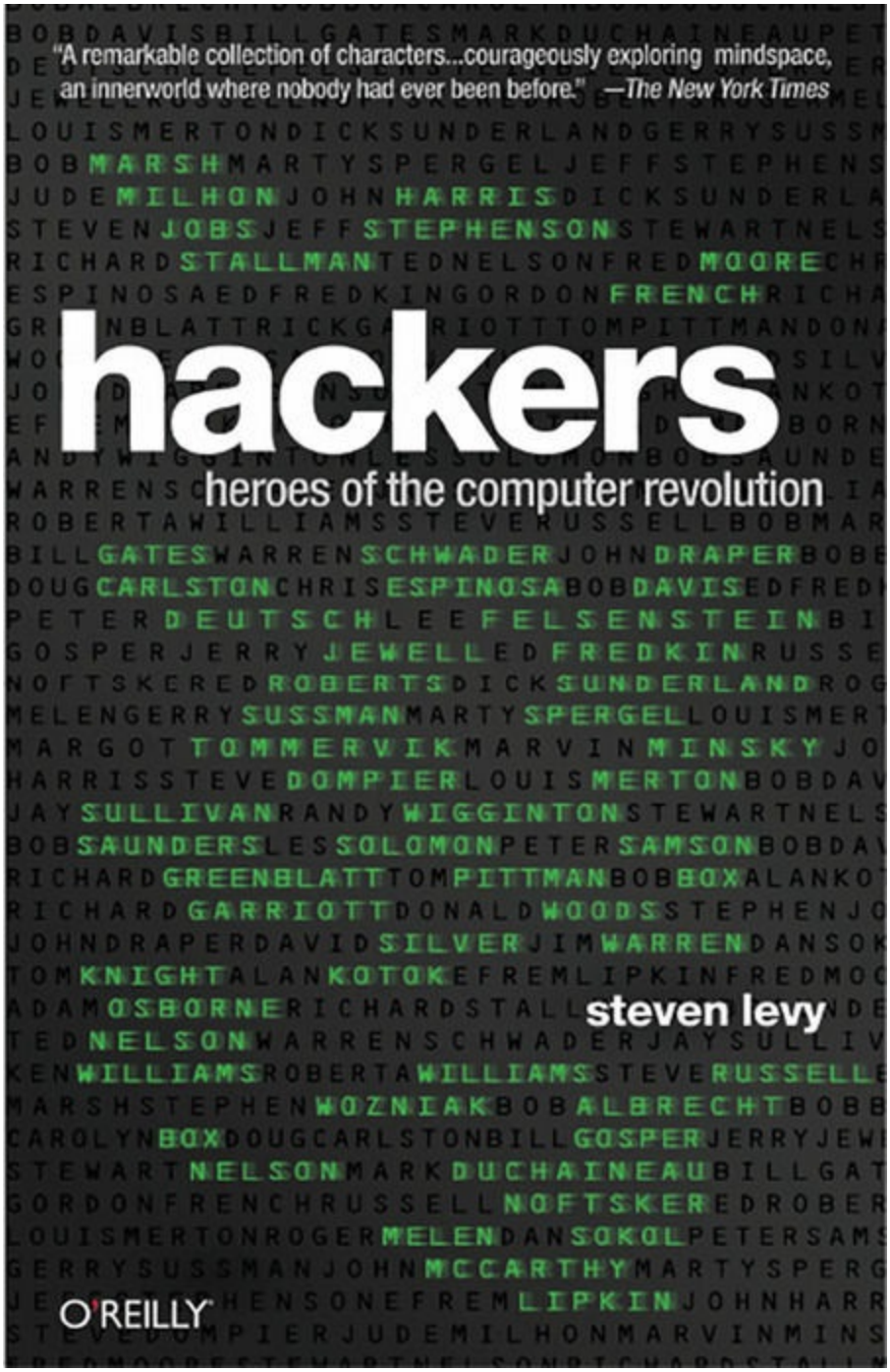
The Hacker Ethic

As a young man, Steve Jobs saw programming computers as a way of rebelling against and controlling an increasingly technological world. Jobs and Steve Wozniak, the cofounders of Apple, built electronic "blue boxes" that let them place long-distance phone calls for free by bypassing AT&T's control system. Beyond allowing the two to steal phone service and play an occasional prank, the boxes taught Jobs that technology could empower individuals:

> What we learned was that we could build something ourselves that could control billions of dollars' worth of infrastructure in the world. . . . We could build a little thing that could control a giant thing. That was an incredible lesson.[99]

Jobs's attitude embodied what is known as the hacker ethic. The ethic is summed up in Steven Levy's book *Hackers*, originally published in 1984, before the internet was a public medium and before many of the major internet tools, most notably the World Wide Web, had been developed. (Levy uses the term *hackers* to refer to people who like programming computers and using them to their fullest potential. He prefers using *digital trespassers* to refer to people who break into institutional computers. It appears, however, that many of the "true" hackers are often also digital trespassers.)

▼ Author and journalist Steven Levy laid out the principles of hacker culture in his 1984 book Hackers, written years before the internet became a popular mass medium.



Courtesy of O'Reilly Media

SECRET 3 ▸ Understanding the hacker ethic is critical to understanding the development of the internet because its values shaped so many of the new medium's developers. Levy lists four key principles of the hacker ethic[100]:

1. "Access to computers—and anything which might teach you something about the way the world works—should be unlimited and total." Hackers want to obtain programs, data, and computers, and they do not respect rules that keep them from these tools. They believe that they should be able

to directly control any computer system they can find; what's more, they believe that they can probably do a better job of running the system than the people who own it.

2. "All information wants to be free." This translates into a disregard for copyright law. Hackers believe that all information should be available to anyone who wants to make use of it. This was at the heart of file-sharing pioneer Napster and user-video site YouTube. If you have music, photographs, artwork, writings, or programs on your hard drive, why shouldn't you be able to share them? And if those same things exist on other computers, why shouldn't you be able to access them? This idea of universally shared information is at the heart of Berners-Lee's design of the World Wide Web.
3. "Mistrust authority—promote decentralization." The hacker culture distrusts centralized bureaucratic authority. Bureaucracies hide information and make rules controlling who can have access to it. So the best way to keep information free is to keep it out in the open.
4. You should be judged by your skills and not by "bogus criteria such as degrees, age, race, or position." On the internet, traditional measures of individuals, such as age, education, sex, or income, matter less than they do under most other conditions because people are able to create identities for themselves that may or may not correspond with their actual identities. In essence, this is an extension of the multiple roles and identities people have always had. You can simultaneously be a teacher, a parent, a spouse, and a child. On the internet, users can further extend their identities, changing their sex, race, and background.

The application of the values of the hacker ethic to the internet in general provides an example of Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center.

Hacking the 2016 Presidential Election

One of the most enduring controversies over the 2016 presidential election is the role that Russian hacking played in the results of the election. As you may recall, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by nearly three million votes, but Donald Trump won the all-important electoral vote 306–232.[101] He did so because of the votes of eighty thousand in three states—Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.[102] So the question of what may have affected that small number of votes looms large.

While the story of what happened during the 2016 election is still emerging, several things are relatively well understood:

- The Russian digital propaganda company the Internet Research Agency set up fake Facebook and Twitter accounts that attempted to promote messages of dissention on issues such as LGBT issues, race, immigration, and gun rights. Some of these accounts had actual people behind them while others were automated bots that republished and amplified news that matched their programming.
- Russian news organizations Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik spread false stories on social media both through regular messages and paid ads. Both organizations have now been banned from advertising on Twitter.
- Russian hackers broke into Democratic National Committee computer networks and stole thousands of emails and other documents. They then released this through websites they controlled and Julian Assange's WikiLeaks. While these documents did not have any radical secrets, they did show the ugly infighting that occurs in every political operation.
- Russian hackers also broke into voter registration systems in thirty-nine states. While they attempted to modify some of the records, there is no evidence that they changed any actual votes.[103]

Figuring out what the Russians did is substantially easier than deciding what sort of effect the digital meddling had. *New Yorker* journalist Adrian Chen, often held up as an expert on the Russian hacking, writes that we should not overstate the effectiveness of the campaign by a group of Russians who barely spoke English. "[It] ignores people's tendency to share information they already agree with; and it sees evidence, in the spread of that information among self-interested groups, of some grand design by a mastermind propagandist."[104]

Election (and baseball) statistical journalist Nate Silver, at his *FiveThirtyEight* blog, cautions giving too much credit to the Russian hacking/interference in the election, writing that former FBI director James Comey's letter to Congress coming out the week before the election about Hillary Clinton's email investigation likely swayed more voters. (Does that number, 538, sound familiar? That's the number of electoral votes there are in our

presidential election system.) Silver argues that Russian interference is hard to track in terms of importance because it wasn't just one thing. But mostly he argues that the Russian efforts were relatively small compared to the campaign as a whole. The Russian effort spent about $1.25 million a month, while the Trump campaign and associated organizations spent $617 million overall, and the Clinton campaign and her supporters spent $1.2 billion. Nevertheless, Silver notes that the themes of the Russian efforts matched those of the reasons that Clinton lost. The belief that Clinton was dishonest and untrustworthy were boosted by Russian-supported hashtags like #Hillary4Prison. The hacking of the Democratic National Committee's computer network and the subsequent release of emails were also important.[105]

Questioning the Media

How would you be able to figure out whether the Russian hacking had any effect on the 2016 presidential election? What made finding these answers so complicated? Regardless of how you feel about the election's outcome, what should the United States be doing to protect itself against outside interference in our elections?

The Notion of Cyberspace

The word *cyberspace* is used extensively to describe the internet and the interactions that take place there. But the word predates common use of the internet and the shared culture it has created. The word *cybernetics* (from the Greek *kybernetes*, meaning "pilot" or "governor") has been in use since 1948 to refer to a science of communication and control theory. Science-fiction writer William Gibson is generally credited with coupling the prefix *cyber* to the word *space* in his 1984 novel *Neuromancer*, although the authoritative *Oxford English Dictionary* (see Chapter 4) notes that Gibson originally used the word in a magazine story in 1982. Gibson defines cyberspace in this way: "Cyberspace is where the bank keeps your money. It's where a long-distance telephone call happens. It's this ubiquitous, non-physical place where increasingly a lot of what we think of as our civilization takes place."[106] Gibson sees cyberspace and the culture of the internet as an expression of the hippie ideals of freedom and self-expression: "Tired as I am with all the hype about the Internet and the info highway, I suspect that from a future perspective it will be on a par with the invention of the city as a force in human culture."[107]

Broadening Our Online World

Before the 1900s, it was relatively easy to define community: The community was made up of the people you interacted with every day. But the growth of the mass media led to changes in our understanding of community. People no longer need to be face-to-face with each other to interact. Larry Tesler, who helped develop the idea of computer communities at the Xerox PARC research center and at Apple Computer, has said that

> when we were human beings in small tribes hunting and gathering, everybody you had to deal with was somebody you saw every day. We're a species that's based on communication with our entire tribe. As the population grew and people had to split up into smaller tribes and separate, they got to the point where they would never see each other for their whole lives. The Internet is the first technology that lets us have many-to-many communication with anybody on the planet. In a sense, it's brought us back to something we lost thousands of years ago. So one reason I think the Internet's taken off so fast is that we always needed it. And we finally have it.[108]

Questioning the Media

Do you agree with the hacker ethic that "information wants to be free"? If media content is going to be free, who will pay the content creators? Should the government be stopping people from sharing copyrighted materials? Why or why not?

Is It Really a World Wide Web?

When Tesler claims that the internet allows people to interact with others anywhere on the planet, he overstates the case. Worldwide, approximately 46 percent of the population has internet access.[109] In developing countries, that number can average 35 percent, compared to 82 percent of the population in developed nations.[110] But the spread of mobile technology is helping bring change. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest percentage of people online, with only 20 percent having access, but that represents a 111 percent increase since 2010. This growth is coming because people are now getting access via phones using mobile broadband. And that technology is allowing for the 40 percent growth rate in Africa. Companies like Facebook and Google are putting substantial effort into bringing inexpensive over-the-air internet services to poorer areas.

The Digital Divide.

Even in the United States, access to a high-quality internet connection is not universal. Although there are not large systemic differences in access based on race and ethnicity, research by Pew shows that access to high-speed broadband connections go up as people's education levels and income increase. Urban people are also more likely to have broadband than people in rural settings.[111]

Conflicts Over Digital Media

For all the benefits associated with the web, the new medium has been criticized on a number of fronts. For one thing, a great deal of material on the web is inappropriate for children. Another criticism is that web surfers give up their privacy when they visit certain sites. Finally, it is argued that people spend so much time with their virtual communities and friends that they forget about their real lives.

▼ Attendees use a smartphone to take a selfie during an independence celebration in Nairobi, Kenya. People in developing countries like Kenya are most likely to go online using mobile devices.



Luis Tato/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Controlling Content on the Web.

The World Wide Web differs from all other media in that it is essentially an open forum where anyone can publish anything. More importantly, anyone can access anything he or she wants to. Because of this lack of control, unsupervised web surfing is not particularly suitable for children. As computers and the internet came to classrooms in the 1990s, parents and teachers became concerned about the possibility of students viewing pornography, hate speech, or even instructions on how to build a homemade bomb.

One solution to this problem is the use of filtering software, which can block access to certain kinds of material. This approach has been successful to a degree, but no filtering scheme can block all offensive material and still allow access to a full range of sites. For example, in 1998, the Loudoun County, Virginia, public libraries installed filtering

software. The software successfully blocked pornographic material, but it also blocked sites with information on sex education, breast cancer, and gay rights.[112] The fundamental problem with trying to control information on the net is that the network of networks was designed specifically to overcome blocks and breakdowns. Once information is on the net, it is virtually impossible to stop it from spreading. Net pioneer John Gilmore summed up the issue neatly: "The Net interprets censorship as damage and routes around it."[113]

Privacy and the Web.

A consumer walking into a conventional bookstore can wander from aisle to aisle, picking up titles of interest. After leaving the store, no one knows what books the consumer looked at. But when that same consumer shops at the online bookstore Amazon.com, the store keeps track of everything looked at. The Amazon software will then make recommendations to the shopper according to previous searches and purchases. Is this a great convenience or a serious loss of privacy?

Web users give up their privacy every time they go online. Each time they fill out a form, join a group, or buy something, information (name, address, interests, etc.) is stored so that the owner of the site will know more about its visitors. Websites create tiny files called cookies to identify website visitors and potentially track their actions on the web. Cookies may identify users so that they don't have to reenter their names and passwords. Or, as Amazon's cookies do, they might keep track of which types of items a visitor likes to look at. Cookies are generally designed to assist users as they visit one particular website, but they can also be used to track users' web-surfing habits or to provide evidence of what sites they have visited.

Website developers can use cookies to tailor sites to a particular visitor. For example, a news site could use information from a cookie to provide the scores of your favorite teams, quotes for the stocks in your portfolio, or reviews of the style of music you like. This tailoring to individual tastes could take a more sinister cast, however. Web creator Tim Berners-Lee speculates that cookies could even be used to tailor propaganda to match the biases of the viewer:

> Imagine an individual visiting the webpage of a political candidate, or a controversial company. With a quick check of that person's record, the politician or company can serve up just the right mix of propaganda that will warm that particular person's heart —and tactfully suppress points he or she might object to.[114]

Convergence of Old and New Media

There is lots of talk these days about convergence and new media, such as why the web will replace the old dead-tree media (newspapers and magazines), broadcast media, and other formats as the main source for news. New media synergy, we are told, will bring together the depth of text with an abundance of photos, audio, and video. You get all of the advantages of the old media in one package.

There are signs that this is happening. NPR (formerly National Public Radio) launched its new NPR.org website in July 2009 with the goal of enabling journalists to present photos, video, audio, and written stories to go with streaming copies and transcripts of all the stories that have aired on NPR since May 2005. The site also makes these resources available on mobile media such as the iPhone and Android.[115]

Convergence is also delivering media that wouldn't be available otherwise. As will be discussed in Chapter 15, the Arab news channel Al Jazeera started its English-language service in November 2006, but it had trouble finding any U.S. cable or satellite services willing to carry it. For the time being, Americans who are interested in watching Al Jazeera must do so primarily over the internet or using a mobile device app, though a few cable services started carrying it following the Arab Spring movement in 2011.

SECRET 7 ▸ Sometimes you get reverse synergy—the worst of the old and new media in one new package. A prime example of reverse synergy happened in 2008 when Bloomberg's online financial news service posted a six-year-old news story about United Airlines (UAL) filing for bankruptcy. The story was true—it was just six years out of date. What happened was this: An undated story about UAL's 2002 bankruptcy filing showed up on a Google search on "bankruptcy 2008" done by a reporter working for Income Securities Advisor. The story from the South Florida *Sun-Sentinel* dated back to December 10, 2002, when UAL did file for bankruptcy. The reporter who performed the search posted the story to Bloomberg News. In response to the story, investors started dumping their shares in UAL, dropping the stock from $12.17 a share to approximately $3 a share. Not realizing what had happened, UAL was baffled by the tanking of its stock, but it quickly posted an online denial of the story. By the time the market closed, UAL stock was back up to $10.92.[116]

What can we learn from this? Think about Secret 7—There is no "they." The story that sent the stock price crashing was a single story from a single website. Wouldn't you think that if a major corporation had filed for bankruptcy twice in six years the story would be playing on every major news site, not just a single Florida paper that had no local connection to the story? At the risk of oversimplifying things, the story was posted because someone—a "they"—said it was so. This resulted in a huge destruction of wealth, albeit a temporary one, because of a story that had no truth value and apparently was posted completely by accident.

Everything Is Data

We are moving into an age where more and more media are delivered digitally. And that means we will be moving away from old channels like cable television, paper, or cellular phone service and moving into the use of data services.

Think about it—how often do you come close to using up your allocation of cell phone minutes? Maybe you don't even have a limit on minutes anymore. The same is likely true of text messages (i.e., SMS).

But what about when it comes to data? Ah, that's a different story. How long do you get into the month before you start getting warning notes from your provider that you've used 50 percent, 75 percent, or 90 percent of your data allocation? Of course, your mobile provider is always quite happy to sell you another bucket of data . . .

Think about all the things you use data for on your mobile device: streaming audio and video, social media, games, maybe even a little old-school email. You might also be sending photos and video back upstream through Snapchat, Instagram, or Periscope.

If you're on an iPhone, you likely burn through a lot of data using FaceTime to make your audio and video calls (though if you're smart about it, you're using Wi-Fi whenever possible). And everyone is burning through data one way or another with Skype.

Over in the world of the television, we are seeing this transformation as well. Right now, at least if you are old, you think of TV as something that comes in through cable or down from the skies via satellite. If you're really old (or poor), you think of it as something that comes in over the air through an antenna.

But as we discussed in Chapter 9, increasingly we are getting our video programing from streaming services. When I ask my students about the most recent programming they watched on television, the most common answer (with the possible exception of the World Series broadcast) was Netflix. Now Netflix is a streaming service that you get over the internet using data. Netflix is just one of many sources of streaming video: Hulu, CBS's All Access, Amazon Prime, and the list goes on.

Apple has offered a streaming box for several years called the Apple TV that the late Steve Jobs used to refer to as a hobby. But with the release of the newest version of it, Apple seems to be taking it much more seriously—with the idea that the new Apple TV could serve as a substitute to your cable or satellite service—assuming you have a big bucket of data to support it.[117]

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

The internet arose in the late 1960s out of efforts to share expensive computer resources provided by the military to universities across the United States. The initial network, called ARPAnet, went online for the first time in the fall of 1969. The network operated using packet switching, a method of transferring information that breaks down messages into small packets that are transmitted separately across the network and reassembled once they are received. Through email and file sharing, ARPAnet soon became a tool used by academics to collaborate and communicate across the country.

As the number of incompatible networks grew in the 1970s, Bob Kahn and Vint Cerf developed the TCP/IP protocols that allowed the networks to communicate with each other. In 1983, ARPAnet started using the TCP/IP protocols. This is commonly seen as the true beginning of the internet.

The internet is unique among the mass media in allowing interpersonal communication through email and instant messaging and group communication through email, instant messaging, SMS, the World Wide Web, search, mobile apps, blogs, podcasts, and streaming media.

The World Wide Web was developed in 1989 by British physicist Tim Berners-Lee while he was working at the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland. His goal was to produce a decentralized system for creating and sharing documents anywhere in the world. The web has three major components: the uniform resource locator (URL), the hypertext transfer protocol (http), and the hypertext markup language (HTML). Berners-Lee published the code for the World Wide Web on the internet in 1991 for anyone in the world to use at no cost.

A growing part of online interaction is through social media, which is defined as media that allows for user-created content, comments, tagging, and social networking.

Video games are an emerging part of modern mass media that have been recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court as deserving full First Amendment protection. In addition to being a popular activity, video games, in the form of eSports, are also a spectator event now.

The internet in general and the web in particular were based on a set of values known as the hacker ethic. This ethic holds that information should be freely distributed and that individuals should have as much control over computers as possible.

The World Wide Web has turned the internet into a major mass medium that provides news, entertainment, and community interaction. The web offers a mix of content providers, including traditional media companies, new media companies offering publications available only on the web, aggregator sites that offer help in navigating the web, and individuals who have something they want to say.

The web has been criticized for elevating rumors to the level of news, making inappropriate material available to children, collecting private information about users, and creating a false sense of intimacy and interaction among users. This can be seen with the Russian hacking of the 2016 U.S. presidential elections.

Over the past several years, the transmission of media content has been moving from channels of legacy media into those of online digital media, allowing people to access content when and where they want to.

Key Terms ▶▶

internet 258
packet switching 259
ARPAnet 260
TCP/IP 260
electronic mail (email) 261
instant messaging (IM) 261
hypertext 262
World Wide Web 262
uniform resource locator (URL) 262
hypertext transfer protocol (http) 262
hypertext markup language (HTML) 262
Mosaic 264
weblog (blog) 266
citizen journalism 266
social media 267
broadband service 272
digital native 273
eSports 274
hacker ethic 277
cookies 281
aggregator sites 283

Review Questions ▶▶

1. What was journalist Keah Brown trying to accomplish with her hashtag #DisabledAndCute?
2. How was our first nationwide interactive computing network built?
3. How does interacting online differ when you do it through an app rather than through the World Wide Web?
4. How are social media and mobile media connected to each other? How are social media changed when we use them with mobile devices?
5. If you were asked to defend video games as a medium of mass communication, how would you do that?
6. What does your author mean when he writes "Everything is data"? What kind of transformation is taking place in the legacy media industry as more media are transmitted digitally?

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PART IV Strategic Communication

Chapter 11 Advertising
Selling a Message
Chapter 12 Public Relations
Interactions, Relationships, and the News



Kevin Winter/Getty Images

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Describe two major reasons why advertising grew dramatically in importance during the nineteenth century
2. Define what "advertising" is using examples of six different types of advertisements
3. Describe the four major groups in the advertising business and the key characteristics of each
4. Explain how advertisers use demographics and psychographics to target their audience
5. Name four common misconceptions about the advertising industry
6. Discuss the controversies surrounding advertising directed at children
7. Discuss how companies are using integrated marketing communication (IMC) to promote their brands

Youth is both the advantage and the disadvantage of trying to target advertising to digital natives—the young people who have grown up with mobile phones, tablets, and always-on internet. People like Logan Paul and his brother Jake Paul can attract huge numbers of young viewers through videos, photos, and other brief online content. The two brothers initially gained attention from the six-second videos they created. Since then, Jake has made the jump to legacy media with a starring role in a Disney Channel show, but Logan has stayed on YouTube and Instagram and attracted a regular audience of more than sixteen million subscribers. That audience for Logan's stunts, pranks, and raps is something advertisers really want to reach. So there's a lot of money in it for folks like Logan and Jake and young eyeballs for their advertisers. That's the advantage.[1]

The disadvantage is that Logan Paul is only in his early twenties and is self-employed. The high school dropout, who has made his young career out of portraying his disregard for others as "cool and rebellious," could make some really bad decisions without having someone around him to say, "Don't do that. That's stupid." The central issue, as Lux Alptraum writes for *NBC News*, is "that young 'creators' are financially rewarded for attracting attention, without anyone providing guidance on how to manage that attention once they've gotten it."[2]

How does a YouTube star like Logan Paul make money? Take this one example: Back in 2015, Logan was hired to start promoting the Dunkin' Donuts mobile app and the coffee shop's loyalty program. DD's agency worked with Logan and his management to add a Logan Paul–themed gift card to its mobile app. He was also hired to promote the brand across Twitter and Snapchat. At the time, Logan had more than 8.7 million followers on the now shuttered short-video site Vine, more than 5.4 million likes on Facebook, 2.4 million followers on Facebook, and 615,000 followers on Twitter. Media agency official Jeff Zannella for Dunkin' Donuts described him as "a celebrity for the millennial generation."[3] As any good social celebrity does, Logan described himself as "a true fan" of the chain. He said that while of course he was being paid, he did really like Dunkin'.

Zannella told trade magazine *Ad Age*, "This is a paid relationship, but at the end of the day, it's all about authenticity." In addition to his personal sponsorships, Logan makes a large portion of his income from the ads that appear surrounding his online videos.

By 2017, Logan Paul had more than sixteen million followers, primarily preteens. And then in late December, he posted a video on YouTube showing a dead body hanging from a tree in Aokigahara, a dense forest on the northwestern side of Mount Fuji in Japan, a spot that has been a common location for suicides. The video has Logan encountering the hanging body in what seems to be a humorous way, writes Robinson Meyer for the *Atlantic*.

"'Yo, are you alive?' [he] shouts at the body, early in the video. 'Are you f***ing with us?'"[4]

In addition to showing the dead body (with the face blurred), the video has Logan's trademark exaggerated reaction shots and nervous laughter.[5] The video stayed up for about a day before being taken down, but during that brief time, it accumulated more than six million views.

At that point, the brands that had been paying him large amounts of money to feature their ads before and after his videos started dropping him. This highlights the central problem: Young people who do crazy things on video often do a great job of attracting an audience; they also can do a great job of attracting unwanted attention to brands that want to protect their image.[6] Most of the ads on YouTube are not bought deliberately to run with a particular video. Instead, algorithms place the ads with videos without a lot of analysis as to whether the content is a good match for the ad. This can match commercial messages with sexist, violent, and politically extreme videos.[7] Google can help with this with the content it allows on Google Preferred, its premium ad program. The Preferred program is designed to help brands have their ads stream with high-quality videos.

The YouTube star apologized in January 2018 for posting the video. He claimed he had posted it to raise awareness about suicide and suicide prevention, and he later stated, "I should never have posted the video. I should have put the cameras down."[8]

In February 2018, YouTube temporarily suspended running ads on Logan Paul's channel after he had additional repeated violations of the video-sharing site's rules. A social media analytical firm found that Logan and his brother Jake had videos filled with "references to weapons, drugs, profanity and other offensive speech."[9] These included him posting videos of tasering a dead rat and encouraging his viewers to take the Tide Pod Challenge. (That's eating brightly colored laundry detergent packets. Really. We'll talk about that in the next chapter. It was a real PR problem for Tide.)

Logan Paul's problems are not unique. Felix Kjellberg, better known as PewDiePie, is unquestionably the king of YouTube and possibly the entire internet. With his more than sixty-one million subscribers, he has more subscribers than Logan Paul, Justin Bieber,

CNN, Nike, and Coca-Cola combined. PewDiePie started out doing video game walkthroughs where he screamed and cursed at the game. Back in 2016, he was famous for being the first YouTuber to have ten billion views.

But the following year, things did not go well for the star. He made a video that showed two men in India he had hired to carry a sign saying "death to all Jews." Kjellberg claimed it was a satirical post showing that "people would say anything for 5 dollars." (Kjellberg later took the anti-Semitic video down.) By the following day, Disney's Maker Studios had dropped him, and YouTube had dropped the second season of his reality show *Scare PewDiePie*.[10]

PewDiePie's online style has continued to evolve, with him having more of a conventional talk show format now rather than video game playthroughs. And while there may be some luster off his star, he, like Logan Paul, still has some of the most watched video programing out there, and advertisers seem willing to live with its faults. Since the problems with Logan Paul and PewDiePie, Google has added new controls for advertisers, who can request to not be placed next to content with material that is "sexually suggestive," is "sensational and shocking," or contains "profanity and rough language."[11]

Although advertising has been a part of American media since the 1700s, the challenge today is to get consumers to pay attention to the messages that pay for so much of the media we receive. In this chapter, we look at the development of the advertising industry in the United States, the major players in the advertising process, and the influence advertising has had on contemporary culture.

The Development of the Advertising Industry

One element of the media that is almost inescapable is advertising. The American Marketing Association defines advertising as "any paid form of nonpersonal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor."[12] Advertisements are the commercial messages that pay for an article about cardiovascular health in *Prevention*, an editorial about foreign policy in the *New York Times*, and the block of *Rolling Stones* hits on the local classic rock radio station.

SECRET 1 ▸ Advertising makes possible the vast array of inexpensive media available worldwide. But there is more to advertising than just cheap media. Advertising drives the size and diversity of the world's economy by telling consumers the multimedia functions they can perform by using a new computer, the image they will project by wearing a brand of clothing or driving a particular car, or the eating pleasure and health benefits they will experience by sampling a new variety of breakfast cereal. Advertising has been a key element of the American economy and culture of consumption and acquisition for more than one hundred years and has existed since before the United States was a nation. With the pervasiveness and importance of advertising in our society, we see once again Secret 1—The media are essential components of our lives.

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

The Birth of Consumer Culture

The earliest American advertising was published in newspapers and was targeted at a narrow, elite audience, just as the papers themselves were. Advertising was not a major source of income for the early papers, but it was still important. The *Boston News-Letter*, one of the first successful colonial newspapers, solicited advertising as early as 1704. Most ads were simple announcements of what a merchant or shop had for sale. There was little point in promoting particular products because most manufacturers produced similar goods. Consumers judged the quality of the goods they bought by inspecting them and taking into account the reputation of the individual merchant. There were no brand names.[13]

▼ Manufacturers of patent medicines promising cures for almost anything—internal ailments, weight gain or weight loss, debility, the common cold—were among the biggest of the early national advertisers.



Library of Congress

Industrialization and the Growth of Advertising.

Major societal changes had to occur before advertising could become a significant social force. The most important of these changes was the Industrial Revolution. The 1800s were a period of rapid industrialization, in which work done by hand using muscle or water power in small shops was replaced by mass production of goods in large factories that used steam power or, later, electricity. Industrialization brought about the mass production of low-cost, standardized products that had never been available before. Due to advances in transportation, these goods could be manufactured in a single location and then distributed over a wide area. Personal conversations between shop owners and their customers began to be replaced by sales messages placed in newspapers and magazines or posted on signs. Standardized goods were sold using standardized messages—advertisements. In essence, the mass production of consumer goods was developing along with the mass production of messages promoting those goods. Advertising grew explosively during this period as the responsibility for transmitting marketing information passed into the hands of the media.[14]

Modernization: Satisfying Needs Through Shopping.

Along with industrialization, the nineteenth century was characterized by modernization, the social process by which people go from being born with an identity and a role in life to being able to decide who they want to be, where they want to live, what they want to do, and how they want to present themselves to the world.

As more products became widely available, thanks to industrialization, advertising was used to promote the products and what they stood for. People could now adopt a certain style and purchase the items necessary to portray that style to others—the clothes they wore, the food they served, the soap they washed with, and so forth. Each of these goods was associated with an image that was supposed to rub off on its user. How did people learn about these meanings? Through the advertising that gave meaning to the products.[15]

Media historian Michael Schudson has written that in modern societies people believe they can satisfy their social needs by buying and using mass-produced goods.[16] The late 1800s brought department stores that received new merchandise frequently and then sold it quickly, in contrast to the older dry-goods and clothing stores, which might receive new goods twice a year. As people moved into new urban centers in search of jobs in the factories, their old family identities had little meaning. This allowed them to create a new identity for themselves through the products they chose. For example, in the 1920s, people started to buy more ready-made clothes rather than sewing clothes for themselves. This ready-made clothing, which they learned about through advertisements, allowed them to be fashionable and “modern” and to “put on” the identity that went with the clothes.

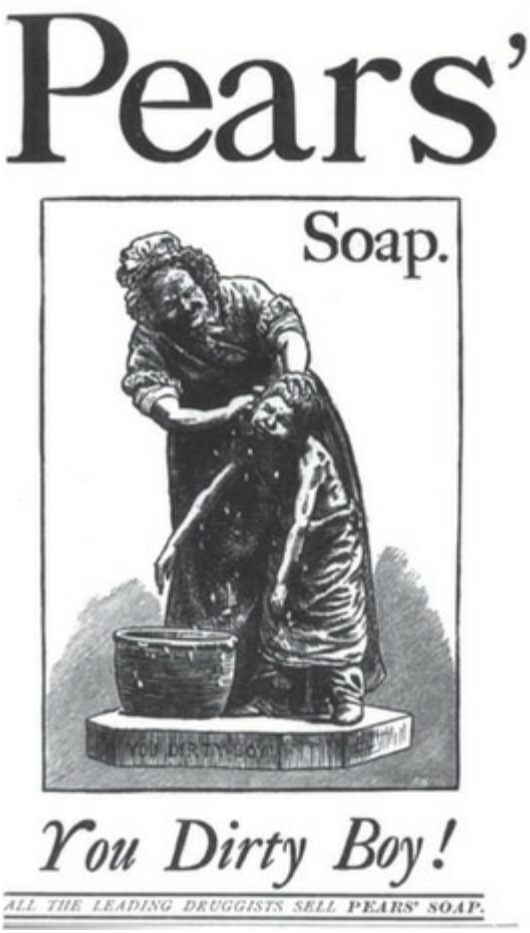
The Growth of Brand Names

With the growth of industry allowing more production and the construction of transcontinental railroads and steamships making possible better distribution, more and more prepackaged consumer goods came on the market, ready to be promoted through advertising. Among the first were patent medicines—manufactured remedies that often consisted primarily of alcohol and laudanum (opium). Instead of being shipped to stores in large containers and bottled at the point of sale, these products arrived bottled and ready to be sold to the consumer. These were the first products of the economy of abundance, in which there are as many or more goods available as there are people who want to buy them.[17]

Brand-name goods became popular at the end of the nineteenth century. A brand name is a word or phrase attached to prepackaged consumer goods so that they can be better promoted to the general public through advertising. In a highly mobile society, these standardized, branded products became a source of stability for consumers. The idea of stability coming from a brand-name product has persisted into the twenty-first century. For example, wherever they are, weary travelers are likely to stop for a meal at a familiar and comfortable landmark such as a Starbucks or KFC.[18]

The development of brand-name goods was a driving force behind the growth of advertising. Brands were necessary to distinguish the new mass-produced products from one another. The names made it possible for people to ask for goods produced by a specific manufacturer, and advertising let people know what these brands were and what they stood for.

▼ Pears' Soap was one of the earliest national brands. Pears' ads encouraged consumers to ask not for soap, but for Pears'.



Library of Congress

Quaker Oats, which was among the first prepackaged cereals, was typical of early brand-name products. It was sold in a multicolored box illustrated with the trademarked "man in Quaker garb." The cereal was a product of consistently high quality that was manufactured in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and distributed to the entire country. Wherever you purchased the product, it would be the same. Quaker Oats promoted its trademark everywhere, including "on billboards, streetcars, newspapers, calendars, magazines, blotters, cookbooks, Sunday church bulletins, metal signs on rural fences, company-sponsored cooking schools, free samples given away house-to-house, booths at county fairs and expositions."[19]

Thomas J. Barratt developed the first branded soap. "Any fool can make soap," he commented. "It takes a clever man to sell it."[20] Barratt created the Pears' Soap brand and promoted it with outdoor and newsprint ads asking, "Have you had your Pears' today?" Other versions included "How do you spell soap? Why, P-E-A-R-S', of course," and "GOOD MORNING! Have you used Pears' Soap?" Pears' became one of the most talked-about brands of its era and was even mentioned by prominent writers such as Mark Twain. The Pears' Soap catchphrases were the "I'm lovin' it," "Keeps on going and going," or "Just do it" of their day.

Advertising-Supported Media

The growth of products that needed advertising to succeed brought about a similar growth in advertising-supported media. Beginning in the 1830s, newspapers became much easier and cheaper to produce due to the availability of inexpensive wood-pulp paper and the steam-powered rotary press. The new penny papers (see Chapter 6) were sold to large numbers of people. These large audiences appealed to advertisers, so newspapers moved from subscription revenue to advertising revenue as their primary form of support. The change was dramatic. Instead of merely tolerating advertising, newspapers began to encourage it and even created special advertising sections to seek it out.

Magazines also started out with an uneasy relationship with advertising. In the 1800s, publications such as *Harper's* ran only limited advertising in an attempt to preserve their elite image. Another reason early magazines carried little advertising was that their circulation was national, whereas most advertising was done in local publications. Because there were few national brands at the time, few companies wanted or needed to reach a national audience.

Once manufacturers needed to reach the magazines' national audiences, the economics of magazine publishing changed. No longer were publishers selling magazines to subscribers; instead, they were selling subscribers to advertisers. The *Ladies' Home Journal*, which was published from 1887 to 2014, was designed specifically as a medium for consumer advertising.[21] Publisher Cyrus H. K. Curtis put it this way in a speech to advertisers:

Questioning the Media

With modernization, we can try on new personas by using products that are marketed to help us create our identities. What are some advertised products you use because they say something about who you are? How are these products advertised? What do they tell others about you?

> Do you know why we publish the *Ladies' Home Journal*? The editor thinks it is for the benefit of American women. That is an illusion, but a very proper one for him to have. But I will tell you; the real reason, the publisher's reason, is to give you people who manufacture things that American women want and buy a chance to tell them about your products.[22]

Curtis also used advertising to promote his magazine and build its circulation. When *Ladies' Home Journal* closed in 2014, it was not for lack of circulation—it still had more than three million subscribers—but the fact that advertisers had lost interest in the magazine's somewhat older readership.

Although the radio industry flirted with revenue options such as taxes and profits from selling radios, it soon became clear that the only way to make enough money to pay for top-notch entertainers and make a profit was to sell advertising. William Paley founded the CBS radio network after he saw how successful radio advertising was for his family's cigar company (see Chapter 7). Paley understood that good programming could attract a large audience that advertisers would want to reach. Sponsors frequently bought not just advertising time, but the entire program. This gave rise to shows such as the *Maxwell House Coffee Time*, the *Lucky Strike Dance Orchestra*, and the *General Motors Family Party*.

▼ The food industry found an ideal medium for getting its message across in magazines like *Ladies' Home Journal*. The rapid expansion of Kellogg's in the early twentieth century is, in large part, due to mass advertisements like the one above.



The Ladies Home Journal/Kellogg's Rice Krispies

There was never any debate about whether television would be driven by advertising. Television grew quickly in the 1950s, and advertisers recognized its potential as a powerful tool for reaching all Americans. By 1960, 90 percent of all homes had television sets.[23] As with the rest of the media, television's "product" is the audience watching its programs. Thus, the primary purpose of the Super Bowl, from television's point of view, is not to choose a professional football champion but rather to deliver 45 percent of the American audience to advertisers for one evening each year. Robert Niles, a network marketing executive, echoed Cyrus Curtis's promise to deliver an audience to American manufacturers almost a century earlier when he stated, "We're in the business of selling audiences to advertisers. [The sponsors] come to us asking for women 18 to 49 and adults 25 to 54 and we try to deliver."[24]

Consumer Advertising.

Local advertising attempts to induce people to go to a local store or business to buy a product or service, whether it be a new Toyota truck, a gallon of milk, or a travel agent's services. These ads announce the product or service and its price and tell consumers where they can buy it. The local ad is also looking for immediate, direct action. Thus, a direct-action message is designed to get consumers to purchase a product or engage in a behavior. For example: "Hurry down, these prices won't last, buy today!"

National advertising is designed to build demand for a nationally available product or service, but it does not send consumers out to a particular store to buy a can of Pepsi, a DVD, or a bag of cat food. National advertising assumes that the consumer knows where

to buy the product or service or can be told in a local ad where and how to do so. The national advertiser is also more patient and can wait for consumers to take action. Thus, an indirect-action message is designed to build the image of and demand for a product. Perhaps a consumer won't buy a new washing machine this week, but he will eventually, and that's when he should buy a Maytag.

Advocacy Advertising.

Advocacy ads are intended to promote a particular point of view rather than a product. In 2014, for example, food and biotechnology companies spent more than $25 million on ads in successful efforts to defeat state laws in Colorado and Oregon that would require the labeling of food containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs).[25] U.S. unions and businesses have fought foreign competition with advocacy ads. Companies express their concerns directly to the public through advocacy ads, bypassing traditional news channels. Such advertising has a long history in the United States, dating back to 1908, when AT&T ran a campaign arguing that it was natural that the phone company should be a monopoly.

Public Service Advertising.

Some of the most iconic advertising in the United States comes not from business, but from long series of public service ads created by the Advertising Council. The Ad Council got its start as the War Advertising Council back in 1942 with such memorable messages as the Rosie the Riveter "We Can Do It" campaign, which was designed to promote women working in factories producing goods for the war effort. The best-known creation of the Ad Council is likely Smokey Bear, who has stayed on message for more than sixty-five years, telling members of the public that only they can prevent forest fires. He is the second-most-recognized image in the United States, falling just behind Santa Claus. What is more, generations of children have taken great joy in delivering his basic message of fire prevention to their parents and other adults. Other prominent Ad Council campaigns include the 1971 "Crying Indian" antipollution campaign, a 2011 campaign encouraging fathers to "Take time to be a dad today," and McGruff the Crime Dog taking "a bite out of crime."[26]

The editorial and opinion pages of the prestigious national newspapers are popular spots for placing advocacy ads. This is partly due to the credibility associated with appearing on those pages and partly because it's a good place to reach the target audience of influential decision makers. These ads might, for example, support or oppose a piece of legislation. Sometimes the target of an advocacy ad in the *Washington Post* might be senators or representatives who are being reminded of the support they have received in the past from a given company or industry.[27]

▼ A public service ad shares information about the Zika virus at a Florida town hall.



Jeffrey Greenberg/UIG via Getty Images

Trade Advertising.

Business-to-business (trade) ads promote products directly to other businesses rather than to the consumer market. Business-to-business advertising is a critical part of the advertising industry. Consider the fact that General Electric earns 80 percent of its revenue from nonconsumer business.[28] Business customers can be reached through trade magazines, such as *Electronic Engineering Times*; business-oriented cable news channels, such as CNBC; or local weekly business newspapers.

The Advertising Business

Advertising is a multifaceted business that involves four major groups. First, there's the client, the person or company that has a product or an idea to promote. Then there's the advertising agency or department that researches the market, creates the advertising, and places it in the media. Next, there's the medium, be it television, the internet, a newspaper, a magazine, or some other medium, that carries the advertisement. Finally, there's the audience, the people who see or hear the advertisement, whom the client hopes to influence.[29]

For a product to be successful in the marketplace, all four of these groups must work together successfully. There must be a good product backed by advertisements that have a strong sales message delivered through well-chosen media to an appropriate audience. If any part of this process is flawed or seriously miscalculated, the product is likely to fail.

The Client

The first component of advertising is the client, the company with something to sell. The client may want to increase awareness of a new product, encourage people to use an existing product more often, build a positive image of a product, convince users of competitors' products to switch brands, promote a benefit of a product, or demonstrate some new use for a product. The 3M Company increased sales of its Scotch brand cellophane tape by suggesting other uses for the product beyond repairing torn paper. Arm & Hammer baking soda's original purpose was to make cakes rise, but the company also increased sales by promoting the product as a cleaner and deodorizer. One of Arm & Hammer's best ads tells consumers to buy a box of baking soda and pour it down the drain to clean and deodorize the sink. In essence, the company was suggesting that people buy its product to throw it away! Arm & Hammer's research showed that people used baking soda to freshen laundry and to brush their teeth, so the company introduced detergent and toothpaste enhanced with baking soda.[30] Begun in 1993 on behalf of the California Milk Processor Board, the "Got Milk?" advertising campaign succeeded at boosting milk sales and has become one of America's longest-running and most celebrated ad series. The "Got Milk" ads ran both in California and nationally until 2014, when the national milk promotion board decided to focus on milk's protein content in its advertising. But the campaign does still live on in California more than twenty years after it started.[31]

▼ Table 11.1

▼ TABLE 11.1

Top Advertisers in the United States, by Brand

Rank	Brand	2018 U.S. Spending (in millions)
1	Procter & Gamble	$2,489
2	Berkshire Hathaway	$1,847
3	General Motors Co.	$1,807
4	Pfizer	$1,740
5	Comcast	$1,726
6	AT&T	$1,592
7	L'Oréal	$1,288
8	Verizon	$1,281
9	Ford Motor Co.	$1,250
10	Toyota Motor Corp.	$1,194
40	Johnson & Johnson	$1,176

Source: Data from "Marketing Fact Pack 2018," *Ad Age*, http://adage.com/d/resources/resources/whitepaper/marketing-fact-pack-2018.

Source: Data from "Marketing Fact Pack 2018," *Ad Age*, http://adage.com/d/resources/resources/whitepaper/marketing-fact-pack-2018.

For details on America's top advertisers, take a look at Table 11.1.

For a product to be successful, it needs more than a good advertising campaign. It also needs to be a good product at the right price and has to be available for consumers to buy. When Sony launched its PlayStation 2 video game system, it did relatively little initial advertising and held off releasing popular games because it couldn't manufacture enough of the consoles to satisfy public demand. Customers were ready and willing to buy, but the

product simply was not available.[32] Once there was a sufficient quantity of the product, Sony started advertising.

SECRET 4 ▸ No amount of advertising can save a product that the public just doesn't want to buy, as Coca-Cola discovered when it launched New Coke more than thirty years ago in 1985. Coca-Cola spent $4 million on research that seemed to indicate that consumers would like the new formula better than the original recipe. But consumers reacted to the change with anger and frustration, and Coca-Cola eventually had to bring back the old drink under the name Coca-Cola Classic.[33] The research may have shown what people liked best in blind taste tests, but the company missed a couple of key points:

Consumers did like the sweeter formula of New Coke, but only in small samples. When they drank an entire serving of Coke, their feelings for and against the new formula were much stronger.

The research didn't take into account how people felt about the product, what meaning they assigned to it, and the fond memories they associated with it.[34] What the research missed was "the abiding emotional attachment" Coke drinkers had for the product in its familiar form.[35] As one Coke executive put it, "We did not know what we were selling. We are not selling a soft drink. We are selling a little tiny piece of people's lives."[36]

The Agency

The advertising profession originated in the 1840s when agents started selling ad space to clients in the new advertising-supported newspapers. At first, the advertising agents worked directly for the newspapers, but before long, they became more like brokers dealing in advertising space for multiple publications. George Rowell, the leading advertising agent of the 1860s and 1870s, was the first agent to buy large amounts of newspaper advertising space wholesale and sell it to his customers as they needed it. Rowell was also the first to publish a directory of newspaper circulation numbers, thus providing clients with an independent source of this vital information. Before Rowell's innovation, newspapers could, and did, lie about the size of their circulation.

The early agents earned a 15 percent commission on the space they sold for the newspapers. This is why advertising agencies were traditionally paid by commission on the media space and time they sold; initially, that was all they were selling.[37]

Before long, advertising agents moved beyond just selling space in the media. Their clients wanted help developing the ads for the space they were purchasing. In 1868, twenty-one-year-old Francis W. Ayer opened N. W. Ayer and Son (giving his father a 50 percent share in the company and the lead name), one of the first agencies to write copy, put together the artwork for an ad, and plan campaigns. The agency recognized that providing the associated services that would make advertising easier for clients would help the agency sell more space for the media.

Gradually, ad agencies came to represent their clients rather than the media in which they sold advertising space. This shift resulted from the open contract, which enabled the agency to provide advertising space in any publication (and eventually on broadcast outlets as well) rather than only a few. The agent was now handling the advertising services for the client, not selling space for the media.[38]

In the 1920s and 1930s, advertisers increasingly recognized that there were different market segments and that ads should be tailored to those segments. Agencies also realized that they needed to use a different mix of media for each of their target audiences. Eventually, they began offering clients three major services: research, creative activity, and media planning.

Research and Planning.

Agencies typically use research throughout the entire advertising campaign. The initial research activity is aimed at identifying the characteristics of the target audience and what those people are looking for in a product. Ads are then tested to see how well members of the target audience respond to them. After the campaign, the agency will evaluate its success. How many people remembered seeing the ad? How many people clipped the

coupon or called the phone number? How much did sales go up or down?

The process starts with objectives. What does the client want to accomplish with the ads? These objectives could be increasing sales, increasing awareness, or getting people to clip a coupon or make a phone call. The agency may also study characteristics of the product's target audience, a process that is discussed later in the chapter.

Finally, the agency may test the ads itself, either as a pretest before the ads are run or as a recall test after the campaign. One problem advertising researchers face is that the people they want to reach may be unwilling to participate in the research. And the people who are willing to participate may be trying to give the agency the answers they are looking for. Although advertising research continues to be a powerful tool for reducing uncertainty, it is still a difficult process at best.[39]

Creative Activity.

There is more to marketing a product than advertising, but advertising is the most visible aspect of marketing, and it has to provide what legendary advertising executive David Ogilvy called the big idea—an advertising concept that will grab people's attention, make them take notice, make them remember, and, most important, make them take action. Leo Burnett, founder of one of the nation's biggest agencies, agrees with Ogilvy:

> The word "idea" is loosely used in our business to cover anything from a headline to a TV technique. [But] I feel that a real idea has a power of its own and a life of its own. It goes beyond ads and campaigns. Properly employed, it is often the secret of capturing the imagination of great masses of people and winning "the battle for the uncommitted mind," which is what our business really is about.[40]

In advertising, a tension often exists between creativity and salesmanship. An ad may do a great job of grabbing people's attention and generating talk, but if the ad doesn't have a solid sales message, consumers will not remember the product or give serious thought to buying it. A number of ads have done a great job of grabbing the public's attention. But have they done a good job of promoting the product? Have they built the value of the brand?

Consider Anheuser-Busch back in 2009. Its brand Bud Light (the most popular beer in the United States) was launching its Bud Light Lime beer in cans. (Previously it had only been available in bottles.) Anheuser-Busch promoted the launch with an online ad that had people talking about "getting it in the can"—as in a suburban housewife confessing, "I never thought I'd enjoy getting it in the can as much as I do." The crude sex joke attracted a lot of talk and attention from the advertising press. But it's not clear what the message did

to promote the brand or increase sales.[41]

Burger King and Google

On the other hand, it can be hard for fast-food restaurants to cut through the clutter of advertising noise to grab people's attention, especially if they want to get a message about the food out as well as just make an entertaining video. But that's what Burger King accomplished with its "Google Home for the Whopper" ad and stunt created by the David Miami agency. The fifteen-second commercial has an actor in a Burger King uniform look at a camera from behind the counter and say, "OK Google, what is the Whopper burger?" If you have a Google Home smart speaker near your TV, that phrase triggers the speaker to read the Wikipedia entry on the Whopper. (This is also why your author wrote, back in Chapter 7, that he thinks that having an always-on voice-activated smart speaker in the home is a really bad idea.) It appears likely that in addition to creating the ad, Burger King edited the Wikipedia entry to start with a list of the Whopper's ingredients. Of course, Burger King can't stop people from editing the online encyclopedia entry to say that the Whopper is made from ingredients like "100% medium sized child" or "cyanide." And Google worked at making changes to its smart speaker software to stop it from responding to television ads. Nevertheless, the ad was a huge success for Burger King with 9.3 million global impressions and trending on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Google Trends.[42]



INSIDER LATAM, "GOOGLE HOME OF THE WHOPPER Cannes Lions 2017" June 20, 2017. Retrieved from YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUj8SUoJ-ZM.

Adman Hank Seiden puts it this way: "All good advertising consists of both idea and execution. All bad advertising consists of just execution."[43] Ogilvy believed that all advertising should be created to sell a product or promote a message. It does not exist to be innovative, exciting, creative, or entertaining. Good ads may be all of those things, but the central principle is that they must achieve the client's goals:

> A good advertisement is one which sells the product without drawing attention to itself. It should rivet the reader's attention on the product. Instead of saying, "What a clever advertisement," the reader says, "I never knew that before. I must try this product."[44]

For products that are similar, the brand image attached to them is often critical. This image gives a brand and the associated product a personality or identity and helps it stand out from the pack. Ogilvy once headed a campaign to give Hathaway shirts a personality when the company's competitor, Arrow, was spending almost a hundred times more on advertising than Hathaway, a smaller company, could. Ogilvy's solution was to buy a black eye patch in a drugstore for $1.50. A model wearing the eye patch was shown conducting an orchestra, driving a tractor, and sailing a boat. This simple bit of brand identity boosted Hathaway out of 116 years of obscurity and turned it into a leading brand.

Ogilvy argues that at the heart of all advertising is an appeal based on facts that are of interest to consumers. As he wrote in the early 1960s, "The consumer isn't a moron. . . . You insult her intelligence if you assume that a mere slogan and a few vapid adjectives will persuade her to buy anything. She wants all the information you can give her."[45]

For print ads, the most important element is the headline, because five times as many people read the headline as read the rest of the copy. This means that 80 percent of the ad's effectiveness comes from the headline. The headline must tell readers whom the ad is for, what the product is, what the product does for the consumer, and why he or she should buy it. That's a lot of responsibility for eight to fifteen words. Ogilvy says that the most powerful headline words are *free* and *new*. Other words favored by Ogilvy are

> *how to*, *suddenly*, *now*, *announcing*, *introducing*, *it's here*, *just arrived, important development*, *improvement*, *amazing*, *sensational*, *remarkable*, *revolutionary*, *startling*, *miracle*, *magic*, *offer*, *quick*, *easy*, *wanted*, *challenge*, *advice to*, *the truth about*, *compare*, *bargain*, *hurry*, [and] *last chance*.[46]

Although these phrases are overused, they do work. Look at what Ogilvy considered to be the greatest headline he ever wrote: "At Sixty Miles an Hour the Loudest Noise in the New Rolls-Royce Comes from the Electric Clock." It uses the word *new*, it contains a fact that also sells a benefit, and it is true.

Media Planning.

Media planning involves figuring out which media to use, buying the media at the best rates, and then evaluating how effective the purchase was. It is the least glamorous part of the advertising business, but it is central to a successful campaign. No matter how brilliant

the idea or how beautiful the execution, if the ad doesn't reach the target audience, it can't accomplish anything. Typically, advertisers try to pick a mix of media that will deliver the highest percentage of the target audience at the lowest cost per thousand views, or CPM. (M is the Roman numeral for 1,000.) Selecting the right media involves identifying the audience for the ad and knowing which media these consumers use.[47]

Agency Size and Income.

Advertising agencies have grown immensely since their modest start selling newspaper advertising space. According to *Ad Age*'s 2018 advertising agency report, the nine-hundred-plus agencies studied had their income grow in 2016 by 4.4 percent from the previous year to reach a total of $46.8 billion. (That figure included advertising, media, digital marketing services, health care communication, and public relations.) Work for digital media now dominates the business, accounting for 46.6 percent of all U.S. advertising agency revenue in 2016. Keep in mind that this is just the portion of the income that goes to the agency. This figure doesn't include the amount that goes to pay the media for advertising time and space. According to *Ad Age*'s 2018 annual report, advertisers were on track to spend $204 billion on advertising in the United States using media for which the size of the audience is measured. (This does not include, for example, direct-mail advertising.) Of that, television accounted for the largest share ($78.9 billion), followed by online ($31.9 billion), magazines with $18.8 billion, newspapers with $12.2 billion, radio with $7.9 billion, and outdoor and cinema with $5.6 billion.[48]

Several major trends have emerged in the agency business since the 1980s. One trend is toward the purchase of independent agencies and small groups of agencies by larger holding companies. The biggest of these are WPP, Omnicom Group, Publicis Groupe, and Interpublic Group of Companies.[49] A second trend is a shift toward greater specialization of agency functions. One agency may do research and creative work, whereas another agency (known as a media buyer) develops the media plan and buys the time and space. Because of this specialization, agencies are moving from the commission structure to charging fees for their services. After all, if an agency is just doing creative work, it can't charge a commission on media space that it isn't buying.[50]

The Media

The third group in the advertising business is made up of the media that carry advertisements. These include newspapers, magazines, radio, television, outdoor sites such as billboards and metro buses, and digital. The two media that do not receive large amounts of advertising revenue are movies and books, although movies are increasingly using paid product placements and theaters run advertisements before showing movies. Books initially did not carry ads because advertising was not common when books were first published. In the nineteenth century, when advertising became popular, there were other, cheaper media in which to advertise. Postal regulations also pose a barrier to advertising in books: Materials containing advertising can't be shipped using the post office's inexpensive book rate. But advertising scholar James Twitchell suggests that as delivery options expand through companies such as FedEx and UPS, advertising in books may become commonplace, especially in expensive academic books.[51] This textbook doesn't yet contain advertisements in its pages, but you probably found a few advertising pieces for credit cards or magazine subscriptions in the bag the bookstore clerk gave you. In Table 11.2, you can see the relative importance of different media to the top hundred leading national advertisers in the United States.

▼ Table 11.2

▼ TABLE 11.2

U.S. Ad Spending Totals by One Hundred Leading National Advertisers in Measured Media

Measured Media	2016 Spending (in billions)
Television (including broadcast, cable, spot, syndicated, and Spanish-language)	$78.9
Internet (paid search, internet display)	$31.9
Magazines (consumer, Sunday, business-to-business, local)	$18.8
Newspapers (national to local, inserts)	$12.2
Radio (network, national spot, local)	$7.9
Outdoor and cinema	$5.6

Source: "Marketing Fact Pack 2018," *Ad Age*, http://adage.com/d/resources/resources/whitepaper/marketing-fact-pack-2018.

Source: "Marketing Fact Pack 2018," *Ad Age*, http://adage.com/d/resources/resources/whitepaper/marketing-fact-pack-2018.

Newspapers.

Newspapers were the original advertising medium, but they have been suffering major declines in advertising revenue. Between 2007 and 2015, ad revenue declined by more than

61 percent. Some of this was due to the recent recession, but advertising analyst Ken Doctor says that much of it is coming from newspapers failing to make the digital transformation: "Despite uneven digital ad results reported by newspaper and magazine companies, it's not that the money isn't there—they just haven't transitioned their businesses enough to compete for it."[52] According to the Pew Research Center's "State of the News Media 2015" report, newspapers' digital advertising has been growing, but not enough to compensate for the drop in print advertising.[53]

Nevertheless, newspapers remain an advertising medium, carrying a majority of local advertising and a significant amount of national advertising. They allow advertisers to present detailed information (such as grocery prices) that would be confusing on radio or television, and they give audience members plenty of time to interpret the information. Newspaper ads make it easy to include coupons, web addresses, and 800 numbers that readers can clip and save. They also allow advertisers to target not only specific cities, but also specific areas of the city (this is known as zoned coverage). Cities typically have only one or two newspapers, so advertisers can cover the entire market with a single purchase. Finally, newspapers allow advertisers to buy space at the last minute.[54]

Magazines.

Magazines are an excellent medium for reaching a specific niche audience. Before the 1950s, general-interest magazines were the best way to reach a mass, national audience. Since the 1960s, however, that role has fallen to television. The response of magazines has been to seek ever narrower audiences—there are magazines for motorcyclists, computer users, young women, retired people, knitters, and video game players. Whatever audience an advertiser wants to reach, it is likely to find a magazine to help it do so. For business advertisers, magazines may be the only alternative to direct mail for reaching their target audiences. Magazines offer higher print quality than newspapers do but have a much longer lead time, so magazine advertising requires careful planning. The advertising market for magazines has been changing over the last decade. While the number of ad pages sold has been falling, the revenue from digital sources, such as websites and mobile apps, has been growing.[55] Go back to the chapter on magazines (Chapter 5) and reread the section about the *Atlantic* and its "digital-first" strategy as a reminder.

Outdoor Advertising.

Outdoor ads (also known as "out of home advertising") catch people in a captive environment—such as in a car surrounded by slow-moving traffic on the way to work—but they are limited to short, simple messages. The biggest change to have happened to outdoor advertising is the advent of the digital billboard. Essentially giant video screens, digital billboards display a static image that stays up for six to eight seconds before shifting to a new image. Digital billboards can include changing information, such as time or

temperature, or even the day's television schedule for a local station.[56] In major cities, there are transit signs—posters on bus-stop shelters, on subway platforms, and on the buses and in the subway cars themselves. Ads have also been placed in the bottom of golf holes so that you see them when you pick up your ball. Overall, $5.6 billion was spent on outdoor advertising in 2016.[57] Overall, billboards dominate outdoor advertising, accounting for 65 percent of the spending, with transit signs making up 18.1 percent, street furniture 5.5 percent, and place-based outdoor advertising 11.4 percent.[58] New York City's Times Square is one of the most valuable places in the United States for outdoor advertisements because of the large number of people who pass through it each day, its frequent coverage on television, and the nearly constant presence of tourists who are photographing the area.[59]

▼ The entire cityscape of New York has become sponsored, product-placed, and wrapped in logos.



©iStockphoto.com/aluxum

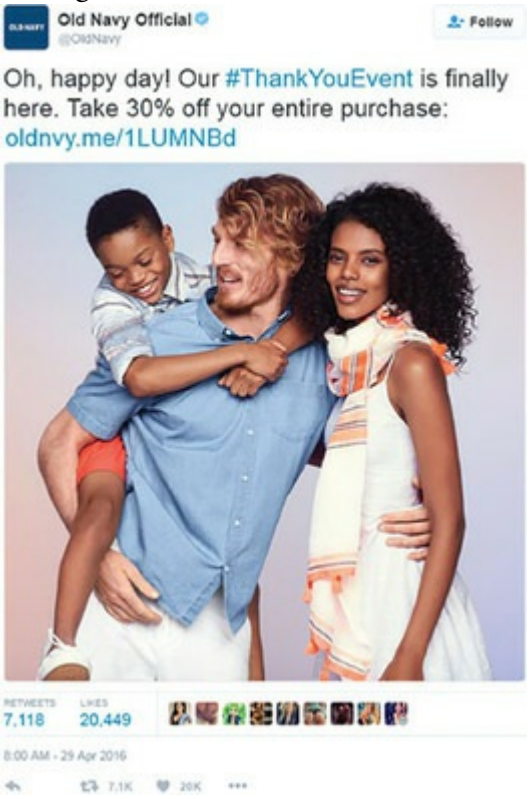
Radio.

Radio enables advertisers to broadcast their message repeatedly and to target a narrow audience. Advertisers can choose stations with programming aimed at teens, women ages twenty-five to fifty-four, young adult males, Spanish speakers, or almost any other demographic group. Like outdoor advertising, radio ads can be very effective in big cities where advertisers can reach a captive audience in their cars during the morning and afternoon commutes, which are known as drive time. Radio also offers a short lead time and relatively low costs.

Television.

Although the most popular television shows remain an appealing place to advertise to a general, national audience, the remote control, the mute button, and the proliferation of cable channels have made it difficult to get viewers to pay attention to commercials. The audience for broadcast television has been declining, but the Big Four networks (see Chapter 9) can still reach a mass audience quickly and effectively. Television offers sound, motion, and visuals. A drawback, however, is that many of the best advertising time slots on the networks, such as those during the Super Bowl, are sold nearly a year in advance. There is also the problem of viewers channel surfing during commercial breaks or skipping commercials using the fast-forward button on their DVRs.

▼ This interracial family in an Old Navy promotional tweet wouldn't seem to be controversial, but it attracted a wide range of responses from people who delighted in seeing an ad that represented people like themselves to people who claimed the ad was promoting ending the white race.



Twitter/@OldNavy

The new television environment allows targeted advertising, such as ads aimed at the youth market on MTV or The CW, the Hispanic market on Univision, or the African American market on BET. For local television advertising, there are independent stations along with the network affiliates. In many communities, local advertisers can buy time on a range of cable stations with local commercial breaks as well. The biggest problem facing television advertisers is that of clutter, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Digital.

Digital advertising has been the fastest-growing segment of the advertising market, increasing by double-digit percentages for several years. During the recession in 2009, online advertising saw its first decline since the dot-com bubble burst in 2002 and sent numerous web properties into bankruptcy.[60] But since then, online advertising has resumed its rapid growth. A study by *eMarketer* found that in 2013 American consumers spent more time with digital media than with television for the first time. More recent data estimate that Americans spend an average of four hours and eleven minutes a day with television, but that they spend five hours and forty-five minutes with all digital media combined. *eMarketer* defines digital media as all online, mobile, and streaming services.[61]

> SECRET 6 ▸ The growth of use of digital media comes heavily from the growth of mobile devices. Time spent with digital media (which includes desktop/laptop computers, nonvoice mobile and other connected devices) was expected to be five hours and fifty-three minutes in 2017, and of that time, three hours and seventeen minutes came from nonvoice use of mobile phones (i.e., not talking on them).[62] (So we see once again Secret 6—Online media are mobile media.)

Digital advertising has the advantage of being able to closely target consumers. As an example, when your author visits websites that contain advertising, ads for motorcycle accessories often appear because the cookies in his browser history tell the ad server that he's interested in motorcycles. And we all expect that kind of behavior with online ads. But sometimes, as marketing professional David Berkowitz points out, that level of knowledge about us seems a little creepy. Berkowitz asks you to suppose you are searching for a camera using the web browser on your smartphone. You bring up an ad from Target for a camera you're interested in. The ad can tell that you already have the Target shopping app on your phone, so it automatically sends you the appropriate page on the app to view the camera you are searching for. The question then becomes: Are you creeped out by the fact that an ad on a web page knows what apps you have installed on your phone? Or do you like the fact that the ad is smart enough to redirect you to an app you already have on your phone?[63] (For more on digital advertising, look ahead to the section of the chapter on long-tail advertising.)

Questioning the Media

Can you name several advertisers who are targeting people like you? Who are they? How can you tell they are targeting you? How do you feel about this?

The Audience

As we talked about in the opening vignette of this chapter, the audience is made up of the people advertisers want to reach with their messages. The audience is also the central "product" that media sell to advertisers. In yet another example of targeting, advertisers try to make a particular product appeal to a narrowly defined group. Ads for Starburst candies, for example, target the teen and preteen audiences, whereas ads for Godiva chocolates target upscale adult women. The people appearing in an ad are chosen carefully to make members of the target audience say, "This is a product made for someone like me."

As with other types of media, such as radio and television, audience members for advertising are often defined by the "graphics": demographics, geographics, and psychographics. As you may recall from Chapter 2, demographics are the measurable characteristics of the audience, such as age, income, sex, and marital status, whereas geographics involve measurements of where people live. Psychographics combine demographics with measurements of psychological characteristics, such as attitudes, opinions, and interests.[64]

Psychographics and VALS™.

In advertising, it's not enough to know the demographics of the client's target audience (age, income, sex, etc.). Advertisers also want to know what the target audience dreams about, aspires to, and feels. These are the topics covered by psychographic research.

The term *psychographics* was first used in the 1960s to refer to a measure of consumer psychology. Depending on the project, researchers may look at a person's lifestyle, relationship to the product, and personality traits.[65]

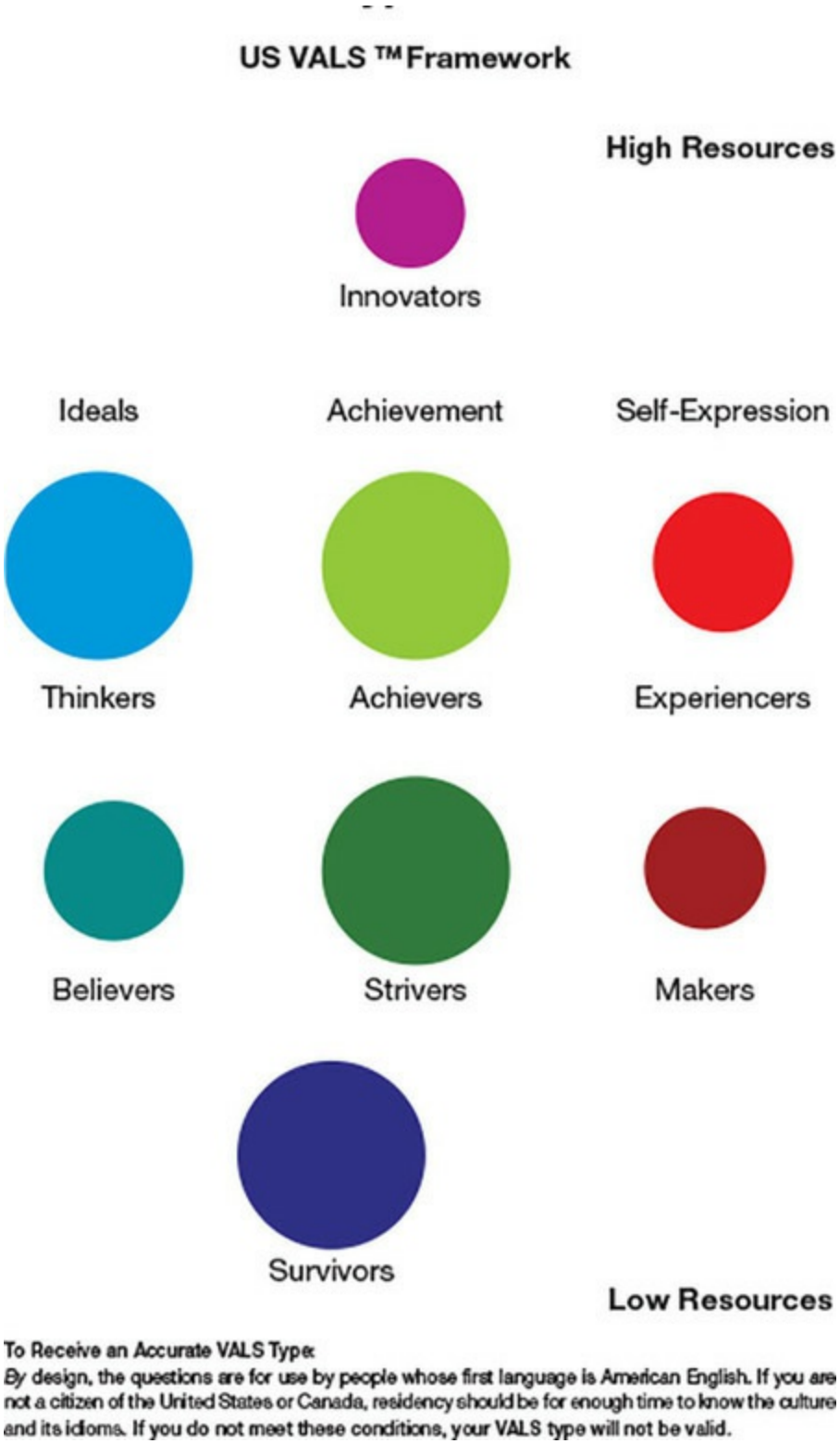
Emanuel Demby, one of the first users of the term, defines psychographics as psychological, sociological, and anthropological data that are used to segment a market into relevant groupings. The way the income variable is conceived is more sophisticated than just grouping markets by income levels. Demby argues that it is just as important to know whether someone's income is increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable as it is to know the person's actual income. Why? Because how things are going in people's lives will say something about how they see themselves. If advertisers understand how members of the target audience see themselves, they can craft ads that will more readily appeal to the target.[66]

The best-known psychographic segmentation is VALS™, developed by SRI International and currently owned and operated by Strategic Business Insights. VALS classifies people into one of eight consumer groups according to their primary motivation and level of

resources (see Figure 11.1). Resources are the tangible and intangible things that people draw upon to express themselves as a consumer, such as: their education, finances, level of curiosity, and self-confidence, among other factors. Primary motivation is the person's approach to life. Ideals-motivated consumers ("Thinkers" and "Believers") are guided by knowledge and principles; achievement-motivated consumers ("Achievers" and "Strivers") look for products that will demonstrate their status and success to others; and self-expression-motivated consumers ("Experiencers" and "Makers") seek action and independence.

At the top of the VALS framework are Innovators, described as being "successful, sophisticated, take-charge people with high self-esteem." These are people who have established careers and value the image of a product as "an expression of their taste, independence, and personality." At the bottom of the VALS framework are the survivors, who have few resources and believe "the world is changing too quickly." VALS describes them as cautious consumers with little to spend but with high brand loyalty.[67]

▲ Figure 11.1 The U.S. VALS^{TM} Types



To Receive an Accurate VALS Type:

By design, the questions are for use by people whose first language is American English. If you are not a citizen of the United States or Canada, residency should be for enough time to know the culture and its idioms. If you do not meet these

conditions, your VALS type will not be valid.

Source: Strategic Business Insights (SBI), www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals. Reprinted by permission.

How might a company use psychographics and these personality types to target its advertising? As an example, a Minnesota medical center used VALS to identify and understand consumers who were interested in and able to afford cosmetic surgery. The resulting ad campaign targeted to these individuals was purportedly so successful that the clinic was fully booked.

To see targeting in action, we can look at some real-world examples. The first example discusses the targeting of a product (Mountain Dew); the second, a particular audience (gays and lesbians); and the third, some instances of targeting failures.

Targeting a Product: Mountain Dew.

Advertising soft drinks can be a particular challenge because all the drinks are basically the same thing—sweetened carbonated water and a small amount of flavoring—with just a few variations, such as regular or diet, caffeinated or caffeine free. Since the products are so similar, the key to promoting the brand is selling not just a drink but an entire attitude and approach to life, thus making the product appeal to a particular audience. Television scholar Joshua Meyrowitz describes the basic message of a diet soda commercial as "Drink this and you'll be beautiful and have beautiful friends to play volleyball with on the beach."[68]

Mountain Dew has existed as a product since the 1940s and has always projected a rebellious and irreverent image, according to Scott Moffitt, who was director of marketing:

> We have a great unity of message and purpose that has been consistent over time about what we are and what we aren't. The brand is all about exhilaration and energy, and you see that in all that we do, from advertising and community to grassroots programs and our sports-minded focus. We have a very crystal clear, vivid positioning.[69]

▼ Following the Super Bowl success of PuppyMonkeyBaby, Mountain Dew Kickstart released another bizarre ad with a slew of dancing animals, including a mosquito, a frog, and a twerking cat.



2016, Mountain Dew, advertisement

In keeping with its young, energetic image, Mountain Dew sponsors events such as ESPN's X Games because they project the same image the soft drink does. It also goes after heavy consumers who drink three or more cans of Mountain Dew a day.

Mountain Dew now holds a coveted spot among the top four or five soft drinks, behind Coke, Pepsi, and Diet Coke, but it started out as a bar mix consisting of lemon-lime juice, orange juice, low carbonation, and caffeine. It cultivated a hillbilly image and logo and was billed as "zero-proof hillbilly moonshine." In the 1960s, Pepsi bought the brand and started giving it more of a hip image. Following a period of confused advertising images in the 1980s, Mountain Dew came into its own in 1992. Bill Bruce, who was the creative director on the Mountain Dew account, describes Mountain Dew's coming-of-age process:

> Seattle grunge music was happening at the time. Extreme sports were happening. So there was this subculture that we wanted to tap into. The idea was to show the most extreme things. We created these four characters, the Dew Dudes, who represented what was happening at the time musically and culturally.[70]

This approach was first used with Diet Mountain Dew, but given its success, it eventually became the central theme of the entire campaign.

The ongoing challenge to Mountain Dew as it grows in popularity is to maintain its edginess and youth appeal so that it can maintain both its sales and its image. Most recently, Mountain Dew has been trying to engage young urban consumers. (In marketing speak, urban marketing means reaching out to African American and Latino consumers.) The company's goal is to go beyond the rural markets where Mountain Dew has been

enormously successful into the cities where it has traditionally sold less well. Mountain Dew is doing this by featuring hip-hop performers Lil Wayne; Tyler, The Creator; and Rick Ross. (It should be noted that some of the ads to come out of this campaign have backfired for the soft drink maker by offending virtually everyone with racist and misogynistic story lines.[71])

Targeting an Audience.

One audience that advertisers are increasingly targeting is the gay and lesbian market. Gays are desirable as a market to advertisers because they are perceived to be relatively upscale and highly educated.[72] "Because they primarily don't have children and there is one income for each person in the household, you are talking about a population with large sums of disposable income that non-gay families with children wouldn't have," says Rick Dean of the research firm Overlooked Opinions.[73] Media company Rivendell Media estimates that the gay and lesbian market has an annual buying power of $641 billion.[74]

As early as 1994, vodka producer Absolut was among the first major companies to place ads in gay publications, including *Out* and the *Advocate*.[75] In addition to advertising in gay publications, companies are using gay couples in ads. Some advertisers have gone further, experimenting with gay-specific ads. Hyatt Hotels and Resorts has targeted the gay and lesbian market since the late 1990s and has depicted same-sex couples in its messages.[76] Advertising to the gay community carries the risk of antigay groups organizing boycotts of companies that do so, but the effectiveness of such boycotts has been limited.[77]

Failures of Targeted Advertising.

Efforts to target specific audiences are not always successful. When Hornell Brewing launched its western-themed Crazy Horse malt liquor, the company thought it had a product to complement its Dakota Hills Black Sunday brand. The beer was targeted not at Native American groups, but rather at people on the East Coast who were interested in western culture. But Native American groups expressed outrage at the use of the venerated chief's name to sell alcohol.[78] Crazy Horse, a leader of the Oglala Sioux in the nineteenth century, was opposed to drinking.[79] Objections by the Native American community eventually led the U.S. Commerce Department to refuse Hornell a trademark on the product; in addition, the beer was banned in Minnesota and Washington, and its sale was discouraged in Nebraska.[80]

Test Your Media Literacy

Target's Targeting

In the age of online shopping and digital information, it's easy to get paranoid about how much vendors know about us. You want to get creeped out? Start paying attention to the recommendations that Amazon makes to you based on what you've previously looked at and purchased.

But taking all your shopping to a brick-and-mortar department store won't help preserve your privacy. Exhibit number one? Target figured out that a high school girl was pregnant and started sending her direct-mail coupons for maternity products before her father knew anything was going on.[81]

How did Target know the young woman was preggers? It seems that pregnant women have very predictable buying patterns. Sometime during the second trimester, four to six months into the pregnancy, pregnant women start buying things such as prenatal vitamins and maternity clothing. Once a woman starts buying these products, she's likely to be giving birth in three to six months.

According to Charles Duhigg, author of the book *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*, Target tracks every consumer who comes to its stores with a unique number tied to his or her credit or debit card. Using this number, Target knows what pattern of products every consumer buys. This information is then paired with data about the consumer that are purchased by the store, says Target statistician Andrew Pole. Before long, the store knows a lot of information about a customer, including preferred purchases, address, income, race, and even estimated earnings.[82]

So our high school student was buying the right combination of cocoa butter lotions, soaps, and mineral supplements that told Target there was an 86 percent likelihood she was pregnant. So Target started sending her coupons for the products people expecting babies are likely to buy.

When these coupons showed up in the mail, the young woman's father got upset and called the manager of his local Target to complain. "My daughter got this in the mail!" the father told the manager. "She's still in high school, and you're sending her coupons for baby clothes and cribs? Are you trying to encourage her to get pregnant?"

The manager apologized repeatedly to the father. Then the father had an interesting discussion with his daughter and called Target back to apologize. His daughter was pregnant, but she hadn't told him.

Obviously, Pole's system of evaluating the young woman's purchases worked as intended. But how were he and his employer going to deal with the backlash from consumers who just figured out how much the company knew about them?

"If we send someone a catalog and say, 'Congratulations on your first child!' and they've never told us they're pregnant, that's going to make some people uncomfortable," Pole told Duhigg. This led Target to work on figuring out how to get its ads delivered to pregnant women without the women knowing they were being targeted. As Duhigg puts it, "How do you take advantage of someone's habits without letting them know you're studying their lives?"

The solution ended up being fairly simple. Target mails out coupon books to consumers based on their purchasing history all the time. Usually, those coupons don't upset people. So the secret, according to a Target executive, was to mix the pregnancy product coupons in with a collection of other innocuous coupons that hid the fact that Target knew the woman was pregnant.

"We found out that as long as a pregnant woman thinks she hasn't been spied on, she'll use the coupons," the executive said. "As long as we don't spook her, it works."

WHO is the source?

WHO are Charles Duhigg and Andrew Pole, and what do they do?

WHAT are they saying?

How is Target using consumer buying habits to target them with advertising?

WHAT evidence is there?

How predictable are consumers? Does their spending indicate important life milestones? How do consumers react to businesses knowing so much about them?

WHAT do you and your friends think about this?

How do you feel about advertisers using your purchasing and online behavior to target you? Do you find that helpful or creepy? Or maybe a combination of both? Have you ever felt targeted in a way that completely missed who you are? Do you ever change your behavior so you don't get tracked and targeted by marketers?

Advertising in Contemporary Culture

Advertising is much more than a part of the marketing and media business; it is a central element of American culture. Children sing advertising jingles the way they once sang nursery rhymes. In the 1970s, the music from a Coca-Cola commercial even became a hit single, "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing."

▼ In 1962, McDonald's replaced its "Speedee" the hamburger man symbol with the Golden Arches logo, and a year later, the company sold its billionth hamburger. Years of successful advertising have made McDonald's Golden Arches one of the most easily recognizable symbols in the world.



Bloomberg/Getty Images

Critics argue that advertising places a burden on society by raising the cost of merchandise and inducing people to buy things they don't need. The American Association of Advertising Agencies has defended the ad business, claiming that there are four common misconceptions about the industry[83]:

1. Advertising makes you buy things you don't want—The industry responds by saying that no one can make you buy things you don't want. People are free to do as they please.
2. Advertising makes things cost more—Advertisers claim that advertising builds demand for products, which can then be manufactured in larger quantities, more efficiently, and at a lower cost. (This defense ignores the idea of the prestige brand, however. Advertising does not make a bar of Clinique soap cost more to produce, but

the premium image attached to the soap allows the company to charge more for it. Consumers apparently want to be able to buy better, more expensive products.)

3. Advertising helps sell bad products—The industry responds that a good ad may lead people to buy a product once, but it won't sustain demand for a product they don't like. In fact, the industry argues that good advertising for a bad product will kill the product faster than if it hadn't had a good campaign behind it. M. Night Shyamalan, director of the movies *The Sixth Sense* and *Signs*, says that with enough advertising studios can buy a good opening weekend for a movie, but only good word-of-mouth reports by fans will make the movie a long-term success.[84]
4. Advertising is a waste of money—The ad industry counters that advertising strengthens the economy by helping to move products through the marketplace and supporting the mass media.

The Problem of Clutter

When critics complain that there are too many ads on television, few would be quicker to agree than advertising agencies and their clients. They are very concerned about the huge number of commercials and other messages—collectively referred to as clutter—that compete for consumer attention between programs.

Advertisers dislike clutter because the more ads and nonprogram messages there are on television, the less attention viewers will pay to any given message. A study conducted by the Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau (now the Video Advertising Bureau) found that viewers are much more likely to remember the first ad in a group (called a pod) than the fourth or fifth.[85] The clutter problem is not limited to television; each day, the average American adult is exposed to as many as 360 advertisements, of which perhaps 150 will receive at least minimal notice. (Many of the rest will be completely missed through using technology like fast-forwarding on the DVR.)[86]

According to a study commissioned by advertising agencies and their clients, clutter is reaching record levels. In 2005, U.S. network television averaged about fifteen minutes of advertising and promotional clutter per hour during prime time.[87] Cable television rates were even higher, with MTV averaging sixteen minutes and thirteen seconds of clutter per hour. In 2010, cable channel Spike may have set a record for clutter with a single commercial pod running ten minutes during an episode of *Entourage*.[88]

Clutter is generally defined as anything that is not part of the program itself: ads, public service announcements, network promotions, and other gaps between programs.

Broadcast and cable networks are experimenting with cutting back on the number of commercials they carry. NBCUniversal announced in the spring of 2018 that it planned to cut the number of commercials it shows across all of its networks by 20 percent in the fall of 2018. During prime-time original programming, the network plans to reduce advertising time by 10 percent for the 2018–2019 TV season. Among the changes the networks will be doing is trying to better match ads to the content of the programs to make them more relevant to their audience members. Time Warner's Turner networks and Viacom networks are planning similar changes. This means, of course, that if the networks are going to keep their revenues steady, advertisers are going to need to pay more for this smaller amount of ad time. Fox Broadcasting is considering getting its commercial load down to two minutes per hour by 2020. Among the ways it might do so is by offering six-second-long commercials. (Don't laugh—Logan and Jake Paul initially built their online careers with six-second-long videos.) According to data from television measurement firm Nielsen, in 2017 the average ad time per hour was thirteen minutes on broadcast TV and sixteen minutes on cable.[89]

Breaking through the clutter is a continuing challenge for advertisers, who have come up with a variety of solutions to the problem. Tire company Goodyear breaks through the clutter by putting its message on the Goodyear Blimp, which flies over sporting and other entertainment events that draw large audiences.[90] Drug companies fight clutter by using celebrities in their advertisements. Former senator and presidential candidate Bob Dole served as an early spokesman for the impotence drug Viagra; NBA star Alonzo Mourning talked about the anemia drug Procrit, which is used to treat a kidney disorder that almost ended his career; and actress Lorraine Bracco, who played a psychiatrist on *The Sopranos*, discussed depression in ads for drugs manufactured by Pfizer Inc.[91]

Debunking Subliminal Advertising

With all the concern about advertising clutter, it is ironic that there is substantial public concern about subliminal advertising—messages that are allegedly embedded so deeply in an ad that they cannot be perceived consciously. The concept has been popularized by several writers, but no research has ever been done to demonstrate that advertising audiences can be influenced by messages they don't perceive consciously.

SECRET 3 ▸ Although there is no evidence that it works and little evidence that any advertisers try to create ads with hidden messages, much of the public believes that subliminal advertising is used and is effective. A survey published in 1993 found that among people who were familiar with the concept of subliminal advertising, 72 percent thought it was effective.[92] The concept of subliminal advertising came to public attention in 1957, when Jim Vicary, a market researcher, claimed to have exposed movie audiences to the commands "drink Coca-Cola" and "eat popcorn" flashed on the screen so quickly (less than three-hundredths of a second) that they could not be perceived consciously. Vicary claimed that popcorn sales increased by an average of 57.5 percent and Coke sales went up 18.1 percent. Vicary claimed that people could be influenced strongly by things they didn't see. It turned out, however, that Vicary had not conducted the tests but had simply made up the statistics on increased sales of popcorn and Coke. Throughout 1957 and early 1958, Vicary collected more than $4 million in consulting fees; in June 1958, he disappeared. Despite the fact that this most famous of subliminal marketing studies was a total fraud, it still moved the concept from the margin to the center, demonstrating Secret 3.

In 1970, Wilson Bryan Key, a university professor in Canada, revived the idea of subliminal advertising. While looking at a photo in an article in *Esquire*, he thought he saw an image of a phallus. Key made a career of arguing that Madison Avenue hides images of death, fear, and sex in advertisements to increase sales.[93] It is unclear how these hidden images are supposed to influence viewers, who presumably are ignoring the clutter of overt advertising.

▼ Famed director Ridley Scott created the iconic "1984" commercial to introduce the 1984 Super Bowl audience to Apple's new Macintosh computer. At the time it was produced it was the most expensive commercial ever made; it was also one of the most memorable.



1984, Apple, Inc. “1984

When Advertisements Are More Important Than the Program

Sometimes television ads are as interesting as the programs during which they appear. Commentators have even argued that people sometimes stay tuned to a boring Super Bowl broadcast just to see the commercials. Ridley Scott, best known as the director of blockbuster movies such as *Prometheus*, *The Martian*, and *Blade Runner*, made a name for himself by directing the 1984 Super Bowl commercial that introduced Apple's Macintosh computer. Scott's commercial, known as "1984," changed the world of advertising. Not only is it one of the most talked-about commercials of all time, but it also showed that good commercials can be more memorable than the shows they accompany.[94]

The commercial, created by the Chiat/Day agency, was a success on a number of levels. It portrayed a dramatic image of a young woman athlete rebelling against an Orwellian "Big Brother" situation. It generated talk among the hundred million viewers who saw it, and it transmitted the central message that Apple wanted to get across: that there was an alternative to what was perceived at the time as the all-encompassing power of IBM (a role that has since been taken over by Microsoft).[95]

The commercial aired once on network television during the third quarter of the Super Bowl. After the Super Bowl, the commercial was broadcast free on the Big Three network news shows, and the trade magazine *Ad Age* named it the commercial of the decade. Steve Hayden, who wrote the spot while employed at Chiat/Day, says that the agency wanted to sum up the whole philosophy of the computer in one commercial: "We thought of it as an ideology, a value set. It was a way of letting the whole world access the power of computing and letting them talk to one another."[96]

Ironically, the commercial almost didn't run at all. When it was previewed for Apple's board of directors, several members were horrified by it and wanted the spot scrapped. John O'Toole, former president of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, explained the significance of the ad as follows:

> What "1984" as a commercial for Apple really signified was the first time somebody could put a great deal of production money into a single commercial and run it only once and get tremendous benefit from running it only once. It took great coordination with PR. It was really event marketing, with sales promotion and PR built in. That was the beginning of the new era of integrated marketing communications.[97]

Questioning the Media

Do you watch the Super Bowl every year for the ads? What are your favorite Super Bowl ads? What makes you like them?

Advertising to Children

Few aspects of advertising raise more concerns than commercials targeted at children. Yet children (and, through them, their parents) are a highly desirable audience and market for advertisers. If your parents tell you that there weren't as many commercials targeted at children when they were young, they're right. In 1983, companies were spending $100 million a year to reach children. But by 2008, spending on advertising directed at children had grown to $17 billion a year. That means that marketers are spending 170 times more today to reach children than they were a generation ago.[98]

Television Advertising to Children.

A U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) study published in 1978 under the title "Television Advertising to Children" found that children between the ages of two and eleven see approximately twenty thousand television commercials a year—that's the equivalent of about three hours a week, or slightly less than half an hour per day. The study was highly controversial at the time because it called for bans (never implemented) on all advertising in programs for which a "significant" portion of the audience was under the age of eight and on television ads for sugary foods targeted at children ages eight to eleven.[99]

Marketing to children in the twenty-first century goes far beyond the traditional print and thirty-second television ads. Companies are instead pouring money into product placement, in-school programs, mobile phone ads, and video games.[101] In 2006, the advertising industry revised its guidelines for advertising to children for the first time in thirty-two years. The new guidelines require companies to distinguish between advertising and programming content, show mealtime foods as part of a single balanced meal rather than as part of a larger balanced diet, and identify when online games contain advertising.[102]

Food Ads Directed at Children.

In recent years, the biggest criticism of advertising directed at children has moved from cigarettes to junk food. The Health and Medicine Division of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine says there is "strong evidence that exposure to television advertising" is connected with obesity, which can lead to numerous illnesses, including diabetes.[103] The institute goes on to say that ads for junk food targeted at children under age eight can help establish a lifetime of poor eating patterns.[104] Of course, what constitutes healthy food is subject to some debate. Would a high-fiber granola bar with significant levels of sugar qualify as health food or junk?

Richard Martin, a spokesman for the Grocery Manufacturers Association, said at an FTC

hearing that the association does not believe there are bad foods: "Any food can be responsibly consumed by everyone, including kids."[105]

The advertising industry has been critical of the report's recommendations to regulate food ads targeted at children. Daniel L. Jaffe, an executive with the Association of National Advertisers, told the *Washington Post* that

> the government stepping in and saying what should be in messages on TV is a very radical proposal. . . . If you do it for food, there's no reason it can't be done for other controversial product categories. People are already trying to restrict the advertising for prescription drugs.[106]

In response to the report and other criticism from activist groups, the U.S. advertising and food industries say they are working to limit the advertising of junk food to children. Ten of the largest food and beverage companies—including Kraft, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Hershey's—have pledged to use at least half of their ads directed at children under age twelve to promote healthier foods or encourage healthy lifestyles. They will also take junk food promotions out of online interactive games.[107]

Televised advertising of junk food to children has been a major issue in the United Kingdom as well, with the government putting in place strong new regulations of the practice. The new restrictions limit the promotion of high-fat, high-sugar, and high-salt foods to children under age sixteen to certain hours of the day. The ban has been controversial in Britain because these food ads provide funding for popular children's programming, such as *Bob the Builder* and *My Parents Are Aliens*. Producers argue that without the revenue from food ads, the commercial broadcast networks will stop producing high-quality children's content.[108] Critics of the ban say that this would leave British children with the choice of commercial-free BBC programming or imported satellite programming from companies such as Disney.[109] Anne Wood, creator of the popular *Teletubbies* series, told the *Guardian*,

Test Your Media Literacy

Limits on Advertising Food To Children

Advertising to children in general has been controversial for years, but as of late the criticism has become more focused on children's food ads. In a nutshell, a recent research study conducted by the Institute of Medicine found the following, in respect to food preferences and diets:

- There is strong evidence that television advertising influences the food and beverage preferences of children ages 2–11 years. There is insufficient evidence about its influence on the preferences of teens ages 12–18 years.
- There is moderate evidence that television advertising influences the food and beverage beliefs of children ages 2–11 years. There is insufficient evidence about its influence on the beliefs of teens ages 12–18 years.
- There is strong evidence that television advertising influences the short-term consumption of children ages 2–11 years. There is insufficient evidence about its influence on the short-term consumption of teens ages 12–18 years.
- There is moderate evidence that television advertising influences the usual dietary intake of younger children ages 2–5 years and weak evidence that it influences the usual dietary intake of older children ages 6–11 years. There is also weak evidence that it does not influence the usual dietary intake of teens ages 12–18 years.[100]

WHO are the sources?

You have read about groups in the United States and the United Kingdom that have both advocated for and opposed advertising food products to children. Who are these groups?

WHAT are they saying?

Why do critics oppose food advertisements targeted at children? What types of food ads do they object to? How have supporters of this advertising responded? How have the responses in the United Kingdom and the United States differed?

WHAT evidence is there?

What evidence has been presented that food advertising directed at children is harmful? What evidence has been presented that it is benign or even helpful? Who is sponsoring and funding the studies?

WHAT do you and your classmates think about food advertisements directed at children?

What kinds of effects do you think food advertisements have on children? Do you think that the arguments that advocates and opponents are presenting are sincere? Or are the advocates just trying to advance their own agendas?

> I am horrified and, believe me, it's not from a personal or self-interested position. . . . The health lobby seems to have won the day, but what about the other cultural side, protecting the rights of children to have television made for them, as adults do?[110]

Because the restrictions include ads targeted at children under sixteen, the ban will also affect MTV, costing the network as much as 8.8 percent of its income.

The Future of Advertising

With the rise of new advertising media, including computers connected to the internet, mobile phone screens, and video games, the older media, such as television, newspapers, and magazines, are going to be facing substantial challenges.

Integrated Marketing Communication

One response to the rapidly changing marketing environment advertisers are facing is integrated marketing communication, or IMC. The idea is that there should be an overall communication strategy for reaching key audiences and that this strategy can be carried out using advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and interactive media. Dating back to the 1980s and 1990s, IMC is a long-term approach to building the value of a brand or an organization.[111] (We'll take a more in-depth look at IMC in Chapter 12 when we talk about how Coca-Cola has marketed its new Coca-Cola Freestyle machines.)

In addition to making online payment systems, electric cars, batteries for home electric storage, solar power shingles, reusable rocket ships, and (possibly) a high-speed transcontinental subway system, engineer and entrepreneur Elon Musk has done a great job of building himself up as a brand. And he's done it by using a wide range of media to grab the public's and the media's attention through his use of IMC.

Musk made his first fortune by founding electronic payment system PayPal. The money he made selling PayPal to eBay has helped him develop a wide range of high-tech businesses. His company Tesla makes high-performance all-electric cars. After getting started in the electric car business, Musk realized he also needed to be in the battery business—because if he wanted to make enough batteries to make the cost low enough to make his cars affordable, he needed more ways to sell batteries. So he developed the Powerwall, a high-powered battery that can charge with solar power during the day to provide electricity at night. He founded SpaceX to build the Falcon reusable rocket system to make launching satellites, and eventually humans, into space more affordable. He also wants to create a high-speed vacuum-based subway system that would speed people between cities.[112]

Musk does not rely on traditional advertising to promote his products. Instead, he tries to make people excited about them through a wide range of communication strategies. Instead of worrying about his company's Super Bowl ad, Musk launched his personal Tesla Roadster into space using the powerful SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket. With the Falcon Heavy's test flight, he could have put anything in it, a block of iron, to serve as a simulated payload. But instead he put his personal Tesla Roadster convertible. Then, in the Roadster with its top down, there sat a Starman dummy wearing a SpaceX prototype space suit behind the wheel. And with that, he built a connection between his SpaceX space launch brand and his Tesla electric car brand.[113]

▼ Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk excels at getting free attention for his brands. In this case, he launched one of his all-electric Tesla convertibles into space on top of the Falcon Heavy rocket with a Starman dummy clad in a SpaceX space suit. The Roadster is currently on its way to Mars and beyond.



SpaceX via Getty Images/Getty Images

With people around the world watching the most powerful rocket launched in decades, the video supplied by SpaceX showed the Roadster and its Starman dummy on its way toward Mars. The SpaceX video based on the launch live stream has attracted more than 15 million views. An edited video from SpaceX about the launch has had 22 million views. The video of the launch posted by the *Guardian* has had more than 1.2 million views. Another version of the video posted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation had 2.2 million views, and the video showing the Falcon Heavy's twin side boosters landing side by side picked up yet another 2.2 million views.

That simple substitution of a car for a block of iron created global sensation. A search of news stories about the launch found more than 130,000 links ranging from *Florida Today*, to Space.com, to every major news organization.

Adweek journalist David Griner writes, "While the launch was clearly one of the most dramatic moments of livestreaming in recent memory, it's the live YouTube feed of Musk's own cherry-red Roadster circling the Earth that will perhaps generate the biggest publicity boost for Musk's emerging electric-car company. With a famously nonexistent ad budget, Tesla just secured a place in auto marketing history."[114]

Media Transformations

From Advertorials to Native Advertising



Onion Labs, "Gildan Try Outs: Three guys try on their dad's underwear and give us their thoughts." August 3, 2017. Retrieved from YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3KjTqAAsrA.

SECRET 4 ▸ Back in 1950, legendary adman David Ogilvy created one of the best examples of an ad trying to masquerade as magazine editorial content. The "Guinness Guide to Oysters" gave readers a delicious look at Atlantic oysters and suggested that a Guinness Extra Stout would go great with them. As Brian Clark wrote in his advertising column at the website Say Daily, "I don't even like oysters, and this sounds amazing right now."[115] Ogilvy's Guinness and oysters ad is oftentimes held up as the real start of the advertorial—a paid message where the advertisement blends in with the surrounding materials in the magazine, newspaper, or website. While advertorials have been around for more than sixty years, a new version known as native advertising has emerged. Native ads are essentially a more sophisticated form of sponsored content that "matches a publication's editorial standards while meeting the audience's expectations."[116] (They are also an example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.) Many prestige media companies—including the Atlantic, the Washington Post, and the New York Times—are making use of native ads, especially on their websites.[117]

While ads designed to look like editorial content are nothing new, having the publication's editorial staff producing articles appearing as sponsored content is breaking down the old barrier between "church and state"—the blurred line between the business side and the content side of a publication.[118] This line is fuzzy enough that according to a 2015 study published in the *Journal of Advertising*, only about 8 percent of subjects in an experiment could rightly identify native ads as paid marketing messages.[119] In an effort to help reduce this confusion, the Federal Trade Commission has put together new guidelines requiring online publishers to more clearly label native ads in a way that consumers will understand.[120] Globally, native advertising is growing rapidly, going from $30.9 billion in 2015 to an estimated $59.35 billion in 2018.[121]

The big challenge to both the advertiser and the publication is that the content of native ads needs to really match the style and standards of the hosting publication. When the Gildan underwear company wanted to create a modern image for its men's briefs to differentiate them from the "tighty whitey" underwear worn by young men's dads, it turned to Onion Labs, the native advertising agency from the *Onion* news parody website. A pair of videos produced by Onion Labs showed the young men trying on their dad's underwear and finding the experience both unpleasant and unsettling. One young man wore his dad's underwear for seventy-two hours, and he started donating money to public radio and taking up fly-fishing.[122]

Native ads can go horribly wrong, however, when the content of the article or ad doesn't match the standards of the hosting publication. One of the most notorious examples came from 2013 when the *Atlantic* ran a sponsored article on its website extolling the opening of twelve new Scientology churches.

Along with the article, which seemed to be at odds with content from the *Atlantic*, the comments section following the article appeared to have nothing but positive comments about Scientology. Comments on most articles at the site are both positive and negative. After the article was up less than twelve hours, it was pulled from the website, and the next day an apology was posted that began:

> We screwed up. It shouldn't have taken a wave of constructive criticism—but it has—to alert us that we've made a mistake, possibly several mistakes. We now realize that as we explored new forms of digital advertising, we failed to update the policies that must govern the decisions we make along the way.[123]

The *Atlantic* followed up that apology two weeks later with new guideless for how it would handle sponsored content in the future.[124]

DO you think that native advertising or sponsored content lowers the reputation of publications that sell it?

HOW do you feel about reading articles that are sponsored by the people being written about? Would you find them as interesting as articles that were not sponsored? Why or why not?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

It should be noted that while all the media attention was achieved at no cost, it did require the development of a $500 million rocket development program.

Is Anyone Watching Television Ads?

There is only a fixed amount of money available for advertising and marketing products. And as companies move their advertising dollars to new media—online for ads and streaming content and to mobile phone screens—there will be less money for older media, such as television. If that were not enough, television is grappling with declining audience sizes and new technologies, such as DVRs, which allow viewers to skip watching commercials altogether. As of 2017, DVRs were in approximately 53 percent of American households.[125]

The broadcast networks are responding to this threat in various ways. CBS is selling web ads as a package with broadcast ads. These aren't the simple banner ads of the 1990s; they are video ads that come before streaming web content. Sneaker manufacturer Converse used its broadcast ads to get consumers to generate short videos featuring Converse sneakers, and the company then featured the videos on its website.[126]

Mobile Advertising.

Mobile devices like smartphones and tablets have become the latest frontier for advertising, with their bright color screens and their ubiquitous use among the notoriously hard-to-reach population of adults aged eighteen to thirty-four. Although many companies are simply using banner ads to go with wireless web content, others are creating interactive apps to promote their products.

> SECRET 6 ▸ Despite having small screens, cell phones have several key advantages to advertisers. They are always on, they are always with the person who owns them, and the phone belongs to an identifiable individual. This lets advertisers send out highly targeted messages that can contain time-sensitive offers. Another popular use of mobile phone advertising is to get consumers to participate in activities such as voting for contestants on reality shows.[127] According to *Ad Age*, mobile advertising has been growing dramatically in recent years, going from $31.6 billion in 2015 to a projected $77.1 billion in 2020.[128] The magazine goes on to estimate that mobile advertising will account for two-thirds of online advertising that same year.[129] As this clearly shows, online media are mobile media—Secret 6.

Advertising consultant Kathryn Koegel said she learned a lot about mobile advertising being done around the world when she served as a judge of the GSMA Global Mobile Awards. What did she discover? That folks are doing much more interesting and creative things globally using simpler tools than marketers are in the United States.[130]

The problem, Koegel claims, is that in the United States advertisers are obsessed with fancy iPhone apps that really don't do much to promote the brand. What Koegel found globally was that companies promoted involvement using simple SMS text messages and creative approaches that led to publicly visible activity.

She points to the winning mobile campaign from the competition—one that sells Cornetto ice cream in Turkey through the use of a video game projected on the wall of a building in Taksim, Turkey's answer to Times Square. People compete by controlling game characters on the side of the building using text messages from their phones. If they complete the task, they win free ice cream that is collected on the spot.

The lesson from Koegel isn't that there is anything wrong with mobile apps; you just want to make sure that you have clear goals for what you are trying to accomplish with them. What kind of mobile marketing could you think up?

Questioning the Media

How do you feel about television programs featuring sponsored products within the shows? Do you find product placement more annoying in scripted programs than in reality shows? Why or why not?

Product Placement

Product placement has long been with us. When Paul Newman drank a beer in the 1981 movie *Absence of Malice*, it was a Budweiser. And when Steve McQueen played cop Frank Bullitt back in 1968, he chased criminals through San Francisco in a Ford Mustang GT. But in recent years, product placement has gotten considerably more sophisticated, rising occasionally to the level known as plot placement, branded entertainment, or product integration, in which the product or service being promoted is not only seen, but central to the story.[131]

▼ Microsoft has used product integration in *Mission: Impossible* to feature the company's Surface tablet computer.



Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation/Paramount Pictures/productplacementblog.com

One of the forces driving the growth of this expanded form of product placement is that multitasking consumers are increasingly ignoring television ads by skipping past them on the DVR, surfing other channels during commercial breaks, or leaving the room to get a snack.[132]

The biggest challenge to product placement is making it seem natural rather than intrusive, as intrusive placement tends to put off consumers, according to *New York Times* advertising columnist Stuart Elliott. That may be why so much of the product placement is in reality shows, where the use of products as rewards and prizes makes them fit in better.

There seem to be no limits now to which products can get placed in prime-time programs. Pregnancy was an unmentionable topic on television in the 1950s, but pregnancy tests have shown up frequently in product placements in shows ranging from *Gossip Girl* to *Sex and the City*.[133]

Television and movie writers have rebelled against product integration, complaining that it interferes with their creative integrity; they've also called for getting a cut of the placement income if they're going to be writing the placements into the stories. Patric Verrone, president of a movie and broadcast writers' union, explained why writers are concerned about product integration: "Product placement is simply putting a branded box of cereal on the kitchen table in a show. Product integration is having the characters talk about the crunchy deliciousness of the cereal."[134]

The Long Tail of Advertising

Online advertising has grown dramatically in recent years, going from 3.8 percent of U.S. advertising spending in 2000 to 35.1 percent in 2017. This shows the rising importance of online and social media advertising with ads that hit highly targeted audiences through the long tail.[135]

Among the best known of the long-tail advertising tools are Google's AdWords and AdSense programs. Rather than buying a particular website, advertisers instead buy certain keywords, which place their ads next to particular content. Under AdWords, when surfers do a Google search that includes the keyword, the ad appears next to the search result. With AdSense, websites have a code on them that searches the content of the site and puts ads relevant to the subject matter next to the content posted there. So if I had AdSense on my site and wrote about DVDs in a blog entry, ads for retailers that sold DVD players would start coming up. The advertisers pay for each person who clicks on the served-up ad, with a portion of the money going to the owner of the site where the ad appeared.[136] Although this tool can be used to market any product, it is especially useful for advertising long-tail media. If I were trying to sell punk polka CDs, for example, I would try to maximize the return on my advertising money by reaching only people who were already reading about punk polka bands. Google also supports its Android mobile device operating system software with advertising sales.[137]

One of the big problems with internet advertising is documenting how many people have actually clicked on the ad. Major advertisers have complained that "click fraud" drives up their cost of online advertising. The owner of a website with online ads may pay friends to click on the ads repeatedly to generate more page views and hence more income.[138] Or competitors of a particular advertiser will click on that advertiser's ad to run up his bill.[139] There are even automated programs known as clickbots or hitbots that will click away twenty-four hours a day, running up the bill for advertisers.

Social Marketing

One way advertisers can make their messages more credible is to have them be delivered by people their target audience views as credible. This has a long history of drug companies using medical professionals and shoe companies using athletes like LeBron James to endorse their products. But now this has moved out of the realm of just traditional celebrities into the world of social media stars. Companies are paying prominent social media personalities to feature their products on Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram. Danielle Bernstein, who had 994,000 followers on Instagram in May 2015, posts photos of herself daily in stylish apparel. Some of these photos are of her wearing what she was just planning on wearing, but others are sponsored by companies who pay her from $5,000 to $15,000 for featuring their product in her photos. Among her clients are Lancôme and Virgin Hotels. Should she reach more than a million followers, the magazine *Harper's Bazaar* estimates she could ask for as much as $100,000 per post.[140] In 2017, Instagram developed a standard "Paid partnership" to be posted at the top of all sponsored posts. In addition to giving audience members more information, it gives the paid sponsor access to the reach and engagement data attached to the post that the influencer has.[141]

As we discussed in the section of this chapter on native advertising, however, new FTC regulations could be coming that would require social media figures to disclose when they are getting paid for promoting products.

SECRET 5 ▸ Social marketing can have ties with existing legacy media. As an example, Swiss apparel (and watch and knife) maker Victorinox had a campaign for its outdoor wear that appeared in *Wired* magazine and in the magazine's digital edition in 2014. It was then supported with photos from Instagrammers Bethany Olson and Cory Staudacher who chronicle their world travels on social media. As part of their trip to Switzerland, they hashtagged the brand whenever they were wearing it in images. Dennis Piretra, Victorinox's senior vice president for marketing, told *Ad Age*, "The authenticity and beauty in their photography really sang to us."[142] In one month, the campaign generated more than sixty-five thousand likes and five hundred comments. This illustrates, as do all the examples in this section, Secret 5—All media are social.

▼ Photographer and motorcyclist Bryan Giardinelli got a box of branded swag and payment on his bike loan when the Indian Motorcycle company got some great feedback when it shared Giardinelli's photo of his new Scout motorcycle at sunset.



Instagram/@indianmotorcycle

Not all social marketing efforts are premeditated, however. In 2015, the social media folks at Indian Motorcycle (owned by Polaris) found a great photo of their recently launched Scout motorcycle taken at sunset by photographer and motorcyclist Bryan Giardinelli who Instagrams using the handle @hirethestache. Indian shared the photo through its account along with some complimentary language. The company got more than 3,300 likes and lots of nice feedback, so it then sent the photographer/bike owner a box of branded swag and made a payment for him on his bike loan. That would have been pretty good marketing right there, but the story then got picked up and shared by motorcycle parts company RevZilla, which shared the story with its customers through its blog *Common Tread* under the feature "Stuff That Doesn't Suck."[143]

Whether it is planned in advance or done through content that emerges through social media, what is vital to social marketing campaigns is that viewers need to perceive it as real. Adam Shlachter, then with digital marketing agency DigitasLBi, told *Ad Age* in 2015, "Above all, no matter what you're doing, be authentic and true to your brand as well as the audience."[144]

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Advertisements are paid messages about an organization, a product, a service, or an idea that appear in the mass media. Advertising provides numerous benefits to society, including making media less expensive and contributing to a large and diverse economy. While advertising has existed in the United States since colonial times, it was industrialization, urbanization, and the growth of national transportation networks in the nineteenth century that allowed it to become a major industry. Advertising transformed the media industry from one supported primarily by subscribers to one supported by advertising revenues. Publishers (and later broadcasters) were no longer sellers of content to audience members; they were now sellers of audiences to advertisers.

Advertising can be broken down into consumer advertising, advocacy advertising, and trade (business-to-business) advertising, according to the audience the client is attempting to reach and the idea or product it is trying to sell. The advertising industry encompasses four main groups: the client who has something to advertise, the advertising agency or department that creates the advertising, the media that carry the ads, and the audiences targeted by the advertisements.

Advertisers use a variety of strategies to reach their audiences. They may attempt to understand the needs, wants, and motivations of audience members through psychographic research. They also target products to specific demographic groups.

Critics argue that advertising raises the cost of merchandise, that many ads are tasteless, and that ads can exploit young people and other vulnerable audiences. Advertisers join the critics in complaining that there are too many advertisements in the media, creating the problem referred to as clutter. Although there have been complaints of advertisers embedding subliminal messages in ads, there is no evidence that such messages have been used or that they are effective.

Advertising is going through a period of significant change as new technology emerges that allows consumers to bypass viewing commercials on television. But technology is also providing numerous new venues for advertising, including the internet and mobile devices. Companies are increasingly making use of integrated marketing communication strategies that bring together multiple forms of marketing communication to promote their brands. Advertisers are also looking at promoting their products through elaborately developed product placement and social marketing.

Key Terms ▶▶

advertising 288
industrialization 289
modernization 289
economy of abundance 290
brand name 290
local advertising 292
direct-action message 292
national advertising 292
indirect-action message 292
advocacy ads 292
public service ads 292
business-to-business (trade) ads 293
open contract 294
the big idea 295
brand image 296
media planning 297
CPM 297
zoned coverage 298
drive time 299
targeting 300
clutter 304
subliminal advertising 305
integrated marketing communication (IMC) 309
advertorial 310
product integration 312

Review Questions ▶▶

1. What are the dangers to advertisers when they place their messages next to online posts from young celebrities?
2. What had to happen socially in the nineteenth century in order for advertising to become an important part of our culture?
3. How can advertisers grab the attention of consumers when there are so many competing advertisements they are being exposed to?
4. How did Apple's "1984" commercial introducing the Macintosh transform Super Bowl advertising?
5. How does integrated marketing communication differ from traditional advertising?

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Tide, "Gronk knows that Ride PODS® are for DOING LAUNDRY. Nothing else." January 12, 2018. Retrieved from YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DrC_PF_3Lg.

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Discuss how public relations developed from press agentry to a profession
2. Describe the three major functions of public relations
3. Explain the five components of the ROPES public relations process
4. Explain how a public relations professional should deal with a crisis
5. Explain how the internet has changed the public relations process
6. Discuss how public relations shapes the news we receive and our view of politicians.
7. Describe how political activists use public relations to promote their causes

As we discussed in the opening to Chapter 11, young people can do a good job of attracting bad attention online with videos showing them doing stupid things. In 2013, teens were posting videos of themselves attempting to eat a tablespoon of pure spice in sixty seconds for the Cinnamon Challenge. In the summer of 2014, there was the more admirable charity Ice Bucket Challenge where people dumped a bucket of ice water over their heads to help raise money to fight Lou Gehrig's disease, or ALS. (To be fair, that one had plenty of full-fledged adults participating, including Fox News host Shep Smith and MSNBC host Rachel Maddow.) In 2016, there were videos of the Mannequin Challenge where young people tried to stay frozen in action like, you guessed it, a mannequin.

> SECRET 4 ▸ What did all of these have in common? They all involved young people doing a silly, sometimes dangerous stunt while recording a video of it to post online.[1] (They are also all an example of Secret 4: Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.)

Few of these have been as directly dangerous, however, as the one that became popular in 2017 and 2018—the so-called Tide Pod Challenge that involves people attempting to eat (really just bite into) pods filled with highly concentrated and toxic laundry detergent. As the *PBS NewsHour* pointed out, the challengers don't actually eat the detergent. If they did, they could suffer chemical burns in their throats, esophagi, or lungs. They could also make themselves violently ill to their stomachs. They could give themselves breathing problems for the rest of their lives. They could die.[2]

No one is clear exactly where the Tide Pod Challenge came from. Procter & Gamble (P&G), the consumer product giant that makes Tide, dealt with a small outbreak of young people biting into the laundry pods for fun back in 2015. At the time, satire site the *Onion* posted a mock op-ed opinion piece from the point of view of a toddler who wanted to eat one. But it wasn't until 2017 that making videos of the activity became popular.[3] That was also when the *College Humor* website got 3.5 million views of a video titled "Don't Eat the Laundry Pods. (Seriously. They're Poison.)"[4] *Vox* reports that this was followed with memes of celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay talking about how tasty they were, fights in

postapocalyptic grocery stores over the last bag of pods, and baking pizzas with laundry pod toppings. The *Onion* even had a follow-up parody announcement that Tide had introduced a new sour-apple-flavored laundry pod.[5]

Both P&G and YouTube jumped in quickly to issue statements telling people not to deliberately eat the pods. One press release from P&G stated that the company is "deeply concerned about conversations related to intentional and improper use of liquid laundry packs. Laundry packs are made to clean clothes. They should not be played with, whatever the circumstances, even if meant as a joke. Like all household cleaning products, they must be used properly and stored safely."[6] P&G also got both YouTube and Facebook to take down the Tide Pod Challenge videos whenever they found them.

Of course, P&G didn't really expect to reach teens with its serious and responsible news messages. For that, the company turned to New England Patriots football star Rob Gronkowski, who had previously made Super Bowl commercials for Tide. Gronkowski's message in the online video was direct. "What the heck is going on, people? Use Tide pods for washing, not eating. Do not eat." If that wasn't clear enough, at one point in the video he says, "No, no, no, no."[7] The video went viral and inspired a range of other videos mocking the whole idea of the challenge. Rapper and actor Ice-T made a very direct public service announcement that aired during the *Tonight Show* where the *Law & Order: SVU* star said in his monotone, "Stop eating laundry detergent dumb f——s."[8]

Tide also responded directly through social media to consumers who were reaching out to the company. When a consumer posted a tweet that said, "Help @tide I ate a tide pod because I lost a bet and now I feel like I'm burning a hole in my stomach," Tide responded quickly with a tweet saying, "Contact your doctor or your local poison control center. When you are feeling better, please call us at . . . We're open M–F from 9–6 ET."[9]

But the Tide Pod Challenge was only a small part of the problem—though it has been the most visible part. As early as 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called poisoning by detergent pods an emerging health crisis, with poison control centers reporting 7,700 cases among children age five and under for that year.[10] Between 2012 and 2017, two children and six adults died from eating the packets, though apparently none of them were participating in the challenge.[11]

Tide responded to the original problem of small children biting into the packets by creating educational materials for parents and caregivers, putting the pods in more child-resistant packaging, and adding a bitter flavor to the wrapper that surrounds the detergent.[12]

Public relations practitioner Blair Nicole Natasi, writing for *Forbes*, says that one thing that helped P&G was that the Tide Pod Challenge was not a self-inflicted PR crisis. Tide had long had warning labels on its packaging telling people not to ingest the packs or let them

get into their eyes. Once the challenge started appearing on social media, the company wasted no time in responding with the message that the pods were for laundry only. Finally, Natasi writes that in addition to responding to young people, P&G worked at making the broader public aware of the problem.[13]

Marketing professor Robert Field praised P&G for not apologizing for the bad actions of consumers. "They validated public concerns, yet made it clear they don't consider themselves responsible," he said.[14]

As we will see later in the chapter, one of the key ways of promoting the image you want of your institution is making sure you are doing a good job of telling your story publicly before bad narratives get started. In addition to examining the development of the PR industry, we discuss how the PR process works, the various publics that organizations need to work with, and how public relations professionals have used public relations to protect and advance their employers' interests.

From Press Agentry to Professionalism

The field of public relations (also called PR) has had an uneven image in the United States. (The term *public relations* is discussed more extensively later in this chapter.) In his book on corporate public relations, Marvin Olasky noted that practitioners have been called "high-paid errand boys and buffers for management."[15] Other names have been less flattering. Despite such criticisms, public relations is critical to industry, government, and nonprofit organizations. These organizations need to deal with the people who work for them, invest in them, are served by them, contribute to them, regulate them, or buy from them. They need to interact with the world. Ultimately, that's what public relations is all about—relating with a wide range of publics. A public is a group of people who share a common set of interests. An internal public is made up of people within the organization. An external public is made up of people outside the organization.

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

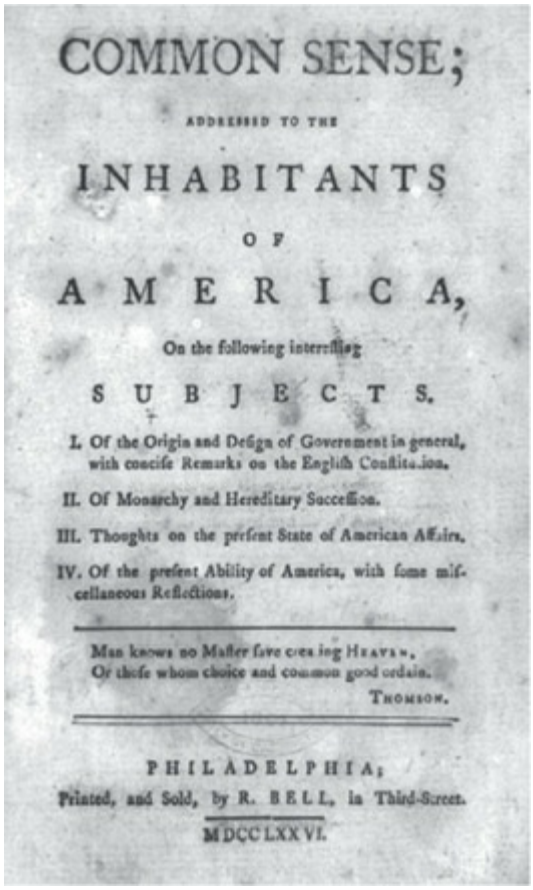
The Origins of Public Relations

The origins of public relations go back as far as the American Revolution, with pamphlets like Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, which built up the case for the colonies' break with England. In the early 1800s, author Washington Irving used publicity to build excitement for his latest book. But the PR profession is generally seen as having grown out of the Industrial Revolution. As companies and their accompanying bureaucracies grew, so did the need to manage their image.[16] Advances in communications also made publicity campaigns more feasible. It wasn't until the penny press of the 1830s and 1840s produced widespread newspaper circulation that publicity began to be particularly effective. Circus entrepreneur P. T. Barnum raised publicity to a fine art, building interest in his shows by writing letters to the editor under fake names and accusing himself of fraud. Thus, this early publicity process, known as press agentry, was a one-way form of public relations that involved sending material from the press agent to the media with little opportunity for interaction and feedback. Press agentry was used to support causes such as temperance with speakers, books, and songs. It was also practiced effectively by the abolitionist movement.

One-Way Communication.

As noted in the preceding section, press agentry consisted of one-way communication. For the most part, press agents before the 1920s worked at building publicity for their clients rather than managing or creating a specific image. Standard Oil's efforts in the 1890s were typical of the time. The oil giant's advertising agency sent out news articles as paid advertisements, but the agency paid for the ads only if they looked like articles or editorials.[17] In the early years of the twentieth century, however, companies started realizing that they needed to respond to criticism from various populist and progressive political groups and to muckraking investigative reports by magazines such as *McClure's* (see Chapter 5).

▼ Thomas Paine's famous *Common Sense* pamphlet is an example of an early public relations effort. It was used to build the case for the American Revolution.



COMMON SENSE;

ADDRESSED TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

AMERICA,

On the following interesting

SUBJECTS.

I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.

II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.

III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.

IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

Man knows no Master save creating HEAVEN,
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.
THOMSON.

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed, and Sold, by R. BELL, in Third-Street.
MDCCLXXVI.

Library of Congress

The Beginnings of Image Management.

The first major users of public relations were railroads, which had numerous reasons for working on their images.[18] In the 1870s, many railroads wanted to divide freight traffic among themselves according to predetermined percentages so as to avoid competition. The railroads did not want criticism of their monopolistic practices in the press, so they bribed reporters and editors, either by making cash payoffs or, more subtly, by giving free passes for travel on the railroad to cooperative members of the press. The Illinois Central Railroad realized that praise of the railroads coming from academics would do more good and be more persuasive than puffery coming from the industry itself, so it funded university research on the railroads, the findings of which could then be quoted by the press.

Like the railroads, the utility and telephone industries saw the value of public relations. Chicago Edison argued to both the government and the public that providing electricity was a "natural monopoly" and should not be open to competition. In the early 1900s, AT&T required newspapers in which it advertised to run positive articles about its actions. Both the utilities and the phone company used publicity firms to write articles and editorials promoting the companies' points of view that were placed in newspapers around

the country.

Ivy Lee.

Ivy Lee, one of the two key founders of modern public relations, brought to the business a strong understanding of both economics and psychology. Lee recognized that the public often reacted more strongly to symbols and phrases than to rational arguments, and he built his campaigns around the importance of symbolism.[19] He also saw that it was important to put a human face on corporations.[20]

Lee was the first PR professional to deal with crisis management, and although *spin control* did not become a popular term until the 1980s, he was practicing it as early as 1910. Lee wanted to do much more for his clients than just send out favorable publicity; he wanted to manipulate public opinion in favor of his clients. That meant actively working with the press.

Among the problems faced by the railroads was reporting on accidents. The accepted practice of the industry in the late 1800s was either to cover up accidents or to bribe reporters not to write about them. Lee suggested that it might be in the railroads' best interests to deal with the press openly. When his client, the Pennsylvania Railroad, had a wreck, Lee invited reporters to visit the scene of the accident at the company's expense. After they arrived, he helped them report on the story. Company officials were amazed to see that the publicity they received when they cooperated with the press was a vast improvement over what they received when they fought with it.[21]

Lee also recognized the importance of telling the truth. Although the arguments he presented clearly supported his clients' viewpoints, Lee was always careful to be accurate in any factual claims. This was not so much because telling the truth was right or moral as because doing so was effective.[22] Lee once told oil giant John D. Rockefeller Jr., "Tell the truth because sooner or later the public will find it out anyway. And if the public doesn't like what you are doing, change your policies and bring them into line with what the people want."[23] In 1902, American coal mine operators were facing a strike. The mine owners ignored the press, but the unionized miners worked with reporters to their advantage, and due to this the public strongly supported the workers. When the mine owners faced another strike in 1906, they hired Lee's publicity firm, Parker and Lee.[24] Lee convinced the mine operators that they could no longer ignore public opinion. A former business reporter, he started giving newspapers all the information they asked for. Supplied with clear and accurate statements from the mine owners, reporters started writing stories that were considerably less antagonistic to the mine owners.

▼ Circus promoter P. T. Barnum built publicity for his shows through posters such as this one, as well as by staging protests and complaints about his circus.



Library of Congress

At about this time, Lee developed his "Declaration of Principles," which outlined how he thought public relations ought to be carried out. These principles can be summarized quite simply: Openly and honestly supply accurate and timely news to the press.[25] Lee himself suffered from bad public relations late in his career: In the 1930s, he was accused of being a Nazi propagandist because he had worked for the German Dye Trust. The damage to his reputation from this association came at least in part from the many enemies he had made over the course of his career.[26]

Edward L. Bernays.

Along with Ivy Lee, the other founder of public relations was Edward L. Bernays, who was the first person to apply social-scientific research techniques to the field. Bernays, a nephew of Sigmund Freud, promoted the use of psychology to manipulate public opinion, a technique that he called engineering consent:

> This phrase means, quite simply, the use of an engineering approach—that is, action based only on thorough knowledge of the situation and on the application of scientific principles and tried practices in the task of getting people to support ideas and programs. Any person or organization depends ultimately on public approval and is therefore faced with the problem of engineering the public's consent to a program or goal.[27]

Questioning the Media

Back in the early 1900s, Ivy Lee said that PR professionals needed to deal with publics "openly and honestly." Do you think modern PR professionals live up to this ideal? Why or why not?

In addition to promoting his clients, Bernays actively promoted the concept of public relations as a profession. To that end, he wrote the first books on the practice, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923) and *Propaganda* (1928). In 1923, Bernays taught the first course in public relations, which he offered at New York University.

Like Lee, Bernays recognized the importance of the crowd in modern life. He found that the best way to influence the public was to arrange for messages to be delivered by credible sources. "If you can influence the leaders, either with or without their conscious cooperation, you automatically influence the group which they sway," he commented.[28] While the guaranteed influence of leaders over groups may be a bit of an overstatement, the use of credible or admired individuals to speak on behalf of a company is certainly central to public relations.

Test Your Media Literacy

False Reports Garner Publicity

▼ Truthfulness is not always the first priority when it comes to entertainment publicity. Actress Rita Hayworth in the 1930s and singer Rihanna in the 2010s had their publicity agents pull similar stunts and claim that the performers had won imaginary awards for their appearances.



Getty Images/ Bob Landry

Emporio Armani, 2011 Fall-Winter Campaign

Fake news isn't always about politics. Back in 1939, a young actress by the name of Rita Hayworth was trying to become a household name, and her press agent, the legendary Henry Rogers, was willing to do whatever it took to make her a Hollywood star. One of these efforts was putting out a made-up press release naming Hayworth the winner of a nonexistent "best-dressed off-screen actress" contest held by a nonexistent group. That story landed Hayworth a big photo story in Look magazine (a competitor of *Life*) and launched the buxom actress's career.[29]

Why do we care? Because it's happened again.

SECRET 7 ▸ More recently, British newspaper the Daily Mail ran a story proclaiming that singer Rihanna's ad campaign for Armani undies had won an award from Ad Age magazine for being the sexiest of the year. The writers even quoted Ad Age as saying: "It's Rihanna at her sexiest. She's never looked this good." They also added: "She's in amazing shape and the pictures are stunning."[30] (As a side note, the "they" in the attribution should have been a tip-off that there was not really a source behind the story. Remember Secret 7—There is no "they.")

Even Rihanna tweeted about the award. The only problem? As press blogger Jim Romenesko points out, *Ad Age* didn't actually give out an award for the sexiest ad. That's why none of the stories about it (including those from the *Huffington Post*, the *Hindustan Times*, the *Global Grind*, and others) had links back to *Ad Age*.[31]

The actual source of the story? A company called TNI Press Ltd. that writes stories for British tabloids and is the source for a number of recent stories extolling Rihanna's sexiness. In his *New York Times* obituary, Rogers was quoted as saying in 1987, "If I did now what I did then, I'd be barred from every news media outlet."[32]

SECRET 4 ▸ Hmmm . . . maybe not. Think about Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

As a side note, at the time this story was spreading, your author ran a Google search on Rihanna's Armani ad and found twenty-four media stories about it but only one link to the actual correction. When it comes to celebrity gossip—gossip likely put forward by the celebrity himself or herself—do we really care whether it's true?

WHO are the sources?

What is the Daily Mail? What kind of stories does it run? Who was Henry Rogers?

WHAT are they saying?

What did Henry Rogers do for Rita Hayworth? What did the Daily Mail do for Rihanna? What connection is there between Rogers and the Rihanna story?

WHAT evidence is there?

What evidence did the Daily Mail have that the Rihanna story was true? How about the news sites that reprinted the story? What could these publications have done to check the story before they published it? What do you and your classmates think about fabricated celebrity stories?

WHY do you think that the Daily Mail ran the story with photos about Rihanna?

Do you think that it cared whether or not the story was true? Was there any difference between what the Daily Mail did for Rihanna and what Henry Rogers did for Rita Hayworth? Do you and your friends have any faith in the truth of tabloid stories about celebrities?

To Bernays, the chief characteristic distinguishing public relations from the press agentry of the past was that public relations was a two-way interaction between individuals and organizations—communication that involved listening as well as speaking. Bernays wrote that by the 1920s it had became clear to practitioners that words alone did not constitute public relations; there had to be actions to go with the words.

World War I: The Federal Government Starts Using Public Relations

The years 1914–1918 were a period of major growth for public relations. According to Bernays, during this time governments figured out how important persuasive communication could be to mobilize popular support for a major war: "Ideas and their dissemination became weapons and words became bullets."[33] The U.S. government used public relations extensively during World War I. Within a week of the U.S. entry into the war, President Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI) under the direction of George Creel, the former editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*. The committee operated from April 6, 1917, until June 30, 1919, building American support for the war. Although the committee lacked many of the modern tools of mass communication—radio was still in its infancy, and the movie industry was just taking its first steps—it was still able to use advertising, billboards, and posters, as well as newspaper opinion pieces, articles, and pamphlets.

The committee also used interpersonal channels. It enlisted seventy-five thousand "Four-Minute Men" who took the committee's messages to churches and civic groups by delivering four-minute speeches. Research conducted in the 1940s later proved the effectiveness of this technique by confirming that people often turn to individuals they know and trust when they are looking for guidance about an important topic. So if an organization wants to influence a particular public, the best way may be to use influential local individuals, along with the mass media.[34] Bernays referred to this process as opinion leadership—using "journalists, politicians, businessmen, scientists, professional men, authors, society leaders, teachers, actors, women of fashion and so on" to deliver influential messages to the public.[35]

▼ The Committee on Public Information had seventy-five thousand "Four-Minute Men" who gave brief speeches about World War I to churches and civic groups across the United States.



Library of Congress

Woodrow Wilson's use of public relations was not limited to the war effort. He was the first president to hold regular television screen press conferences, and under Wilson the Federal Trade Commission used publicity to force the food industry to adopt more sanitary practices.

The federal government turned to public relations once again during World War II. The Office of War Information served much the same purpose that the CPI had during World War I. The main difference was that the new group was able to use talking films and radio

to supplement the print and interpersonal communications used by the CPI.

Public Relations Becomes a Profession

During the 1940s and 1950s, public relations continued to grow as a profession, and colleges and universities began offering degrees in the field. Advances in polling made it easier to measure public opinion, and clients began to realize that PR firms could help shape how people felt about companies and issues. Clients were also looking for help in making use of the emerging medium of television.

Throughout the 1960s, the media became more critical of both business and government as the United States became caught up in the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, the student and women's movements, environmentalism, and consumerism (for example, groups such as Ralph Nader's consumer activist organization). This trend continued into the 1970s with the rise of Watergate-inspired investigative reporting. It was a time when institutions had to actively manage their images, and they realized the importance of communicating with individuals, businesses, governments, and social organizations.[36]

The Business of Public Relations

There is a popular misconception among students that public relations primarily involves talking and meeting with people. Although it certainly includes these elements, there is much more to the profession. Public relations involves managing an organization's image through planning, research, communication, and assessment.

What Is Public Relations?

Edward Bernays described three major functions of public relations[37]:

1. Informing—Sending out information to a variety of publics, ranging from the people who work in a company's office to its customers on the other side of the world. An example of information would be a press release announcing a new product line to stores that sell the company's products.
2. Persuading—Attempting to induce members of various publics to change their attitudes or actions toward an idea, product, or institution. An example of persuasion would be a lobbying campaign to persuade the government to remove a tax on the company's product.
3. Integrating—Attempting to bring publics and institutions together with a shared set of goals, actions, and attitudes. An example of an integrative event would be a charity auction designed to raise funds for a park in the city where the company has its offices as the company works to become a vital part of the community.

Bernays saw public relations as a public good, necessary for the proper functioning of society. He argued that society was moving too fast and becoming too complex for the average person to cope with and that the only hope for a functional society was to merge public and private interests through public relations.

This two-way model of interaction between the institution and its publics is the central notion of modern public relations, which can be defined as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends."[38] This definition has three basic segments:

1. Public relations is a management function. This means that it is central to the running of a company or organization and not merely a tool of the marketing department.
2. Public relations establishes mutually beneficial relationships. This means that public relations is an interaction that should benefit both sides—the organization and the public(s).
3. Companies depend on various publics to succeed. One of the primary reasons PR campaigns fail is that they neglect these relationships and consider only the company's point of view.

One mistake companies must avoid is to assume that glib communication can be a substitute for real action when solving a public problem. This can be seen clearly in the case of the film industry in the 1920s and 1930s. As discussed in Chapter 8, during that period movies were being criticized for their immorality. Industry leaders responded by hiring former U.S. postmaster Will Hays to supervise the moral content of movies. Throughout

the 1920s, Hays preached a message of corporate responsibility to the press, but the industry made no significant changes in response to criticism of the portrayal of sex, violence, and drug use in the movies.[39]

By 1934, critics had had enough of soothing words without action, and the Catholic Legion of Decency started a movie boycott. With the threat of government censorship growing, the movie industry finally adopted a production code that put strict limits on what directors could portray. Public relations historian Marvin Olasky argues that if the movie industry had dealt with its critics in a meaningful way in the 1920s, it might have avoided the restrictions forced on it in the 1930s.[40]

The Public Relations Process

Although there are a number of different ways of looking at the PR process, we are going to look at it using a model known as ROPES: research, objectives, programming, evaluation, and stewardship.[41]

1. Research—Researching the opportunities, problems, or issues the organization is facing
2. Objectives—Setting specific and measurable objectives for the PR campaign
3. Programming—Planning and implementing the activities necessary to carry out the objectives
4. Evaluation—Testing the messages and techniques before using them, monitoring the programming while it's being delivered, and measuring the results of the programming
5. Stewardship—Maintaining the relationships created through the previous steps

Central to the ROPES process is the notion that public relations is concerned primarily with creating, developing, and nurturing relationships between an organization and its key publics.[42] To see how this process is carried out, let's look at how P&G used public relations to both discourage misuse of the Tide laundry pods and protect the value of the United States' best-selling liquid laundry detergent brand as we discussed earlier in this chapter.[43]

Research.

P&G, the owner of the Tide brand, from the time of the initial launch of Tide laundry pods in 2012 up through the present day, needed to encourage the safe use of its product without overreacting to every accidental or deliberate misuse of the pods. To do so, the company monitored social media and news reports about them as well as public health reports. During the first year of release, P&G learned that toddlers were biting into the brightly colored, soft pods and making themselves sick, as were some older people suffering from cognitive disabilities or mental illness. A couple of years later, reports started to surface of teenagers attempting to eat the pods on a dare. Finally, in 2017 and 2018, news reports and social media showed young people were posting videos of themselves engaging in what they called the Tide Pod Challenge.[44]

Through monitoring, P&G found that it clearly had a problem with small children innocently biting into the toxic product. In 2014 and 2015, the company found a low level of teen abuse of the pods, but decided that it would do more harm than good in publicizing the abuse. When the Tide Pod Challenge surfaced and started going viral, the PR professionals working with P&G knew they needed to respond in a significant way.

Objectives.

A successful PR campaign depends on a clear definition of what the client wants to accomplish. This depends on having clearly measurable objectives for the campaign. It also involves working to solve the problem with changes to the product in addition to communicating with various publics. P&G's objectives over a multiyear period included

- Maintaining the trust of its customers
- Encouraging safe storage and use of the pods
- Discouraging the attempted eating of the laundry pods
- Discouraging teens from engaging in stunts with the pods and sharing it on social media
- Preventing negative word of mouth through social media[45]

Programming.

P&G put together several phases of product updates and communication to respond to the problems of safety and abuse.

- For the problem with toddlers biting into the pods, P&G decided early on to make changes to the product, most significantly by adding a strong bitter taste to the coating on the pods. The company also strengthened the effectiveness of the child-resistant packaging the pods came in. Finally, P&G improved and publicized the safety information that came with the product and was available online.[46]
- To deal with the social-media-driven fad of posting videos of the Tide Pod Challenge, P&G made an online public service announcement featuring New England Patriots' Rob Gronkowski telling teens, "No, no, no, no," about biting the pods. The company also worked with YouTube and Facebook to take down the Tide Pod Challenge videos. The company also did a more conventional communication campaign to get across the idea that laundry pods were a cleaning product that needed to be treated carefully and with respect. Finally, P&G worked with an industry organization to produce educational materials to be distributed at colleges and universities.[47]

Evaluation.

Evaluation of the campaign showed that it was effective in a number of ways. Analysis of poison control center reports showed that the number of accidental injuries from the pods stayed at a relatively stable number even as sales of the product drastically increased. The combination of communication and product changes was effective. The anti–Tide Pod Challenge campaign was also successful. The Gronkowski video was retweeted more than fifty thousand times and liked more than one hundred thousand times. Gronkowski himself also tweeted the video from his account, collecting an additional nine thousand

retweets and twenty-nine thousand likes. The video also got more than forty-four thousand views on Facebook. In addition, the meme-like video inspired the production of a number of other videos that mocked the whole idea of biting into the pods. Efforts to work with YouTube and Facebook were also successful in getting the pod-eating videos off of social media.[48]

Marketing professor Americus Reed praised the efforts by P&G and its agencies: "From the perspective of brand crisis assessment, I think Tide did everything that you're supposed to do. . . . You have to validate concerns. You have to show action. And you have to control the narrative."[49] By speaking out early and taking definitive action, P&G has protected one of its most important brands.

Stewardship.

P&G made its response to the Tide laundry pod crisis part of its overall communication plan. Tide had always had safety warnings on its packaging and child-resistant packaging. The response simply had the company reinforcing its previous actions. When P&G's public relations agency produced the "No, no, no, no" video, it used Gronkowski, whom it had previously used in Super Bowl commercials, thus making the message part of its overall campaign. The company then continued to monitor social media and to respond to any reports of accidental or deliberate ingestion of the laundry pods.

Who Are the Publics?

The term *public relations* seems to imply that there is a single monolithic group of people —"the public"—with whom the client needs to communicate. But, in reality, there are many such groups, since a public is any group of people who share a common set of interests.[50] These could include a company's employees, customers, stockholders, government regulators, or even people who live in the community where a new factory is to be built. In general, however, these publics can be divided into two main groups: internal publics and external publics, as mentioned earlier.

Internal Publics.

An important audience for companies, and one that is easy to forget, is the internal public —the people who work for the company. Not only are good relations with employees important for morale and responsiveness, but employees are also an important informal source of news about the company. Through email, chat rooms, phone calls, and media contacts, employees are a central part of a company's communication environment.[51] For P&G, internal publics would include their management, employees, and communication professionals.

Corporations and other organizations use a variety of media to communicate with their internal publics. In the case of employees and managers, this communication can be done through something as simple as a weekly email or as elaborate as a four-color company newspaper. But internal communication is not limited to simple written materials. Web video, closed-circuit television, and even satellite conferences can be used to bring important news to employees. When the Three Mile Island nuclear plant suffered a major accident in 1979, a neighboring utility used videotaped programs to help its employees learn more about nuclear power. This form of education decreased the likelihood that the employees would spread misleading information when they talked with friends and family members.[52] Many organizations have started intranets, which are computer networks that are open only to members of that organization. Such a network can be used as an internal news source, a collection of corporate documents, or even an interactive communication channel.[53]

External Publics.

Whereas internal publics are well known to an organization, the range of external publics is far larger and relatively less well known. The press is one of the most important external publics because it is through the press that organizations communicate to many of their publics. Building a good relationship with the press is critical. Public relations practitioners as early as Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays found that working with the press during good

times would lead to better relations during bad times.[54] Ian Monk, a British journalist turned PR practitioner, says that the relationships he built up as a reporter help him immensely in the PR business: "I deal with former colleagues and protégés all the time, and the relationships I have already built with them are invaluable."[55] For P&G, external publics would include customers, social media companies, and state legislators. The company communicated with people misusing the product one-on-one over social media and on a larger scale with online videos and websites. It also communicated using packaging materials.[56]

Media relations can be defined as two-way interactions with members of the press. Typically, media relations involve the placement of unpaid messages within the standard programming or news content of the medium. Good media relations, ultimately, are good relations with the public at large. A positive image with the press will often become a positive image with the general public. And a company that the public likes to begin with tends to weather a crisis much better than one that is disliked. According to PR practitioner Susanne Courtney, "Corporate PR is about building up an 'equity' account with groups like the investment community, customers, media, employees and others that a company may need to draw on in a time of need."[57] Presenting a company to the press is the most visible part of public relations. Press conferences, feature stories for the trade press, photographs, news releases, and streaming video are all tools that PR practitioners use to help manage the messages they send out to various publics through the media. Sometimes the press activities of an agency may be subtler. A PR firm may encourage a prominent leader to write an opinion piece favorable to its client's point of view for publication on the editorial page of a major newspaper. Or it may arrange for a reporter to interview a company president. Or it may simply provide useful background material to reporters.

▼ The makers of the Keurig coffeemaker faced a public relations crisis when consumers started complaining that their Keurig 2.0 single-cup coffee brewing systems could only use officially licensed coffee pods.



Joe Raedle/Getty Images

For P&G, the company communicated with the press through communication professions such as spokespersons Jessica Mason and Petra Renck.[58] P&G CEO David Taylor also sent out a press release in which he wrote, "Let's all take a moment to talk with the young people in our lives and let them know that their life and health matter more than clicks, views and likes. Please help them understand that this is no laughing matter."[59]

Crisis Communication

Nothing tests an organization's PR ability more than a crisis, an event perceived by the public as being damaging to the organization's reputation or image. Al Tortorella, an executive with Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, claims, "A crisis is what the media says it is."[60] What he means is that a problem can be defined as a crisis when it becomes public and begins to be perceived as a crisis. This means that it is possible to prevent a problem from becoming a crisis, but companies should never count on problems being kept secret; they need to have a plan for handling them if they turn into crises.

For example, in 2014, Keurig introduced the successor to its K-Cup single-cup coffee-brewing system called the Keurig 2.0 system. One of the biggest changes to the system was that the coffeemaker would only use single-use coffee pods made for the new system by Keurig. The original system could use pods from a variety of producers, along with the reusable My K-Cup pod that could be filled with any type of coffee the consumer wanted. Consumers, forced to use only the expensive, official pods that contained a special chip that told the coffeemaker the pod was "official," quickly became angry. As a story from the *Washington Post* points out, Keurig's response was a model of how not to respond to upset customers:

The My K-Cup accessory and other reusable filters are not compatible with Keurig 2.0 brewing technology because the brewer has no way of determining what beverage is being used or how much coffee is being added, and therefore cannot adjust to factors such as brew strength and amount of water, which could represent a safety concern.

Consumers were not amused. They responded by filling Keurig's Facebook page with complaints, writing negative reviews on Amazon, and—most importantly—not buying new Keurig coffee machines. Sales dropped by 23 percent the first quarter the new machines were on the market. One company that sold unlicensed K-Cups gave away a clip that would let consumers bypass the chip system. Eventually, Keurig was forced to back down and put the My K-Cup back on the market. It was not a total victory for consumers, however. Unless consumers use the bypass clip, they still have to use officially licensed pods if they aren't using the reusable pod.[61]

Principles of Crisis Communication.

What should a company do when it faces a crisis? In general, it should communicate promptly and honestly with all its publics. More specifically, there are five principles of crisis communication[62]:

▼ Protesters gather at the Starbucks location in Center City, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in April 2018 where days earlier two black men were arrested while waiting for a friend to

arrive at the shop. The arrest prompted controversy after video of the incident became viral, and soon afterward Starbucks launched a crisis communication campaign. As part of its response, the company closed eight thousand stores in the United States for several hours to provide its employees with racial-bias training.



Bastiaan Slabbers/NurPhoto via Getty Images

1. Be prepared—The most important principle is to have a crisis plan. For every company, there are certain things that are unlikely to happen but would be enormously damaging if they did. Such events could, if serious enough, put the existence of the company at risk by damaging its most important assets: its credibility and reputation.[63] Airlines should have a plan in the event of a plane crash; universities should have plans in the event of an academic or athletic scandal; a factory should be prepared for a chemical spill. These events might be unlikely to occur, but they can, and we should be prepared for them.
2. Be honest—One of the problems with lying is that liars are often caught. Cover-ups almost always end up being exposed, and the cover-up looks worse than the original problem. Instead, get the story out and over with quickly. President Richard Nixon's lies about the break-in at the Democratic Party's headquarters in the Watergate building created far more problems for him than did the actual burglary itself. For President Bill Clinton, lying about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky was infinitely more damaging to his reputation than was the affair itself.[64] Public relations consultant Bob Wilkerson says, "The truth is going to get out. I want it out of my lips. It's bad enough I've had an incident. It's even worse if it looks like I was trying to cover up."[65]
3. Apologize, and mean it—The company should respond with real action, not just words. In 2006, motorcycle manufacturer Yamaha got caught claiming that its new

middleweight sport bike had an engine that would rev up to 17,500 rpm. This was significantly higher than any competing motorcycle. It turned out that both the tachometer and the marketing department were a little optimistic because the motorcycle's true redline was 16,200 rpm. In real life, this discrepancy probably doesn't matter much. But when complaints about the overstated redline started surfacing on the internet, Yamaha made a simple decision to completely neutralize the crisis. The company sent a letter to everyone who had bought the motorcycle, apologized for the discrepancy, and offered to buy back the bike—including tax, setup, and interest—no questions asked.[66] In addition to having done the right thing, Yamaha squelched the crisis immediately and kept it from damaging the company's otherwise good reputation with motorcyclists.

4. Move quickly—Public relations critics say that how a company reacts in the first few hours after a crisis occurs will determine how the crisis is perceived from that point on. "All crises have a window of opportunity to gain control of 45 minutes to 12 hours," says crisis communication expert Paul Shrivastava.[67] Beyond that point, people will have already decided what they think about the crisis, and once they have made up their minds, they are reluctant to change them. In the past, companies could build their response around the time the morning newspapers were published or the nightly news was broadcast, but cable news channels and newspaper websites can publish news at any time, and social media will spread unfounded and unverified speculations that traditional news outlets might avoid. Bad news can also spread rapidly online.[68] Even when things move quickly, the company still needs to act carefully. Crisis management decisions are much more difficult to make than conventional decisions because they deal with things that have important consequences. They also need to be made quickly, while the whole world watches.[69]
5. Communicate with the press and other constituencies—These include the company's own employees and management, stockholders, government regulators, and customers, as well as the press. It was immediate communication with all publics that helped minimize Yamaha's problems with its advertising misinformation.

The application of these principles can be seen in two examples of crisis communication that are discussed in the following subsections. In the first, the company handled both the physical response and the communication response almost perfectly and emerged from the crisis with a good market position and a stronger image than it started with. In the second, mishandled communications led to a blot on the company's reputation that has endured for more than twenty years.

▼ Johnson & Johnson had to handle the recall of millions of containers of Tylenol in 1982 after tainted capsules led to the deaths of seven people in the Chicago area.



AP Photo/Jim Mone

The Tylenol Scare.

In September 1982, the consumer products giant Johnson & Johnson faced a crisis that could have destroyed one of its most important brands, Tylenol. Seven people in the Chicago area died after taking cyanide-laced Extra Strength Tylenol capsules. The deaths set off what the *New York Times* called "the biggest consumer product scare in history."[70] (The perpetrator was never caught.) But Johnson & Johnson, with the help of PR agency Burson-Marsteller, managed to preserve the brand and the company's reputation with a combination of appropriate ethical action and good public relations.

The first thing the company did right was to be entirely honest with the media and public. The praise it subsequently received for its openness improved its image.[71] The next thing the company did right was to take immediate action in response to the tampering. As soon as Johnson & Johnson learned of the problem, it immediately stopped advertising the product and took it off the market in Chicago.[72] Throughout the crisis, Burson-Marsteller

conducted nightly telephone surveys to measure public opinion. When those polls showed that the public feared that other Tylenol capsules might be tampered with, Johnson & Johnson took the product off the market nationwide.[73] The company was perceived as acting responsibly, and in fact it was acting responsibly.

Johnson & Johnson had clearly won the first PR battle and was being perceived as a responsible company that had been the victim of a vicious attack. The second battle was the campaign to rebuild trust in the Tylenol brand.

In November 1982, Johnson & Johnson announced the relaunch of Extra Strength Tylenol with the news that the product would now be sold in a triple-sealed container. Along with the expected marketing support, Johnson & Johnson engaged in an extensive PR campaign that utilized educational advertising, media appearances, and personal contacts.

The company sent out more than two thousand sales representatives to meet with major retailers and doctors. An advertising campaign informed people about the new tamper-resistant packaging, and Johnson & Johnson announced the relaunch of the brand in a thirty-city teleconference delivered via satellite. Simultaneously, it held a press conference that was attended by nearly six hundred journalists. Finally, Johnson & Johnson's CEO, James Burke, appeared on both *60 Minutes* and the daytime talk program *The Phil Donahue Show*.

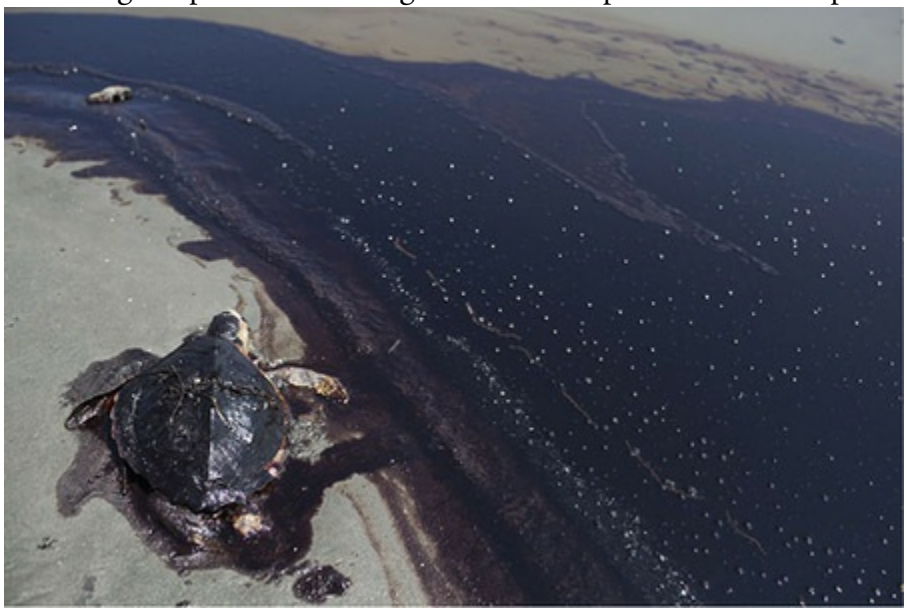
The campaign was a success. Before the crisis, Tylenol had had a 37 percent share of the pain reliever market; this number dropped to 7 percent during the tampering scare. But within a month of the relaunch, Tylenol was back to 28 percent of the market, and it eventually regained its status as the industry leader.[74] Johnson & Johnson succeeded in protecting its brand and reputation for a number of reasons. First, few people blamed the company for the tampering; the fault appeared to lie with an individual beyond the span of the company's control. Second, the company acted quickly and responsibly in the interests of consumers. It was also open with its various publics, freely admitting what it did and didn't know. Finally, the company actively worked through the difficult situation and engaged the press by viewing it as an ally instead of as an adversary.

The *Exxon Valdez* and BP Oil Spills.

On March 24, 1989, the oil tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground in Alaska's Prince William Sound, spilling 240,000 barrels of crude oil into the ocean. This oil soon washed up on shore, coating beaches, birds, and sea life in an environmentally sensitive area. Exxon spent more than $2 billion on the cleanup of the oil spill, but it still ended up with a tarnished image. Former reporter and network news president William Small notes that no company ever spent as much as Exxon did following the oil spill and still came out looking so bad.[75]

▼ Despite the lessons learned after the catastrophic *Exxon Valdez* oil spill that had

occurred twenty-one years earlier, the BP oil company seemed ill prepared to deal with its wide range of publics following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico.



Benjamin Lowy/Getty Images

Exxon's post-spill image problem had numerous causes that illustrate the difference between Johnson & Johnson's response to a crisis and Exxon's:

1. Perception of fault—Unlike the Tylenol tampering case, Exxon was considered at fault for the oil spill. Exxon's first problem was that it was the company's tanker that had run aground. It is difficult from a PR point of view to defend a company that has done something wrong.[76]
2. Lack of effective crisis plan—Exxon never developed a crisis plan for dealing with such a serious oil spill. Although Exxon shared responsibility with the Coast Guard for the lack of proper facilities, the fact that it did not have cleanup equipment in Alaska forced it to shoulder the blame after the spill.[77]
3. Failure to take immediate control—Exxon did not take immediate control of the flow of information. Not until a week after the spill did Exxon's CEO, Lawrence Rawl, make public comments. Meanwhile, numerous heartbreaking images of fouled wildlife started coming from the area. Almost all the press coverage of the spill was negative. In fact, Exxon made it actively difficult for reporters to get the company's point of view. The company's initial response was reportedly handled by a one-person PR office in Houston that had trouble coping with all the requests for information. Moreover, Exxon held all its news briefings for reporters in Valdez, Alaska, which had limited communication channels, instead of in a more accessible location, such as New York.[78]
4. Failure to accept responsibility immediately— Exxon didn't initially accept ethical

responsibility for the spill and apologize. The company started off by trying to spread the blame, claiming that the Coast Guard, Alaska environmental officials, and the weather were also responsible. Whether or not these claims were valid, the press and the public saw Exxon as responsible. As one Alaska official put it,"I would suggest it's Exxon's tanker that ran up on the rocks."[79]

The final blow to Exxon's image came in the fall after the oil spill, when a memo from a company official was leaked to the press. The memo said that Exxon would end the cleanup effort whenever it chose to, that it would do nothing in the winter, and that it did not promise to return in the spring. The memo made the company look arrogant and uncaring.[80] Exxon eventually accepted responsibility for the oil spill and the cleanup, but by then the company's image was damaged irrevocably.

SECRET 4 ▸ Even twenty-seven years after the accident, the *Exxon Valdez* remained the standard to which environmental disasters were compared. As recently as the summer of 2016, a quick check showed that multiple new stories mentioning the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill have been published in a variety of news outlets. One article mentions it in the context of shipping tar sands oil up the Hudson River in New York; a second in the context of tanker escorts for the city of Valdez, Alaska; and third in a discussion of the impact of poor sleep.[81]

When the Deepwater Horizon oil rig that was drilling for the London-based BP PLC exploded and sank in the Gulf of Mexico during the summer of 2010, triggering the world's largest oil spill, people immediately began comparing it to the Exxon spill. Critics contrasted BP's cleanup efforts to Exxon's, but they also compared public relations responses. Of course, the current media world full of online social media, blogs, and multiple 24/7 cable channels that faced BP was very different from the one Exxon had to deal with. Yet the issues facing the two oil companies remained similar: Both tried to focus on technological issues rather than the effects on people, and both tried to shift blame away from themselves and onto others. But most of all, it appears that neither company had a plan to deal with a major oil spill.

Communications professor Kathleen Fearn-Banks told the New York Times blog Greenwire, "BP never had a plan in place for the worst-case scenario or they would have put it in place. I don't think it's a question of money . . . They absolutely don't know what to do at all."[82] (This is a prime example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.)

Public Relations Goes Online

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the PR industry acquired a new friend and enemy—the internet. The internet gave PR practitioners a new way to research and to distribute information, but it also provided a powerful new channel for the spreading of rumors that had the potential to develop into crises.

A New Information Channel.

Among many other things, the internet has given the PR industry a new tool. Now companies can distribute press releases, background information, and photos to the media through email and websites. If a company's website or social media feed has a good reputation, it can become the first place reporters go to for information. Since reporters often start by going online to research articles, placing statistics and facts on a website can affect the way a company is covered.

The internet has also given companies a means of bypassing the traditional media and communicating directly with various publics. Customers, stockholders, and even critics may go to a company's website in search of information. A website also ensures that a company's point of view is being presented the way the company intends it to be. Along with having a good website, companies need to make sure that their site will show up at the top of the list of search results for their company. It can be embarrassing if a company's critics appear above the company itself in a web search.[83] The internet also allows companies to find out what people are saying about them. Many organizations monitor websites and social media to see what complaints and kudos are coming their way. Public relations practitioners may join chats and discussion groups to help shape what is being said about their clients. Of course, with millions of websites and social media accounts in existence, just finding out what is being said about a company can be a massive undertaking.[84] The internet gives critics access to the world without the checks and balances of traditional journalism. Prior to the internet, the only way to reach a broad, general audience was through the professional media, which might not always be a fan of your company but would probably treat you fairly. Many internet sites can be biased or don't engage in editorial oversight or fact-checking.

SECRET 5 ▸ Crisis management consultant Jonathan Bernstein says that online media create significant new PR challenges. He writes that organizations need to consider the following:

> Once a crisis hits the Internet, it can't be contained. It used to be that a local news story would stay local. Now, once a story is posted online by a newspaper or television station, it's gone national. The Internet makes it easy for critics to leak confidential information to reporters and others. This can include not just reports of confidential information, but also images of original documents or recordings of phone calls. In the absence of good information, rumors will flourish online. Of course,

this problem isn't unique to the Internet. Anytime an organization doesn't provide creditable information, rumors and gossip will spread person-to-person to fill the gap.[85]

But the internet can accelerate the process by which rumors travel. These considerations illustrate perfectly the importance of Secret 5—All media are social.

Social Media—Interacting Directly With Your Publics.

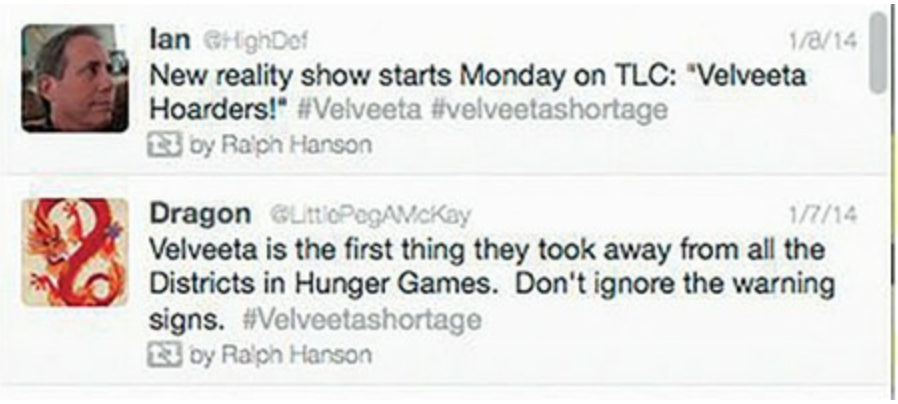
One of the great challenges that online media bring to the public relations business is that they are a continually moving target. Just when PR professionals think they have blogs and the web figured out, along comes the rise of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. Social media expert Pamela Seiple has written that PR professionals need to realize that social media are an opportunity for interactions with various publics, not just a channel to send out information. She notes that, through social media, stories about your company's brand can spread and mutate at a much faster rate than in the past: "If your company is not participating in social media today, it's missing an opportunity to spread its message and missing valuable—and even damaging—conversations that could be taking place about your brand." One of the most important uses for social media, according to Seiple, is building ongoing relationships with publics, including customers, vendors, opinion makers, and the press.[86]

In the winter of 2014, Kraft Foods was facing a minor shortage of Velveeta, its gooey cheese product that is a central ingredient in many sports fans' queso dip for Super Bowl and playoff watch parties. And with that, Kraft had a minor crisis on its hands. In some ways, it was a good problem to have—consumers wanted more of its iconic product than the company could supply, which demonstrated that its marketing efforts promoting making salsa and cheese dip were successful. But how would the company respond to its customers and stores? How would it interact with its publics?[87]

As word of the shortage spread, Twitter users started lamenting it. Among the early tweets collected by *People* magazine's *Great Ideas* blog were these pictured below.[88]

Kraft built on this social media response in a number of ways. The company promoted the use of the #Cheesepocalype hashtag and built a Cheesepocalpyse website that mapped out reports of Velveeta shortages using Twitter reports from across the country. The company also used its Tumblr blog, which normally suggested humorous uses for Velveeta, to officially announce the shortage.[89]

▼ Fans of Velveeta got online to talk about the spot shortages of the product using hashtags on Twitter. One of the most popular ones was #VelveetaShortage.



Twitter/@HighDef/@LittlePegAMcKay

So what did Kraft and Velveeta get out of the Cheesepocalypse social media campaign? According to *Ad Age*'s Jack Neff, the brand got a huge amount of free publicity—publicity that was likely out of proportion to the "crisis." (The shortage was only of one packaging size.) But Kraft marketing executive Cannon Koo points out the #Cheesepocalypse hashtag helped the company identify its so-called "super-consumers," the people who consume the most of the brand. Super-consumers are the folks who make up about 10 percent of the buyers for any brand, but account for anywhere from 30 to 70 percent of the brand's sales. Information about how these super-consumers use Velveeta has let the company increase its sales.[90]

Media Transformations

Coca-Cola Freestyle

▼ The new Coca-Cola Freestyle vending machine allows consumers to mix different flavors to suit individual preferences, and businesses can also program custom drinks for their stores. The machines collect those data and send them over the internet back to beverage companies and restaurants to help them understand consumer habits.



Roberto Machado Noa/LightRocket/Getty Images

Coca-Cola is a big company. Really big. It has more than 450 brands in 200 countries selling more than 1.6 billion servings of their products a day. So how does a company that has built its reputation on serving you the exact same thing again and again anywhere in the world adapt to a culture where people want to have everything customized to their personal taste?[115]

Think about what happened back in 1985 when the company tried to change the basic formula for Coke, as we discussed in Chapter 11, and consumers responded with anger and frustration.[116] As one Coke executive put it, "We did not know what we were selling. We are not selling a soft drink. We are selling a little tiny piece of people's lives."[117] So how does a company address the problem of "Don't change anything" but also "Give me exactly what I want, even if it's different from everyone else"? How does Coke continue to make its drinks be a part of people's lives?

The answer to that question is the Coca-Cola Freestyle machine, though you may not recognize it by that name, which Coke has been promoting through integrated marketing communication (IMC). As you remember from Chapter 11, IMC is how companies reach their key audiences using advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and interactive media. While Coke has certainly used traditional advertising and PR techniques to promote this product, its big push has been to engage directly with consumers and their feelings toward it.

When Scott Cuppari, global marketing director for Coca-Cola Freestyle, spoke to a group of public relations college students back in 2015, he largely drew blank stares from his audience when he mentioned the name. Then he said, "If I ask, 'Have you seen the touch-screen Coke machine where you get a hundred plus drinks?' then lots of hands shoot up."[118] He also referred to it as "the coolest drink machine," and the "Coke machine of the future." But despite the fact that few people knew the brand name, the product itself has been in development since at least 2005. David Butler, the company's vice president for global design back in 2009, had a very simple goal for his project—he wanted to "sell more stuff." The Coca-Cola Freestyle machine was the solution to that goal.

The Freestyle machine does a variety of things. Instead of having the standard 5-gallon bags of syrup, it instead has 46-ounce cartridges of highly concentrated drink mix. It also can track what people are drinking and when. As an example, during preliminary testing of the Freestyle machine, it showed that in an Atlanta location, Caffeine-Free Diet Coke was the third-best-selling drink after 4 p.m.[119]

The Coca-Cola Freestyle machines are part of the so-called Internet of Things, that is, noncomputer devices that surround our lives that collect data and transmit them over the internet. The Freestyle machines, for example, can tell the company what students are drinking on campus right before popular television shows come on the air.[120] In addition to letting customers choose their own mixes and tracking what and when those mixes are bought, the Freestyle machines can give fast-food businesses their own custom drinks. In May 2017, burger chain Jack in the Box offered its own signature drink, "Jumpin' Jack Splash," a mix of "refreshing fruity flavors." What the Freestyle machine brings to the party is that there needs to be no separate cartridge of syrup for the drink, only the recipe the machine needs to follow for mixing existing concentrates.[121] This capability also lets the machines give celebrity remixes. Olympic bobsled champion Elana Meyers Taylor had "Bobsled Rush" with "a smooth, delectable ride of cherry-raspberry sweetness" and "Bobsled Triumph," which let fans "celebrate a triumph over thirst with hints of orange and vanilla goodness."[122]

A new version that may be in stores by the time you read this will have Bluetooth connectivity so you can use the Coca-Cola Freestyle app on your phone to deliver your own custom drink. This connectivity will also let Coke know who is ordering each drink mix as well as what and when they are drinking it.

Toward the close of his speech to PR students, Cuppari pointed out that Coca-Cola Freestyle is about more than letting customers having it "just my way." It's also providing more choices to people who traditionally have not had choices. He notes that his diabetic son loves that Coca-Cola Freestyle gives him 80 separate choices of sugar-free drinks instead of just one or two from traditional fountain beverage machines.[123]

WHAT is Coca-Cola Freestyle? What does the product offer that's new? How does it differ from the company's old philosophy?

WHAT kind of information does Coca-Cola Freestyle deliver about consumers to the company? How does connecting the company's mobile phone app to the machine add to that information?

HOW does the Coca-Cola Freestyle machine change the interaction between Coke and its customers?

HOW does Coca-Cola make use of IMC techniques to sell more of its hundreds of brands?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

Beyond the social media content itself, the active discussion drew a large amount of news media and blog coverage of Velveeta. Websites from Michigan to Alabama wrote about the Cheesepocalypse. The publicity generated was not always positive, with an Alabama news

blog mocking the Kraft Velveeta shortage map, saying, "Hopefully folks in severe areas of Alabama and across the country will learn to function without Velveeta. If they use it to make dips, mac and cheese casseroles, melt on burgers etc., maybe they will rethink those recipes and substitute a healthier, real food option."[91]

SECRETS 2 AND 5 ▸ Kraft's promotion of the Cheesepocalypse is at the core of how social media can be effectively used in public relations. Social media are not just new ways to push marketing information; they are a great tool for interacting with and getting to know the people who love a product best. In the case of Velveeta, Kraft got to know the product's super-consumers better and helped them share recipes and new ways to use the soft cheese product. (Kraft's effective use of social media to interact with its consumers and turn what could have been a problem into a big plus for the brand is a great example of Secret 2—There are no mainstream media. In this case, interactive social media were far more important to Kraft than legacy media were, which also illustrates Secret 5—All media are social.)

Questioning the Media

How do social media change the public relations process? Can you think of an example of how social media content has helped or hurt an organization? Why do you think this happened?

Domino's: Fighting Back Against Social Media.

It used to be that the worst media publicity a company had to worry about was a scathing story by an investigative journalist on a program such as *60 Minutes*. But today a corporation's worst PR nightmare can come from amateur-produced mobile phone video posted on video-sharing sites, such as YouTube, and then publicized through social media sites, such as Twitter. That's what Domino's Pizza discovered in April 2009 when two employees in Conover, North Carolina, posted a video showing one of them putting cheese up his nose and then placing it on a sandwich, blowing his nose on a sandwich, and farting on a sandwich. The other employee narrated the video with comments:

> In about five minutes it'll be sent out on delivery where somebody will be eating these, yes, eating them, and little did they know that cheese was in his nose and that there was some lethal gas that ended up on their salami.[92]

Once the video was posted on YouTube, word about it spread rapidly online through Twitter and other social media, and the video quickly racked up more than one million views.

The Domino's Pizza chain attempted to respond quickly and responsibly, but it may have spoken out too late in the rapidly changing online environment. The company responded publicly to the video within forty-eight hours of finding out about it, delaying its response reportedly to keep from drawing further attention to the video. Domino's eventual response included a YouTube video featuring company president Patrick Doyle, a complete cleaning of the store where the video was shot, and a revision of the company's hiring practices. The company also started a Twitter account with which to respond to customers.[93] Richard Levick of the PR firm Levick Strategic Communications told *Ad Age* that Domino's handled the crisis well after its initial delay in responding: "After the first 24 hours, they were largely textbook. They started a Twitter account, separated themselves from the villains, shut down the store, apologized, went to their demographic, went to YouTube—I think all of that is great."[94]

Levick said that companies need to do several things to prepare for online crisis communication:

- Identify your crisis team—This includes PR professionals, lawyers, and digital communication specialists.
- Imagine your nightmare scenarios—Make sure that you have the online resources so that when a crisis hits and people start searching for information, they come to your website first.
- Track the blogosphere and other social media—Make sure you know what people are saying about you, and be responsive to the people who are talking about your company.
- Don't wait—You have a very limited time to respond.[95]

SECRETS 5 AND 6 ▸ Following the posting of the video, the two employees were identified by bloggers, arrested, and charged with distributing prohibited foods. Although the Domino's Pizza chain has largely recovered from the crisis created by the video, the North Carolina store where the video was shot has not. After closing briefly for cleaning following the posting of the video, the store closed for good five months later.[96] Note that while this story was covered by legacy media, it really moved through social media, thus illustrating Secret 5—All media are social. The Domino's story is also an illustration of Secret 6—Online media are mobile media.

Public Relations and Society

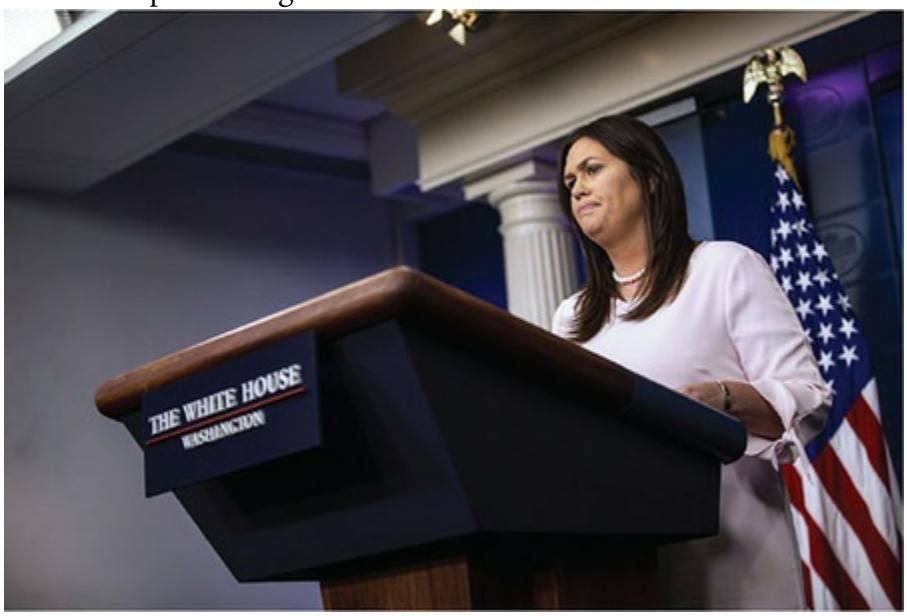
This chapter has so far looked at public relations largely from the point of view of either PR firms or their clients. But it is also useful to look at it from the public's perspective. Public relations shapes the news we receive through newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and even the internet. In the form of "spin control," it attempts to shape our view of politicians and public policy, and it is also a central component of social movements.

Journalism and Public Relations

Public relations plays a significant role in what is presented as news in the media. Sociologists David Altheide and Robert Snow argue that public relations is an integral part of the news business because most of the events—including crime and disaster reporting—covered by the media were created by PR practitioners to obtain coverage for their clients.[97] Just how much of the news originates with public relations?

Depending on how it is measured, anywhere from 40 to 90 percent of all news starts out as public relations. The *Columbia Journalism Review* tried to narrow this down by studying an issue of the *Wall Street Journal*. The researchers selected 111 stories from the paper. The companies mentioned in the stories were then contacted and asked to send a copy of their original press releases. The researchers found that 72 percent of the stories they were able to analyze were based almost exclusively on material from a press release. The study estimated that 45 percent of all the stories in the *Wall Street Journal* that day had been based on press releases, and that 27 percent of the actual news space was devoted to press releases.[98] The newspaper's executive editor estimated that 90 percent of the stories in the paper started with a company's announcement.

▼ Press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders is responsible for making sure that President Donald Trump gets his message out to reporters in a way that portrays the administration in the best possible light.



Bloomberg/Getty Images

How does this happen? Think about a typical news day. Most news coming from

Washington, D.C., involves a press conference, a speech, a press release, or an event created specifically to be covered by the media. A scientific report on an environmental issue is published, and both environmentalists and industry groups hold press conferences to provide background information. A bank robber is arrested, and the police hold a media briefing. Even a basketball game will be reported using statistics provided by the sports information office and quotes from an official postgame interview session hosted for the media.

Although a lot of news may originate in PR efforts, executives and other individuals covered by the media sometimes have an exaggerated sense of what public relations can accomplish. One movie studio boss reportedly told an applicant for a PR position, "Your responsibility will be, if I step out of my limousine and my pants fall down, you make sure that no one gets a photo to the press."[99] That's a guarantee no PR practitioner can make.

Public Relations and the Government

Along with the general public and media, the various levels of government are major external publics. Through their government relations departments, PR firms represent their clients before the federal government, federal agencies, state legislatures, and even municipal bodies. As businesses face increasing government regulation, they have increased their efforts to work with government to shape legislation and regulations that are favorable to their interests.[100] Government relations includes lobbying for laws that will best meet the needs of the organization, as well as simply building goodwill with legislators and regulatory bodies. The Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan research group that studies the influence of money on elections and public policy, estimates that, in 2017, there were 11,529 active, registered lobbyists in Washington who spent approximately $3.37 billion trying to influence the federal government on policy issues.[101] But that figure, as big as it is, only tells part of the story. Work by the Sunlight Foundation, another nonprofit focused on open government, found that for every dollar spent on reported lobbying, another dollar was spent on influencing activities that didn't meet the narrow legal definition of lobbying that was required to be reported. Thus, the total amount spent on "government relations" in 2013 would be estimated to be $6.44 billion.[102]

The government itself is a major practitioner of public relations. All elected federal officials have a press secretary, and many have a communications director. The various agencies themselves have PR offices. The role of the political press secretary is a challenging one, as the spokesperson has to serve his or her boss while still dealing honestly with the press and the public. Sometimes this involves being evasive, as reporter Betsy Rothstein discusses somewhat satirically in Box 12.1. As one congressional press secretary told Washington, D.C., paper the *Hill*,

> It is a matter of practice and experience and being able to steer a conversation toward issues you are looking to advance . . . The golden rule is you don't answer the question you are asked, you answer the question you want to answer.[103]

Box 12.1 "Tricks of the Trade" for Government Press Secretaries

Hill reporter Betsy Rothstein lists the following somewhat tongue-in-cheek "tricks of the trade" press secretaries use in dealing with reporters they don't want to talk to:

- Say "I will call you back" and then don't.
- Repeat the same phrase over and over.
- Try to talk the reporter out of writing the story.
- Act brusque and distant.
- Don't return phone calls until the day after the deadline.
- Talk in short sentences.

- Act as though you are in a hurry and need to get off the phone as soon as possible.

Source: Betsy Rothstein, "Capital Living: The Fine Art of Flacking," *Hill*, February 22, 2006.

Lanny Davis, who advised President Bill Clinton on damage control, says that when the press and the public are interested in an issue, the spokesperson only has one option: "Tell the truth, tell it all, tell it early, tell it yourself."[104] During the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal, President Clinton ignored the "tell the truth" rule, and the scandal stuck with him throughout the remainder of his second term in office.[105] Conservative opinion writer Jennifer Rubin writes that President Donald Trump's press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders suffered from severe credibility problems throughout her first year on the job for misleading the White House press corps. Sanders would routinely deny that senior advisers were going to be fired, right until the moment that they were fired. She also repeatedly denied that the president had knowledge of payments made on his behalf to adult film star Stormy Daniels, up until the point that President Trump acknowledged the payments. Rubin writes, "[I]t's not enough to tell the media and the country 'I didn't know better'—it's her job to know better and answer with authority."[106]

The U.S. military has been actively involved in public relations since World War I. Although the military's initial PR efforts were intended to recruit volunteers, they were also interacting with the press. Today the American Forces Radio and Television Service provides internal public relations in the form of radio and television broadcasts for service people overseas. There are also public information activities and community relations for the areas surrounding military bases.[107]

Spin Control: A More Personal Form of Public Relations

A new kind of public relations, known as spin control, has risen to the forefront since the 1970s. Rather than simply providing press releases, events, and background information, so-called spin doctors attempt to influence how a story will be portrayed and discussed. Newspaper columnist and former speechwriter William Safire suggests that the word *spin* came from the idea of spinning a yarn—that is, telling a story. It may also have a sports connotation, as in putting a spin on a tennis or billiard ball.[108]

John Scanlon, the late New York City publicist, was often cited as a top spin doctor. He was acquainted with many members of the national press corps and would call them when he considered a story unbalanced—or at least contrary to his client's interests. He also sent out frequent mailings to influential people in which he presented his point of view regarding events in the news. Scanlon's goal was not so much to give information to the press as to influence how stories were interpreted—that is, to control the spin put on them.

Here are some of the things spin doctors do:

- Selectively leak information in advance, hoping that reporters will pay more attention to it than to information received later.
- Contact members of the press immediately after an event in an effort to get them to adopt the desired spin or interpretation of the event.
- Push the idea that there are always two sides to every story. According to Scanlon, "What seems to be true is not necessarily the case when we look at it and we dissect it and we take it apart, and we turn it around and we look at it from a different perspective."[109]

Public Relations and Political Activism.

Not all public relations is practiced by professionals working for large agencies. As numerous political activists have shown, public relations can be an effective tool for social change as well. In 2005, the farm labor group Coalition of Immokalee Workers won a battle with Yum! Brands, the parent company of Taco Bell, over rights and pay for migrant workers. The laborers engaged in a work boycott against Taco Bell's produce farmers, held an extended hunger strike to draw attention to their cause, carried out a 230-mile protest walk, and organized a consumer boycott against Taco Bell. Despite the fact that migrant farmworkers are typically seen as a relatively powerless group, the workers were able to force a change in the fast-food business.[110]

Public Relations and the Civil Rights Movement

Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. displayed a brilliant understanding of public relations throughout the campaign to integrate the South in the 1950s and 1960s. King knew that it would take a combination of action, words, and visibility in the media to eliminate segregation laws and integrate lunch counters, restrooms, water fountains, and businesses. He practiced public relations in churches, hotel rooms, and even jail.

In 1963, King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights group, wanted to do something highly visible that would let the entire nation see the evils of segregation. The goal of the campaign was to hold nonviolent demonstrations and acts of resistance that would force segregated stores and businesses to be opened to African Americans.

King and his colleagues picked Birmingham, Alabama, as one of their targets, in part because the city's police commissioner was Eugene "Bull" Connor. Connor was a racist who could be counted on to attack peaceful marchers. King's campaign was called Project C, for *confrontation*, and it included press conferences, leaflets, and demonstrations in front of hundreds of reporters and photographers. Starting in April 1963, African American volunteers marched in the streets, held sit-ins at segregated lunch counters, and boycotted local businesses. As the protests started, so did the arrests. The story was covered by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. King and his colleagues knew that all the protests in the world would be ineffective if they were not covered by the press and that being beaten up by police would accomplish little if no photographers were present to document the event.

David Halberstam, who was a newspaper reporter in the South at the time, commented on the civil rights leaders' understanding of public relations:

> The key was to lure the beast of segregation out in the open. Casting was critical: King and his aides were learning that they needed to find the right venue, a place where the resistance was likely to be fierce, and the right local official to play the villain. Neither was a problem: King had no trouble finding men like . . . Bull Connor, who were in their own way looking for him, just as he was looking for them.[111]

On Good Friday, King and Ralph Abernathy joined in the marching so that they would be arrested. While King was in jail, he wrote the "Letter from Birmingham Jail," which was smuggled out and published as a brochure. His eloquent words, given added force by having been written in jail, were reprinted across the country.

After King was released, he and his followers raised the stakes. Adults would no longer march and be arrested; instead, children became the vanguard of the movement. The images, which appeared in print media throughout the world, were riveting. In his biography of King, Stephen Oates wrote, "Millions of readers in America—and millions overseas—stared at pictures of police dogs lunging at young marchers, of firemen raking them with jet streams, of club-wielding cops pinning a Negro woman to the ground."[112] King faced criticism for allowing young people to face the dangers of marching in Birmingham. But he responded promptly by criticizing the white press, asking the reporters where they had been "during the centuries when our segregated social system had been misusing and abusing Negro children."[113] Although there was rioting in Birmingham and King's brother's house was bombed, the campaign was ultimately successful. Business owners took down the "WHITE" and "COLORED" signs from drinking fountains and bathrooms, and African Americans were allowed to eat at the lunch counters and sit on the buses. The successful protest in Birmingham set the stage for the march on Washington in August 1963, during which King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.[114]

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Public relations developed out of the press agentry of the late 1800s. Publicity firms used one-way communication, deceptive techniques, and bribery. By the beginning of the twentieth century, large corporations such as railroads and utilities realized that they needed to develop more sophisticated relationships with the press if they hoped to control their images.

Ivy Lee and Edward L. Bernays are generally considered to be the founders of public relations as a profession. Lee was among the first press agents to recognize that dealing with the press promptly and truthfully was the best way to obtain positive coverage for his clients. In 1906, he codified this approach in his "Declaration of Principles." Bernays wrote the first book about public relations and taught the first college course on the subject.

During World War I, the federal government realized the value of public relations and used a variety of techniques to build support for U.S. participation in the war. Public relations continued to grow as a profession as businesses became increasingly regulated and the public began to distrust both businesses and the government.

Public relations can be seen as performing three main functions: informing, persuading, and integrating (bringing together) publics, both internal and external. Among the most important publics are the media. Effective public relations generally includes both communication and action. The PR process consists of four steps: (1) defining the problem, (2) planning, (3) communicating, and (4) evaluating. Successful companies work at communicating with their publics during both good times and times of crisis. The rise of the internet and instantaneous communication not controlled by major media has forced the public relations industry to speed up its rate of response to problems and to deal with a wider range of problems. Public relations is used by a wide range of organizations, including corporations, the government, and activist groups.

Key Terms ▶▶

public relations (PR) 318
public 318
press agentry 318
engineering consent 320
opinion leadership 322
intranets 326
Internet of Things 333
media relations 326
crisis 326

Review Questions ▶▶

1. How did Procter & Gamble use public relations to fight the accidental and deliberate misuse of Tide laundry packs?
2. How does professional public relations differ from press agentry?
3. Name and explain two ways to mess up responding to a crisis affecting your organization.
4. How does interacting with your publics through social media differ from going through legacy media?
5. How did Martin Luther King Jr. make good use of public relations techniques during the Good Friday march in Birmingham, Alabama?
6. How did Coca-Cola use IMC techniques to deal with consumer demand for more choices of beverages?

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PART V Regulation and Control of the Media

Chapter 13 Media Law
Free Speech and Fairness
Chapter 14 Media Ethics
Truthfulness, Fairness, and Standards of Decency
Chapter 15 Global Media
Communication Around the World



Sean Gallup / Staff / Getty Images

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Describe the development of a free press in the United States
2. Discuss the limits that have been placed on free expression and other First Amendment rights, including those put in place since September 11, 2001
3. Explain the three elements that must be present for libel to occur and the four major defenses against libel
4. Name the four major forms of invasion of privacy
5. Discuss the issue of whether the press can be legally required to behave ethically using three Supreme Court case examples
6. Explain how the media industry is controlled through copyright law, broadcast, and internet regulation

Pittsburg, Kansas, is not a city that shows up much in the national media. Before the first week of April 2017, there had only been about four mentions of the city in the *Washington Post* over the last decade. One was when Pulitzer Prize–winning poet James Tate died in 2015. (Tate got his bachelor's degree from Kansas State College there in 1965.) Before that, it was when Pittsburg State University wide receiver John Brown was drafted by the Arizona Cardinals in 2014. There were also brief mentions of the death of a judge who had been born there and the fact that an unnamed Fortune 500 CEO had been born there.

But on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, the most read story on the *Washington Post*'s website was about a group of Pittsburg High School students who discovered through dogged journalistic research that their high school's newly hired principal had questionable educational credentials. That story, reported in the school paper, the *Booster Redux*, on Friday, March 31, resulted in the new principal, Amy Robertson, resigning her post following a school board meeting on Tuesday evening of that week.

Seventeen-year-old Connor Balthazar told the *Washington Post* that "there were some things that just didn't quite add up" about things Robertson. Reporting on the story was done by a team of six high school students.[1] In their story, the students wrote:

> *The Booster Redux Staff typically introduces each new administrator at PHS with a news story. During the interview process with Robertson, the Booster staff found inconsistencies in Robertson's credentials. The staff presented these concerns to Pittsburg Community School superintendent Destry Brown, who encouraged the Booster reporters to reach out to Robertson.*
>
> *On March 16, the Booster staff held a conference call with the incoming principal. Booster adviser Emily Smith and Brown were also present. During the call, Robertson presented incomplete answers, conflicting dates and inconsistencies in her responses.*

After the conference call interview, the staff conducted further research online and by phone interview to confirm her credentials. These are the findings. [2]

And what a set of findings they were. Robertson claimed to have a master's degree and PhD from Corllins University in Stockton, California, but the students' research showed no signs in property records that there had ever been a university by that name in Stockton, no U.S. Department of Education records documenting the university, no sign of an active website of the university, and an online article that referred to Corllins University as a diploma mill. Robertson also claimed to have a bachelor of fine arts degree in theater arts from Tulsa University. While TU is a very real school, the students found that it has never offered a BFA in theater.

PHS senior Trina Paul, part of the reporting team, told the *Kansas City Star* that the students just were concerned about Robertson's credentials. "She was going to be the head of our school, and we wanted to be assured that she was qualified and had the proper credentials. We stumbled on some things that most might not consider legitimate credentials."[3]

In the end, the students published the story and nervously awaited the results. The school superintendent dismissed the students' story the next day, saying the district had hired the best candidate. But then . . . the school board scheduled a special meeting to discuss the story. The *Wichita Eagle* reported that Smith was even concerned she might be fired.[4]

Instead, the word came out that the new principal had resigned. When the school board met, most of the meeting was done in executive session to discuss the resignation. But when it was over, a parent stood up and told the board that the students were owed an answer about what happened because they were the ones who had found out the new principal was being deceptive.

The students are normally advised by their award-winning journalism teacher Emily Smith, but she had to recuse herself on this story, she told the *Washington Post*, because she had been on the search committee that had hired Robertson.[5] But the students did receive help from a range of state and national journalists and experts. Smith is understandably proud of what her high school students have accomplished: "Everybody kept telling them, 'stop poking your nose where it doesn't belong.' They were at a loss that something that was so easy for them to see was waiting to be noticed by adults."[6]

Once their story was published and Robertson resigned, PHS journalism students started getting national attention for their work. The following day, the students got calls from *Good Morning America*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times*. There were tweets and retweets from a number of top national journalists including *Boston Globe* Spotlight team reporter Todd Wallack, *Washington Post* executive editor Marty Baron, and

Washington Post political reporter David Fahrenthold.[7] The students were even invited to be the guests of the *Huffington Post* at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

In the end, the superintendent bought pizza for the students and thanked them for their work. Smith had told the students, "This is probably going to be the hardest thing you do in your life because you're doing the right thing and it's not always easy and it's not always popular."[8] During a summer high school journalism camp at Kansas State University, the paper's adviser said, "I would say some people were really supportive, and they think it was great and they support the kids. [But] most people were really mad because they said we made everyone look really bad."[9]

In many states, the school superintendent would have had the authority to stop the students from publishing the story as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* decision that ruled that high school newspapers have only minimal protection with the First Amendment. Kansas high school students, however, are also protected by the Kansas Student Publications Act that puts tight restrictions on when administrators can censor student papers.[10] (You can read more about this later in the chapter in the section on free speech and students.)

In this chapter, we look at the laws that both protect and restrict our privacy, our freedom of speech, and our freedom of the press. We start by examining the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which established a minimally restrictive system of media law. We then look at media law in terms of how it protects individuals through laws governing libel, invasion of privacy, and the right to a fair trial. Next, we look at the controls that can be placed on the press, including requirements that the press tell the truth, restraints on publication, and regulation of obscenity. We then look at how the broadcast industry is regulated by the government in a somewhat stricter fashion than the rest of the media. Finally, we close out with regulation of online media.

The Development of a Free Press

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is at the core of all U.S. laws concerning the media. It says simply that

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

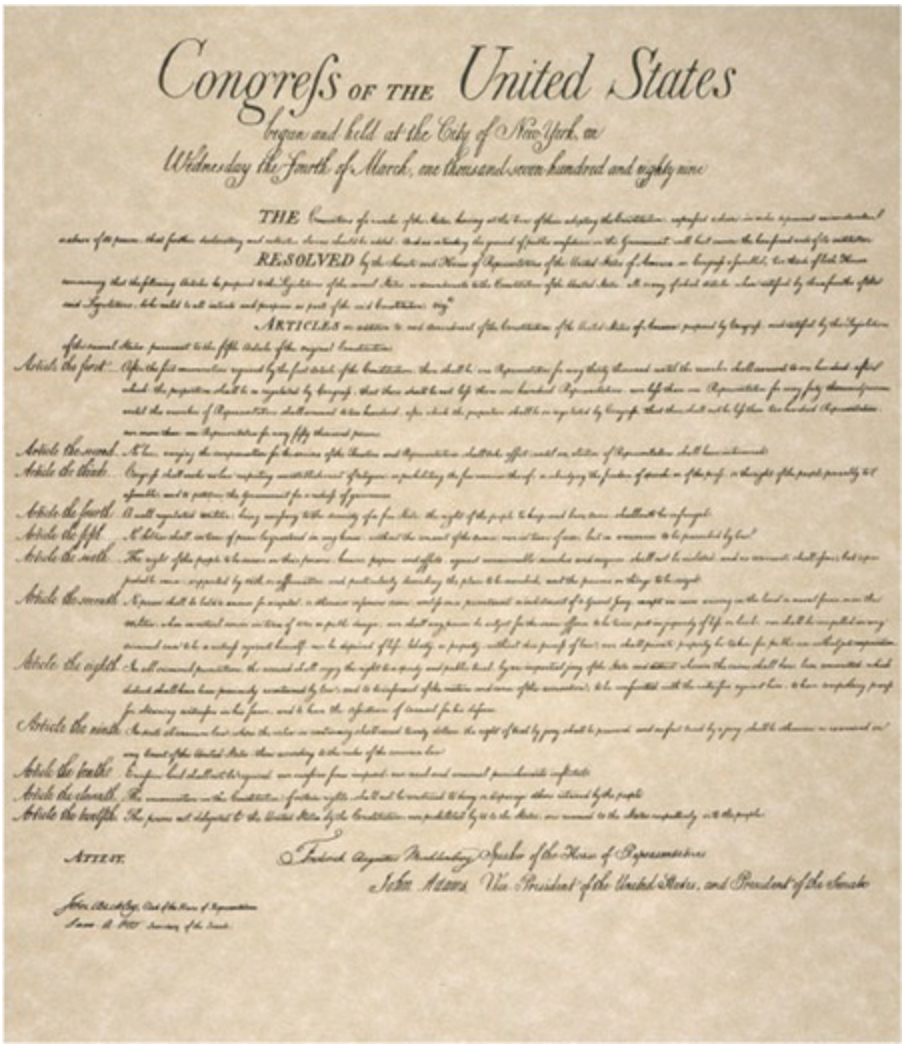
> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Although the First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law," the U.S. Supreme Court has long upheld certain limits on both speech and the press. People do not have "the right to say anything they please, any way they please, anywhere or under any circumstances."[11] In this section, we look at how the notion of freedom of expression and of the press has developed and what regulations and restrictions the government can place on that freedom.

The First Amendment: "Congress Shall Make No Law"

According to First Amendment scholar Fred Cate, the First Amendment is an essential component of a representative democracy because a democracy cannot function unless the people have the right to freely and openly discuss matters of public concern. It is through free and open speech that change takes place within society. The First Amendment does not just protect popular or conventional ideas; it protects all forms of expression, including offensive ideas. Even some level of false expression is allowed because the truth is not always clear. Thus, the solution to the expression of dangerous ideas is to permit more, rather than less, communication.[12] The most basic right guaranteed by the First Amendment is freedom of speech without constraint by the government. The right of freedom of the press is an extension of the rights of individuals to express themselves.[13] In addition to its explicit mention of the press and speech, the First Amendment provides a wide range of other rights, including freedom of religious practice, the right to assemble, and the right to petition the government.

▼ The Bill of Rights, ratified in 1791, established protection for all forms of expression, not just popular ideas.



Congress of the United States
begun and held at the City of New-York, on
Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine

THE Conventions of a number of the States having at the time of their adopting the Constitution expressed a desire in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government will best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution

RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, two thirds of both Houses concurring that the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all or any of which Articles when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the said Constitution, viz.

ARTICLES in addition to, and amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America proposed by Congress and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.

Article the first... After the first enumeration required by the first Article of the Constitution there shall be one Representative for every thirty thousand until the number shall amount to one hundred after which the proportion shall be regulated by Congress, that there shall be not less than one hundred Representatives nor less than one Representative for every forty thousand persons until the number of Representatives shall amount to two hundred after which the proportion shall be regulated by Congress that there shall not be less than two hundred Representatives nor more than one Representative for every fifty thousand persons.

Article the second... No law varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives shall take effect until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

Article the third... 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.

Article the fourth... 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.

Article the fifth... 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.

Article the sixth... 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.

Article the seventh... 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 offence 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.

Article the eighth... 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 defence.

Article the ninth... 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 re-examined in any Court of the United States than according to the rules of the common law.

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

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

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

ATTEST.

Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg Speaker of the House of Representatives
John Adams Vice President of the United States, and President of the Senate

John Beckley, Clerk of the House of Representatives
Sam. A. Otis Secretary of the Senate

The Granger Collection, New York

The Roots of American Free Speech

Speech was not always free in the American colonies. Colonial newspapers were published under licenses granted by the British colonial government, with the phrase "Published by Authority" printed at the top of each edition. This notice implied that the British government approved of what was being published, and editors violated that approval at their peril.

The Zenger Case.

John Peter Zenger and his wife, Anna Catherine Zenger, were independent editors, printers, and small-business owners in the American colonies. Zenger started his *New York Journal* in 1733 and, like many editors of that time, was soon in trouble with the authorities. Zenger accused Gov. William Cosby of political corruption for replacing New York Supreme Court justices with whom he disagreed.[14] The governor retaliated by throwing Zenger in jail on a charge of seditious libel (writing things critical of the government). When the case went to trial in 1735, Zenger, who was represented by prominent lawyer Andrew Hamilton, defended himself against the charge by claiming that what he had written was the truth. The shocked judge argued that the truth of the statement didn't matter. But Zenger and Hamilton refused to back down, and the jury found Zenger not guilty, thus establishing truth as a defense against libel. While her husband was in prison, Anna Catherine took over the operation of the paper, thus becoming one of the first women newspaper publishers in the country.[15]

Limits on Free Speech.

In 1791, the states ratified the first ten amendments to the Constitution, commonly known as the Bill of Rights. But making the Bill of Rights a part of the Constitution did not end the government's efforts to limit people's right to freedom of expression.

In 1798, just seven years after the ratification of the Bill of Rights, Congress passed, and President John Adams signed, the Alien and Sedition Acts. These laws punished anyone who published "false, scandalous, or malicious writings against the government of the United States, or either house of the Congress of the United States, or the President of the United States" with substantial fines, jail time, or deportation. One editor went to prison for accusing Adams of corruption, and a second went to prison for supporting the critical editor. All those charged under the acts were eventually pardoned by Thomas Jefferson when he became president.[16]

Sedition became a crime once again during World War I, when more than 1,900 people were prosecuted under sedition statutes for criticizing the government, the military draft, or U.S. involvement in the war. Following the war, some but not all of the anti–free speech

provisions were repealed.[17] Then, in 1940, during the run-up to U.S. involvement in World War II, Congress passed the Smith Act, which made it a crime to advocate the violent overthrow of the government or to belong to a group that advocated the violent overthrow of the government. The central purpose of the act was to suppress the Communist Party of the United States.[18]

Limits on Free Speech in the Post-9/11 Era

SECRET 4 ▸ Forty-five days after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act, its name an acronym that stands for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism."[19] The PATRIOT Act follows in the tradition of previous wartime laws in changing the balance point between maximizing our civil liberties and protecting the United States from perceived threats. The act is one more example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

The law permitted a host of activities by the Justice Department, including the placing of wiretaps and increased domestic surveillance, and it also widened the definition of what constitutes terrorism. Most of the objections to the act fall under the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which protects against "unreasonable searches and seizures."[20] But there are First Amendment implications as well. One of the biggest is that Section 215 of the act allows the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to examine individuals' media use by obtaining "library records, health-care records, logs of Internet service providers and other documents and papers."[21]

Jameel Jaffer of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) says the fact that people may be watched can keep them from looking at things they might otherwise view: "If people think that the government is looking over their shoulders to see what books they are reading or what Web sites they are visiting, many are not going to read those books or visit those Web sites."[22] The law also makes it a crime for anyone to provide "expert assistance" to any group designated as a terrorist organization, even if there is no evidence that the advice leads to further terrorism.

▼ The National Security Agency has used a broad understanding of the PATRIOT Act Section 215 to justify collecting voice mail and email data on almost any U.S. citizen.



Cagle Cartoons, Inc

Most controversial was the provision that people served with PATRIOT Act warrants couldn't tell anyone that they had received them. That is, anyone served with a PATRIOT Act warrant lost his or her free speech rights when it came to discussing the warrant. Since the act was originally passed in 2001, it has undergone changes that have scaled back the limits on free speech. The most important of these changes is that people served with warrants under the act now have permission to consult an attorney.

The PATRIOT Act has also been used to identify journalists' confidential sources. Brian Ross and Richard Esposito of ABC News wrote in their blog, the *Blotter*, that the federal government was tracking the phone numbers they called after they reported on the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) secret prisons in Romania and Poland.[23] Ross charges that this tracking of his calls was done under Section 215 of the act. "It's a provision of the Patriot Act designed to fight terrorism—and it's being used to fight journalists," Ross said. "That's really what it comes down to."[24]

While there had been a variety of reports about potential misuse of Section 215 similar to those from Brian Ross, the world learned the extent of the collection of "metadata" in a series of stories from the *Guardian* newspaper based on documents leaked by former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden. As you may recall from Chapter 2, Snowden revealed that the NSA had been collecting bulk information that showed "who called whom, the date, time, duration and frequency of calls for millions of

Americans who are not suspected of any crimes."[25] These data do not include the content of the calls, but just the metadata alone could establish someone's political activities, health issues, or personal relationships. The PATRIOT Act underwent a fairly substantial revision with the passage of the USA FREEDOM (Uniting and Strengthening America by Fulfilling Rights and Ending Eavesdropping, Dragnet-Collection and Online Monitoring) Act in June 2015. Among the changes was an end to the NSA's practice of bulk collection of phone data of millions of Americans. The revisions were passed by a coalition of liberal Democrats and libertarian-thinking Republicans.[26]

Questioning the Media

Does the First Amendment go too far in its protections of the press and of individuals? Why or why not? Why do you think the government periodically tries to limit our First Amendment rights?

Protection of Individuals

Although the press is censored only rarely in the United States, individuals do have a right to protect themselves from being harmed by the media. Rather than exercising prior restraint to prevent the press from printing or broadcasting potentially damaging material, U.S. law allows individuals to sue the press for any damage they feel they have suffered. Protection of individuals from the press focuses on three main issues: libel, invasion of privacy, and the right to a fair trial.

Libel

Although in general the press cannot be restricted from publishing something, it can be held accountable for what it does publish. This is accomplished primarily through libel law. Libel is any published statement that unjustifiably exposes someone to ridicule or contempt. In general, for a statement to be libelous, it needs to contain three elements: defamation, identification, and publication.

1. Defamation—To defame is to damage a person's reputation in some way. This can involve calling someone, for example, a criminal, a communist, or a drunk. If a student newspaper ran an article falsely accusing Dr. Smith, a journalism professor, of selling an A grade in his Introduction to Mass Communication class for $100, Dr. Smith would probably have been defamed.
2. Identification—No person can sue for libel unless the defamation can be proved to apply to him or her; another reader or viewer must agree that the comment applies to the person who is suing. Just leaving that person's name out of the article isn't enough. If a person can be identified, he or she can sue. Going back to the example of Dr. Smith, suppose that the article did not mention his name but merely said that the teacher of the Introduction to Mass Communication course at Big State University was taking bribes for grades. If Dr. Smith was the only person teaching the course at Big State U, he would have been identified.
3. Publication—To be libelous, the statement must be published or broadcast and seen by someone other than the author and the person who was defamed.[27]

How can the media defend themselves against libel suits? After all, much of what gets printed or broadcast in the news has the potential to damage a person's reputation. There are at least two approaches. When an article is genuinely false and defamatory, the media look to a landmark 1960s case, *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, which is discussed later in this chapter. First, let's look at approaches that are used when the material in an article is true, privileged, or a statement of opinion.

The Defense of Truth.

The Zenger case from the early 1700s established truth as an absolute defense against libel. It is not always an effective defense, however, because the truth is not always clear. In the article about Dr. Smith, it may well be true that a student accused Dr. Smith of selling grades, but it would be much more difficult to prove that Dr. Smith actually sold the grades.

The Defense of Privilege.

Asserting privilege is a much better defense than truth in a libel case. As a legal defense

against libel, privilege is the idea that statements made in government meetings, in court, or in government documents cannot be used as the basis for a libel suit. What is more, any fair and accurate report of what happened at the meeting, in court, or in a government document is also protected from libel.[28] For example, the privilege defense protects a reporter who is covering a murder trial. The journalist is privileged to give a fair and accurate report of any testimony, no matter how inflammatory, without fear of being sued.

Opinions.

Opinions are neither true nor false, so a statement of opinion cannot be used as the basis of a libel suit. Calling someone an idiot or a jerk would probably not be considered libelous; both words are expressions of opinion. Editorial cartoons, parodies, and reviews are all generally considered to be opinion and are given fairly broad latitude in their protection from libel. But remember that, to be protected, statements need to be clear expressions of opinion. An article that states, "Dr. Smith, in my opinion, is selling grades," would most likely be considered libelous: Claiming that a fact is a statement of opinion does not protect the writer.

New York Times Co. v. Sullivan.

The defenses of truth, privilege, and opinion arise from the notion that the press has published something it is entitled to publish. But there are times when the press gets a story wrong, runs an advertisement containing factual errors, or makes a mistake in a headline. In these cases, the press is likely to look to the 1964 case of *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*.[29]

The 1960s were a period of racial unrest in the United States, marked by protests and rioting over efforts to integrate schools, lunch counters, and other public facilities, with white segregationists claiming that the national media were interfering with local issues that were none of their business.[30]

On March 29, 1960, a civil rights group ran a full-page ad in the *New York Times* to raise money for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The ad included the names of numerous well-known individuals, such as Harry Belafonte, Marlon Brando, Nat King Cole, Jackie Robinson, and former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and was paid for by the Union Advertising Service for the Committee to Defend Martin Luther King and the Struggle for Freedom in the South.[31] Among the sections of the ad that created trouble was the following:

> In Montgomery, Alabama, after students sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee" on the State Capitol steps, their leaders were expelled from the school, and truck-loads of police armed with shotguns and teargas ringed the Alabama State College Campus.

> When the entire student body protested to state authorities by refusing to reregister, their dining hall was padlocked in an attempt to starve them into submission.[32]

This passage contained several false statements. The students did not sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee," and the police did not literally surround the building.

Although Montgomery police commissioner L. B. Sullivan, who was in charge of the police department, was not mentioned by name in the advertisement, he felt that any accusations against the police department were accusations against him. He also charged that the advertisement contained numerous factual errors. He asked the *Times* to retract the ad, but the paper responded that it did not see how the ad reflected negatively on Sullivan's reputation. So Sullivan filed suit, joining eleven other libel cases that were pending against the *Times*.[33] In the initial three-day trial, the *Times* admitted that the ad contained errors, but friends of Sullivan testified that they did not think less of him as a result because they did not believe what they had read in the ad. Nevertheless, the judge instructed the jury that they could presume that the material in the ad was libelous and that it had damaged Sullivan's reputation. The jury returned a verdict in favor of Sullivan, awarding him $500,000 in damages. The verdict was upheld by the Alabama Supreme Court.

▼ This is the ad from the Committee to Defend Martin Luther King and the Struggle for Freedom in the South that was printed in the *New York Times* that led Police Commissioner L. B. Sullivan to sue the paper for libel.



"The growing movement of peaceful mass demonstrations by Negroes is something new in the South, something understandable. . . . Let Congress heed their rising voices, for they will be heard."

—New York Times editorial
Saturday, March 28, 1960

Heed Their Rising Voices

As the whole world knows by now, thousands of Southern Negro students are engaged in widespread non-violent demonstrations in positive affirmation of the right to live in human dignity as guaranteed by the U. S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In their efforts to uphold these guarantees, they are being met by an unprecedented wave of terror by those who would deny and negate that document which the whole world looks upon as setting the pattern for modern freedom. . . .

In Orangeburg, South Carolina, where 400 students peacefully sought to buy doughnuts and coffee at lunch counters in the business district, they were forcibly ejected, tear-gassed, soaked to the skin in freezing weather with fire hoses, arrested en masse and herded into an open barbed-wire stockade to stand for hours in the bitter cold.

In Montgomery, Alabama, after students sang "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" on the State Capitol steps, their leaders were expelled from school, and truckloads of police armed with shotguns and tear-gas ringed the Alabama State College campus. When the entire student body protested en masse against this high-handed action, their dining hall was padlocked in an attempt to starve them into submission.

In Tallahassee, Atlanta, Nashville, Savannah, Greensboro, Memphis, Richmond, Charlotte, and a host of other cities in the South, young Americans, black and white, unarmed, simply and courageously playing the role assigned to them by the Founding Fathers of this nation when they wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, are being met by the most brutal forms of police intimidation and violence. Small wonder that they are determined to demonstrate until the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution are secured for all Americans.

In Montgomery, Alabama, after a student demonstration against racial discrimination, the entire student body was expelled from school, and truckloads of police armed with shotguns and tear-gas ringed the campus. When the entire student body protested en masse against this high-handed action, their dining hall was padlocked in an attempt to starve them into submission.

In Tallahassee, Atlanta, Nashville, Savannah, Greensboro, Memphis, Richmond, Charlotte, and a host of other cities in the South, young Americans, black and white, unarmed, simply and courageously playing the role assigned to them by the Founding Fathers of this nation when they wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, are being met by the most brutal forms of police intimidation and violence. Small wonder that they are determined to demonstrate until the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution are secured for all Americans.

Again and again the Southern violence has answered Dr. King's peaceful protests with intimidation and violence. They have bombed his home almost killing his wife and child. They have assaulted his person. They have arrested him seven times—for "speeding," "loitering" and similar "offenses." And now they have charged him with "perjury"—a felony under which they could imprison him for ten years. Obviously, their real purpose is to remove him physically as the leader to whom the students and millions of others—look for guidance and support, and thereby to intimidate all leaders who may rise in the South. Their strategy is to behead this effective non-violent movement, and thus to demoralize Negro Americans and weaken their will to struggle. The defense of Martin Luther King, spiritual leader of the student sit-in movement, thereby, is an integral part of the total struggle for freedom in the South.

Dr. King, cofounder of the Montgomery Improvement Association, has been arrested four times. His life has been threatened on numerous occasions. He has been subjected to intimidation and violence by the Montgomery police force. Now an all-out effort is being made to destroy him, to remove him physically as the leader to whom the students and millions of others look for guidance and support, and thereby to intimidate all leaders who may rise in the South. Their strategy is to behead this effective non-violent movement, and thus to demoralize Negro Americans and weaken their will to struggle. The defense of Martin Luther King, spiritual leader of the student sit-in movement, thereby, is an integral part of the total struggle for freedom in the South.

Decent-minded Americans cannot help but applaud the courage during the students and the quiet heroism of Dr. King. But this is one of those moments in the stormy history of Freedom when mere applause and cheers from the sidelines by a wonderful world, the American whose heritage of Liberty these Southern Defenders of the Constitution are defending. Is our America as well as theirs. . . .

We must heed their rising voices—yes—but we must add our own.

We must extend ourselves above and beyond moral support and make the material help so urgently needed by those who are taking the risks, being jailed, and even death in a glorious re-affirmation of our Constitution and its Bill of Rights.

We urge you to join hands with our fellow Americans in the South by supporting, with your dollars, this Combined Appeal for all three needs—the defense of Martin Luther King—the support of the embattled students—and the struggle for the right to vote.

Your Help Is Urgently Needed . . . NOW!!

We in the south who are struggling daily for dignity and freedom warmly endorse this appeal

Please mail this coupon TODAY!

COMMITTEE TO DEFEND MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN THE SOUTH
312 West 125th Street, New York 27, N. Y. UNiversity 6-1700

recordsofrights.org

The case then went before the U.S. Supreme Court, which reversed the lower courts with a sweeping ruling in favor of the *Times*. The Court could have overturned the lower court judgment simply by ruling that Sullivan had not been identified in the ad or by saying that Sullivan's reputation had not suffered any damage. But it decided instead to use the case to consider whether the public had the right to criticize the government.[34] The Court ruled that it was not enough to protect true statements; false statements against public officials made in good faith should also be protected.

With the Sullivan case, the Court established a new standard for libel. It ruled that public officials would have to show that the media had acted with actual malice and displayed a reckless disregard for the truth or falsity of a published account. In the Sullivan case, the Court ruled, the paper had not acted with malice; at worst it had been negligent. One of the goals of the Court's judgment was to help protect against self-censorship—to prevent publications from being so afraid of making a mistake that they would not print anything that might be controversial. The Court was attempting to balance the right of a public official to protect his or her reputation versus a critic's right to speak out against that official.

Libel and Public Figures.

In 1967, the Supreme Court extended the actual malice standard to apply to public figures as well as public officials. The theory behind this extension of the Sullivan standard was that these people have voluntarily exposed themselves to public scrutiny and thus to the threat of being libeled.

The standard was settled by the case of *Gertz v. Robert Welch Inc.* in 1974.[35] The John Birch Society's magazine had run an article accusing Elmer Gertz of being a communist. The question was whether Gertz, an attorney, was a public figure. The Court ruled that private individuals deserve more protection because they have not voluntarily submitted themselves for public attention and because they are less able than public figures to defend themselves.[36]

Libel and Social Media.

In general, there are few differences in the standard for libel between legacy media and social media. The big difference is that legacy media have a legal staff to advise writers when they are writing or broadcasting something that could be problematic; people on Twitter or Facebook rarely do. Also, as attorney Ellyn Angelotti points out, social media like Twitter make publishing potentially defamatory content much easier.[37] Finally, while newspapers or broadcasters are typically responsible for what they publish because they actively control what goes out in their name, social media sites themselves are not responsible for what people post using their service. In January 2014, the first Twitter libel case to be settled dealt with a tweet posted by singer/celebrity Courtney Love that suggested "one of her attorneys had been 'bought off.'" The jury in the case ruled in favor of Love and against her attorney. The jury ruled that Love's tweet contained false information but that she didn't know that it was false.[38] (Note to students: Don't assume that other juries would rule the same way!)

Recent Libel Cases.

The most high-profile libel case in the United States in recent years was against *Rolling*

Stone magazine for a story about an alleged gang rape by members of a fraternity on the University of Virginia campus and the supposed callous response by university administrators. The magazine and journalist Sabrina Rubin Erdely were sued by a university administrator, a group of fraternity members, and three members of the fraternity. The associate dean who had been accused in the story of being indifferent to the rape allegations in the story received an award of $3 million, the fraternity was awarded $1.65 million, and the fraternity members received an undisclosed amount. Erdely testified during the trial that after the story was published in 2014 she no longer trusted her source for the story and the magazine should issue a retraction.[39]

Former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin sued the *New York Times* for libel after the paper published an editorial that falsely connected her to a mass shooting that took place in Arizona. According to an article about the case from the *Times*, "the editorial suggested a connection between a map of targeted electoral districts circulated by Ms. Palin's political action committee" and the 2011 shooting that wounded congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. The paper later issued a correction, "saying there was no link between political rhetoric and the shooting." The judge dismissed the lawsuit saying there was no evidence that the error was made maliciously.[40]

Invasion of Privacy

What magazines do you subscribe to? What books do you check out from the library? How much money do you have in the bank? What movies have you rented from the video store? What do you buy at the grocery store? Why did you see the doctor last week? Are you uncomfortable with these questions? Most people would like to keep such information private.[41] With all this information potentially available, what legal expectation do people have of maintaining a private life in the information age? The Constitution offers no explicit protection of privacy, but a right to privacy has been implied, and the issue shows up in a number of ways. The "freedom to associate" clause of the First Amendment prevents the government from requiring a group to release its membership list to the public. It also protects the right of an individual to possess any type of literature in the privacy of his or her own home. The Fourth Amendment limits searches and seizures, and the Fourteenth Amendment limits disclosure of personal information. In cases involving privacy, the courts try to balance an individual's right to protect his or her privacy and reputation versus the public's interest in a news or feature story that the press might publish.

In general, legal protection exists for four types of invasion of privacy: intrusion, embarrassment, false light, and misappropriation. Let's look briefly at each of these.[42]

Intrusion.

Intrusion is invasion of privacy by physical trespass into a space surrounding a person's body or onto property under his or her control. Reporters and photographers are not allowed to go onto private property to collect news without the permission of the owner, but in some cases, the newsgathering function and the right of the public to know can conflict with the rights associated with private property. For example, a reporter and a photographer were sued for intrusion when they pretended to be patients at a private California medical clinic that was being run by a plumber practicing medicine without a license. Their visit to the clinic was ruled to be trespass, but the story won numerous prizes and resulted in the clinic's being shut down.[43]

The courts have generally held that undercover reporting is legal, if not necessarily ethical, as long as it does not involve trespass. (For more about intrusion, see the section on *Food Lion v. Capital Cities/ABC* later in this chapter.)

Embarrassment.

Sometimes reporters come across true information that is so embarrassing and private that a person has reason to expect that it will not be published, especially if he or she is not well known. In general, embarrassment cases are difficult to win. If the information is true, it

will often be considered newsworthy, which is the press's strongest defense in privacy cases.

One of the best-known embarrassment cases arose in 1975, when Oliver "Bill" Sipple, a former U.S. Marine, helped save President Gerald R. Ford by knocking aside Sara Jane Moore's gun as she attempted to shoot the president. Two days later, a columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle* implied that Sipple was gay. Sipple sued the *Chronicle* for giving unwanted publicity to that information. The court ruled against Sipple, however, because he had been written about in gay magazines and had marched in gay pride parades. The court also ruled that the information about Sipple was legitimate news.

So when is something that is private not newsworthy? On October 13, 1961, an Alabama woman went into a fun house at the local county fair. As she came out, an air jet blew her skirt up, exposing her underwear, and a photographer from the local newspaper took her picture. The woman was recognized by friends and relatives, who teased her about the picture. She called the paper at least twice but received no sympathy. The paper's editor says that had he apologized at that point, the case would have likely ended. But he didn't, and the woman sued and won.[44] What distinguishes *Daily Times Democrat v. Graham* from the Sipple case? Sipple had just saved the president's life and hence was a part of the news. In the Alabama case, however, the woman had done nothing to make herself newsworthy.

The most spectacular invasion of privacy case in recent years is that between Hulk Hogan and the gossip website *Gawker*. Hogan was a professional wrestler who had been quite famous back in the late 1980s and 1990s. In the 2000s, he had sex with a friend's wife, and the friend recorded them on video. (The friend, it should be noted, was radio shock jock Bubba the Love Sponge, and yes, that's his legal name.) Someone sent a copy of the text video to *Gawker*, which published it. Hogan sued *Gawker* for invasion of privacy, and initially a judge ruled in favor of *Gawker*, ruling that the video did not have to be taken down, given Hogan's public persona and his public discussion of his sex life. But then the case got complicated. Tech billionaire Peter Thiel, who hated *Gawker* for outing him as gay several years earlier, financed Hogan's appeal of the verdict. This time, the case went before a jury, and Hogan won a judgment of $115 million, enough to force *Gawker* owner Nick Denton to sell his media company in 2016 to Spanish-language broadcaster Univision Communications. When Thiel's involvement in the case was revealed, it became clear that he had financed the appeal in order to seek revenge on Denton and *Gawker*.[45]

▼ Hulk Hogan, whose real name is Terry Bollea, testified in his case against the website *Gawker* in March 2016 in St. Petersburg, Florida. Bollea took legal action against *Gawker* in a $100 million lawsuit for releasing a video of him having sex with his best friend's wife. Hogan's appeal, it was later revealed, was financed by billionaire Peter Thiel, who allegedly was motivated by a grudge against *Gawker*.



Boyzell Hosey-Pool/Getty Images

False Light.

False light is similar to libel, and people who file libel suits often simultaneously file false light suits. False light doesn't really seem to be an invasion of privacy, but that's how the law treats it.[46] False light occurs when a journalist publishes untrue statements that alter an individual's public image in a way that he or she cannot control. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* lost a false light suit when reporter Joe Eszterhas (who later became famous for writing the screenplay for the movie *Basic Instinct*) described a poverty-stricken widow whose husband had been killed in a bridge collapse several months earlier in West Virginia —even though he had neither met nor spoken with the woman. He wrote:

▼ In 1975, Oliver "Bill" Sipple (left) helped save President Gerald R. Ford by foiling an assassination attempt by Sara Jane Moore. After the *San Francisco Chronicle* revealed Sipple was gay, he sued the paper, but the courts ruled that information about Sipple was newsworthy and, therefore, not an invasion of his privacy.



AP Photo/San Francisco Examiner, Gordon Stone

> Margaret Cantrell will talk neither about what happened nor about how they are doing. She wears the same mask of non-expression she wore at the funeral. She is a proud woman. Her world has changed. She says that after it happened, the people in town offered to help them out with money and they refused to take it.[47]

Regardless of whether the woman's reputation was damaged, the portrayal was clearly false because Eszterhas had never been in contact with her. False light often arises more from context than from a deliberate attempt to deceive. For example, a television story about street prostitution might show men and women walking down the street, with the implication that the women are prostitutes and the men are their customers. ABC television settled multiple lawsuits over just such a story (though without admitting guilt).

Misappropriation.

The final form of invasion of privacy is quite different from the preceding three. Misappropriation is using a person's name or image for commercial purposes without his or her permission. The right to control the commercial use of their names and images is of great importance to athletes and celebrities, who may make more money from endorsements than they do from competing or acting. For example, in 1997, basketball legend Michael Jordan earned $31.3 million in pay from the Chicago Bulls but over $40 million from endorsements.[48] Clearly, it is in Jordan's economic and financial interest to control the use of his name and image.

What of the paparazzi armed with telephoto lenses who make a business out of stalking celebrities? Television and movie star Jennifer Aniston has filed numerous invasion-of-

privacy lawsuits to stop distribution or publication of topless photos taken of her. It is not clear how a court would rule on her cases, as most of them have been settled out of court. Aniston has used a range of legal strategies in her cases, including copyright infringement, intrusion, and misappropriation.[49] (She apparently did not have a problem with her officially sanctioned topless photo that ran on the cover of *GQ* magazine in 2005, at the same time one of her lawsuits was in progress.[50]) In 2009, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill into law that allows lawsuits against media outlets that publish photos shot illegally. In general, freelance photographers can be sued for violating privacy laws, but the publications that buy their photos have been shielded from liability. Free-speech advocates argue that California's new law could interfere with legitimate newsgathering. Legal experts have questioned whether California's law is enforceable because it can be difficult to prove when and where a photo was taken.[51]

Social Media and Privacy.

If we were to go ask Captain Obvious whether we had any right to privacy with things we post to social media sites, he would immediately reply, "Duh, no, it's meant to be shared, obviously." And from a practical point of view, he would be correct—once anything is posted to the internet, it's bound to go public. If you want to keep something secret, don't post it. But from a legal point of view, you do have some protection. According to a 2012 ruling by the District Court of New Jersey, if you post something that is available only to a select group of people (i.e., "friends"), you may have a reasonable expectation of privacy. On the other hand, a 2009 California Court of Appeals ruling found that someone who posted a series of complaints about her hometown on Myspace had no grounds to sue for invasion of privacy when her comments were republished in a local newspaper.[52] As this was being written in the summer of 2016, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was considering adding new regulations on what information about your online activity broadband providers would be allowed to share with others, such as advertisers, without your consent. One area of difficulty the commission is facing is that there could be differing rules for what broadband providers, mobile providers, mobile operating system providers, and search engine providers are allowed to do.

Questioning the Media

Does the press go too far in revealing private details about celebrities? Why or why not? Given that celebrities benefit from positive coverage, should they be given more power to control negative coverage?

Privacy and Your Smartphone.

How private is the content of your smartphone? If you have a recent iPhone with the latest operating system on it, pretty darn private. So private that even Apple's engineers couldn't get in and read your private messages, even if they wanted to. Which they don't.

The level of privacy in iPhones became a national controversy in the winter of 2016, when the FBI wanted to get access to an iPhone used by a married couple who killed fourteen people and injured twenty-two others when they attacked a county employee holiday party in San Bernardino, California. The FBI was hoping the phone might contain information about motives for the attack and whether the couple had been influenced by Islamic extremist groups.

The FBI couldn't get the access code from the attacker and owner of the phone—he was dead, shot by police. Investigators also couldn't simply guess at the four-digit access code. Apple's software shuts down the phone if someone guesses unsuccessfully at the pass code a given number of times. Under some settings, the phone will erase itself if you guess wrong too many times.[53]

The FBI wanted Apple to write a new, special version of the phone's iOS operating system that would disable all the anti-guessing features so the feds could rapidly do a brute-force attack to break into the phone. When Apple refused to do so, the FBI got a federal court order mandating that Apple comply. Apple again refused. Apple's CEO Tim Cook, in an open letter to the company's customers, wrote:

> Smartphones, led by iPhone, have become an essential part of our lives. People use them to store an incredible amount of personal information, from our private conversations to our photos, our music, our notes, our calendars and contacts, our financial information and health data, even where we have been and where we are going.
>
> All that information needs to be protected from hackers and criminals who want to access it, steal it, and use it without our knowledge or permission. . . . Compromising the security of our personal information can ultimately put our personal safety at risk. That is why encryption has become so important to all of us. . . . We have even put that data out of our own reach, because we believe the contents of your iPhone are

none of our business.[54]

Cook wrote that while he and Apple were horrified by the terrorist attack and wanted to help the FBI, they were unwilling to create a back door past the iPhone's security system. Apple put the new, enhanced security on the phone because the company had a history of cooperating with the government in unlocking dozens of phones in the post-9/11 era. Apple, along with most other major tech companies, was revealed to be turning over supposedly secure data to the government in the name of protecting national security.[55]

The case ended with neither the FBI nor Apple backing down. Instead, the FBI apparently hired a hacker who managed to find a way into the one specific phone, reportedly at a cost of more than $1 million, though the FBI refused to be specific.[56] In a separate case, in April 2018, police tried to use the fingerprint of a man they had shot and killed to unlock his phone. The police held the corpse's finger up to the phone's sensor, but they were not able to get into the phone. Law professor Charles Rose told the *Tampa Bay Times* that while what the police did was legal (you don't have a right to privacy after you are dead), "it really doesn't pass the smell test."[57]

▼ Press photographers outside Buckingham Palace in London for the wedding of Charles, Prince of Wales, and Lady Diana Spencer on July 29, 1981.



Serge Lemoine/Getty Images

Privacy Law in Europe

When Britain's beloved Princess Diana died in a car crash on August 30, 1997, the entire world mourned, and many people in Europe and the United States blamed the accident on overly aggressive photographers chasing the car in which she was riding. Although evidence soon came to light that Diana's driver had been drunk at the time, the high-speed chase through the streets of Paris brought the privacy rights of the rich and famous to the forefront of the public's attention.[58] France has relatively strict privacy laws that proclaim "each individual has the right to require respect for his private life. . . . Privacy revolves around the secrecy of one's intimate life and the right to oppose investigation and revelation of this domain."[59] This protects against coverage of a person's family life, sexual activity or orientation, illness, and private leisure activities. The person suing does not need to show that he or she has been damaged; the law presumes that invasion of privacy, by its very nature, is damaging.

Despite the strength of the restrictions, the penalties for violating the laws are relatively mild.[60] Most fines are under $50,000, and the French press views them largely as a cost of doing business. Although the law also allows the courts to confiscate the publications containing the offending photographs, in practice the courts almost never do so.[61] Whereas France has relatively strict laws, until recently, British law did not recognize an individual's right to privacy. For example, in 1987, British actor Gorden Kaye suffered a serious head injury in an accident. Kaye was subsequently interviewed while he was semiconscious and recovering from brain surgery. The British courts ruled that the only thing legally wrong with the article was that it implied that the actor had consented to the interview. Thus, the article was published without penalty.[62] In 2000, the British Parliament put into law the Human Rights Act, which requires the press to observe a "proper balance" between privacy and publicity.[63]

In the spring of 2018, the European Union started enforcing one of the toughest online privacy rules in the world—the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).[64] The law requires that

- Companies be clear about how their customers' data are being handled. They also must have permission before they can use it.
- Online advertising can only target you if you give your consent. This means that on European websites and apps you will be less likely to see the ads that target you because you are a twenty-one-year-old woman from Stockholm, Sweden, who likes electronic dance music and Coca-Cola Light (as Diet Coke is known in Europe).
- You can ask companies about what information they have on you and require them to delete it if you request. This could include things like your shopping history tied to your credit card or loyalty program. (Think back to the example in Chapter 11 of

targeting pregnant women based on their buying habits.)

- Most visibly, companies had to have new, clear, and understandable privacy policies. This is why you got a flood of new privacy policy notices in your email inbox in May 2018, even if you lived in the United States. Any company that does business in Europe has to follow the rules, so just to be on the safe side, companies sent the notice out to all of their customers.

▲ Figure 13.1 Key Changes Under the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)



Source: Based on information located at "GDPR Key Changes," https://www.eugdpr.org/key-changes.html.

European "Right to Be Forgotten" Laws.

In 2014, the European Court of Justice ruled that people who live in the European Union (EU) have a right to purge search engine results they consider to be out of date or irrelevant. The "right to be forgotten" ruling requires that Google and other search providers present the edited search results on any search conducted from within any of the

countries covered by the ruling.[65]

The "right to be forgotten" ruling doesn't force anyone to take down the offending material; it only forces them to omit it from search results. According to the *New York Times*, these requests have included removing links to news articles, a link to a mass shooter's published manifesto, and an unkind slide show that called a reality TV star "an annoying, unbearable nag."[66]

As of February 2018, Google had received more than 655,000 "right to be forgotten" requests demanding the removal of nearly 2.5 million links and honored about 43 percent of them. What did people want deleted from search results? One-third of the requests were for "social media and directory services that contained personal information." One-fifth of them were for news articles or government websites, generally containing information about the person's legal history.[67]

The editing of results will be done on searches within the European Union, but not in the United States or other countries outside the EU.

Free Press/Fair Trial

The right to a free press often conflicts with the right to a fair trial. The Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees accused individuals the right to be tried by an impartial jury, and the Fourteenth Amendment requires that criminal defendants be tried fairly before an unprejudiced jury. Supreme Court justice Hugo Black wrote that "free speech and fair trials are two of the most cherished policies of our civilization, and it would be a trying task to choose between them."[68] Over the years, there have been repeated charges that pretrial publicity interferes with the ability to select an impartial jury and that media coverage turns trials into circuses. These complaints became particularly loud during O. J. Simpson's 1994 murder trial, which attracted an inordinate amount of media attention. Media scholar Matthew D. Bunker argues that the conflict between a free press and a fair trial does not require that one right be sacrificed for another. Instead, he suggests that creative decisions by judges can lead to fair trials and open media coverage at the same time.[69] The general rule is that the First Amendment must be upheld unless there is a compelling state interest in regulating the speech. If speech is regulated, it must be done in the least restrictive way possible. The reasoning is that there should be no official version of the truth. Instead, people should be able to put forward contrasting ideas that compete for attention.

The Case of Dr. Sam Sheppard.

One of the most spectacular collisions between the right to a free press and the right to a fair trial involved the murder trial of Dr. Sam Sheppard. The case, later fictionalized in the television series and movie *The Fugitive*, involved the murder of Sheppard's wife, Marilyn, who was found beaten to death in their home in 1954. In his defense, Sheppard, a prominent Cleveland doctor, claimed to have been awakened by his wife's screams and to have fought with his wife's attacker, who left him unconscious.

Sheppard's story did not convince the police, and he soon became the leading suspect in his wife's murder. Reporters found out that Sheppard had been having an affair with a woman named Susan Hayes. A newspaper headline demanded, "Why Isn't Sam Sheppard in Jail?" As the trial began, the Cleveland newspapers printed the names and addresses of prospective jurors, along with their pictures. Jurors were also allowed to view the media during the trial, despite a "suggestion" by the judge that they avoid doing so.

Sheppard was convicted of murder, but his conviction was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court, and he was given a new trial. This time he was acquitted. The Court, in *Sheppard v. Maxwell*,[70] said that the "carnival atmosphere" surrounding Sheppard's trial had denied him due process. But the Court also noted that it was the judge's responsibility to make sure the defendant received a fair trial. If stopping coverage of the trial was not an option,

what could the courts do to avoid this problem? The Court suggested a number of possibilities[71]:

- Put a gag order on participants in the trial to keep them from talking to the press in the first place (although the press would be free to report on anything that happened in the courtroom itself).
- Sequester the jury.
- Postpone the trial until the publicity dies down.
- Change the venue for the trial.
- Order a new trial.

Oklahoma City Bombing Case.

Beyond the Sam Sheppard case, the most important free press/fair trial case over the last thirty years is undoubtedly the Timothy McVeigh trial for the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building that resulted in the death of 168 victims including numerous children and eight federal agents. Chad F. Nye, in his book *Journalism and Justice in the Oklahoma City Bombing Trials*, found eleven major areas of free press/fair trial law to emerge from the case, including

▼ The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, is the deadliest act of homegrown terrorism in U.S. history, resulting in the deaths of 168 people.



Staff Sergeant Preston Chasteen/Department of Defense

- Concerns about pretrial publicity in a case that affected directly or indirectly almost every family in the Oklahoma City area.
- The challenges of handling access for a huge press corps that produced more than 1,700 newspaper stories and more than 900 broadcast stories.
- The challenge of getting access to the trial for the people of Oklahoma City after the trial was moved to Denver, Colorado, because the defense argued that McVeigh and his accused collaborator Terry Nichols could not get a fair trial in Oklahoma. The judge ordered the court to have a closed-circuit television feed setup that would bring

> the trial from the Denver courtroom into an auditorium in Oklahoma City where family members of the victims could see and hear testimony. The judge also allowed journalists who couldn't get into the courtroom itself to listen to an audio feed of the trial, as long as they promised not to record or rebroadcast any of the testimony.

In the end, U.S. District Judge Richard Match kept everyone involved in the trial under tight control that satisfied both the rights of the accused and the rights of the public and the press to observe the trial.[72]

Cameras in the Courtroom.

While there is no question that reporters and the public are entitled to view trials, there has been considerable debate over whether television and other cameras ought to be allowed in the courtroom.

The central argument in favor of allowing cameras is that the right to an open trial belongs to the public, not to the participants in the trial. Steven Brill, founder of the cable network Court TV (now truTV), argues that television coverage of trials

> offer[s] the public the chance to see the legal system at work and to judge with their own eyes whether it has performed properly. [It] can heighten public understanding of the system, counter rumors and speculation, and provide important insurance against abuses of defendants' rights.[80]

Movie cameras were first allowed in courtrooms in 1917. But in 1935, when Bruno Richard Hauptmann was on trial for the kidnapping and murder of aviator Charles Lindbergh's baby, the trial became a media circus. As a result, in 1937, a general ban was placed on movie and still photography in courtrooms. The fraud trial of the flamboyant Texas financier Billie Sol Estes in 1965 led to a Supreme Court decision that the time had not yet come for cameras to be allowed in the courtroom. But the Court went on to say that this might change when cameras became smaller and less intrusive.

In the 1970s and 1980s, electronic technology led to small, remote-controlled cameras. In 1977, the Florida Supreme Court started experimenting with allowing televised coverage of state court proceedings; by 1981, twenty-nine states had laws allowing partial television access.[81] By 1999, the vast majority of states had begun to allow cameras in their courtrooms under certain circumstances, although the judge generally retained the discretion to control when they could be used. Most states limit coverage of jurors, and many allow witnesses to refuse to be shown on television.[82] Experiments conducted in Illinois and Minnesota in the 2010s found that in general television cameras in the courtroom were not particularly disruptive. In fact, a Minnesota judge reported that she

forgot the cameras were there.[83] A judge in Illinois commented that the courts couldn't use what happened in the circus-like televised O. J. Simpson murder trial because that case was "an aberration."[84] The one place cameras have not been allowed into is the U.S. Supreme Court. However, members of Congress and the judiciary have argued that the public should be able to watch the Supreme Court hear oral arguments on important cases such as the constitutionality of President Obama's health care reform law.[85]

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Should Legal Protections Extend To Offensive Speech?

▼ What's your first reaction to this photo? Does it shock and anger you? Why or why not? Should members of groups such as the Westboro Baptist Church have the right to picket near a soldier's funeral?



Douglas Graham/Roll Call via Getty Images

The Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) of Topeka, Kansas, has made itself infamous over the last decade by picketing the funerals of U.S. servicemen and women, as well as other high-profile funerals, carrying signs proclaiming "GOD HATES FAGS" and "THANK GOD FOR DEAD SOLDIERS." The church, which is not connected to any other Baptist denomination, is generally described as being mainly composed of the extended family of its founder and former leader, the late Fred Phelps. The church argues that God is punishing the United States for homosexuality, and its members picket the funerals to draw attention to their group.[73] (Phelps died in March 2014, but the WBC has continued with its pickets reportedly under the leadership of nonrelative Steve Drain.[74])

In 2006, members of the Phelps family brought their pickets to the funeral of Lance Cpl. Matthew Snyder, who was killed in Iraq. The protesters were reportedly kept approximately one thousand feet away from the church where the funeral was being held. Then, a week later, a member of the WBC posted an "epic" to the church's website that told a disparaging story about Snyder and his family, claiming that Snyder's parents raised him to "defy his creator" and that they taught him that "God was a liar." Albert Snyder, Matthew's father, sued Phelps for intentional infliction of emotional distress and invasion of privacy. He was initially awarded an $11 million judgment, but that judgment was later reduced to $5 million by the judge. The case was then reversed by the federal appeals court, based in part on the Supreme Court's ruling in *Hustler v. Falwell* that even speech that was "gross and repugnant in the eye of most" was still protected.[75]

When the case of *Snyder v. Phelps* reached the U.S. Supreme Court, there was an extensive public debate over the rights of the Phelps family to free speech versus the rights of the Snyder family to bury their son in peace.

During arguments before the court, the attorney for the Snyder family testified, "We're talking about a funeral. If the context is ever going to matter, it has to matter in the context of a funeral. Mr. Snyder simply wanted to bury his son in a private, dignified manner."[76] In response, Margie J. Phelps, daughter of Fred Phelps, argued that there is no constitutional law to keep her from exploiting a funeral for her cause. She told the court that "when I hear the language of 'exploiting the bereavement,' I look for: What is the principle of law that comes from this court? This notion of exploiting, it has no definition in a principle of law that would guide people as to when they could or could not."[77]

The Court eventually ruled in favor of the Phelps family's right to protest in an 8–1 decision, holding that the Phelps family had followed local laws and stayed the required thousand feet away from the funeral.

Chief Justice John Roberts, writing for the majority, said that "speech is powerful. It can stir people to action, move them to tears of both joy and sorrow, and—as it did here—inflict great pain. On the facts before us, we cannot react to that pain by punishing the speaker. As a Nation we have chosen a different course—to protect even hurtful speech on public issues to ensure that we do not stifle public debate."[78]

In an odd twist, the WBC picketed the funeral of Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia, who had voted with the majority in the *Snyder v. Phelps* case in favor of the church's right to picket.[79]

WHO are they?

Who is Fred Phelps? Who is Albert Snyder?

WHAT did they say?

Why did Snyder sue Phelps and the Westboro Baptist Church? Why do Phelps and his family picket veterans' funerals?

WHAT evidence is there?

What grounds would the Court have had for ruling in favor of Snyder? What grounds did the Court have for ruling in favor of Phelps?

WHAT do you and your classmates think?

Do you agree with how the Court ruled in the Phelps case? Why or why not? What would the consequences be for free speech if the Court had ruled against Phelps? What can communities do (if anything) about the WBC protests? Do you think people have a right to protest at or near funerals?

Controlling the Press

SECRET 4 ▸ Despite the First Amendment, Congress has repeatedly placed restrictions on speech and the press. These restrictions include bans on false advertising, libel, perjury, obscenity, reporting troop movements during time of war, and solicitation of murder.[86] This section looks at some of these limits in detail as illustrations of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

Honesty and the Press

The law clearly states that the press can be held responsible for printing material that is libelous or invades a person's privacy, but can it require that the press behave ethically? Journalists certainly should behave ethically, but can the law require them to keep a promise or tell the truth? This question has been tested in a number of cases.

Cohen v. Cowles Media.

In 1982, Republican Wheelock Whitney was running for governor of Minnesota. With just one week to go before the election, the campaign discovered that the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor had been arrested and convicted of a minor theft eleven years earlier. What could Whitney's campaign managers have done with this information? Simply revealing it to the public would have made them look as if they were engaging in a smear campaign. Instead, they hired local public relations practitioner Dan Cohen to leak the information to the press. Cohen spoke to a series of reporters, offering them a deal:

> I have some documents which may or may not relate to a candidate in the upcoming election, and if you will give me a promise of confidentiality—that is, that I will be treated as an anonymous source, that my name will not appear in any material in connection with this, and you will also agree that you're not going to pursue with me a question of who my source is—then I'll furnish you with the documents.[87]

Four reporters from the Minneapolis/St. Paul media agreed to Cohen's terms, and all received copies of the court documents. But once they had the documents, the media responded in three different ways. Television station WCCO decided not to run a story at all. The Associated Press distributed a brief story outlining the charges against the candidate that did not identify Cohen as the source of the story. But against the wishes of their reporters, both the *Star Tribune* and the *Pioneer Press*, the Twin Cities' leading newspapers, ran stories that identified Cohen as the source of the story. In the end, the Democratic candidates won handily, and the information about the lieutenant governor seemed to have no effect on the election. There was, however, fallout for Cohen: He was immediately fired by his employer, who did not want to risk offending the new administration that Cohen had helped attack.

Cohen then sued the newspapers. He argued that the newspapers had entered into a verbal contract with him, exchanging a promise of confidentiality in return for the information he provided. The newspapers argued that they had done nothing wrong by printing Cohen's name. Instead, they had simply printed a true and accurate story about dirty tricks during a political campaign. Although the papers clearly broke an agreement with Cohen, they said

that they were entitled to do so because they were printing the truth, which was protected by the First Amendment.

> SECRET 4 ▸ The trial court found in favor of Cohen and awarded him $200,000 in damages for being fired, as well as punitive damages of $500,000. The state court of appeals, however, struck down the punitive damages. When the case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, the justices ruled by a 5–4 vote that the First Amendment did not excuse the media from having to live up to the contracts into which they entered.[88] Given the long battle over whether reporters should have to reveal their confidential sources, this is an example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

Controversy over the verdict arose within the press. Although it was the source who sued the press, the conflict lay primarily between editors and reporters. Could editors overrule promises made by reporters? The local reporters' union started urging reporters not to reveal their confidential sources to their editors unless the sources agreed to it. The newspaper publishers argued that the courts ought not to make judgments about journalistic ethics.

Food Lion v. Capital Cities/ABC.

In some instances, the courts have not punished the press for deceptive behavior. In 1992, the ABC television newsmagazine *Primetime Live* sent undercover reporters Lynn Dale and Susan Barnett to apply for jobs as food handlers at a Food Lion grocery store. The network had been tipped off by disgruntled union officials that the store had been cleaning, bleaching, and repackaging beef, chicken, and fish that had passed its freshness date. The reporters (who did not reveal their true occupation) wore hidden microphones and cameras to document the store's misconduct. When the story ran, ABC charged that Food Lion had mixed old hamburger with new, sold improperly packaged chicken, and engaged in other unsanitary practices.[89]

> SECRET 4 ▸ Food Lion sued ABC, but not for libel as might be expected. Instead, it sued the network and producers for résumé fraud and trespass. Although the story was substantially true, Food Lion was trying to punish ABC for its aggressive—some would say unethical—reporting techniques. In the initial trial, Food Lion won its case and was awarded $5.5 million in damages. (We'll talk more about the ethics of reporters lying in Chapter 14.) But the judge reduced the award to $316,402, saying that $5.5 million was excessive for lying on a job application and entering a closed area of the store. With this case, we see a major corporation trying to stop a news organization from reporting news the company would rather keep secret, providing another example of Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit reduced the damages to a symbolic $2: $1 for trespass and $1 for breach of loyalty (food handlers not serving their employer properly).[90] The court made it clear that this was not really a résumé fraud or trespass case, but a libel suit in disguise (in which truth would be an absolute defense). Food Lion argued that the broadcast had damaged its reputation and that it deserved compensation, but the court held that the reporters' only offense was lying on their résumés. The judgment,

although technically ruling against ABC with the award of symbolic damages, preserved the right of journalists to report truthful information.

Prior Restraint

The most extreme and least accepted form of control of the press in the United States is prior restraint, a judicial order that stops a media organization from publishing a story or image. In the American colonies, prior restraint was the rule rather than the exception. All newspapers were published by the approval of the Crown; if they did not have that permission, they could not publish. But since the ratification of the First Amendment, in only a handful of cases have stories been barred from being published or broadcast.

Near v. Minnesota.

The landmark case on prior restraint is the 1931 case of *Near v. Minnesota*. Jay Near was the publisher of the *Saturday Press*, a racist, anti-Semitic newspaper. Among other things, Near used his paper to charge that the police were controlled by a "Jewish gangster" and therefore were not going after gamblers and bootleggers. A Minnesota court stopped publication of the paper, using a state law allowing prosecutors to suppress publications that were "malicious, scandalous, and defamatory."

> SECRET 4 ▸ On appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the government did not have the right to suppress an entire publication merely because it was offensive. Instead, the Court said that the government could engage in prior restraint only to suppress the publication of military information during time of war, incitement to overthrow the government, or obscenity. Since none of Near's material fell into those categories, he could not be restrained from publishing it. The case established a major precedent: Although obscenity and publication of military secrets were not protected by the First Amendment, virtually everything else, no matter how offensive, was.[91] As we have seen multiple times in this chapter, just because people in positions of power or authority want to see a story suppressed does not give them the right to do so, illustrating Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.

The Pentagon Papers.

The second major case of prior restraint arose in 1971, when the federal government tried to suppress newspaper stories about a top-secret, forty-seven-volume report with the irresistible title "History of U.S. Decision-Making Process on Vietnam Policy." The report, which came to be known as the Pentagon Papers, contained extensive background information about how the United States had become involved in the Vietnam War, going as far back as the Truman administration's assistance to France in its colonial war in Indochina. Along with this lengthy commentary were copies of the original documents on which the report was based.[92]

One of the authors of the report was Daniel Ellsberg, a former U.S. Marine who worked for the Rand Corporation think tank. Although he made only minor contributions to the massive report, he was one of the few familiar with its entire contents. Ellsberg became convinced that if the report was publicized, the public outcry would bring the war to a

quicker end. So he started leaking copies of the papers to members of Congress and a few academics. Finally, in March 1971, he gave *New York Times* reporter Neil Sheehan nearly seven thousand pages from the report, withholding only the four "diplomatic" volumes, which he thought should be kept confidential.

Sheehan headed a team of reporters from the *New York Times* that read and verified what was in the papers. There was considerable debate at the *Times* about the ethics of publishing the papers.

On June 13, 1971, after three months of work, the *New York Times* started publishing stories about the Pentagon Papers. On June 14, President Richard Nixon's attorney general asked the paper to stop publishing the information, but it politely declined to do so. On June 15, the third installment of the series was published, and the Justice Department obtained a restraining order against the *Times* to prevent it from publishing any additional stories. It was, as journalist Sanford Ungar put it, "the first time in the nation's history that a newspaper was restrained in advance by a court from publishing a specific article."[93] Ellsberg started looking for another news organization to cover the story. All three of the major broadcast networks turned him down, but the *Washington Post* was eager to obtain a copy of the papers. Lawyers for the *Post* cautioned the paper not to run the stories because the *Times* had already received a court order not to publish. But to *Washington Post* managing editor Ben Bradlee, not publishing was unthinkable—a violation of what journalism was all about: "Not publishing the information when we had it would be like not saving a drowning man, or not telling the truth."[94] So on Friday, June 18, the *Post* published its first Pentagon Papers story, and on June 19, the government obtained a restraining order against the *Post*.

▼ Daniel Ellsberg (left) was cleared of espionage charges for leaking copies of a top-secret Pentagon report to the press after it was revealed that the Nixon administration had authorized a break-in of Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office.



ASSOCIATED PRESS/AP Images

At this point, the documents and stories were spreading across the country. Although approximately twenty newspapers published articles based on the Pentagon Papers, only four were taken to court: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.[95] The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on the restraining orders on Saturday, June 26, and voted 6–3 to allow the newspapers to resume publishing their stories. Justice Potter Stewart raised the central issue in the case: Did the publication of the Pentagon Papers pose "such a grave and immediate danger as to justify prior restraint?" Stewart said that it did not: "The only effective restraint upon executive policy and power . . . may lie in an informed and enlightened citizenry—in an informed and critical public opinion that alone can here protect the values of democratic government."[96] Justice William O. Douglas wrote that one of the primary goals of the First Amendment is to stop the government from covering up embarrassing information. In fact, the reason the First Amendment was ratified in the first place was to put a stop to random charges of seditious libel against people who were exposing embarrassing information about the government. The court pointed out that the government had been engaging in activism, not analysis, when it sought to control the release of the Pentagon Papers.

Now, more than forty-five years later, the lessons of *New York Times Co. v. United States* [97] (informally known as the Pentagon Papers case) are still relevant. While the Pentagon Papers were classified as "top secret," the secrets they contained were embarrassing political secrets, not dangerous military secrets.[98] In 1989, Erwin Griswold, who had argued the

government's case before the Supreme Court, said that he had "never seen any trace of a threat to the national security" from publication of the papers.[99] But what about Daniel Ellsberg, the man who leaked copies of the Pentagon Papers to the press? The legality of Ellsberg's releasing the documents was never really resolved. Ellsberg was indicted on charges of conspiracy, misappropriation of government property, and violating the Espionage Act. But the court eventually declared a mistrial and dismissed the charges against him after it was revealed that the Nixon administration had Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office burglarized and made illegal recordings of the sessions there. In recent years, Ellsberg has spoken out against the Persian Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq.[100]

The Progressive Case.

In the Pentagon Papers case, the newspapers were desperately trying to publish their articles. But eight years later, author Howard Morland and the *Progressive* magazine wanted to have an article censored. Morland was an Air Force pilot turned antinuclear activist who maintained that the government was concealing details about how hydrogen bombs operate —not for security reasons but to stifle public opposition to the weapon. Morland used unclassified documents and interviews with scientists to write an article explaining how these weapons of mass destruction worked. Morland and the *Progressive* knew that censorship would transform the article from an obscure piece in a radical magazine into a cause célèbre that would receive nationwide publicity.

They got their wish. A former professor of Morland's submitted an early draft of the article to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), which manages nuclear material in the United States. In addition, the magazine's editor sent the article and drawings to the DOE to have them checked for accuracy. On March 1, 1979, a district court judge in Wisconsin issued a temporary restraining order against the *Progressive* because the article presented a "clear and present danger" to the United States.

It initially appeared that the government might have a good case against Morland and the *Progressive*. The *Near* case (discussed earlier in this chapter) had established that the government could censor a publication that published "the sailing dates of transports or the number and location of troops." Although the types of information involved in national security had changed since *Near*, the same argument might be made—that the article would compromise national security by giving away military secrets. (It should be noted that although the article explained how a hydrogen bomb worked, it did not provide instructions for building one.)

Central to the *Progressive*'s defense was the argument that there were no secrets in the article because all the material it contained was available from nonclassified sources. The government argued that Morland's organization of the material into an article made it a security problem.[101] While the *Progressive* case was under appeal, a number of people started working on similar articles. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reporter Joe Manning re-

created Morland's research and published a two-part story that covered the three "secrets" from Morland's article in fairly simple terms. Then nuclear hobbyist Charles Hansen wrote an eighteen-page letter to the editor of the *Madison Press Connection* that outlined much the same information as Morland's article. On September 17, 1979, the day after the Hansen letter appeared, the government dropped its case, declaring that its attempt to suppress the information was "meaningless, superfluous, unnecessary, inconsequent."[102] The *Progressive* finally ran Morland's article in November 1979 under the headline "The H-Bomb Secret: How We Got It, Why We're Telling It," but it was a somewhat hollow victory for the magazine.[103] Its editors had gotten the attention they sought, but unfortunately for them, everyone saw the case as a freedom-of-the-press issue—not the important debate over nuclear weapons they were hoping for.

The Pentagon Papers and *Progressive* cases have two important implications. The first is that much information that the government would like to believe is secret is actually public knowledge. The second is that in a free and open society it is very difficult to keep information secret that determined people want to make public. And with the addition of the internet to the range of available media, virtually anyone is able to publish any information widely and easily. Although it is still possible to punish individuals and media corporations after the fact for publishing or broadcasting inappropriate material, prior restraint is becoming virtually impossible in the United States and the Western democracies.

Free Speech and Students

Do the rights that protect adult journalists also protect student reporters working on high school newspapers? More than twenty-five years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court decided the answer is no. In 1988, a group of high school students in Hazelwood, Missouri, sued the school system because their principal had barred articles about pregnancy and divorce from the student newspaper. The Supreme Court in *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* [104] ruled that a principal could censor a student newspaper when it was produced as part of a class. It wrote:

> The First Amendment rights of students in the public schools are not automatically co-extensive with the rights of adults in other settings . . . A school need not tolerate student speech that is inconsistent with its "basic educational mission," even though the government could not censor similar speech outside the school.[105]

The Court ruled that the student newspaper is a classroom exercise rather than a vehicle for free speech, and hence administrators may censor any content that is "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns."[106]

One way students have reacted against this censorship is by starting web-based newspapers that are not sponsored by the school. In addition, at least eleven states have passed laws that restore to high school students the rights they had prior to the *Hazelwood* decision. These laws limit the circumstances under which student newspapers can be censored, generally allowing articles to be banned only if they are "libelous, obscene, or will create a substantial disruption of school activities."[107] Interestingly enough, in both 2016 and 2017, the Walter Cronkite New Voices Act that restored the rights to student journalists they had lost in the *Hazelwood* case has been passed by the Missouri House. According to the new law, student journalists are responsible for the content of their newspapers "unless such material is libelous, an invasion of privacy, a violation of the law or incites students to create a clear and present danger." The bill has yet to make it through the state senate, however.[108]

There have also been several cases that dealt with schools trying to limit the free speech of students in other venues. Some schools have attempted to limit what students can post to either blogs or social networking sites such as Facebook and Myspace. Three middle school students in the Chicago area were suspended after they posted "obscene and threatening" comments about a teacher in their blog. Schools in the Washington, D.C., area have banned students from using their school-provided email accounts to register with Facebook.[109] And a student in Indiana was expelled from high school for a grammar joke laced with the "*F* word" that he tweeted late at night from what he claims was his own

computer.[110] Student Joseph Frederick was suspended from a Juneau, Alaska, high school in 2002 by the principal, Deborah Morse, for holding up a giant sign saying "BONG HiTS 4 JESUS" across the street from his high school as the Olympic torch passed through his town.[111] The school district in the case claims that the student was promoting drug use. The student responded, "I wasn't trying to say anything about drugs. I was just trying to say something. I wanted to use my right to free speech, and I did it."[112] The case, known as *Morse v. Frederick*, was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2007. The Court ruled on June 25, 2007, that principals could punish speech that could "reasonably be viewed" as promoting the use of illegal drugs.[113]

▼ Student Joseph Frederick was suspended from his high school in 2002 for displaying a sign reading "BONG HiTS 4 JESUS." The U.S. Supreme Court supported his suspension in a 5–4 ruling.



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Interestingly enough, the student received support from the ACLU, gay rights advocates, and the Christian Legal Society (CLS). (The CLS and gay rights groups were concerned that other school districts might use the case as a way of limiting speech about religious or gay rights issues.)

Many students may not be aware that their rights are being limited or what their rights entail. A survey of more than one hundred thousand high-school-aged students found that three-fourths of them believed incorrectly that flag burning was a crime. The survey also found that 36 percent of students said newspapers should get government permission

before publishing stories and that 32 percent said the press has "too much freedom to do what it wants."[114]

Journalists Going to Jail

Many states have shield laws that protect journalists from having to testify in court (and divulge sources) under certain circumstances, but there is currently no federal shield law in place. Many journalists are lobbying strongly for one.

The U.S. Senate has been considering bills creating a federal shield law for several years. The 2014 version of the bill easily passed out of the Judiciary Committee, but was never put up for a vote of the full Senate.[115] Some journalists find shield laws of concern because they seem to define who is a journalist—and is thus protected—while excluding others who are not considered journalists. First Amendment attorney David Bodney says, "Any attempt to legislate the scope of our First Amendment rights is unsettling business."[116] Despite these concerns, Bodney does support the proposed federal law.

Since the 1960s, a number of journalists have been either fined or sent to jail for refusing to testify in federal courts. These have included journalists who witnessed drug crimes or the actions of the Black Panther Party and some who interviewed murder suspects.

In 2005, journalists Matt Cooper and Judith Miller faced fines and jail time for refusing to testify to a federal grand jury about who had leaked information to them about the identity of a covert CIA officer. Both were eventually granted permission to testify by the source they sought to protect, vice presidential adviser I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby Jr. *Time* magazine's Cooper testified without serving jail time after his employer ordered him to do so. *New York Times* reporter Miller went to jail for eighty-five days for refusing to testify in the same case. Miller finally accepted the release by Libby from her promise of confidentiality and testified.[117]

Questioning the Media

Do students lose their First Amendment rights when they enter the schoolhouse door? Why or why not? Should school administrators be able to freely censor student publications?

Obscenity

The *Near* case, in addition to allowing prior restraint of sensitive military information, established that obscene material is not protected by the First Amendment. The term obscenity describes sexually explicit material that is legally prohibited from being published. This raises the question of what kinds of material can be considered obscene. Finding the answer has proved difficult, both for the courts and for society.[123]

Roth v. United States.

The Supreme Court made its first contemporary attempt to answer the question of what constitutes obscenity in 1957 in *Roth v. United States*.[124] Samuel Roth, who ran a business selling sexually explicit books, photos, and magazines, had been convicted of mailing obscene material through the U.S. Postal Service. He appealed his case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which eventually upheld his conviction. But more important, the Court used the case to start establishing standards for what was and was not protected by the First Amendment. The *Roth* case reaffirmed that the courts could regulate obscenity and that obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment. But the justices also cautioned that "sex and obscenity are not synonymous."[125]

With *Roth*, the court established a three-part test to help determine whether something is obscene: "Whether to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interests."[126] The three parts of this test can be analyzed as follows:

Test Your Media Literacy

When Is Arresting Reporters Considered Acceptable?

On the evening of Wednesday, August 13, 2014, *Washington Post* reporter Wesley Lowery was sitting in a McDonald's restaurant in Ferguson, Missouri, working on a story about the protests and violence in Ferguson over the death of Michael Brown. Brown was an unarmed black man who was shot and killed by Ferguson police. Brown's death set off nights of protests, looting, and killing in the St. Louis suburb. The McDonald's was a popular place with journalists that night, with the availability of food, tables to work on, and Wi-Fi to file stories with.

A story from the *Washington Post* reported that after initially telling reporters they were fine staying in the restaurant, police returned and told reporters they had to leave. Lowery started packing up his belongings, but while he did so, he also started recording a video with his phone. As he was preparing to leave, Lowery said he was shoved up against a soda machine, cuffed, and arrested. Lowery told the *Post*:

> This is probably the single point at which I've been more afraid than at any point. More afraid than the tear gas and rubber bullets, more afraid during the riot police. I know of too many instances where someone who was not resisting arrest was assaulted or killed.[118]

Huffington Post reporter Ryan Reilly was also arrested. Within half an hour of being taken to a holding cell, all the arrested members of the media were released without charges being filed.

But nearly a year later, both Reilly and Lowery were charged with trespassing and interfering with a police officer.[119] Close to forty news organizations signed a letter from the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press that condemned the charges against the reporters. It said, "The fact that these journalists were kept from doing their jobs was troublesome enough. But the fact that your office—after having time to reflect on police actions for a full year—has chosen to pursue criminal prosecution now is astonishing."[120] Not all news organizations were sympathetic toward Reilly and Lowery. John Nolte, writing for the strongly conservative website Breitbart.com, said, "Left-wing *Washington Post* activist Wesley Lowery (who identifies as a journalist) has been charged officially in St. Louis County of trespassing and interfering with a police officer."[121]

Nearly two years after they were arrested, charges against the reporters were dropped.[122]

WHO are the sources?

Who are Wesley Lowery and Ryan Reilly? Where do they work? Would you consider either of them to be mainstream newspapers?

WHAT did they do?

How did Lowery report his stories? What was he doing at the time he was arrested?

WHY were the reporters in trouble with the police?

If a reporter is ordered to leave the scene of a story by police, is it wrong for him or her to stay to report the story? Why did the police want the reporters to leave?

HOW do you and your friends feel about the presence of reporters at the scene of protests and violence?

Do reporters need to be at the scene of protests and violence? Should reporters be allowed to stay and report? Why or why not? Were the police justified in arresting the reporters? Why do you think the police

eventually dropped all charges against the reporters?

1. The standard for obscenity is set by individual "community standards" using the view of an "average person." This means that neither the most liberal nor the most conservative view should be used, nor should there be a national standard.
2. The work must be "taken as a whole." It's not enough for there to be a single sexually explicit section; the work as a whole must be explicit to be obscene.
3. The work must appeal to "prurient interests." This is the most difficult point. Prurient interest means, according to the Court, an "exacerbated, morbid or perverted" interest in nudity, sex, or excretory functions.[127]

Miller v. California.

The standards established in the *Roth* case were refined with the Supreme Court's ruling in *Miller v. California*. Like Roth, Miller had been convicted of sending obscene material through the mail. The *Miller* case upheld the basic standard from *Roth* but had further impact in two key areas. The first is that states have used this ruling to ban child pornography, and many states have added laws that ban other types of content.

The second key aspect of *Miller* is it held that material that has "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value" cannot be banned. This protects, for example, information about sexual health and birth control. It also protects erotic literature, such as D. H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Miller also reaffirmed that local communities could set their own standards. There is not an expectation, the Court said, that "the people of Maine or Mississippi accept public depiction of conduct found tolerable in Las Vegas or New York City."[128]

Obscenity in the Information Age.

The *Roth* and *Miller* standards both assume that obscene material is being sold at a particular location in a particular community. Neither case anticipated the problems raised by the growth of the internet and satellite television. What can the courts do about sexually explicit material that is located on a web server in New York City but is viewed by a person in Morgantown, West Virginia? Attorney Rieko Mashima's piece in *Computer Lawyer* explains the problem: "On the Internet, which is available to a nationwide audience, a sender of information can neither control where it will be downloaded or through which places it will travel, nor tailor contents for different communities."[129]

Pay-per-view cable and satellite television provide a similar problem. In 1999, Larry W. Peterman, owner of a video store in Provo, Utah, was charged with renting obscene films and appeared to be headed to jail. Then his lawyer came up with the idea of recording all the erotic movies that could be seen on pay-per-view at the Provo Marriott Hotel across the street from the courtroom. A little more research found that far more people in Provo were

buying adult movies from cable and satellite providers and in hotels than from Peterman's video store. The jury promptly acquitted Peterman on all charges.[130] The courts have yet to rule definitively on how to handle local control of pornography delivered by satellite or internet, although Congress made an attempt to do so with the Telecommunications Act of 1996, discussed later in this chapter. And as of 2004, the FCC started cracking down on what it called "indecent" communication on broadcast television, as discussed in Chapter 9.

Regulation of the Media Industry

The print media have been largely unregulated throughout the history of the United States beyond copyright and fair use provisions. But broadcast media have been necessarily controlled from the beginning, for two reasons: Radio and television stations have to meet certain technical standards to keep from interfering with each other's broadcasts, and the government has an interest in making sure that the limited number of broadcast frequencies available are used in the public interest. In this section, we look at how these controls of the media industry have been applied.

Copyright and Fair Use

Creators of books, newspapers, magazines, music, and other media products have been protected from having their works appropriated by others since the first U.S. copyright law was passed in 1790. In the law's original form, works were protected for fourteen years, and copyright could be renewed for an additional fourteen years. This protection was extended only to U.S. authors and artists, however. It wasn't until the 1890s that copyright was extended to works by authors and artists from other countries. Under the leadership of Barbara Ringer in the 1960s and 1970s, the length of copyright was increased from the original twenty-eight years to fifty years after the creator's death for an individual copyright. In 1998, the Copyright Term Extension Act extended individual copyright to seventy years after the creator's death, and extended corporate copyright to ninety-five years. Why ninety-five years for the corporate copyright? If not for that extension, Mickey Mouse would have entered the public domain in 2003.[131] The 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act expanded the copyright on materials that are recorded digitally, such as electronic books, CDs, and DVDs. It has long been illegal to distribute duplicate copies of electronic material without permission, but the act also makes it a crime to produce software or hardware designed to break the copy protection on movies, music, or other software. The act leaves users in an odd position: It is legal to make a backup copy of a DVD movie for personal use, but it is illegal to use a computer program that will make a copy of the protected movie.[132] In 2002, a group led by Stanford University law professor Lawrence Lessig created an alternative set of copyright licenses known as Creative Commons that allow authors and artists to reserve a limited set of rights for a creative work without using all the restrictions of a conventional copyright. For example, a photographer can license his or her photo so that anyone can use the image without permission as long as he or she attributes the photo to the original creator. The main advantage of Creative Commons is that it allows creators a middle ground between full copyright and placing their work in the public domain.[133]

▼ Stanford University law professor Lawrence Lessig led the group that created the alternative copyright licenses known as Creative Commons.



Riccardo S. Savi/Getty Images

As the present edition of this book was close to completion, the courts were busy making rulings on several musical copyright issues, including Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven." For a multimedia look at the latest on this subject, visit my blog at www.ralphehanson.com/?s=copyright.

The Rise and Fall of Broadcast Regulation

Broadcast regulation began with the Radio Act of 1912, passed immediately after the sinking of the *Titanic*. But this regulation dealt only with point-to-point communication, such as ship-to-shore radio. Meanwhile, commercial broadcasting got its start in 1920 when radio station KDKA went on the air in Pittsburgh. By 1925, broadcasters were calling for regulation by the government to bring stability to the new industry.

The Radio Act of 1927 created the Federal Radio Commission. This act was also the first to charge broadcast stations with acting in the "public interest, convenience, and necessity." With the Communications Act of 1934, the Radio Commission evolved into the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The 1934 act brought all electronic communication, wired and wireless, under the control of the FCC, but the basic tenets of the 1927 act remained in place[134]:

- The airwaves are licensed to broadcasters, but the broadcasters do not own them.
- The FCC has the power to regulate broadcasters to ensure that they act in the public interest.
- The FCC can tell broadcasters what frequencies and power to use and where their transmitters can be located.

Mandating Fairness on the Air

In addition to attempting to regulate the murky area of indecency, the FCC has regulated how broadcasters handle political campaigns and controversial issues.

The Equal Time Provision.

The FCC's equal time provision requires broadcast stations to make equivalent amounts of broadcast time available to all candidates running for public office. The rule does not require stations to provide time to candidates; it requires them only to ensure that all candidates have equal access. So if a station sells time to one candidate, it must be willing to sell an equal amount of similarly valuable time to all candidates who can afford it. The rule also states that if a station gives free non-news time to one candidate, it must provide similar amounts of free time to all candidates. The purpose of the rule is to prevent stations from favoring one candidate over another while making use of a valuable public resource.[135]

The equal time provision has been subject to controversy in cases where candidates have sought to run ads that are either offensive or libelous. Because stations cannot edit or censor anything in political advertisements, the FCC has ruled that broadcasters are not responsible for libelous statements made in political ads. There has also been conflict over explicit antiabortion ads. In 1992 and 1994, some stations channeled the graphic messages and images contained in such ads to a "safe harbor" time between midnight and 6 a.m., when children were unlikely to see them. Indiana congressional candidate Michael Bailey objected to the channeling, saying that the explicit ads were an essential part of his campaign; he persuaded stations to run the ads during prime time, although the stations ran disclaimers before many of them. The FCC has since said that ads dealing with abortion could be channeled into the "safe harbor" time periods.[136] There are limits to what candidates can do. When *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt declared that he would run for president and would broadcast pornographic campaign commercials under the equal time provision, the FCC said that the "no censorship" clause would not apply to "obscene or indecent political announcements."

The Fairness Doctrine.

More controversial than the equal time provision was the fairness doctrine. Under this 1949 rule, stations were required to cover controversial issues of public interest and to present contrasting views on those issues. The fairness doctrine required not that stations give the same amount of time to all sides of an issue, but rather that they "afford reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance."[137]

The major objection to the fairness doctrine was that stations might avoid covering

controversial issues because they did not want to present extreme viewpoints or cover every aspect of an issue. For example, stations would argue that they did not want to cover issues dealing with racism for fear of having to give the Ku Klux Klan an opportunity to participate. Critics argued that the public suffered because they received no coverage of issues rather than every possible variation.

A 1985 study by the FCC found that the fairness doctrine tended to inhibit free speech and was no longer needed because of new media outlets such as cable television. Moreover, the FCC had had to deal with thousands of complaints filed under the rule each year. Following publication of the 1985 study, the FCC essentially stopped enforcing the fairness doctrine, and it was repealed in 1987.[138] Despite this, radio talk show hosts such as Rush Limbaugh continued to argue that the federal government was considering bringing back the fairness doctrine in order to silence conservative commentators.[139] In a strange footnote, the FCC announced in the summer of 2011 that it was finally taking the language that authorized the fairness doctrine out of its regulation book. Why was it still listed there despite being repealed in 1987? Technically, it was still the rule even though the FCC had voted against its enforcement nearly twenty-five years earlier.[140]

The Telecommunications Act of 1996

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 has been called the biggest reform of broadcast regulation since the formation of the FCC in 1934.

Revising Broadcast Regulation.

The section of the Telecommunications Act that attracted the most attention was the one calling for the creation of the V-chip, which allows parents to electronically block material with a particular content rating. But the greatest impact the act has had is that it relaxed most of the rules that restricted how many broadcast stations a particular company can own. This led to the rapid turnover of many broadcast properties and an increasing concentration of ownership, completing a trend that began in the 1970s and 1980s.[141] (For more about concentration of media ownership, see Chapter 3.)

Media Transformations

Net Neutrality

If you ever want to spark an argument about communication technology, bring up the topic of net neutrality. The term was originated by Columbia University law professor (and popular author) Tim Wu in a 2003 paper about online discrimination, and he defines a neutral network as an "Internet that does not favor one application (say, the world wide web), over others (say, email)."[145]

When the idea first came up, some internet providers, including Comcast and AT&T, were doing a variety of things to control their customers' use of the internet including banning them from using virtual private networks (VPNs), banning them from using Wi-Fi routers, and selectively slowing service to the peer-to-peer file-sharing network BitTorrent. (BitTorrent was heavily used for sharing pirated video and audio, but it also had legal uses.) Wu argued that existing broadband providers tended to limit new technologies that would improve the internet in the long run. So he called for creating a level playing field for content providers in world where there are a limited number of internet service providers.[146]

In 2015, the Obama-era FCC put in place comprehensive net neutrality rules that were opposed by all of the major telecommunication companies. The rules were upheld by a lower court and were in the process of being appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court when the Trump-era FCC started rescinding the Obama-era rules. In December 2017, the FCC threw out all of the Obama-era regulations. The new regulations let the carriers manage their networks as they please, but it does require them to disclose what their policies and procedures are.[147]

This has the potential to allow internet providers to charge companies such as Netflix, Hulu, or Facebook a premium to have better/faster service than competitors. Given that 61 percent of Americans (and 87 percent of rural Americans) have no more than one high-speed internet provider, most people can't choose to change providers if they don't like their current one.[148] The Internet Association, which represents companies like Google and Facebook, argues that net neutrality is vital or internet providers will give preferential treatment either to those who will pay or to companies they own.[149] As an example, Comcast is the nation's leading internet provider and also owns content company NBCUniversal.

It is important to note that as of this writing, this has not happened. Major internet providers such as Verizon and Comcast say that they have no intention of either throttling certain companies on their service or charging companies extra for higher-speed service. Others, such as AT&T, which as of this writing is attempting to buy Time Warner, have said they will not throttle back speeds, but have said nothing about providing favored service to some companies.[150] Trump-era FCC Chair Ajit Pai told the *Washington Post* that prior to the adoption of the 2015 net neutrality rules, the private sector invested $1.5 trillion in high-speed data lines. "Internet speeds accelerated from kilobits to gigabits per second," he said. "The Internet wasn't broken in 2015. We were not living in a digital dystopia."[151] (It should be noted that this was the era that consumer broadband service first came into existence.)

Wired magazine writes that under the new regulations, blocking access to a competitor would likely be illegal, but allowing companies to pay for "fast lane" access would likely be legal.[152] As of May 2018, there was legislation pending in Congress to return to the 2015 regulations. Whether it can pass and whether President Trump would veto the legislation is an open question. There are also a number of states and private groups suing to bring back the old regulations. Individual states are considering passing their own net neutrality laws as well.[153]

WHAT is net neutrality?

WHY do proponents of it argue it is necessary?

WHY do opponents of it argue that it is not needed?

WHAT is the current status of net neutrality?

HOW might the repeal of net neutrality affect you personally?



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Questioning the Media

Given that we can access huge amounts of video and audio online, is there any good reason for the government to continue regulating broadcast content? Why or why not?

Regulation of the Internet.

In addition to calling for the V-chip, the Communications Decency Act provision of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 attempted to regulate the internet in a similar way to the regulation of broadcasting.

Figuring out what kind of medium the internet is from a legal standpoint has been a problem for both Congress and the courts. On the one hand, the internet looks something like television because it comes in over a wire and is displayed on a screen, and many websites are maintained by the same companies that operate television networks. On the other hand, the internet can be seen as more like a newspaper or magazine. There's a great deal of print on the internet, and newspapers have a strong presence there. Also, the number of channels on the internet is not limited, as is the case with broadcast or even cable television. But, unlike both television and print, the internet has strong elements of interpersonal communication, resembling the telephone network in this respect. There is no central authority controlling what can and cannot be said on the internet.

Some observers argue that perhaps regulation of the internet should model regulation of the telephone system. Others say the internet might qualify as an open public forum, without any need for regulation at all.[142] In reality, the internet has elements of all these media—radio, broadcast and cable television, telephone, newspapers, and magazines. The companies that provide high-speed internet service to the home are regulated to a degree, as are phone and cable television companies. First Amendment protection for media sites on the web is similar to that given to print media. Individuals have the same levels of responsibility for what they say through the internet as they do anywhere else. In general, internet bulletin boards and chat rooms are treated in much the same way as telephone communication. The people posting to the bulletin boards, not the company providing internet access, are responsible for what they say, just as a phone company is not responsible for a libelous or defamatory phone call or fax sent over its lines.

The many levels of communication on the internet make it extremely difficult to control. The Communications Decency Act attempted to ban internet messages that are "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, or indecent." The law was opposed by the American Library Association, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (an electronic communication rights group), and the ACLU, among others. Although the law banned only the transmission of indecent messages to minors, it seemed impossible to keep minors out of discussions

involving adults.

▼ Protester Mike Adkins joins proponents of an open and unregulated internet in a protest in February 2018 in Washington, D.C., part of a "net neutrality day of action."



Win McNamee/Getty Images

In 1997, the Supreme Court struck down the Communications Decency Act as an unconstitutional limit on the free speech of adults. It ruled that the possibility of a minor being present in a chat room did not remove the adults' First Amendment rights. Justice John Paul Stevens wrote in the majority opinion, "The interest in encouraging freedom of expression in a democratic society outweighs any theoretical but unproven benefit of censorship."[143] The only certainty is that Congress will continue to consider how to regulate communication on the internet.

Since 1997, attempts have been made to pass new legislation that would control "indecent" content on the web without infringing on the free speech of adults.[144] You can read more about regulation of the internet in Chapter 10.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says that

> 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.

This statement is at the core of all media law in the United States. The purpose of the amendment is to protect the free and open discussion necessary to a democratic society. Although the First Amendment guarantees the right of free speech, Congress has passed several laws that limit this freedom. These include the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798; the Espionage Act of 1917; the Smith Act of 1940; the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001; and laws controlling libel, invasion of privacy, publication of military secrets, and obscenity.

The rights of individuals are protected from actions of the media through libel law, invasion of privacy law, and guarantees of a fair trial. Libel is a statement that unjustifiably exposes someone to ridicule or contempt. For a statement to be libelous, it must include defamation, identification, and publication. In general, the media are allowed to publish defamatory material that is true, privileged, or a statement of opinion. *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* established that public officials seeking to win a libel suit must show that the media acted with actual malice in publishing a false defamatory statement.

There are four basic forms of invasion of privacy: intrusion, embarrassment, false light, and misappropriation. In some cases, journalists can defend themselves against charges of invasion of privacy by showing that the story in question was newsworthy. There is often a conflict between an individual's right to a fair trial and the press's right to cover that trial. The Supreme Court has generally ruled that the judge, not the press, is responsible for guaranteeing the defendant a fair trial. The Court has also ruled that protection of the right to a fair trial should require as few limits on the freedom of the press as possible. This can be done by imposing gag orders, sequestering the jury, postponing or changing the venue of a trial, or ordering a new trial.

Since 1977, courts in the United States have been experimenting with allowing cameras in the courtroom. Proponents of such a policy argue that televising trials allows the public to better understand how the justice system works. Opponents argue that cameras are intrusive and turn trials into media circuses.

Although the press is subject to the same laws as society as a whole, it is protected from censorship in most cases. The government is allowed to prevent publication of certain information only if the material is obscene or gives away military secrets during time of war. There have been only three major cases involving prior restraint: *Near v. Minnesota*, the Pentagon Papers case, and the *Progressive* H-bomb story. High school newspapers published as a classroom activity are not afforded the same level of protection, however. The courts have ruled that obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment, and they have established that the standard for obscenity will be set using state law and local community standards.

The broadcast media traditionally have been regulated much more heavily than the print media because they make use of the public airwaves. They are regulated both for technical reasons and to ensure that they serve the public interest. Major legislation controlling the broadcast media was passed in 1927, 1934, and 1996. Standards for regulating the internet are still evolving, but they appear to be more similar to print regulations than to broadcast ones.

Key Terms ▶▶

Alien and Sedition Acts 345
libel 347
privilege 348
actual malice 349
intrusion 350
embarrassment 351
false light 351
misappropriation 352
prior restraint 360
shield laws 365
obscenity 365
equal time provision 368
fairness doctrine 369
Net neutrality 370

Review Questions ▶▶

1. What rights to free speech do high school students have? Does it vary from state to state? Why?
2. How has the USA PATRIOT Act changed the freedoms for Americans since 9/11? How did the USA FREEDOM Act change the PATRIOT Act?
3. Why did the U.S. Supreme Court rule that public officials needed to meet a higher standard to win a libel suit than ordinary people do?
4. According to the U.S. Supreme Court, why do student publications have fewer First Amendment rights than do publications created by adults? What have states done in response to this?
5. What is net neutrality? Why should you care about it? What is the current status of net neutrality in the United States?

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Chapter 14 Media Ethics Truthfulness, Fairness, and Standards of Decency



Win McNamee/Getty Images News/Getty Images

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Define five major ethical principles affecting journalism
2. Explain the Bok model for ethical decision making
3. Explain the kinds of difficulties journalists and media writers have encountered in attempting to be truthful
4. Discuss the ethical issues related to sensationalism in the news
5. Explain how journalists can get into trouble trying to report on rapidly breaking stories
6. Explain how and why advertisers attempt to control the media in which they place their ads
7. Discuss the ethical conflict in public relations between serving the client and serving the public

Presidents and other politicians using bad language is nothing new.

Lyndon Johnson was famous for his coarse language, with one of his most famous examples being, "I do know the difference between chicken sh-- and chicken salad." He knew, however, that his profanity was never going to find its way into print.

Vice President Joe Biden was known to let his enthusiasm get the best of him at times. At the signing ceremony for the Affordable Care Act, Biden was heard telling President Obama, "This is a big f---ing deal." President Barack Obama got some static for calling his opponent Mitt Romney a "bullsh---er" in *Rolling Stone* magazine. Neither made much of a splash.

It was really President Richard Nixon who forced the press into dealing with how to report profanity. Nixon recorded every conversation in his office, and when the Watergate hearings made those tapes public, many people were shocked to hear the torrent of bad language pouring out of his mouth. When transcripts of the tapes were published, they did not contain the troubling words; instead, they were always replaced with the now iconic phrase "expletive deleted."[1]

In 2004, Vice President Richard Cheney got into an argument on the senate floor with Sen. Patrick Leahy. Their heated discussion ended with Cheney telling Leahy to "f--- yourself." What was unusual was that the *Washington Post* reported the language without bleeping it out, apparently because he had used it to attack a senator on the Senate floor.[2]

This was the first time the *Washington Post* had used the actual *F* word since publishing the Kenneth Starr report in 1998. Before that, a search of the archives only showed two occasions when the paper had used that word.[3] NPR chose not to use the word, instead saying that the vice president used a "vulgar epithet."

President George W. Bush was caught on tape at a dinner in Russia talking to British

Prime Minister Tony Blair saying, "See, the irony is that what they need to do is get Syria to get Hezbollah to stop doing this s---, and it's over." There was very little fuss over this quote in 2006 as it was not said in a particularly public setting, and it was seen a fairly honest statement of the situation he was discussing in Lebanon. In this case, the *Washington Post* did not deem it necessary to quote the actual word.[4]

But in January 2018, President Donald Trump generated a lot of news after making some highly offensive and obscene remarks about the country of Haiti, the continent of Africa, and presumably several countries in Central America. The report in the *Washington Post* read this way:

> Trump derides protections for immigrants from "shithole" countries
>
> *President Trump grew frustrated with lawmakers Thursday in the Oval Office when they discussed protecting immigrants from Haiti, El Salvador and African countries as part of a bipartisan immigration deal, according to several people briefed on the meeting.*
>
> *"Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?" Trump said, according to these people, referring to countries mentioned by the lawmakers.*
>
> *Trump then suggested that the United States should instead bring more people from countries such as Norway, whose prime minister he met with Wednesday. The president, according to a White House official, also suggested he would be open to more immigrants from Asian countries because he felt that they help the United States economically.*
>
> *In addition, the president singled out Haiti, telling lawmakers that immigrants from that country must be left out of any deal, these people said.*
>
> *"Why do we need more Haitians?" Trump said, according to people familiar with the meeting. "Take them out."*[5]

There has been considerable debate over what is appropriate and inappropriate for the press to do when the president or a member of his cabinet uses offensive language, especially to express an offensive idea or point of view. Marty Baron, executive editor of the *Washington Post*, told the *Washingtonian*:

> *When the president says it, we'll use it verbatim. . . . That's our policy. We discussed it quickly, but there was no debate.*

CNN used the full vulgarity on its chyron Thursday, in a way the network has not generally done. On the day the news was breaking, Fox News did not use the vulgarity itself

on its home page, but on the actual story used "s---hole" in the headline. For the record, Fox also reported at the time that it had independently confirmed the president's statements. The *New York Times* declined to use the word in the headline, but did in its story.

NPR initially did not use the word, referring to it as a "vulgarity," but as the story progressed, the public radio network decided to use the word sparingly—approximately once an hour.[6] MSNBC's use of the term varied depending on the host. Some used it repeatedly, while Rachel Maddow used the actual word quite sparingly, as is her usual practice with offensive language on the show.

The vehemently anti-Trump *New York Daily News* had perhaps the most creative approach, using an emoji-based cartoon to get its message across.

Twitter, of course, was exploding with excitement over how the media were reporting this story, but the best tweet, and one of the few that really got at the main ethical issue here, was from Karen Attiah, global opinion editor from the *Washington Post*, who wrote:

I hope every media outlet that is going to produce outraged pieces about Trump's "shithole" comments takes a long and hard look at its coverage of black and brown countries.[7]

In this chapter, we look at and attempt to understand why media practitioners behave the way they do and how their behavior can be judged by the media-consuming public.

Ethical Principles and Decision Making

The words *morality* and *ethics* are often used interchangeably, but they are distinctly different concepts. Media ethics scholars Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins explain that morals refer to a religious or philosophical code of behavior that may or may not be rational. Ethics, by contrast, come from the ancient Greek study of the rational way to decide what is good for individuals or society. A moral decision depends on the values held by a particular individual, but an ethical decision should be explainable to others in a way that they will appreciate, regardless of whether they accept it. In short, ethics consist of the ways in which we make choices between competing moral principles.[8]

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

Questioning the Media

When is it news that important politicians like the president or vice president use vulgar language?

Is it ever appropriate for newspapers or broadcasters to quote that language directly? Why or why not?

Do our news media need to protect children from the language used by politicians?

Can coverage of vulgar language sometimes detract media attention from the more important issues a politician is talking about?

Journalists in the United States have a wealth of competing ethical principles to draw upon beyond the basic Judeo-Christian values that constitute the core of American morality. (This is not to deny that there are many other significant religious traditions in the United States. But a recent survey of journalists showed that they come overwhelmingly from either Christian or Jewish households.[9]) Franklin Foer, writing in the *New Republic*, suggests that there are two approaches to judging journalistic ethics. The first considers the journalist's process of producing the product. If the process has moral failings, such as conflicts of interest, then the product will be flawed. The other approach, which he advocates, suggests that the product itself should be judged. Apart from the process of production, what can be said about the ethical quality of the outcome?[10] In this section, we examine the major ethical principles affecting journalism (all of which fall within Foer's two categories), consider how they might be applied to journalistic decision making, and look at a contemporary model for deciding between competing ethical principles.

Questioning the Media

What is the difference between making an ethical decision and making a moral decision? How can it be problematic to make a moral decision? Can a decision be ethical without being moral?

Aristotle: Virtue and the Golden Mean

The Greek philosopher Aristotle was a student of Plato and the tutor of Alexander the Great. Although he lived more than 2,300 years ago (approximately 350 BC), his writings on ethics, logic, natural science, psychology, politics, and the arts contain insights that are still relevant, especially his comments on ethics and human endeavor. Aristotle argued that the ultimate goal of all human effort is "the good," and the ultimate good is happiness. To Aristotle, achieving happiness involved striking a balance, a "just-right point between excess and defect."[11] Popularizers have labeled this valued midpoint the golden mean.

The classic example of the golden mean is courage, which strikes a balance between the inaction and timidity of cowardice and the recklessness of foolhardiness, both of which are unacceptable behaviors. The example of courage also illustrates how the acceptable ethical middle ground is not a single defined place, but its parameters depend on the abilities and strengths of the individual.[12] To behave ethically, according to Aristotle, individuals must

- Know what they are doing
- Select their action with a moral reason
- Act out of good character

In other words, Aristotle emphasized the character and the intent of the actor and how those determine the way in which he or she acts.

Media ethics scholar David L. Martinson cautions journalists not to take an overly simplistic view of the golden mean and assume that it refers only to compromise. Instead, they must recognize that finding the mean requires virtue. Martinson writes:

> A virtuous journalist is one who communicates truthfully in a manner which will enable the reader or listener to better understand the reality of the community, nation, and world in which he or she lives. In that communication, the journalist will show respect for human dignity and individual circumstances.[13]

To test this principle, consider the photo of Marcus Martin flying through the air after being hit by a car at a white nationalist riot in Charlottesville, Virginia, discussed in the nearby "Test Your Media Literacy" box. A newspaper editor trying to decide whether to run this disturbing photo might want to hit a mean between sensitivity and the need to report what happened. One extreme would be not running the photo at all; the other would be running a graphic image of the victims of the driver of the car that plowed through a crowd of counterprotesters writhing in pain. A possible middle ground would consist of running the photo of the hit taking place. Other forms of balance might be

reducing the size of the photo so that it would have less impact than a large photo and placing it on an inside page rather than on the front of the sports page. The decision to run the photo could also be justified by the argument that the editor was acting out of good character by feeling an obligation to help readers understand what happened during the riot.

Kant: The Categorical Imperative

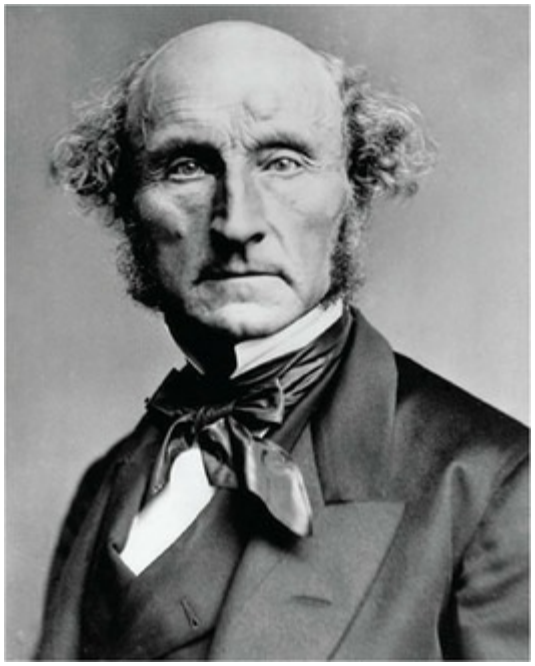
German philosopher Immanuel Kant published his most important writings during the final decades of the eighteenth century. Kant differed from Aristotle in that Kant suggested that morality lies in the act itself and not in the character of the actor or the intent behind the action. He also put forward the Judeo-Christian value of seeing people as ends, never as a means to an end. In short, Kant emphasized that you can't use people to achieve your goals.

Kant's ethics begin with the notion that we have the ability to reason and hence are able to base our actions on moral reasoning. Because of this, people are responsible for their own actions and are obliged to act in a moral way.

The basic summary of Kant's categorical imperative, written in the 1780s, states: "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature."[24] In simpler terms, Kant asks people to consider what would be the result of everyone acting the same way they themselves wish to act. Kant does not worry particularly about the consequences of an action; rather, he looks at the act itself. This does not mean that Kant doesn't consider outcomes important; it means only that he believes unethical behavior cannot be justified by its possibly desirable outcomes.

In the case of the riot photo, the philosopher might ask what moral decision the photographer made. The photographer's decision was to tell the truth about what happened during the riot. Would we be willing to accept the consequences of everyone telling the truth? What problems might arise out of a position of absolute truth?

▼ John Stuart Mill has been called "the most influential English-speaking philosopher of the nineteenth century." He explored the individual's right to have freedom of thought, opinion, and action in society.



London Stereoscopic Company - Hulton Archive

John Stuart Mill: The Principle of Utility

In the movie *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, the emotionless Spock performs a rational yet selfless act. He saves the crew of the starship *U.S.S. Enterprise* by entering a reactor room to prevent an explosion that would have killed everyone on board the ship. But in doing so, he absorbs a lethal dose of radiation. As he dies, he justifies his actions to his friends with the maxim, "The good of the many outweighs the good of the few, or the one." In this moment, Spock sums up the central tenet of the nineteenth-century ethical philosopher John Stuart Mill's principle of utility: the greatest good for the greatest number.

Mill did not create the idea of utility, but he did do a great deal to refine and promote the philosophy known as utilitarianism. Mill wrote that the consequences of actions are important in deciding what is ethical: "An act's rightness is [a] desirable end."[25] Looking back to the Aristotelian notion of happiness as the ultimate public good, utilitarianism holds that which is virtuous is that which provides the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Or, looked at another way, that which causes the least pain is best. The challenge in applying this principle is that the same act can cause both happiness and pain. NBC News faced extensive criticism when it decided to air excerpts from a multimedia disk created by Seung-hui Cho, who shot and killed thirty-two students and faculty at Virginia Tech in April 2007. Family and friends of the victims said that they felt victimized all over again when they saw the video. NBC News president Steve Kapas said the network ran the excerpts from the disk so that the public might better understand what had happened. "This is as close as we'll ever come to being in the mind of a killer," he said.[26] The network accepted the additional suffering it caused a smaller number of people who knew the victims in order to accomplish the greater good of informing the public at large.

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

“It was such a violent collision”



ASSOCIATED PRESS

August 12, 2017, was Ryan Kelly’s last day on the job for the *Daily Progress*, the newspaper for Charlottesville, Virginia. He was getting ready to move on to be the digital and social media coordinator for Ardent Craft Ales. But he picked that Saturday as his last day so he wouldn’t leave the paper shorthanded on the day a big white nationalist protest was scheduled.[14] “The journalist in me wanted to be there,” Kelly told the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) magazine.

The Unite the Right demonstration had come to town in part because Lee Park, home of a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee, had been renamed Emancipation Park. The night before the demonstration, there had been a torch-lit march through town. The day of the demonstration, the protest never got properly started because a riot broke out between the white nationalists and a group of counterprotesters.

The rioters did not like the press. One protester attacked reporters with pepper spray while others splashed liquid on them or threw eggs. One African American reporter was punched by a demonstrator wearing a T-shirt with a photo of Hitler on it.[15]

Kelly was out in the street, but he stepped onto the sidewalk about twenty seconds or so before the car driven by James Alex Fields Jr. came roaring up. The car ran through the counterprotesters, killing one person and injuring nineteen others.[16]

Kelly says he just started shooting: “It was pure reflex. Years of photojournalism experience had prepared me to react instinctively, and it was more muscle memory than intentional composition that led to those photos.”[17] The photo itself is a frozen moment of action. Kelly told NPR,

> You see sunglasses and shoes and cellphones that aren’t connected to people’s hands or feet or heads. You see water spraying. There’s just a lot of violent, violent details coming through in ways that you don’t normally experience in everyday life. . . . It was such a violent collision. He was travelling so fast down the road when he collided with the crowd.

Afterward, Kelly and his editor Wesley Hester reviewed the images he had downloaded to his laptop to decide which ones to transmit. They saw the image of people being thrown into the air and knew that while the photo was disturbing and graphic, it told the news.[18]

The photo had an immediate impact, distributed nationwide by the Associated Press. Then, in April 2018, it was announced that Kelly had won the Pulitzer Prize for spot photography. The citation read, “For a

chilling image that reflected the photographer's reflexes and concentration in capturing the moment of impact of a car attack during a racially charged protest in Charlottesville, Virginia."[19]

Taking a photo that grabbed the nation's attention and made him famous did not make Kelly happy, however. "It almost feels like a bad dream at this point," he told the NPPA.[20]

"This is journalism, I understand that. But being recognized with awards and especially the Pulitzer, they're an incredible honor, but I was constantly reminded that it came at the expense of someone's life and injuries and emotional trauma and PTSD for lots of people."[21]

"I'm just happy I could have done my job in that moment despite the fact that I wish it had never happened to begin with."[22] "I would die a happy man if I never witness anything like I saw on Saturday."[23]

WHAT does this photo say?

What does this photo of the car hitting Marcus Martin say? What news value does it have? Does it tell you anything important about the white nationalists who marched in Charlottesville?

WHY was this photo published?

Why do you think newspapers and websites published this photo? Why would editors decide not to publish the photo?

HOW do you and your classmates interpret this photo?

How does this photo make you feel? Does it change your understanding of the riots in Charlottesville? Are still images any better or worse than video? Does it matter whether the photo or video has explicit gore? Does that make it any less disturbing? You will have the opportunity to think about this photo and revisit these questions as you work your way through the first portion of this chapter.

Mill also held that some forms of pleasure or happiness are morally superior to others. He suggested that actions and decisions that improve the lot of society as a whole may be superior to those that merely provide the most physical or emotional pleasure.[27] Employing utilitarian reasoning, an editor might decide to run the photo of the attack even though it is painful to see for the people who were involved because it would help people around the country understand what happened. As Ryan Kelly put it with respect to his own photo of the Charlottesville attack, "Maybe seeing the horror of what an attack like that looks like, it might shock folks into an understanding that they wouldn't have had if it weren't for that photo."[28]

John Rawls: The Veil of Ignorance

Contemporary philosopher John Rawls builds on the ideas of utilitarianism. His argument is that which is just is also that which is fair:

> First: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others. . . .
>
> Second: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.[29]

To decide what is fair, the journalist must hide behind Rawls's veil of ignorance, a principle of ethics that says that justice emerges when we make decisions without considering the status of the people involved and without considering where we personally fall in the social system. In other words, we shouldn't ask, "How does this affect me?" Behind this veil, everyone is equal. Journalists following this principle would not question whether they or their subjects were powerful or powerless, rich or poor, black or white, male or female.

Reporters deciding how to treat sources should make the same decision whether they like or dislike the person. They should imagine how they would want to be treated if they were the source and would have to live with the outcome of the story. The value of freedom of the press must be considered on an equal level with the protection of individual privacy, as reporters behind the veil of ignorance do not know whether they are a reporter or a source.[30] It is difficult to say what a photo editor would decide to do with the riot photo using the veil of ignorance. Photographer Ryan Kelly acknowledges that the photo brought him national honor and attention, especially when he won the Pulitzer Prize for it. On the other hand, he said he could easily imagine how painful seeing the image showing up again and again could be for the people whom the driver hit. "That picture just went all over the world and it keeps popping up in the news and it would've made sense to me if they were unhappy about it, unhappy about the constant reminders of pain and the fact that Heather [Heyer] died and so many were injured."[31]

Hutchins Commission: Social Responsibility Ethics

In 1947, widespread concerns about the ethical behavior of the press led Henry Luce, the founder of *Time* magazine, to form a commission to study the responsibility of the press in the United States. Chaired by scholar Robert M. Hutchins, the commission concluded that the First Amendment, by itself, might not be enough to protect the free speech rights of the public because a small number of corporations controlled a large number of the available communication outlets. Although the government might not be limiting free speech, corporations might do so. The report reached two major conclusions:

1. The press has a responsibility to give voice to the public and to society.
2. The free press was not living up to that responsibility to the public because of its need to serve its commercial masters.

The social responsibility theory of the press, holding that the press has an ethical obligation to society, arose from the Hutchins report. (This theory is discussed further in Chapter 15.) The Hutchins Commission listed five requirements for a responsible press:

1. The media should provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context that gives them meaning.
2. The media should serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism (that is, the press should present the full range of thought and criticism).
3. The media should project a representative picture of the constituent groups within the society.
4. The media should present and clarify the goals and values of the society.
5. The media should provide full access to the day's news.

SECRET 2 ▸ Today, the range of long-tail media, including blogs and podcasts, allows both professional and citizen journalists to bypass legacy media (traditional big media) and go directly to the public, though it is hard for the long-tail news outlets to have the impact that a newspaper or television station can. Nevertheless, this is one more example of Secret 2—There are no mainstream media.

Using a social responsibility approach, running the photo of the automobile attack can be defended, assuming that it is run with the goal of giving readers a better understanding of what happened during the riots in Charlottesville.

The Bok Model for Ethical Decision Making

Given the many competing ethical principles journalists have to consider, it can be difficult to decide what is right or wrong, as our consideration of the decision about running a disturbing photo illustrates. But contemporary ethicist Sissela Bok provides a fairly straightforward three-step model for analyzing an ethical situation:

1. Consult your conscience—How do you feel about the action? What does your conscience tell you is right?
2. Seek alternatives—Is there another way to achieve the same goal that will not raise ethical issues? Is there an expert to whom you can turn for advice?
3. Hold an imaginary ethical dialogue with everyone involved—Ask, "How will my action affect others?" Discuss the issues involved from the point of view of each of the people whom it will affect. Think about who will be involved: the source, the news consumer, the public at large, a special interest group, and so forth.[32]

In her book *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, Bok suggests consulting experts and holding a public dialogue. It may not be practical for a working reporter or editor to apply her method fully, but the basic approach of consulting one's conscience, considering alternatives, and taking the point of view of all affected parties is reasonable.[33]

Ethics and News

Journalists face a range of ethical dilemmas ranging from the big to the small every day. These can involve deciding how to report information from an authoritative source that the journalist knows to be lying, balancing the rights of various individuals, deciding whether to use a source's offensive language, or deciding which photograph to run. Some of these decisions are routine, but all of them require ethical choices. Of course, journalists and the people with whom they work don't always live up to high ethical standards, so we look here at how news organizations deal with those problems.

Truthfulness

Journalists have always claimed that they feel obliged to report the truth,[34] and reporters or editors who violate this commitment to truth have paid dearly. The *Washington Post*'s credibility suffered a major blow when the paper discovered in 1981 that a Pulitzer Prize–winning story about an eight-year-old heroin addict by reporter Janet Cooke was fabricated. In the spring of 2003, young *New York Times* reporter Jayson Blair created shock waves throughout the news business when it was revealed that he had fabricated or plagiarized at least thirty-six stories for the nation's most prestigious newspaper. The controversy concerns not only the poor behavior of particular journalists, but also the implications of that behavior for the publication and the resulting lack of trust in the institution. At issue, too, is the lack of commitment to the truth on the part of publications and editors that put exciting stories ahead of making sure those stories are true.

In her book on the nature of lying, Bok states that there are at least two factors to weigh when considering a lie. The first is whether the speaker is intending to transmit the truth or attempting to deceive people. The second is whether the statement itself is true or false. Bok argues that the major ethical problem related to truth-telling is intentionally deceiving people to "make them believe what we ourselves do not believe."[35] Media ethics scholar David Martinson argues that telling the truth entails more than just stating facts that are not false. Instead, the press needs to report "the truth about the fact." In the early 1950s, when Sen. Joseph McCarthy—without any evidence—started accusing people of being communists, the press reported his charges without giving any indication that the charges he was making might be false or without conducting independent verification. It was true that McCarthy had made the statements, but the statements themselves were not true. Martinson suggests that the press too often asks whether the story is factually true instead of asking whether the story helps the public understand the truth.[36]

The truthfulness of nonfiction books has also been called into question. The best-known instance of fabrication in recent years has been James Frey's memoir, *A Million Little Pieces*. Published in 2003, *Pieces* was presented as a memoir about crime, violence, drugs, alcohol, and redemption. Despite some questions raised early on about its essential truthfulness, it was a wildly popular best seller, and many readers deeply identified with Frey.[37]

But in January 2006, muckraking investigative website The Smoking Gun (TSG) reported that the book was filled with exaggerations and "a million little lies."[38] TSG investigated Frey after the site had trouble finding a mug shot from one of Frey's numerous arrests portrayed in the book. (TSG has a big section devoted to celebrity mug shots.) What the site's researchers found in their investigation was that Frey either fabricated or grossly embellished the accounts of his involvement in a train accident that killed a girl, the time he spent in jail, and the details of a friend's suicide.[39] In another memoir, a former U.S.

secretary of labor fabricated testimony that he supposedly had given before Congress.[40] And a prominent writer admitted including imagined conversations in a biography of Ted Kennedy. Presidential biographer Edmund Morris went so far as to insert himself as a fictional character in his biography of Ronald Reagan (a fact that he acknowledged in the introduction to the book).

In contrast, when late *New York Times* reporter David Carr wrote his memoir *Night of the Gun* about drugs, crime, alcohol, and single parenthood, he video recorded interviews with people he had interacted with over the years. In the book, he told things the way he remembered events and then also explained the way the people he interviewed remembered the same events. Carr, with his memoir, acknowledged the fact that a person's memory of how something happened could be faulty and was subject to change over time, something many memoir writers seem to have trouble admitting. (If you go to the index at the back of this book, you will find that David Carr, in his role as the *New York Times*' media reporter, is one of the most cited people in the last couple of editions of this book.) Carr died of cancer in February 2015.

Catching Fabrications.

With the exception of tabloid stories about a space alien having Elvis's baby, articles in magazines and newspapers are generally assumed to be true, or at the very least based on fact. But occasionally that basic assumption is called into question.

Consider the following case: A twenty-five-year-old writer named Stephen Glass had written incredible stories for the *New Republic*, *Rolling Stone*, *George*, and *Harper's*. Other writers—some would say jealous colleagues—thought Glass's stories, with their customary "wow" opening paragraphs that set the scene, were too good to be true. Unfortunately, they were. In 1998, Glass was caught fabricating an article for the *New Republic* about teenage hackers, and his subsequent firing sent shock waves throughout the magazine industry.[41] Follow-up investigations suggested that Glass had fabricated material for dozens of articles without the magazines' fact-checkers catching on.

Said Charles Lane, then the editor of the *New Republic*, "I don't wish [Glass] ill. . . . I just don't want him to be in journalism."[42] After becoming the poster boy for bad journalism, Glass left the magazine business, went to law school, and wrote a novel. Following the critical and commercial failure of his novel, Glass has reportedly worked as a paralegal and as an occasional member of a Los Angeles comedy troupe.[43] How did Glass get away with his fabrications? First, the magazines didn't conduct fact-checking as well as they should have. Second, Glass would submit articles late so that they couldn't be checked, and he would fabricate substantiation for them, such as a phony web page and voice mail message for the beleaguered high-tech company in the hacker story.[44] In an article for the political magazine *George*, Glass wrote a description of presidential advisor Vernon Jordan based on

anonymous sources. He avoided the fact-checking by saying that his sources would be fired if they were contacted at work. After editors found out that Glass had been fabricating articles, fact-checkers discovered that the sources he had cited didn't exist. To be fair to the fact-checkers, their procedures were designed to catch mistakes, not outright fabrications.[45] One result of the fallout from Glass's fabrications was a renewed commitment to fact-checking at magazines; another was increased skepticism toward sensational stories, especially by young writers.

Lying About Who You Are.

Former *Washington Post* reporter Jose Antonio Vargas was a successful young journalist. He was part of a reporting team that won a Pulitzer for covering the Virginia Tech massacre, he wrote a well-regarded profile of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg for the *New Yorker*, and he's written for numerous outlets around the country, including the *Huffington Post* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The secret that Vargas kept until the summer of 2011 was that he is an undocumented immigrant who entered the United States illegally from the Philippines.

Vargas outed himself in a first-person article for the New York Times Magazine. In it, he told the story of how he came to the United States as a twelve-year-old boy to live with his grandparents in California. He did not know that he had entered the country on forged papers until he took his supposed immigration status card to the Department of Motor Vehicles at age sixteen to get his driver's permit. There he was told that his card was fake and that he should not come back again.[46] As he told MSNBC's Rachel Maddow, Vargas's parents and grandparents intended for him to work shadow economy jobs until he could find a U.S. citizen to marry and get a permanent residency permit that way. Only one problem: When Vargas was in high school, he came out publicly as being gay. So while he was out of the closet as a gay male, he remained secretive about his immigration status.[47] Vargas initially offered his story to the *Washington Post*, but the paper turned him down. Vargas then shopped it to the *New York Times Magazine*, which jumped at the chance. The editors went so far as to "tear up" the completed magazine and put the Vargas story on the cover.[48] The story of Vargas and his outing of himself caused a fair amount of controversy in journalistic circles because Vargas had been lying about his immigration status for his entire adult life.[49] Phil Bronstein, who had hired Vargas to write for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, writes that he felt duped by Vargas, especially since Vargas wrote about the experiences of undocumented workers without mentioning that he was one himself. On the other hand, Bronstein hopes that Vargas's story may lead to meaningful immigration reform:

▼ Pulitzer Prize–winning reporter Jose Antonio Vargas revealed in the summer of 2012 that he was an undocumented immigrant who entered the country illegally from the

Philippines when he was a child.



Alex Wong/Getty Images

> But if he can come out, the force of his story—both good reaction and bad—and his project just might lubricate the politically tarred-up wheels of government and help craft sane immigration policy. If it has that effect, we should forgive him his lies.[50]

At the heart of Vargas's story is this central ethical conflict: A journalist lying about his or her identity is always troubling for any reason, but if Vargas had not lied about who he was, he could not have been a reporter. This is, at its core, the definition of an ethical problem. Because ethics are all about what you do when no answer seems right, when all answers are problematic, when telling the whole truth stands in the way of telling any truth.

▼ Fox News Channel host Sean Hannity, shown here (right) interviewing Donald Trump Jr. in July 2017, did not disclose that he was a client of one of his guests, lawyer Michael Cohen, presenting a potential conflict of interest. Hannity disputes that Cohen was actually his lawyer, although Cohen stated in court documents that he was.



AP Photo/Richard Drew

Conflict of Interest

Being fair and balanced are core journalistic values that have been discussed extensively in earlier chapters. At times, however, other factors can overwhelm that value, especially when the interests of the news organization's owners or the journalist him- or herself are in conflict with the values of balance and fairness. This problem of a conflict of corporate interest extends beyond suppressing stories; it also involves actively promoting the company's interests.

During the spring of 2018, Fox News host Sean Hannity had interviewed President Donald Trump's attorney Michael Cohen on several occasions on his top-rated evening show. He criticized the fact that federal agents had raided Cohen's office and home. The problem for Hannity is that he had not disclosed that he had also been a client of Cohen's, something that got revealed in court after the raid. Hannity's response was twofold. First, he said he does not need to follow journalistic ethics because he is a talk show host, not a journalist. The difficulty with this is that sometimes he says he's a journalist, an opinion journalist, or an advocacy journalist. His second claim of innocence is that Cohen was not really his lawyer. "I never retained his services, I never received an invoice, I never paid Michael Cohen for legal fees," Hannity said. "I did have occasional brief conversations with Michael Cohen—he's a great attorney—about legal questions I had."[51] (Nevertheless, Cohen listed Hannity as one of his three clients.)[52] This undisclosed relationship that Hannity had with a source could be considered a conflict of interest.

Another example comes from the *Washington Post*. The paper is owned by Jeff Bezos, the same billionaire (and richest person in the world) who is the CEO and major stockholder for Amazon.com. In order to deal with this conflict of interest, reporters at the *Post* mention that Bezos owns the paper every time they report on Amazon. Traditionally, such conflicts of interest are recognized when reporters give favorable coverage to a company in which they have an interest or to a person who is their friend. Or a conflict could involve the negative coverage of someone they dislike. With the growth in size and concentration of media companies in the past decade, an increasing issue is conflict of interest by the owners themselves. Newspapers always claim that they keep the business side of their operations separate from the newsroom, but it is sometimes hard for the public to see things that way.

Sensationalism

Along with political, international, economic, and other significant news, journalists sometimes focus on news that may not be important but is certainly interesting, largely because that's what audience members seem to enjoy. Cable television commentator Chris Matthews defends such news coverage on the basis of what he calls "the watercooler principle." He says, "If people are talking about it at the office around the watercooler, then it should be on the show."[55] Pulitzer Prize–winning reporter Edna Buchanan describes it this way:

Test Your Media Literacy

Recognizing Fake News is Consumer Responsibility

You know how you've always been warned about being careful when something seems too good to be true? That's never more the case than when you see a story online and say to yourself, "YES! This is exactly how I thought it would be . . ."[53]

Take, for example, the following story from the *Seattle Tribune*:

> *BREAKING: Trump's Android Device Believed to Be Source of Recent White House Leaks*
>
> *If you've recently seen the hashtag #DitchTheDevice trending on social media, it's because, according to several private intelligence reports, the source of the multiple recent leaks within the White House is President Trump's unsecured Android device.*
>
> *Throughout the past several weeks President Trump and his administration have expressed extreme frustration over the multiple leaks provided to members of the press from inside the White House.*
>
> *The recent leaks range from information regarding his executive orders (before he issued them), fighting and chaos among White House staffers, classified conversations with foreign leaders (specifically Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull & Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto), White House staffers conducting meetings in the dark because they can't figure out how the lights work, and President Trump wandering the White House in his bathrobe.*[54]

In March 2017, the story showed up repeatedly on social media, posted by people who dislike President Trump and love the thought that the leaks from his administration are coming from hackers who had compromised his Android smartphone. But the savvy reader should be able to quickly recognize this as a fabrication—fake news, if you will.

First of all, the kinds of documents that were necessary for the leaks that had come from the Trump administration are not the kind that would be likely to be stored on a smartphone by a guy who is not particularly tech savvy. (This is not a criticism of President Trump—merely a statement of fact. He does not use either a computer or a particularly modern smartphone; nor have most of our other presidents.)

The story also smelled because it was a little too pat; it has a bit too much schadenfreude about it: "Wouldn't it be so appropriate if Trump were being done in by the phone he uses to send out all those early morning tweets?" The story simply matched too many of the fantasies of Trump critics.

So the first step a suspicious reader should do is look for information about the site. At the Seattle Tribune, it was on the Disclaimer page on the website, as clear as day:

> The Seattle Tribune is a news and entertainment satire web publication. The Seattle Tribune may or may not use real names, often in semi-real or mostly fictitious ways. All news articles contained within The Seattle Tribune are fictional and presumably satirical news.

Now, that's not a completely honest statement. The story about President Trump and his phone was not funny in a satirical way—it was clearly "fake news," complete with links to real stories. It was designed to attract readers drawn to an appealing story, so that those people would see the ads on the *Tribune*'s pages, and hopefully click on them.

You should also notice that this publication had a name that sounded a lot like a very reliable news source, the *Seattle Times*. But this was the *Seattle Tribune*, a name chosen most likely to deliberately confuse unsuspecting readers.

So when you are thinking about posting links to stories on Facebook that make you angry or self-satisfied, why not look for reputable stories from reliable news sources instead of leaping to the clickbait made-up stories. Think back to the chart from Chapter 6 of reliable and unreliable news sources, and try to pick stories that run on the most reliable and least partisan sources.

WHO is the source?

Where did this story come from? Is it a reliable source?

WHAT did the source do?

What did the story say? Was this a true story?

WHY does the website publish this kind of story?

What does the site get out of it? Why is it deceiving people?

HOW do you and your friends feel about online news sources publishing fake news?

What can you do to recognize these sites before you share news through social media from them? How do you protect yourself from fake news?

> The best day is one when I can write a lead that will cause a reader at his breakfast table the next morning to spit up his coffee, clutch at his heart, and shout, "My God! Martha, did you read this?" That's my kind of day.[56]

Sometimes such stories can move beyond being merely interesting and enter the realm of sensationalism—coverage of events that is lurid and highly emotional. In the winter of 2006–2007, celebrity starlets Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan, and Paris Hilton became the big story. The three, famous primarily for being famous, were in the news continually for getting into catfights, being arrested for driving under the influence, and going in and out of rehab. Photos of them flashing various body parts to paparazzi showed up first on celebrity websites and in the tabloids. But the stories, if not the photos themselves, soon migrated into the mainstream press, and so we saw stories on them in every media outlet from ABC News to Fox News. Even the *New York Times* ran a bylined story on Spears's "lack of wardrobe" malfunctions.[57] *USA Today* ran a story on when it's appropriate to "go commando." And the *Toronto Star* in Canada gave the apparent trend story a political twist by noting that Margaret Trudeau, the wife of Canada's former prime minister, inadvertently flashed a photographer at Studio 54 back in 1977.

Sensational news clearly attracts viewers and readers, especially when it's truly out of the norm. When Michael Jackson died unexpectedly in 2009, the coverage of his death and memorial service dominated the media for several weeks, matching the coverage of British princess Diana's death in 1997. And when golfer Tiger Woods had a minor car accident in late 2009, the media coverage began to explode when the news started breaking that Woods had been having affairs with at least eleven different women.[58] The mainstream media use occasions such as Michael Jackson's death or Tiger Woods's infidelity as an opportunity to

engage in tabloid laundering or tabloidization, which is when respectable media report on what the tabloids are reporting (without doing the reporting themselves). Journalist and commentator Margaret Carlson says, "We take what the tabloids do and write about, and that way get what we wouldn't write about originally into the magazine. And then we run pictures of the pictures to show how terrible the pictures are."[59]

▼ Photos of celebrities like Kim Kardashian and Kanye West often appear in newspapers and magazines to attract attention beyond the actual news value of the image.



Karwai Tang/Getty Images

But *Newsweek* editor Mark Whitaker defends his magazine's reporting on the work of the tabloids:

> When the subject of a legitimate news story is the paparazzi phenomenon, and you're running these pictures in a way that's used to illustrate . . . that news story, and not just titillate people with exclusive photographs that have never been seen that you pay a lot of money for, then I think that that is still a defensible and legitimate use of the photographs.[60]

Why has there been such a move toward tabloidization? The editors of the *Columbia Journalism Review* suggest that there are two major reasons for this:

1. Competition—With increased competition and more players in the field, newsmagazines feel compelled to release stories that they might have avoided in the past. Former television reporter Robert MacNeil, speaking in the 1990s, said,

I tremble a little for the next sizable crisis with three all-news channels, and scores of other cable and local broadcasters, fighting for a share of the action, each trying to make his twist on the crisis more dire than the next.[61]

2. The internet—Competition from the internet has quickened the process by which rumors fly. Because anyone is able to publish, stories move quickly to being "out there." Journalist Jonathan Fenby says, "The Internet has a gun to the head of the responsible media. If you choose not to report a story, the Internet will."[62]

SECRET 4 ▸ Although the 1990s saw an unusually high level of tabloid journalism, this wasn't the only period of questionable taste in the news profession. In the 1830s, the biased partisan press ran real or imagined stories about political sex scandals. One paper, for example, claimed that President Andrew Jackson's mother "was a common prostitute, brought to this country by the British soldiers." And the wild stories published in the papers of Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst (see Chapter 6) don't seem all that different from the rumors presented today by TMZ or Perez Hilton on the internet. (This brings to mind Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again.)

The ethical problem with sensationalism is multifaceted. First, there is the question of whether it lowers politics, public events, and public discourse to the level of crude entertainment that is not to be taken seriously, as Neil Postman has pointed out.[63] Second, tabloid-style stories can displace significant news—politics, economics, international affairs, war, genocide, famine, environmental issues—about which people need to be concerned. Finally, tabloid stories appeal to people's basest feelings and instincts rather than to their intellect and sense of decency.

Going Too Far: The *News of the World* Hacking Scandal

Can media outlets ever go too far with their sensationalism? It's likely that was the case with the *News of the World*, which was for many years the biggest circulating British tabloid newspaper (8.4 million copies an issue at its peak) and long had a reputation for cutting ethical corners to report the sordid details of crimes and celebrity gossip. But it really outdid itself when reporters for the paper hacked into the phone of a murdered thirteen-year-old girl to listen to her voice mail messages. On other occasions, the paper's reporters were accused of hacking into the phones of British terrorism victims, making payoffs to members of the Scotland Yard police force, and having improper connections to prominent British politicians.

▼ *News of the World* had at once been the highest-circulating newspaper in Britain and was known for its lurid covers and headlines, but News Corporation shut down the paper following its phone hacking scandal. The final edition was published on July 10, 2011.



AFP/Getty Images

Matters got bad enough that former editors and reporters at the paper were arrested or even sent to jail over the scandals. There was even talk for a time that News Corporation officials could be prosecuted in the United States for violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act for bribing British officials. The scandal finally became so intense that News Corporation shut down the embattled tabloid that had been published since 1843. This was all shocking, but should it have been, given that the *News of the World*'s sister paper, the *Sun*, runs a topless pinup on page 3 of every issue?

The fact that the *News of the World* was also owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation made this a big story within the press. After all, News Corporation is a major world news organization and a major media owner in the United States. It owns one of the most respected and largest circulating newspapers in the United States, the *Wall Street Journal*.

SECRET 4 ▸ Through all this, it's worth remembering Secret 4—Nothing's new: Everything that happened in the past will happen again. The behavior of Murdoch's tabloids is nothing new. As you read about in Chapter 6, if you consider the rise of the yellow press in New York City back in the late 1800s, about the time that modern standards of journalism were being established, you will see that Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst's *Evening Journal* engaged in very similar escapades. In one case, the two papers battled over covering a spectacular murder case that involved dismemberment and a love triangle. One newspaper publisher even leased the apartment where the murder took place in order to keep competing reporters away.

When and How Do You Apologize?

Apologies are a hard thing for the media to handle. Too often they take the form of "If anyone was offended, we're sorry you feel that way," which is so weak that it lacks almost all meaning. Other times they can trivialize the seriousness of the error. But sometimes an apology can serve as a springboard for discussion about the original issue.

That's what happened in the fall of 2010, when the *Portland Press Herald* in Maine ran a long, thoughtful story on its front page about the local observance of the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. What would normally be considered a relatively noncontroversial story became extremely controversial because this year the final day of Ramadan fell on September 11. Topping things off for the paper was the fact that it planned on running all of its September 11 anniversary stories in the September 12 Sunday paper. The response was instantaneous and furious. Letter writers, emailers, and callers were uniformly upset that the paper did not have a story on the front page about the 9/11 anniversary. And many were upset that there was a story about Ramadan on the front page that day. On Sunday, September 12, the day the paper planned to give extensive coverage of the 9/11 anniversary, the paper ran the following apology:

> We made a news decision on Friday that offended many readers and we sincerely apologize for it.
>
> Many saw Saturday's front-page story and photo regarding the local observance of the end of Ramadan as offensive, particularly on the day, September 11, when our nation and the world were paying tribute to those who died in the 9/11 terrorist attacks nine years ago.
>
> We have acknowledged that we erred by at least not offering balance to the story and its prominent position on the front page.
>
> What you are reading today was the planned coverage of the 9/11 events. We believed that the day after the anniversary would be the appropriate occasion to provide extensive new coverage of the events and observances conducted locally and elsewhere.
>
> In hindsight, it is clear that we should have handled this differently and with greater sensitivity toward the painful memories stirred by the anniversary of 9/11.[64]

But the apology wasn't the end of the story. Why not? Because some people read that apology as saying there was some kind of connection between peaceful practitioners of Islam in the United States and the terrorists who attacked the nation back in 2001.

That was the central theme of a story that ran soon after on NPR's *On the Media* (OTM). In the story, OTM's Bob Garfield had a somewhat confrontational interview with Richard Connor, the *Press Herald*'s editor and publisher. In the interview, Garfield tried to get Connor to acknowledge that the apology made the "connection between Islam and radical Islamic terrorists." Connor refused to do so. If you listen to the program, several things become clear: Connor had obviously had a bad week and was tired of being criticized by all sides about his paper's coverage of the issue, and Garfield was just as clearly trying to hold Connor accountable for what he had to say.[65] All this led to a follow-up to the September 12 apology that Connor published on September 19 that didn't receive as much attention. Connor wrote:

Questioning the Media

Should a media outlet always apologize to the public when it makes a mistake? Why or why not? Can a media outlet actually make things worse by apologizing? If you believe so, can you come up with an example of this?

I have failed my writing hero, E. B. White, whose guiding principle, outlined in the classic "Elements of Style," was: "Omit needless words."

If I'd followed that rule last week, I would have responded to criticism of our newspaper on 9/11 with this:

"Our coverage of the conclusion of the local Ramadan observance was excellent and we are proud of it. We did not adequately cover 9/11 on the 9/11 anniversary, which also should have been front-page news, in my opinion."

Why would I have omitted the other words in last week's column?

Their lack of precision led to mischaracterization and misunderstanding. They were used to prove the maxim that a lie travels faster than truth. Mostly they allowed those with a personal ax to grind or a political agenda to advance to twist and misinterpret.

I meant to apologize for what we did not print—front-page coverage of 9/11 on the anniversary of a day that stirs deep and unhealed wounds. I was in no way apologizing for what we did print in a deservedly prominent position—a striking photo of our local Muslim community in prayer.[66]

What Connor says here is what he probably should have said the previous week—that the paper did a good job of covering Ramadan and a bad job of covering the September 11 anniversary on September 11. This apology is particularly good because it doesn't talk about "who might have been offended," but rather talks about the quality of judgments made at the paper.

There Is No "They": The Sago Mine Disaster

Few journalistic mistakes have been as cruel as the headlines that ran in newspapers across the country on Wednesday, January 4, 2006. The papers trumpeted that all of the coal miners trapped in West Virginia's Sago Mine had been found alive after having been trapped for two days below ground, when, in reality, all but one of the thirteen had died.

In the early morning hours of Monday, January 2, an explosion, likely triggered by lightning, trapped thirteen miners deep below ground in the Sago Mine. About 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, the first body was discovered in the mine, according to a timeline in the *Washington Post*.[67] At 11:45 p.m., one miner was found alive more than two miles into the tunnel.

At this point, confusion reigned. According to the *Post*, at 12:18 a.m., the rescue command center heard a report from a rescue worker that twelve miners were found alive. Apparently, this early report was overheard and spread instantly through a crowd that had been praying for a miracle. Church bells started ringing. People cried, sang, and cheered.

According to the *Charleston Daily Mail*, then West Virginia governor Joe Manchin had come out to the mine to wait with family members and had asked for confirmation of the good news. Although he didn't get the confirmation, Manchin said he was quickly caught up by the joyous mood: "We went out with the people and they said, 'They found them.' We got swept up in this celebration. I said, 'The miracle of all miracles has happened.'"[68] A statement from the governor would seem to signal some level of official confirmation. But within the next half hour, reports started coming into the command center that only one miner was alive—reports that were not passed on to families or the press until nearly 3:00 a.m.

Morning papers, such as the *Charleston Gazette* in West Virginia and Denver's now-defunct *Rocky Mountain News*, started printing around midnight (if not a little earlier). Newspapers have to make really tough calls on a breaking story, and unlike television, they leave a permanent reminder of the times that they get a story wrong. For example, the early edition of the *Rocky Mountain News* carried the headline "They're Alive." The headline was corrected in the final edition.

▼ Newspapers and television news outlets across the United States struggled with tight deadlines and inaccurate information during the Sago Mine disaster in West Virginia. Though initial stories reported that some miners survived, the tragic truth was that twelve of them had died.



Karen Bleier/AFP/Getty Images

National papers also had problems with the story. *USA Today*, which has perhaps the best national distribution of any newspaper in the country, devoted one-third of its front page to the rescue story on Wednesday. On Thursday, the press started an intense examination of how the story was botched.

According to industry newsweekly *Editor & Publisher*, the *Inter-Mountain*, an eleven-thousand-circulation afternoon daily out of Elkins, West Virginia, managed to get the story right, not only in its print edition but also on its website. *Editor & Publisher* quoted *Inter-Mountain* editor Linda Skidmore's account of the paper's handling of the story: "I feel

lucky that we are an afternoon paper and we have the staff that we do. We had a reporter there all night at the scene and I was on the phone with her the whole time." Skidmore also described how the false story started snowballing:

> I was on the phone with [reporter Becky Wagoner] and I was hearing things on CNN and FOX that she was not hearing there. . . . She heard that the miners were alive just before it was broadcast, around midnight. She talked about hearing church bells ringing and people yelling in jubilation—but nothing official.[69]

"We heard that they were found alive through CNN, then it snowballed to ABC, then FOX and it was like a house afire," recalled Wagoner, who said she was at the media information center set up by the mine's operator, International Coal Group Inc., when the reports spread. "A lot of the media left to go to the church where family members were located, but I stayed put because this was where every official news conference was given—and we never got anything official here," she said. "Something was not right. Then we were hearing reports that 12 ambulances had gone in [to the mine area] but only one was coming out. There was so much hype that no one considered the fact that there was no [official] update."[70]

SECRET 7 ▸ Then a resident of West Virginia, I went to bed Tuesday night with reports on the internet announcing that the miners had been found alive. When I sat down to breakfast and my local paper on Wednesday morning, though, it was immediately obvious that something was wrong with the story. The report from the Associated Press read:

> Twelve miners caught in an explosion in a coal mine were found alive Tuesday night, more than 41 hours after the blast, family members and Gov. Joe Manchin III said.
>
> Bells at a church where relatives had been gathering rang out as family members ran out screaming in jubilation.
>
> Relatives yelled, "They're alive!"
>
> Manchin said rescuers told him the miners were found.
>
> "They told us they have 12 alive," Manchin said. "We have some people that are going to need some medical attention."
>
> A few minutes after word came, the throng, several hundred strong, broke into a chorus of the hymn "How Great Thou Art," in a chilly, night air.[71]

What clues tipped me off? How could a reader, reading between the lines, tell there were problems with the story?

There were no official sources cited, other than the governor. Why didn't reporters also quote a source from the coal company?

When the governor made his statement, he noted, "They told us . . ." Not a name—just "they." My high

school journalism teacher Judith Funk always took us to task about that word, asking, "Who's 'they'?" And the Sago story is probably one of the saddest examples of Secret 7—There is no "they."

Later on, the story said, "The company did not immediately confirm the news."

There were no details on the miners' condition or where they were found.

In short, the story read like it was passing along secondhand accounts. How did the press go so wrong with this story?

- There was the understandable problem of midnight deadlines. It's very difficult to handle a breaking story under these circumstances. But news organizations certainly could have been clearer in emphasizing the unconfirmed nature of the information in their reports.
- News organizations have gotten way too comfortable passing on unconfirmed stories that originate in the realm of blogs and rumors because they are afraid of being "scooped." No longer does a story have to be true; it just has to be true that the story is out there. When we are dealing with rumors about misconduct by politicians, whose realities are more subject to interpretation, perhaps this is OK (though I don't really think so). But when we are talking about the lives of ordinary people, this irresponsibility just doesn't cut it.
- The facts of the news didn't match the story reporters were looking for. Journalists, especially the national press, were looking for a "miracle story," in which people's prayers would be answered and everything would turn out fine. When reporters thought they found that story, they reported it. Tragically, that wasn't the way the story turned out.

So what can journalists do to make sure this doesn't happen again? *USA Today*'s Mark Memmott, speaking as part of a panel at West Virginia University on the press coverage of Sago, said,

> Our responsibility was to ask a lot of questions and be very, very careful about attributions and sourcing, and to make sure we told people not just about what we knew, but what we didn't know. We hadn't seen anybody come out of that mine. We hadn't really talked to anybody who knew what was going on inside there. We had heard from family members, who had heard from somebody else, who in some cases couldn't even tell reporters on the scene exactly who it was they had heard it from.[72]

Photography

Photos seem to be at the heart of many of the most troubling ethical cases that journalists face. Whether it is showing live television video of the shooting at Columbine High School, moments of private grief following a drunk-driving accident, or the horrors of September 11, 2001, editors have always had to strike a balance between sensitivity toward readers, consideration for sources, and dedication to reporting the news accurately. Now they also have new tools, like Adobe Photoshop, that allow them to manipulate photos digitally, sometimes producing quite different images from those they started with.

How Much Photo Manipulation Is Too Much?

Photographs have always been prone to manipulation. Photographers choose their films, lenses, and angles with a particular image in mind. Darkroom techniques extended the photographer's ability to control the image. But now photographs are altered electronically in ways that can be almost undetectable. In fact, all photos published today are manipulated digitally in terms of size, shape, color, and contrast. For example, the light and dark contrasts in many of the photos in this book have been adjusted in preparation for the printing process so that they will look better.

So the question becomes "How much manipulation is too much?" Keep in mind that there are several issues here:

- What is an acceptable level of photo manipulation?
- Should viewers know to what degree a photo has been altered?
- Does intentionally making changes in a photo change the viewer's response to the image?

In 2008, there was an intense discussion on an online photojournalism bulletin board about a college newspaper advisor who insisted that a photographer needed to make the sky bluer in a photo of a Martin Luther King Day march. Most of the photographers on the bulletin board were outraged at the demand, saying that deepening the sky's color would be completely unethical. But how many photographers, seeing the pale winter sky, would have boosted the blue in the sky without a moment's thought? Or if the photo had been taken in the predigital era, how many photographers would have chosen to shoot with Kodak's Kodachrome film, which is known for giving intensely vibrant colors?[73]

On a similar, simple level, a photographer at the *Charleston Gazette* was disciplined for removing a television station's logo from a reporter's microphone. After the altered photo was noticed and commented on by West Virginia radio personality Hoppy Kercheval, the *Gazette* published an apology on Facebook along with the unaltered image:

A Gazette photographer went outside the boundaries of our standards when he obscured the name of a television station on a microphone in today's front-page photo. Other than the photographer, no one at the Gazette was aware of what had taken place with the photo. Our photographers know that it is unacceptable to alter reality in news photos. The photographer believed his action helped direct the focus of the photo to the subject. He was wrong to do so. This is a singular incident. Disciplinary action will be taken to ensure it doesn't happen again.[74]

Box 14.1 Standards for Digital Photo Manipulation

The *Charlotte Observer* has put together a very specific set of guidelines for how digital photos can be edited. Among its criteria are the following:

- "Dodging and burning," similar to what could be done in a conventional darkroom, are acceptable.
- Colors can't be changed.
- Backgrounds can't be eliminated or "aggressively toned."
- The original unedited image files need to be downloaded.
- Digital retouching (cloning) can be used only to remove things such as dust spots on the image.
- The only time these rules can be violated is with a photo illustration that is clearly labeled as such and can be clearly seen as an illustration.

Source: Kenny Irby, "*Charlotte Observer* Photo Correction/Editing Guidelines," *Poynter*, September 25, 2003.

Photo manipulation by magazines first came to the public's attention in 1982, when *National Geographic*'s editors "moved" one of the Egyptian pyramids so that a photo of the pyramids would fit on the magazine's cover. The change had no lasting moral significance—a similar effect could have been created by having the photographer reshoot the picture from a slightly different angle—but it forced the magazine industry to confront the implications of journalists altering images.[75] (See Box 14.1.)

Conflicts over digital manipulation of photographs emerge on a regular basis. In June 2006, *El Nuevo Herald*, the leading Spanish-language paper in the United States, ran a photo that appeared to show four Cuban prostitutes soliciting tourists in Havana while two police officers looked on. The only problem was that the hookers weren't actually there—they had been added digitally by an editor.[76] In another case, a *Los Angeles Times* photographer was fired in 2003 after he combined two images of a U.S. soldier supervising a group of refugees in Iraq to make the image more dramatic. But sometimes the alterations are on a smaller scale and are intended to help rather than to deceive. After a terrorist bombing of a train in Spain, some newspapers digitally removed a severed arm lying next to the tracks because they felt the image was too horrifying for a family newspaper. (See Chapter 15's "Test Your Visual Media Literacy" box.)

Enforcing Ethics

How should the media address ethical issues? Are such issues the responsibility of the individual journalist? Of his or her editor? Should there be a single person in charge of ethics? Perhaps a code of ethics, applied properly, could provide sufficient guidance. In reality, various methods are used. This section looks briefly at some of the choices for systematically handling ethics issues.

The Ombudsman.

The ombudsman, also known as the reader's representative or audience advocate, takes the point of view of those who purchase or consume the news. Sanders LaMont, former ombudsman for the *Sacramento Bee*, argues that the ombudsman is an essential part of the journalism ethics process because the ombudsman connects the news consumer with the news outlet, be it a magazine, newspaper, website, radio station, or cable news operation.

The term *ombudsman* is derived from the word for a person who mediated between citizens and the government in Sweden in the early 1800s. Since that time, it has been used to describe anyone who mediates between two groups. News ombudsmen have a variety of tasks to perform:

- Listening to the concerns of readers or audience members—Readers tend to be enthusiastic about someone taking their point of view, whereas newsroom employees may be less so. Kenneth Starck, a former ombudsman for Iowa's *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, told *American Journalism Review*, "News organizations need individuals who can withdraw from the bustle of the newsroom and get some perspective on performance by communicating—thoughtfully, intelligently, empathetically—with people who care enough to offer their views to the organization."[77]
- Writing a regular column or commentary—The ombudsmen at news outlets such as the *New York Times* and NPR have regular commentaries posted online and sometimes within the news pages or broadcast.
- Writing a regular memo for the news staff—The *Washington Post*'s former ombudsman wrote a blog on a regular basis that praises and criticizes the staff; he also wrote a column for the Sunday editorial page.[78] Until the summer of 2003, the *New York Times* did not have an ombudsman because management believed that the job should be done by the editors. However, following the scandal surrounding reporter Jayson Blair's fabrications, publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. appointed two editors to function as ombudsmen and enforce newsroom standards.[79] Although the position of ombudsman has been in a decline in recent years, these internal media critics continue to serve an important function. Poynter's ethicist Kelly McBride points to several examples[80]:

- ESPN's Don Ohlmeyer discussed *The Decision*, the controversial program the sports channel carried about LeBron James's decision in 2010 to move from Cleveland to Miami.
- NPR's Edward Schumacher-Matos wrote a thirty-five-thousand-word critique of the network's 2011 investigative series on foster care for Native American children in South Dakota.

Despite the decline in the number of news organizations with ombudsmen, Simon Dumenco, writing in *Ad Age*, suggests that these reader representatives are less necessary because excellent press criticism sites are available online.[81]

Codes of Ethics.

News organizations have a variety of codes of ethics to consider. The Society of Professional Journalists has an extended code of ethics with three main principles:

1. Seek truth and report it as fully as possible.
2. Act independently.
3. Minimize harm.

Beyond those principles and the accompanying code, the organization's ethics handbook contains a series of case studies and a collection of other codes of ethics to help journalists make ethical decisions. In their introduction, the authors argue that ethics are not merely a set of ideals; they are something journalists do that leads to good reporting.[82] Obviously, a single code of ethics cannot cover all the issues encountered by the many different news outlets in the United States. "Can you even hope to have a common set of standards for the *New York Times*, the *National Enquirer*, and *People* magazine?" asks journalism professor Alex S. Jones, writing in the *Columbia Journalism Review*.[83]

If codes of ethics are to be effective, they need to be more than static documents, according to Jeffrey L. Seglin, an ethics columnist for the *New York Times*. A code of ethics must be central to the way the news outlet does business on a daily basis.[84] Unless that is the case, ethics problems will continue to arise, Seglin warns. The *New York Times* management clearly had not followed up on a lower-level editor's complaints about Jayson Blair a year before the young reporter was caught fabricating and plagiarizing stories for the paper.

The *Cincinnati Enquirer* encountered trouble for an exposé it ran on the banana company Chiquita. The story may or may not have been accurate, but the highly critical article about the company's business practices was based on two thousand voice mail messages the reporter had listened to using stolen access codes. The paper ended up apologizing to the company and paid an out-of-court settlement of $14 million. But prior to writing the story, the reporter had signed a copy of the paper's corporate code of ethics each year.

In these and other cases, the people involved clearly knew that their behavior was wrong and that it violated their publications' codes of ethics.

Ethics and Persuasive Communication

Many of the items we see in the media are not messages created by members of the news staff, but rather persuasive images created by advertising and public relations (PR) professionals seeking to influence people's behavior. The question of what constitutes ethical behavior for people who are attempting to manipulate public opinion then arises.[85] In this section, we examine ethical principles applied in the fields of advertising and public relations.

Advertising

A number of ethical issues concern the advertising industry today, including truth in advertising and the level of control advertisers can expect to have over the news content surrounding their ads.

During World War II, the advertising industry formed the Advertising Council in response to charges of unethical behavior. The organization's purpose was to promote both advertising and business in general. One of its first functions was to help build support for wartime austerity. The Ad Council worked on a communication campaign to stop the hoarding of scarce resources, promote the buying of war bonds, and build morale. After the war, it worked on a variety of public interest campaigns to maintain the positive image the group had fostered during the war. In recent years, the Ad Council has been responsible for a wide range of memorable public service ads, most notably the "Just Say No" and "This Is Your Brain on Drugs" campaigns.[86]

Truth in Advertising.

Snapple claims to make its drinks from the "best stuff on earth." But what is the "best stuff"? Papa John's says "Better Ingredients. Better Pizza." Is this true? Just as important, do consumers expect such claims to be true?

Typically, ads for prescription drugs and medicines are held to high standards of truthfulness, whereas claims that one article of clothing is more fashionable than another are held to a much lower standard of proof. However, a dog food company was once required to prove that dogs really did prefer one brand over another by showing how much of two competing brands dogs would eat.[87] A number of groups keep tabs on honesty in ads. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) investigates many complaints. In 2014, the FTC took action against a number of companies making deceptive claims about weight-loss supplements.[88] The National Advertising Division of the Council of Better Business Bureaus also investigates claims of false advertising. Says council representative Gunnar Waldman, "We care even about the seemingly frivolous or 'less-important' cases. The issues at stake—truth in advertising—are always broader than the products themselves."[89]

Advertising executive Michael Dweck says that claims of being "best" are dangerous: "So the only claims we'd make ought to be sufficiently humorous, exaggerated, and far-fetched that no one will take them seriously."[90] Chris Wall of advertising giant Ogilvy & Mather says that as long as companies are truthful in their ads, they have nothing to worry about: "The most powerful advertising tends to be fundamentally truthful anyway. The trick is finding an honest point of advocacy for a product and then presenting it in a way that moves people, catches their attention, that they remember."[91]

Advertising and Media Control.

Sometimes concern about media content comes from advertisers rather than from critics of the media. Advertisers may want to control the kind of material that surrounds their messages, hoping to avoid stories that are critical of their products or simply to associate themselves with high-quality content. For example, a group of car dealers in California pulled all their advertising from the *San Jose Mercury News* after the paper ran an article that explained to buyers how to read the factory invoices on new cars so that they would be in a better negotiating position.[92] At other times, advertising boycotts are driven by advertisers who don't want to be associated with a program's political point of view. In 2012, at least forty-five advertisers pulled their sponsorship from *The Rush Limbaugh Show* when the popular conservative radio talk show host called a law student and birth-control advocate a "slut" over the air.[93]

Questioning the Media

Do advertisers ever produce messages specifically designed to be offensive? Is it proper for the news media to give attention to these offensive ads? Why or why not? Or should the news media just ignore offensive ads to avoid giving them free publicity?

Magazine editors have long offered warnings to advertisers when potentially offensive articles will be included in a forthcoming issue. Better Homes and Gardens warned cigarette makers before running an article on the dangers of secondhand smoke and offered them the option of moving their advertising to another issue. "That's just consideration," said the magazine's editor in chief. "You don't want to purposely slap advertisers in the face."[94] It can also work the other way: Sometimes advertisers are contacted when positive articles are scheduled to appear. An energy company was solicited to advertise in the National Review when an article included a favorable mention of the company.

Occasionally companies want to know in advance what kind of content is going to be included in forthcoming issues of magazines so that they can decide whether to include their advertising with it. Some publishers view this simply as a way of keeping important advertisers informed about how their advertising will look. However, the American Society of Magazine Editors warns "that some advertisers may mistake an early warning as an open invitation to pressure the publisher or editor to alter, or even kill, the article in question."[95] In 1995, Ford pulled all its advertising from the *New Yorker* for six months because one of its ads appeared next to a column by Ken Auletta that quoted an explicit song by Nine Inch Nails. And *Esquire* reportedly canceled a sixteen-page story about gay sex for fear that Chrysler would pull four pages of advertising from the magazine. In 1996, Chrysler sent a letter to one hundred major magazines requiring them to notify the carmaker "in advance of any and all editorial content that encompasses sexual, political, social issues or any editorial that might be construed as provocative or offensive."[96] Chrysler defended its policy in *Ad Age*:

> We think we have a right to determine how and where we want to place our advertising. . . . We are not trying to get in the way of the editorial integrity of any magazine, but we do have the right to determine the editorial environment where our ads appear.[97]

Advertisers have also attempted to influence programming on television. Finding "family-friendly" shows to sponsor on television, especially broadcast television, is becoming increasingly difficult. The hit program *Friends* delivered a huge audience for NBC, but it did so with racy story lines and risqué humor. Companies such as consumer product giant Johnson & Johnson want to sponsor shows that parents and children can watch together so

that they'll see commercials for Band-Aids, baby powder, Motrin, and Mylanta. To combat this problem, Johnson & Johnson, along with companies such as Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, and Ford, formed a group called the ANA Alliance for Family Entertainment to promote the development of shows that are acceptable to the entire family (ANA stands for Association of National Advertisers). The group, which began back in 1998 as the Family Friendly Programming Forum, isn't boycotting or criticizing adult-oriented shows; it just wants to promote shows on which its members won't be embarrassed to advertise.

The group funds the development of new shows that will meet these needs; in return, it receives the first right to advertise on them. The companies that belong to the forum control $20 billion worth of advertising, so their voices are important to television networks. In 2000, the first show whose development had been funded by the forum came on the air: *Gilmore Girls*.[98] Since then, the forum has been responsible for the development of shows such as *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, *Ugly Betty*, and *Friday Night Lights*. It has also started partnering with YouTube in the production of family-friendly programming.[99]

Ethics in Public Relations

It is easy to joke about a lack of ethics in public relations, but PR firms ignore ethical behavior at their own peril. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), founded in 1948, established its own code of ethics in 1954 not only to improve the profession's behavior, but also to improve the industry's image at a time when practitioners were "generally . . . perceived as slick con artists." In its original form, the code said, "We pledge to conduct ourselves professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness, and responsibility to the public." The code was substantially revised and clarified in 1999. (See Box 14.2.)

Conducting War Through Public Relations.

The ethical challenge of balancing the needs of truthfulness, the public interest, and the client's interests became a major issue for one PR firm during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Foreign governments often hire PR firms to represent their interests in the United States, but few have hired a major firm to promote the nation's involvement in a war.[100]

Hill & Knowlton, the nation's largest PR firm at the time, was hired by Citizens for a Free Kuwait, a group made up of members of the Kuwaiti government. The campaign was designed to create sympathy for Kuwait, opposition to Iraq and Saddam Hussein, and support for U.S. involvement in fighting Iraq. The campaign followed a typical pattern of lobbying Congress, calling press conferences, sending out press releases, and producing video news releases.[101] What really attracted controversy and raised ethical questions throughout the industry was testimony that Hill & Knowlton arranged to have given before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. This group of U.S. representatives held hearings on October 10, 1990, on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The centerpiece of these hearings was the eyewitness testimony of a fifteen-year-old Kuwaiti girl identified only as Nayirah. Nayirah told the caucus that she had personally seen atrocities committed following the invasion:

> While I was there, I saw the Iraqi soldiers come into the hospital with guns, and go into the room where . . . babies were in incubators. They took the babies out of the incubators, took the incubators, and left the babies on the cold floor to die.[102]

Her testimony certainly was effective. President George H. W. Bush mentioned the "twenty-two babies 'thrown on the floor like firewood'" on six separate occasions.[103] Two years later, journalist John R. MacArthur revealed that Nayirah, who had not previously been identified, was actually the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States, who was a member of the Kuwaiti royal family. MacArthur, and others, charged that the incubator story was not true. Amnesty International found no evidence that the story was

true, and ABC News reported that the story was "almost certainly false."[104] Since Nayirah's testimony had not been given under oath, no questions were raised about the legality of Hill & Knowlton's actions. The firm defended its actions on behalf of Citizens for a Free Kuwait, but the fact remains that it did not investigate Nayirah's claims to see if they were true.[105] Whether true or false, the testimony itself was certainly not enough to send the United States to war with Iraq; rather, it was a well-planned PR effort intended to make Iraq seem evil and Kuwait appear to be a victim in need of assistance.

Whom Do You Serve: The Client or the Public?

One of the most difficult ethical problems facing PR practitioners is the conflict between serving the client's interests and serving those of the public. David Martinson, a professor of journalism, argues that PR practitioners can internalize important ethical principles of honesty and serving the public interest by practicing them daily in small ways. Then, when the rare moral dilemmas arise, the practitioner is used to behaving in an ethical manner.[106]

Box 14.2 Public Relations Society of America's Statement of Professional Values

The following is the Public Relations Society of America's Statement of Professional Values:

This statement presents the core values of PRSA members and, more broadly, of the public relations profession. These values provide the foundation for the Member Code of Ethics and set the industry standard for the professional practice of public relations. These values are the fundamental beliefs that guide our behaviors and decision-making process. We believe our professional values are vital to the integrity of the profession as a whole.

Advocacy

We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent.

We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate.

Honesty

- We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public.

Expertise

- We acquire and responsibly use specialized knowledge and experience.
- We advance the profession through continued professional development, research, and education.
- We build mutual understanding, credibility, and relationships among a wide array of institutions and audiences.

Independence

- We provide objective counsel to those we represent.
- We are accountable for our actions.

Loyalty

- We are faithful to those we represent, while honoring our obligation to serve th e public interest.

Fairness

- We deal fairly with clients, employers, competitors, peers, vendors, the media, and the general public.
- We respect all opinions and support the right of free expression.

As noted earlier, Aristotle suggested that ethical behavior arises from a golden mean, or balance, between two extremes of behavior or belief. Does this mean that PR practitioners can strike a balance between lying and telling the truth? No. Martinson says that PR practitioners must always be fully committed to the truth, but that it is possible to compromise between serving the public's interests and serving the client's. The PR practitioner must serve the client's best interests, but not to the extent that his or her professional and ethical obligations to the public are compromised.

Attacks on Women Through Online Media

The internet can be a scary place. Want to see how scary? Take a look at the comments that follow stories about the role of women in video games, comic books, or any other area of geek pop culture. Before too long, you are likely to encounter the terms *gamergate* and *social justice warriors* accompanied by harassing threats of rape and murder.

Gamergate, usually expressed as the hashtag #gamergate, started out as an attack on female game developer Zoë Quinn, her text-based game *Depression Quest* that deals with her own experiences with depression, and her personal sex life. An ex-boyfriend of Quinn's published a series of long blog posts accusing Quinn of having affairs with five other men, some of whom worked in the gaming industry or games journalism. In essence, Quinn was being accused of using sex to promote her video game and to feminize the world of video gaming.

According to the blog *Gawker*, before long, the people behind #gamergate expanded their critique, claiming that their real concerns were about ethics in video game journalism, not the behavior of a specific female game developer.[107] So that brings us to the social justice warriors, or #SJW. According to the 2015 update of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *social justice warrior* is an informal, derogatory noun referring to "a person who expresses or promotes socially progressive views." But to members of the #gamergate movement, SJWs are people promoting enhanced roles for women in geek culture.[108]

Members of the movement have been highly abusive to game developer Quinn and other women in the gaming community. Quinn had her home address and cell phone number posted online, along with her passwords and nude photos of her. She has had online threats from people saying they want to rape and then kill her. One person posted on Tumblr, "If I ever see you are doing a panel [sic] at an event I'm going to, I will literally kill you." Another wrote, "I'm not going to stop spreading your disgusting nudes around and making sure your life is a living hell until you either kill yourself or I rape you to death."[109]

Others receiving similar threats, or worse, include feminist gaming and culture critic Anita Sarkeesian (who helped publicize the Bechdel Test for the role of women in movies discussed in Chapter 8) and Brianna Wu, cofounder of game studio Giant Spacekat.

Caitlin Dewey, digital culture critic for the *Washington Post*, writes:

> Whatever Gamergate may have started as, it is now an Internet culture war. On one side are independent game-makers and critics, many of them women, who advocate for greater inclusion in gaming. On the other side of the equation are a motley alliance of vitriolic naysayers . . . people convinced they're being manipulated by a left-leaning

and/or a corrupt press, and traditionalists who just don't want their games to change.[110]

Women in the gaming/comics/geek culture world are not the only ones subject to severe online harassment. Erin Andrews, who now works for Fox Sports, was working for ESPN in 2008. While she was traveling for the network to Nashville, she was secretly filmed while undressing. A year later, the video was posted online and widely shared.

In a lawsuit Andrews filed against the hotel where the recording took place, Andrews testified, "This happens every day of my life, either I get a tweet or somebody makes a comment in the paper or somebody sends me a still of the video to my Twitter or someone screams it at me in the stands and I'm right back to this."[113] Andrews has been widely harassed about the video and has even been accused of creating it herself as a publicity stunt.

▼ Brianna Wu is a software engineer and head of development at Giant Spacekat, which makes games with female protagonists. Wu is one of three woman targeted for abuse and death threats by the gaming community after posting online about the misogyny in the gaming industry. She stands next to a poster of her video game characters.



Boston Globe/Getty Images

▼ Actress Kelly Marie Tran, who played Rose Tico in *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, deleted all of her posts from Instagram after months of social media harassment. Tran, one of the first women of color with a major role in *Star Wars*, received criticism for her looks, her

Asian ethnicity, and her performance.[111] (Black actress Lupita Nyong'o plays the key character Maz Kanata in the new trilogy, but it is a motion-capture part where you never actually see the actress herself.) Daisy Ridley, who plays the lead character Rey in the new trilogy, left Instagram in 2017 because she found social media "bad for her mental health."[112]



Twitter/@HamillHimself

Media Transformations

Importance of Representation

▼ Patty Jenkins (right) directs Gal Gadot (left) in her starring role as *Wonder Woman* in 2017.



Warner Bros./Photofest

One of the major themes of this book has always been the importance of diversity in our media world, but that's been a central emphasis of the revisions of this edition.

Media scholar George Gerbner, who developed cultivation theory that we discussed back in Chapter 2, wrote back in 1994:

> Middle-class, white male characters dominate in numbers and power. Women play one out of three characters. Young people comprise one-third and old one-fifth of their actual proportions of the population. Most other minorities are even more underrepresented. That cast sets the stage for stories of conflict, violence and the projection of white male prime-of-life power.[114]

How much has changed since then? Both a lot and not as much as you might think.

Marvel's *Black Panther* has been an enormous success, sitting now at the number-three spot on the all-time domestic box office ranking, having brought in almost $700 million in North America. And at one level, this should be no surprise. The annual and all-time box office lists are full of Marvel movies. There are two *Avengers* movies in the all-time top ten along with a host of Marvel Cinematic Universe movies in the top fifty. But the one at the top was of a lesser-known Marvel hero in his debut film that doesn't feature other Avengers.

Why?

One explanation is that it told a different kind of story than we have gotten used to seeing. It was a story where the heroes, villains, stars, and supporting cast were almost all black. The director and the screenwriter were black. The production designer was black and female. The cinematographer was a woman. It was a story with its roots in a mythical African country. The characters being subtitled spoke Xhosa, an official language of South Africa. *Daily Show* host Trevor Noah, who voiced a computer in *Black Panther*, said in a monologue that hearing the language he grew up speaking in his native Johannesburg was an incredible experience. "There were subtitles, and I was like, I don't need subtitles! I don't need your subtitles! This is just for me right now! Nobody else listen! This reminds me of my mom."[115]

Dave Hollis, Disney's president of theatrical distribution, said, "It's clear that representation matters, and moviegoers have responded every time we've answered that demand. We are trying to make movies that resonate with a global audience, and that means making movies that allow people to see themselves

represented on screen."[116]

For all the progress, representation still has a long ways to go. The Color of Change report, "Race in the Writers' Room: How Hollywood Whitewashes the Stories That Shape America," that came out in 2017 found that only 4.8 percent of television writers were black and that two-thirds of the shows for 2016–2017 had no black writers on staff. The shows that did have substantial black writing staffs were generally helmed by black showrunners. Having people of color in management roles is important when it comes to trying to get diverse themes into stories. "I don't think it's appropriate for a nonwhite person to discuss race in normal writers' rooms because you're just too outnumbered, and people get too defensive," said one black writer.[117]

Hollywood keeps needing reminders of how representation is good for business. In 2012, *The Hunger Games*, fronted by Jennifer Lawrence and based on the novel by Suzanne Collins, told a different, but very popular, kind of story about child soldiers. Jeremy Fuster, writing for the Hollywood blog the *Wrap*, argues that the success of *The Hunger Games* helped bring a host of female-fronted action movies like *Mad Max: Fury Road*, the new *Star Wars* movies, and *Wonder Woman* over in the DC Expanded Universe.[118]

Despite the success of movies like *Wonder Woman*, starring Israeli-born actress Gal Gadot and directed by Patty Jenkins, Hollywood is still sticking to movies told for and by men. According to a report in the entertainment industry trade magazine *Variety*, less than 15 percent of the producer deals in Hollywood are with women. "The value of women in the marketplace seems to be a lesson that continues to be learned," said Nina Jacobson, a producer on the *Hunger Games* series who has a deal with Fox. "It keeps needing to be reaffirmed every time it happens, such as with *Wonder Woman*.[119]

WHY does representation matter in entertainment management?

HOW does who is represented on writing staffs affect whose stories get told?

DOES diverse representation in movies affect how successful they are? Why or why not?

DOES financial success of movies featuring women and people of color lead to more diverse movies being made? What evidence do you have of that?



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Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Media ethics are a complex topic because they deal with an institution that must do things that ordinary people in ordinary circumstances would not do. Media ethics draw on a range of philosophical principles, including basic Judeo-Christian values, Aristotle's ideas about virtue and balanced behaviors (the golden mean), Kant's categorical imperative, Mill's principle of utility, Rawls's veil of ignorance, and the Hutchins Commission's social responsibility ethics. One way contemporary journalists can resolve their ethical problems is by using the Bok model for ethical decision making.

Reporters face a range of ethical issues on a regular basis. Those issues include the following:

- Truthfulness—Journalists need to make a commitment to telling the truth. This includes not giving false or made-up reports and telling truthful stories that are not intended to deceive the audience. This may require reporters to provide not only the facts but also the context surrounding them. Truthfulness requires a commitment not only from the journalist but also from the organization he or she works for.
- Conflicts of interest—The interests of a corporation that owns a news organization may sometimes be at odds with the nature of the news being reported. Journalists need to be careful not only to portray their parent company in an accurate light, but also to give no special favors to companies connected to the organization's parent company.
- Sensationalism—News organizations sometimes emphasize news that is interesting but unimportant. This happens when reporters put more effort into attracting and pleasing an audience than into reporting on the critical issues of the day. This can occur because of the increased pace of the news business brought about by cable television, the internet, and the parent company's desire for profits.
- Authenticity and appropriateness of photographs—Photos can be among the most controversial media materials, both because of their disturbing content and because they can be altered with digital editing tools.

Journalists and their employers can apply a variety of methods for enforcing and implementing ethical behavior. These include employing an ombudsman, requiring a commitment to ethical behavior on the part of all employees, and adhering to a code of ethics.

The advertising industry became concerned with protecting its image during World War II. Among the major ethical issues in advertising are the following:

- Truthfulness—How important is it that claims such as "Tastes great" or "It's the best" are demonstrably true?
- Taste—Is it appropriate for ads to attract attention by shocking audiences?
- Media control—Do advertisers have a right to control the editorial material that surrounds their advertisements?

In the public relations industry, practitioners need to work at balancing their clients' interests against those of the public at large. This can become problematic when a client is attempting to influence the public to support an issue, such as going to war.

In online and entertainment media, there is an ongoing problem of representation and of women who attempt to work in traditionally male areas getting harassed and receiving rape and death threats.

Key Terms ▶▶

morals 376
ethics 376
golden mean 377
categorical imperative 378
principle of utility 378
veil of ignorance 380
sensationalism 387
tabloid laundering or tabloidization 387
ombudsman 394
#gamergate 399
social justice warriors (#SJW) 399

Review Questions ▶▶

1. How do newspapers and other news outlets make decisions about when to run vulgar or offensive language from politicians such as the president or vice president?
2. How can two competing ethical principles lead us to making different ethical decisions?
3. Do reporters have an obligation to stay to report on protests and violence when police are telling them to leave the area? Why or why not? What factors might affect how you answer the question?
4. Should advertisers be able to shape the content of media they advertise in? Should they be able to veto ad placement next to certain types of content? Why or why not?
5. What was the #gamergate hashtag supposedly about, and how was it actually used?
6. Why does representation of women and people of color matter in entertainment media?

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Chapter 15 Global Media Communication Around the World



Ivor Prickett/Panos

What You'll Learn

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Discuss different media standards around the world by using four normative theories of the press
2. Explain the usefulness of a more recent "development theory" for describing the press in the twenty-first century
3. Explain the importance of social media and other "small media" in the Middle East
4. Describe the dangers journalists face when reporting from conflict zones
5. Discuss whether Marshall McLuhan's concept of the "global village" is relevant to the media world today

Marie Colvin Murdered in Syria

For twenty-six years, Marie Colvin of the *Sunday Times* of London reported from anyplace bad things were happening—the Middle East, Africa, Chechnya, the Balkans, South Asia. Longtime *New Yorker* editor David Remnick wrote that Colvin was always recognizable when she showed up on CNN, wearing her signature black eye patch she acquired after losing her left eye from a grenade attack during the civil war in Sri Lanka in 2001.

Colvin was a report-the-facts journalist who had no patience with claiming all sides were equal. One night in late February 2012, she was reporting about the death of a child during artillery attacks on the city of Homs in Syria by the forces of President Bashar al-Assad. Colvin reported:

> These are the twenty-eight thousand civilians, men, women, and children, hiding, being shelled, defenseless. The little baby is one of two children who died today. One of the children being injured every day. That baby will move more people to think, "What is going on, and why is no one stopping this murder in Homs that is happening every day?"[1]

Remnick writes there was "cool but profound rage in her voice." Colvin went on to say more about Assad's forces: "It's a complete and utter lie they're only going after terrorists. The Syrian Army is simply shelling a city of cold, starving civilians."

No statement of opinion. No waffling. Just the facts on the ground.

Remnick says it was Colvin who taught him how to be a foreign correspondent when he was covering the West Bank city of Jenin following an Israeli military incursion. The morning after Remnick watched the report by Colvin from Syria, he woke up to the news that the reporter had died from rocket fire.

Six years later, Colvin's family would document in a wrongful death suit against the Syrian

government that the military was deliberately targeting the building she and French photojournalist Rémi Ochlik were in. According to a Syrian defector, the military intelligence officer who ordered the shelling reportedly said, "Marie Colvin was a dog, and now she's dead. Let the Americans help her now."[2]

The lawsuit by Colvin's family states that the attack that killed her was part of a Syrian campaign to stop coverage of the civil war by killing or arresting journalists who could reach worldwide audiences.[3] The Syrian government argues that journalists who went into rebel-held areas were violating the law. Assad told NBC News in 2016, "It's a war and she came illegally to Syria, she worked with the terrorists, and because she came illegally, she's been responsible for everything that befell on her."[4]

The *Washington Post*'s Pulitzer Prize–winning reporter Dana Priest wrote, "Her bravery was legendary. In the 1991 Iraq War, she stayed behind enemy lines. In 1999, when others fled, she remained in East Timor (an island nation in South Asia) to document the 1,000 refugees in a U.N. compound under attack by government-backed militias. . . . Her black eye patch symbolized her fearlessness and commitment to telling the story of civilians who, she reminded her worried friends and readers, 'endure far more than I ever will.'"[5]

Being a war correspondent is never an easy job, but CNN's Christiane Amanpour says that women war correspondents should not be singled out because they are women reporters. They are reporters, full stop. Certainly Colvin would support Amanpour's case that women are as tough as (or tougher than) any men. When Colvin was in Afghanistan in 2002, she was still working at relearning how to handle stairs after losing her left eye and acquiring her black eye patch. She also had one with sparkly beads given to her by the author of *Bridget Jones's Diary*. She called that her "party patch." "I never though in my life I'd be the woman with the patch. But there you are, life changes."[6]

To Colvin, the story about wars is not as much about battles, strategy, or technology as it is about people. Colvin expressed a thought not that different from that of Charlottesville photographer Ryan Kelly (whom we read about in Chapter 14) about feeling guilty because she can escape the trauma she is covering. She said she sometimes feels "like a fake because . . . I get to go home." Though she also understood that sometimes you can't leave it behind, something was brought home to her when her second ex-husband, also a war correspondent, took his own life. "A brutal reminder of seeing too much," she said.[7]

But Colvin didn't stop seeing things. In 1999, she stayed on in East Timor during its transition to independence from Indonesia, trying to bring attention to the Timorese women and children who were being massacred by militiamen with machetes. Then, in 2001, she was bringing attention to five hundred thousand civilians being denied food and medical care during the Sri Lankan civil war. That was when grenade shrapnel took her left eye.[8]

In a speech Colvin gave in London in 2010 honoring journalists who died reporting from war zones, she said, "Covering a war means going to places torn by chaos, destruction, and death, and trying to bear witness. It means trying to find the truth in a sandstorm of propaganda when armies, tribes or terrorists clash. And yes, it means taking risks, not just for yourself but often for the people who work closely with you . . . We go to remote war zones to report what is happening. The public have a right to know what our government, and our armed forces, are doing in our name. . . . You can't get that information without going to places where people are being shot at, and others are shooting at you."[9]

The notion of being able to print or broadcast almost any kind of news is central to the ideal of free speech in the United States and the democracies of the West. But different countries and cultures have differing ideas as to what constitutes the proper form for the media to take. And just because something is legally available in a country doesn't mean that people will in practice actually have access to it. In this chapter, we look at ideals of how the media ought to behave and how the media function in different societies around the world. Finally, we consider what it means to live in a world with such a wide range of media.

Media Ideals Around the World

So far in this book, we have primarily discussed the development of the media in economically developed democracies. But the relationship among politicians, citizens, and the press can take very different forms in other nations, depending on the country's culture, government, and level of development.

Stay up to date on the latest in media by visiting the author's blog at ralphehanson.com

In 1956, three journalism professors from the University of Illinois—Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm—outlined what they considered to be the major forms the press could take around the world in *Four Theories of the Press*. They built their argument around two basic value-oriented theories of how the press ought to behave: authoritarian and libertarian. They then created two variations on these: Soviet/communist and social responsibility.[10] The authors argue that the nature of the press depends on the political and social structures of the society it serves. In other words, the structure and function of the press mirror the society it portrays. Since 1956, however, much has changed. The Cold War has ended, and the Soviet Union has collapsed. We've gone from talking about the influence of the press to talking about the influence of the media. The media industry has come to be dominated by a limited number of large owners. We have seen the rise of the internet, which allows many more voices to be heard, though they can easily get lost in all the digital noise. And the importance of developing nations is being increasingly recognized.

In response to these changes, and many others, scholars started questioning whether the ideas from the book needed to be revisited. John C. Nerone and his contributing authors—also all from the University of Illinois—did just that in 1995 with *Last Rights: Revisiting* Four Theories of the Press. As they pointed out,

> When Four Theories was written, many U.S. newspapers carried ads for segregated housing, it was still legal in a number of states for a husband to divorce his wife for being a bad housekeeper, and no one had ever seen what the earth looked like from outer space.[11]

Nerone and his colleagues suggested several things that contemporary readers of *Four Theories* should think about. Most important of these was that the four theories were not a timeless set of categories. Rather, they were a critique set within a particular time period that reflected the politics and economics of the day. Other critics have suggested that there should be a fifth theory of the press—development theory—to deal with countries that are in the process of building modern economies.[12] In this section, we look at the four original

theories, along with development theory, and see how well they apply to press systems today.

Authoritarian Theory

The authoritarian theory is the oldest theory of the press. It says that the role of the press is to be a servant of the government, not a servant of the citizenry. Authoritarian theory has its roots in royal control of societies during the era when the printing press was first developed. Monarchs were believed to derive their authority to rule directly from God, and therefore they had the right and responsibility to control all aspects of society, including the printing press. Rulers felt that the proper role of the press was to provide the public with the information the rulers deemed appropriate. Keep in mind that the reach of the press was still fairly limited because relatively few people were literate. So the monarch gave formal permission to the publisher, who in return had a monopoly on the publishing business.

Today, countries that are developing mass media often start by taking an authoritarian approach. Authoritarian rule is also practiced in most totalitarian states, which seek to control the press along with all other aspects of social life.

Authoritarian control of the press is carried out by the following means:

- Giving permits to only certain printers—However, as the number of trained printers grows and an increasingly literate public demands more and more printed materials, the ability of the government to control "outlaw" printers can become problematic.
- Prosecuting anyone who violates generally accepted standards for the press.

▼ A journalist from the Democratic Republic of Congo broadcasts live to his audience from Brussels, Belgium, on a major political agreement being hashed out between opposition parties in the DRC in June 2016.



THIERRY CHARLIER/AFP/Getty Images

Totalitarian governments have been ruthless in controlling the press through arrests, torture, arson, and imprisonment, along with more subtle methods such as controlling the availability of the internet. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the government shuts down access to the internet anytime opposition protest marches are held. The DRC's National Intelligence Agency also shut down a television station located in Bukavu in the eastern part of the country as well as arresting a journalist with a news website for interviewing an opposition political figure.[13] Since 2009, strong antiterrorism laws have forced journalists in Ethiopia to self-censor to avoid arrest. In 2014, six newspapers were closed and thirty journalists were forced into exile, and in February 2018, the government declared a new state of emergency that could be used to arrest journalists and ban the public from watching specified broadcast media.[14]

Nerone's major critique of authoritarian theory is that it is more a description of the procedures a government uses to control the press than a philosophy of press behavior.[15]

▼ This 1968 Soviet propaganda poster depicting Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known as Lenin, reads: "Pravda: Our task is to overcome capitalist resistance–not only military and political resistance, but ideological resistance, which is the most profound and powerful."



The Granger Collection, New York

Communist Theory

Although the Soviet Union no longer exists, a variety of governments around the world, including those in Cuba and China, continue to hold to communist ideals. The communist theory of the press is similar to the authoritarian theory but goes a step further. Instead of just being a servant of the government, the press is run by the government to serve the government's own needs. The communist press is supposedly free to publish the truth. However, in the Soviet Union the press was not free, nor did it speak the truth. The communist view is that there is only one valid political and social philosophy, so there is no need for competing "false" ideals to be portrayed in the media. Moreover, communists argue that the American press is no freer than the communist press because the American media serve the needs of capitalist owners rather than those of society. Communist media theory proposes the following principles:

- The media are an instrument of the government and the Communist Party—An independent press is undesirable and should be suppressed.
- The media should be closely tied to other sources of government power and authority —In the United States, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government serve as checks and balances on each other, all overseen by the press. But communist theory holds that all elements of the state, including the press, should work toward a common goal.
- The media's main purpose is to act as a tool for government propaganda.

The communist notion of absolute right and wrong leaves no room for the media to debate the proper role of government. The press is not a watchdog, but rather a supporter of the Communist Party's efforts to create a perfect state. Since the responsibility for enforcing this truth lies within the leadership of the state, the leadership should control the mass media. So the role of the press is to put forward the official party line. This is almost directly counter to the Western notion of the press as an outside observer keeping watch on the government.[16]

Questioning the Media

If you knew you were going to risk imprisonment or torture, would you still be willing to speak out and criticize your government? Why or why not?

In *Last Rights*, the authors point out that what we've been referring to as "the communist theory" was supposed to represent a generalized Marxist response to libertarian theory (discussed below) but really represented the Soviet approach at a given time.[17] The communist theory of the press was an ideal that Soviet communists never came even close to obtaining. The Soviets may have had an ideal of a communist press, but in reality it was generally just authoritarian controls. The only time the Soviet media came close to acting as a force for the people and not just for those in power was under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s during his campaign for *glasnost*, or openness. *Glasnost* allowed citizens and the media to express their opposition to the official government position and to criticize corrupt local leaders. Since then, however, the Russian media have gone back to a level of authoritarian control, as we discuss later in this chapter.

Libertarian Theory

The opposite of authoritarian theory is libertarian theory. In this view, the press does not belong to the government but is instead a separate institution that belongs to the people and serves as an independent observer of the government. Libertarian philosophy views people as moral beings who can tell the difference between truthfulness and falsity. Because of this, they need a free and open press so that they can decide for themselves what is true and what is false. The libertarian theory thus holds that there must be a marketplace of ideas in which both true and false statements can compete for the hearts and minds of audience members. This is the basic idea of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.[18] Libertarian theory is the basis of free speech in the democracies of the West and is the most well developed of the theories in *Four Theories*.[19]

▼ In a country with a libertarian theory of the press, journalists are free to cover protests against the government, such as this one in Ferguson, Missouri, where locals were carrying pickets protesting the killing of local resident Michael Brown.



Joshua Lott/AFP/Getty Images

Most noncommunist countries pay at least lip service to the libertarian ideal of the press, although many do not adhere to it. Again, even in the United States, there tends to be much more government control of the broadcast media than of print.

The free press of a libertarian society is based on the following principles:

- People want to know the truth and be guided by it.

- The only way to arrive at the truth is for ideas to be freely and openly discussed.
- Different people will have different opinions, and everyone must be allowed to develop his or her own.
- The most rational ideas will be the most accepted.

In the libertarian view, the major functions of the press are to inform, entertain, and advertise (to support itself). Overall, though, the goal of the media is to help people discover the truth. The press should be free of government control, and every idea, no matter how crazy or offensive, should be allowed a forum for expression. As Siebert et al. wrote in *Four Theories*, the ideal is "to let the public at large be subjected to a barrage of information and opinion, some of it possibly true, some of it possibly false, and some of it containing elements of both."[20] A key problem with libertarian media theory is that it assumes that the primary threat to freedom of speech and communication comes from the government rather than from the marketplace. Under the American system, the voices that are profitable to present will be heard much more loudly than those that do not produce a profit. The ideas that attract advertising revenue and sales draw much more attention from the press than do those about the poor or disenfranchised. Hence we hear more in the news about the stock market than about job programs for the unemployed. *Four Theories* argues that the free market is the ultimate in freedom, rather than media owned by "community groups, nonprofit corporations, universities, religious groups, and municipalities."[21] The debate is framed in terms of external controls rather than access. There is a presumption that the ideal of freedom is corporate or individual ownership with no government intervention.

In 2018, the press was under attack, even in countries that presumably have free speech and freedom of the press. The United States is ranked 45th out of 180 countries in the 2018 World Press Freedom Index, down from 43rd in 2017 and from 20th in 2009. Despite leading the country of the First Amendment, President Donald Trump has declared the press an "enemy of the American people," and he routinely refers to what journalists publish as "fake news." Journalists have also been facing arrest for covering protests, something that started before the 2016 election. We saw this happen back in Chapter 13 with the story about the *Washington Post*'s Wes Lowery getting arrested for covering the Ferguson, Missouri, protests.[22]

Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory of the press is an outgrowth of libertarian theory. This theory is based on the concern that, although it may be free from interference by the government, the press can still be controlled by corporate interests. For example, in principle, anyone can start up a newspaper, but in reality, it is an expensive and difficult proposition. Moreover, only a limited number of radio and television station licenses are available. So, although the government does not control the press in a free society, the control exercised by a limited number of corporations and individuals can be as effective as that of any government. Social responsibility theory says that the high level of concentrated power in the hands of the media requires that they be socially responsible in covering all sides of controversial issues and providing voters with all the information they need to make considered choices. If the press is not sufficiently vigilant, it is the duty of some representative of the public to force it to be responsible.[23]

Under social responsibility theory, the press is obliged to serve several social functions:

- Provide the news and information needed to make the political system work
- Give the public the information needed for self-governance
- Serve as an overseer of the government
- Serve the economic function of bringing together buyers and sellers through advertising
- Provide entertainment
- Be profitable enough to avoid outside pressures

Social responsibility theory essentially advocates nonauthoritarian media controls. France, Israel, and Sweden all operate under some form of social responsibility controls. The governments own and operate television channels, and the programming tends to promote the government's point of view.[24] The alternative is for the press to be in the hands of private business, which may allow for more political views but limits the media to carrying programming that is profitable. Government ownership frees the media from the constraint of having to make a profit.

The social responsibility theory was a response to the Hutchins Commission report from the late 1940s on the social responsibility of the press, which we discussed in Chapter 14. However, it does describe an approach to the press that is common in the world, for example, in the Israeli press, which we discuss later. The press does not necessarily like the idea that it has responsibilities to go with the freedoms it claims. The question really is, to whom does the freedom of the press belong? Is it to a corporate institution, or is it to people with voices wanting to be heard? Does giving a voice to one limit the voice of the other? Should we automatically favor the rights of those who can afford the press over those

who cannot?[25]

Norms for the Press in the Twenty-First Century

Perhaps the biggest problem with these normative theories of the press is that it may take two or more of them to describe a given country's media system. For example, theocratic countries whose media operate under a strong social responsibility theory may incorporate elements of the communist media theory, substituting the values of the state religion for those of the Communist Party.

Several authors have suggested a fifth theory of the press, development theory, to address the special needs of emerging nations, whose governments may feel that they need to restrict freedom of the press in order to promote industry, national identity, and partnerships with neighboring nations. Media theorist Denis McQuail writes that less developed societies undergoing the transition from colonial rule to independence have different needs than do developed nations such as those of North America and Western Europe. These developing nations "lack the money, infrastructure, skills, and audiences to sustain a free-market media system."[26] Thus, in many cases, leaders in those nations resort to using authoritarian controls. In May 2007, for example, then Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez revoked the broadcast license of the country's oldest and most watched television network, Radio Caracas Televisión, or RCTV. The network had been severely critical of Chávez and his administration, and lifting the network's broadcast license effectively silenced it. Chávez's efforts have been continued since Nicolás Maduro was elected president in 2013. A 2010 law allows the government to censor any content "calling the legitimately constituted authority into question." Print media also frequently suffer from unexplained newsprint shortages.[27]

▼ In the nineteenth century, the telegraph served to transmit news across the United States and around the world far faster than any vehicle could travel. It was the first step toward the creation of global electronic media.



Library of Congress

The Internet in the Twenty-First Century

In *The Victorian Internet*, author Tom Standage argues that the nineteenth-century telegraph was also a significant global development, serving many of the same purposes as the internet at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. According to him, the telegraph was "a world-wide communications network whose cables spanned continents and oceans, [and] it revolutionized business practice, gave rise to new forms of crime, and inundated its users with a deluge of information."[31]

The telegraph system was followed by both radio and the telephone as media that could tie large areas of the world together. While the earliest components of the internet were in use by 1969, the net was limited largely to interpersonal communication until 1991, when Tim Berners-Lee released the World Wide Web as an easy and uniform way to access material on the internet. Although the internet owes a historical debt to the early telegraph and telephone systems, it has grown into a new medium unlike any other because it is the only one that incorporates elements of interpersonal, group, and mass communication. The unique nature of the internet, especially in a global context, poses new moral dilemmas concerning national boundaries, corporate control, freedom of the press, and the rights of individuals. As you read about global media in different countries later in this chapter, keep in mind some of these issues.

Going Global: Media Standards Around the World

There is a presumption that a direct connection exists between a country's media system and its political system. Central to this presumption is the idea that a free press is essential for a functional democracy. But what constitutes a free press? Broadcasters in countries with commercially run media, such as the United States, presume that the freest press is that run by private-sector corporate control. Broadcasters in countries with strong traditions of public ownership, such as the United Kingdom, might argue that the commercial broadcasters are beholden to stockholders and advertisers and are no freer than the media in totalitarian states.

Alan Wells suggests that the four theories of the press might be replaced by five dimensions over which media could be rated:

Test Your Media Literacy

Updating the Four Theories

John Nerone and the contributing authors of *Last Rights*[28] say that *Four Theories of the Press*[29] was a map of the world's media drawn at a specific time—the mid-1950s. And although it was a good map for its day, it was limited by what could be seen at that time and does not take into account the massive transformations that have taken place since then—the fall of communism, the end of the Cold War, globalization, and media consolidation. So they ask, "Do we need to draw a new map?" Or the even bigger question: "Can we draw a new map?"[30] This new map will need to deal with the issues surrounding the press in developing nations, as well as the norms surrounding the controlled press in many Islamic nations.

Reread the section of this chapter describing the four theories, paying particular attention to the critique of the theories, and then answer the questions here.

WHO is the source?

Who is John Nerone? What have he and his colleagues written?

WHAT is he saying?

According to Nerone, what made Four Theories such a significant book? What are the major questions he raises about the theories for the current media world? Are there other notions of a free press than the libertarian theory?

WHAT evidence is there?

What evidence does Nerone provide that Four Theories needs to be updated to apply to the present media world? How do new media—the internet, websites, blogs, and social networking sites—fit within these theories? What other critiques are there of the four theories? What evidence is there that the categories are still useful?

WHAT do you and your classmates think?

What role do you think the media should play within society? Should the media be forced to be responsible? If so, who should decide what it means to be responsible? Should the role of the media be to support the government or to be a watchdog over the government? Can they do both?

- Control—Who controls the media system? This could be the state, a public corporation, a private enterprise, or corporate sponsorship.
- Finance—How do broadcasters pay the bills? Options include license fees, taxes, advertising, private subsidies, subscription charges, or a combination of these.
- Programming goals—What are the media trying to accomplish with their programming? Providing entertainment, educating the audience, selling products, promoting cultural goals, promoting a political ideology, or just putting up the cheapest possible imported material is each a possible programming goal.
- Target audience—For whom are the media producing and distributing content? These could be social or economic elites, the masses, or specialized/targeted audiences.
- Feedback mechanism—How do media organizations hear back from their audiences? Such feedback could be in the form of field reports, audience participation rates, polls

and ratings, or response from critics and sponsors.[32]

As you can see, these five properties can be combined in an endless number of ways to describe a wide range of media systems. As we travel around the world looking at the various approaches to running the media, think about how these properties are being applied. You might also consider which of the normative theories of the press discussed previously would apply.

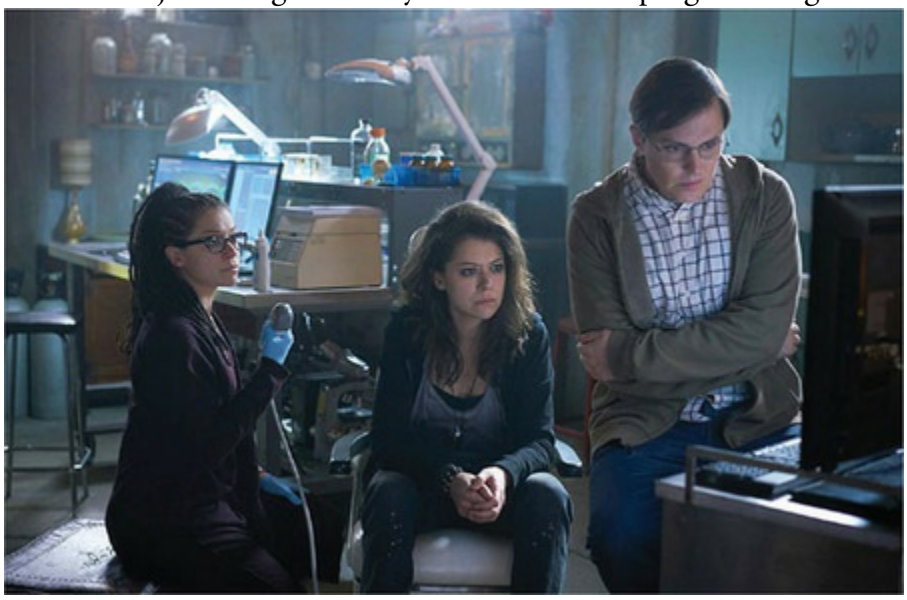
Canada, Western Europe, and Great Britain

Canada, Western Europe, and Great Britain have liberal democracies that have free speech and media that are relatively free to criticize their governments. But their media differ in significant ways from the media in the United States, if only because the United States has the largest media industry in the world.

Canadian Media.

Canada has a free press patterned in part on the U.S. model but modified by a desire to preserve Canadian culture in the face of the massive U.S. media industry. Canada can be characterized as a country with a large geographic area offset by a relatively small population, which makes media transmission relatively expensive. Canada's vastness means that it has strongly regional media, amplified by the fact that both English and French are official languages.

▼ Thanks to the success of *Orphan Black*, Canada is now a noted producer of television rather than just being a friendly location to film programming.



Orphan Black/Photofest

One area of resentment has been the somewhat one-way direction of media influence from the United States. As one major Canadian mass communication text points out,

> In Canada, more American television programming is available to the vast majority of Canadians than is Canadian programming. On most Canadian commercial radio

> stations, more American material is available to listeners than Canadian material. On virtually all magazine racks in Canada more American magazines are available to the reader than Canadian magazines, in spite of the fact that about 2,000 magazines are published in Canada. More American authors than Canadian authors are read by the average Canadian school child.[33]

Despite these issues, the Canadian media industry has been seeing growth. Canada's recording industry has been increasing steadily for the past two decades, as has the book publishing industry. The Canadian film industry has benefited from U.S. movie and television productions shooting north of the border, with Canada now being the second-largest producer of television programming in the world, after the United States. The movie and TV industry in Canada generated $12 billion in gross domestic product in 2017.[34] (This is also known as "screen-based production.") In an effort to protect and enhance Canada's media industry, the government has put in place a number of "Canadian content" regulations requiring broadcasters to carry a certain level of Canadian-produced material. For example, programming on Canadian radio must be at least 35 percent domestically produced. Canadian television attracted widespread attention in spring 2007 when the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation put a sitcom on the air called *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, which follows the travails of a rural Muslim community in small-town Canada.[35] (No, I'm not making this up. It was a hit series in Canada that ran six seasons through 2012, and it's recently been available in the United States on Hulu and Hulu Plus.)

These policies put the country at odds with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which calls for products to flow freely across the borders of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The problem Canada faces is that the United States' largest export is not wheat or steel, but rather media content. Nevertheless, Canada has worked hard at maintaining its cultural production, exporting media content produced by authors such as Margaret Atwood and Douglas Coupland; filmmakers such as James Cameron and Jason Reitman; actors including Ryan Reynolds, Ryan Gosling, and Rachel McAdams; and musicians such as Drake, The Weeknd, deadmau5, and—of course—Justin Bieber.[36]

Western European and British Media.

Western Europe covers a wide range of countries, from Spain and Portugal up through France, Germany, and Scandinavia. These are the countries of the European Union.[37] Cable television is common in some regions, such as Belgium and Germany, while satellite programming is more common in Scandinavia. European broadcasting was dominated by state-run monopolies until the 1980s and 1990s, when commercial alternatives became more common. With this switch, broadcasters started moving away from subsidies to advertising revenues. But even the commercial stations remain heavily regulated and have

strong controls and guidelines on the amounts and placement of advertisements. Part of the drive to privatize broadcasting was due to pirate radio stations located offshore on ships that broadcast into the countries.

Broadcasting in France typifies the European approach, with networks having a strong public service obligation and a desire to preserve French culture from foreign encroachment. According to broadcast scholar Matthew Rusher, "Each country in Western Europe seeks to preserve its own culture and language and sees the foreign produced programming on the international channels as a threat to its cultural integrity."[38] These stations want to attract audiences and make money, but they also want to preserve their distinctive national culture.

Globally, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) may well be the best-known non-U.S. broadcaster. Britain, a pioneer in broadcasting from its earliest days, used radio to reach out to its far-flung empire, which once covered a quarter of the globe.[39] The BBC was created as a public service in the 1920s. In the 1930s, it started broadcasting on the shortwave radio band, which allowed its signals to extend around the world. During World War II, the BBC was the international voice of opposition to the Nazis, broadcasting in more than forty languages, including French, Danish, and Hindi.[40] Listening to BBC broadcasts in Nazi-occupied Europe was a punishable offense.

As of 2017, the BBC's World Service network had an audience of approximately 155 million on radio, 39 million online, and 110 million on television, including both news and entertainment programming.[41] The BBC notes that "the World Service Group is going from strength to strength in both developed and developing markets, with the single biggest audience for any country in the USA (30m), and with more than a third of the total audience on the African continent (100m), the biggest BBC audience ever seen on any continent."

SECRETS 5 AND 6 ▸ While the BBC started out as a radio service, the network has always been willing to experiment with new channels of communication, which currently means social and mobile media. These include a new Africa page on the BBC website, a Thai news stream on Facebook, and an emergency Ebola news service in Africa over the WhatsApp chat service. What's more, the BBC has redesigned all of its websites in twenty-seven languages to be easily read on mobile devices. Even a legacy media outlet as old as the BBC has reached the point where all media are social (Secret 5), and online media are mobile media (Secret 6).

The BBC's international reach can be seen with the program *Focus on Africa*. For a continent that depends on radio as its primary medium of mass communication, the BBC provides a reliable source of news that is not censored by local governments. To avoid charges of being a colonial voice of white Britain in black Africa, most of the reporting on the show is done by African journalists. *Focus on Africa* is such an important source of news that it is often rebroadcast on local African stations, sometimes just by taking a shortwave

radio and holding it up to the station's microphone.[42]

The BBC operates under a public service model in which audience members pay the cost of the programming through equipment licensing fees. Although the BBC is the best known of the British broadcasters, it also competes with several commercial channels, though these channels have not had the worldwide influence of the BBC. Alan Wells argues that the public service orientation of the BBC has helped it deliver more innovative and less bland programming than the American commercial model. (It should, however, be pointed out that international viewers only see the best of the BBC's programming, missing out on the more routine soap operas and game shows.[43])

Test Your Visual Media Literacy

Are There Limits to What Media Images Should Display?

▼ What's different about these photos of the 2004 Madrid train bombing? The photo on the left was distributed by Reuters news service, but a similar photo on the right, taken moments later, was edited by the *Telegraph*. Does one shock or offend you more than the other? Do you even notice the differences? As a news consumer, does it bother you to think the images you see may be edited?





REUTERS/El Pais

©Telegraph Media Group Limited

At first glance, the photo of the terrorist bombing of a Madrid train in 2004 taken by Spanish photographer Pablo Torres Guerrero is disturbing enough, with its visage of carnage and death. But after you look at the photo for a few moments, you realize that there is a portion of a severed arm in the foreground, bright red with blood.[44]

How was the photo on the right changed to be printed in the British newspaper the *Telegraph*? Do these changes make the photo less graphic? Do these changes make the photo less honest? What else could have been done to tone down the gore in this photo? Or is it wrong to take the horror out of the photo?

The Telegraph wasn't the only newspaper to tone down the graphic image of the train bombing. The Guardian (photo not pictured) also took the color out of the limb so it wasn't so graphic. And the Times of London took the limb out altogether. Paul Johnson, an editor at the Guardian, said that removing the color from the limb was the best compromise the staff could come up with:

> We could have cropped it out, but someone came up with the suggestion that we bleed out the colour. It is not perfect by any means but I felt it was the best solution all round because it didn't eradicate anything from the picture.[45]

Media are pervasive throughout Western Europe, with almost every household owning at least one television set and close to half owning two or more. Most homes also have a radio, and two-thirds have VCRs. Computers and the internet are not as pervasive as in the United States; roughly one-third of homes in Western Europe have a personal computer. The big change in European media is the growth of privately owned television channels. As recently as 1990, Europe had only 47 national stations; by 2012, there were more than

11,000 channels available in Europe, including 8,270 in the European Union.[46] As we discussed in Chapter 6, European newspapers tend to take a more obvious political point of view than the detached, objective approach of U.S. papers. These papers have a clearly understood viewpoint designed to appeal to members of particular political parties.[47] While newspaper readership is higher in Europe than anywhere else in the world, papers in European countries are still facing the same kinds of declines experienced by those in North America.[48]

Charlie Hebdo, the Danish Cartoons, and Terrorism.

On Wednesday, January 15, 2015, three masked gunmen attacked and killed at least twelve people at the Paris offices of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in what was one of the deadliest attacks on journalists ever.

Charlie Hebdo is known for its controversial covers and provocative cartoons, which are known for skewering religion and politics of every stripe. One of the paper's most famous covers published shortly after its offices were firebombed in 2011 depicts a male *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonist giving a slobbery open-mouth kiss to a bearded man in traditional Muslim garb.[49] (We are not reprinting any of the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons here, but you can see links to a number of them at a blog post that goes with this section. Even trying to describe some of the cartoons would go beyond the standards at SAGE.)

▼ This editorial cartoon was drawn by artist Darrin Bell in memory of the cartoonists and others killed in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks of January 15, 2015.



Darrin Bell/The Cartoonist Group

The killings were allegedly provoked by cartoons published in the paper that depicted the prophet Muhammad and mocked the leader of the Islamic State (also known as ISIS). It is important to remember, however, as Ezra Klein at *Vox* points out, that we do not need to try to analyze whether the paper was being too provocative. The attack was an act of terrorism and act of violence, not a response to a legitimate provocation. It should also be noted that *Charlie Hebdo* describes itself as a "secular and atheist newspaper" and routinely

publishes material that is offensive to every major world religion.[50]

This explains, in part, why many U.S. news outlets did not reprint any of the *Charlie Hebdo* covers. Mark Memmott, writing for NPR's *The Two-Way* blog, said that NPR did not reprint any of the magazine's covers in part because they would give viewers the mistaken idea that the cartoons inside the publication are not as graphic as they actually are:

> Photos showing just a few of the magazine's covers could lead viewers to mistakenly conclude that *Charlie Hebdo* is only a bit edgier than other satirical publications. But a comprehensive display of *Charlie Hebdo*'s work would require posting images that go well beyond most news organizations' standards regarding offensive material.[51]

In essence, Memmott is arguing that to give readers a realistic view of what the cartoons are like would require violating NPR's rules for decency. The *New York Times* also declined to publish any of the most offensive *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons, including all of those that depicted the Prophet Muhammad. Margaret Sullivan, who was at the time the public editor at the *Times*, wrote in her column that while she understood the paper's reasons for not publishing the explicitly offensive cartoons that the magazine had run previously, she questioned why the paper had not run the cover from the week following the attack that showed a crying Muhammad holding a sign that loosely translated to "Sorry Charlie."[52]

The attacks in Paris bring back to mind the rioting and attacks that followed the publication (and republication) of the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. A Pew Research Center poll back in June 2006, at the time of the response to the Danish cartoons, asked whether Americans thought that the controversy was more about "Western disrespect" or "Muslim intolerance." Not surprisingly, Americans (by a 3-to-1 margin) blamed the problems on Muslim intolerance.[53]

The Danish cartoons were drawn in a range of styles. One made fun of the editors of *Jyllands-Posten* for trying to provoke attention, another put a Danish anti-immigration politician in a police lineup, and one portrayed the Prophet with a bomb in his turban with a quote from the Koran printed on the front.[54] At the time the cartoons were published, they drew relatively little attention. But in the winter of 2006, a number of European and American newspapers reprinted the cartoons. Following these reprints came rioting throughout the Middle East that led to dozens of deaths.[55]

So why was half the world infuriated over cartoons published in a conservative Danish newspaper? The answer is both simple and complex. At the heart of the controversy is Islam's prohibition on depicting the Prophet Muhammad. According to news accounts, it

is a sin for a Muslim to create such an image and the "ultimate sort of insult" for a non-Muslim to do so. The *Washington Post*'s culture critic Philip Kennicott gives a compelling explanation of why the cartoons were so controversial and why he believes that publishing them was a bad idea:

> They were created as a provocation—Islam generally forbids the making of images of its highest prophet—in a conservative newspaper, which wanted to make a point about freedom of speech in a liberal, secular Western democracy. Depending on your point of view, it was a stick in the eye meant to provoke debate, or just a stick in the eye.[56]

He points out that we would be unlikely to see many cartoons quite that offensive toward Christianity in the United States:

> No serious American newspaper would commission images of Jesus that were solely designed to offend Christians. And if one did, the reaction would be swift and certain. Politicians would take to the floors of Congress and call down thunder on the malefactors. Some Christians would react with fury and boycotts and flaming e-mails that couldn't be printed in a family newspaper; others would react with sadness, prayer, and earnest letters to the editor. There would be mayhem, though it is unlikely that semiautomatic weapons would be brandished in the streets.[57]

The response to the cartoons was massive: At least four people were killed when Afghan troops fired on demonstrators, the cartoonists themselves went into hiding for fear of being killed, two Jordanian newspaper editors who reprinted the cartoons were arrested, the cartoons were banned in South Africa and the editor who published them there received death threats, and protesters burned the Danish embassy in Beirut. American commentators have written lengthy pieces on the controversy, the effects of which still linger. As recently as 2012, a Somali man who attacked one of the cartoonists was sentenced to ten years in prison.[58]

While many American news outlets did not reprint the Danish cartoons, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* did reprint the most offensive of the images. Muslims in the Philadelphia area responded by picketing the paper, thus illustrating the commonsense idea that the proper response to offensive speech is more speech, not less. In fact, *Inquirer* editor Amanda Bennett said of the protesters: "Neither I nor the newspaper meant any disrespect to their religion or their prophet. I told them I was actually really proud of them for exercising their right to freedom of speech."[59] The cartoons also ran in the University of Illinois student paper, the *Daily Illini*, which sparked debate about the issue on the campus and led to peaceful protests.

But far more papers decided against running the cartoons. The *Boston Globe*, in an editorial, explained the paper's reasoning:

> Depicting Mohammed wearing a turban in the form of a bomb with a sputtering fuse is no less hurtful to most Muslims than Nazi caricatures of Jews or Ku Klux Klan caricatures of blacks are to those victims of intolerance. That is why the Danish cartoons will not be reproduced on these pages.[60]

Central and Latin America

Most of Latin American commercial broadcasting is dominated by North American, Mexican, and Brazilian programming. Brazil and Mexico have among the largest and most sophisticated broadcasting operations of any nation in the world. In fact, Mexico and Brazil export culture back to the United States through sports programming and the extremely popular telenovelas. Latin American broadcasters tend to follow the American for-profit model rather than the BBC's public-service orientation. One reason for the larger scope of South American broadcasting is that, unlike Africa (which we discuss shortly), Latin America has only two dominant languages to deal with—Spanish and Portuguese.[61] Since the 1990s, Latin American governments have grown more stable and less repressive, and the economies of these countries have grown. All these factors have contributed to the growth of the media industry in Latin America. Unlike in much of the world, newspaper circulation has been growing in Latin America, with more than one thousand newspapers being published and daily readership exceeding one hundred million.[62] Journalists in Central and South America do face threats of violence, however, coming from organized crime and paramilitary groups, and to a lesser extent from the government.[63]

▼ In March 2018, protesters in Sinaloa, Mexico, march to denounce the assassination of Mexican journalist Javier Valdez one year earlier and to call for justice for him and other journalists killed in the professional line of duty. In 2017, more journalists were killed in Mexico than in any other country.



RASHIDE FRIAS/AFP/Getty Images

Journalists working in Mexico have faced violence and murder covering crime and

corruption. Mexican journalist Javier Valdez was killed when he was shot near the newspaper he founded. The *Washington Post* reports that he was the fifth reporter in Mexico murdered in 2017. By the end of the year, a total of eleven journalists would be killed, the most in any single country, including Syria.[64] In a speech he gave in 2011, Valdez said, "To do journalism is to walk on an invisible line drawn by the bad guys—who are in drug trafficking and in government—in a field strewn with explosives. This is what most of the country is living through. One must protect oneself from everything and everyone, and there do not seem to be options or salvation, and often there is no one to turn to."[65] Valdez's specialty was reporting on the human toll of violence in Mexico.

Islamic Countries and the Middle East

The press in the Middle East seems to straddle the fence between social responsibility and authoritarian media control. For example, although Israel is a modern, liberal democracy, reporters there are required to submit stories on sensitive military issues to the government for approval.[66] During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, all news coming out of Israel via commercial media had to be cleared by military censors. Israeli authorities are also quick to control the dissident Palestinian press.

Even before the terrorist group ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) took over sections of the country, Syria was one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists, according to the group Reporters Without Borders. Between 2011 and 2018, more than 122 news workers were killed there, and more than sixty journalists were taken prisoner or hostage.[67] Along with Marie Colvin's death by rocket fire in Syria in 2012, one of the highest-profile deaths in Syria was that of American journalist/photographer James Foley, who was beheaded by Islamic State militants in August 2014 after having been held hostage since November 2012. This was not the first time Foley had been taken prisoner. He had previously been held prisoner by Libyan soldiers loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.[68] Even before the recent revolutions and violence in Syria and Libya, the press there was under authoritarian control at best. Jordan and Egypt both tightened their controls on the press after the Arab Spring movement in 2011.[69] Along with the official state-controlled media, many Arab nations also have *Al-Hayat*, a regional Arabic newspaper published in London, and the Al Jazeera satellite channel, which originates in Qatar. The other alternative is to listen to news from a neighboring Arab state, which will not hesitate to criticize the government of its neighbor. By listening to a range of reports, one can gain a more complete picture of the news.[70]

On July 22, 2014, *Washington Post* Iran correspondent Jason Rezaian was arrested by Iranian authorities, along with his wife, Yeganeh Salehi, an Iranian citizen who was also a reporter for a United Arab Emirates paper. Rezaian was taken to Iran's notorious Evin Prison where he was kept in solitary confinement for months. He was eventually held captive for more than five hundred days until he and three other prisoners were swapped for seven people imprisoned or charged in the United States. Salehi had been released on bail.[71] Imprisoned nearly five months before finally being charged during a closed court hearing without having an attorney, Rezaian's captivity was the longest in Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Almost a year after being arrested, Rezaian was tried on charges of "espionage, 'collaborating with hostile governments,' 'propaganda against the establishment,' and allegations that he gathered information 'about internal and foreign policy.'"[72]

The *Washington Post*, under the leadership of executive editor Martin Baron, petitioned the

United Nations for "urgent action" to get his release. Baron and other *Post* editors quickly met with U.S. government officials, including Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry. But for Baron and the rest of the people at the *Post*, getting information out of the U.S. government was challenging. "All along, the administration was reluctant to get into a lot of details with us," Baron said. Administration officials "remained concerned throughout, to the very end, that if they provided us details it would somehow end up being public."[73]

Up to the very last minute before Rezaian left Iran, whether he would actually get out was in question. As the jet left Iranian airspace, the former prisoners were served champagne and chocolate. *Post* owner and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos met Rezaian and his family once the Swiss plane landed in Germany, and brought them back to the United States in his private plane.[74] Iran has not been an easy place for journalists, both foreign and domestic, to work. At the time of Rezaian's release, there were still at least nineteen other "reporters, cartoonists and editors" being held by the government there.[75] In February 2018, two Iranian reporters working for a Sufi news website were badly beaten and arrested. Iran is currently ranked 164th out of 180 by the 2018 World Press Freedom Index.[76]

Satellite and internet delivery have vastly changed media in the Middle East, and they bypass authoritarian rule. During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, people in the Middle East received news from CNN, which they believed was being censored by the U.S. government. But Western media are not that influential in Arab-speaking countries. First, not everyone speaks English or French, the languages typically spoken on international channels. And the middle class, as well as members of Islamist movements in the Middle East, have an understandable thirst for regional media.[77]

Kai Hafez, a scholar at American University in Cairo, has distinguished three types of press in the Arab world: the "mobilized press," which is controlled by the government to promote the government; the "loyalist press," which is run by private industry but is supportive of people in power, especially those who can control access to resources such as paper and electricity; and finally the "diverse press," which is relatively free.[78]

Many of these countries espouse freedom of the press, and the level of criticism of the government that a country tolerates varies from administration to administration, from year to year. However, even in countries without an Islamist government, it can be a crime to "insult" the country, which puts definite limits on what can be reported.

The Importance of "Small" Media.

Long before we spoke of social media, so-called small media were significant channels for small-scale communication. Small media include fax machines, photocopy machines, and video cameras, along with computers, blogs, and mobile social media, such as Twitter and SMS text messages. Hafez has written about the importance of alternative independent

media—of which small media are a crucial component—in the Middle East. Although Palestinian media in the West Bank have been subject to Israeli censorship, Palestinians have been able to use the web to post accounts and images of demonstrations and violence that bypass government censorship.[79]

SECRET 2 ▸ During the Arab Spring protests and revolutions of 2011, social and mobile media were frequently credited as both a source of news about the protests and an organizing tool for the protesters. These small media alternatives have taken the spot formerly occupied by cheaply produced short-run magazines. The alternative-independent media provide for a range of voices, even in countries such as Iran that have strict Islamic control of the mainstream media (which shows us that, even in other parts of the world, Secret 2—There are no mainstream media—still holds).

Religion professor Fred Strickert notes that while the Israelis and Palestinians are still capable of manipulating the news, the internet allows for the expression of a wider range of views:

> Yes, the Palestinian Authority can still censor damaging video footage, as it did in the case of the mob lynching of two Israeli soldiers, and the Israeli government can put its spin on the news. But the truth is on the Internet for anyone who cares to find it.[80]

Whereas legacy media using internet and satellite delivery receive a great deal of popular attention, the small media have also done a good job of transmitting messages outside the realm of censorship. Following the disputed Iranian presidential elections in 2009 (discussed in Chapter 10), the Iranian government began to crack down on news media, going so far as to kick reporters out of the country.[81] The government blocked many forms of social media, reduced internet speed to block online video, shut down mobile phone towers, and threatened retaliation against those who used new media, such as mobile phones and the internet, to transmit information out of Iran. Legacy media, including CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, and even the BBC, had to turn to online video, blogs, and Twitter feeds of questionable reliability to report on what was happening within Iran. As social media expert Gaurav Mishra points out, mobile phone–based social media are increasingly going to be the medium through which news breaks.[82]

Old and New Media in the Islamic World.

Media in the Arab world are heavily controlled by the government, though the presence of satellite broadcasting and mobile technology is challenging governmental control. Until recently, it's been very difficult to get a handle on media use in the Middle East. But in 2013, researchers with Northwestern University in Qatar started taking a long-term, in-depth look at how people in Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates used and thought about a full range of media, the social and political climate in their countries, and the state of freedom of expression. The "Media Use in the Middle

East" study does not look at the same issues each year. For example, in 2015, the focus was on use of entertainment media and leisure time.[83] The countries included in the study have varied slightly over the years. The 2017 edition initially was not going to be able to include Egypt because of problems getting permission from the government, though the researchers did get clearance eventually. It was not soon enough, however, to include Egypt in the comparison data.

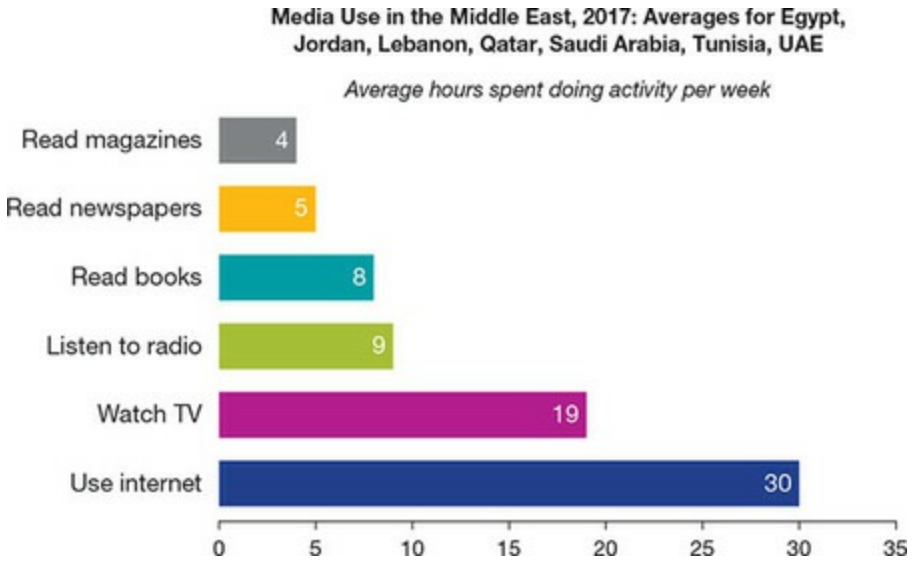
▼ Refugees from Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East recharge their mobile phones and other devices at a central charging station in a camp in Moria, Greece, in the spring of 2016. For many of the refugees, mobile phones are the only channel for communication they have access to.



NurPhoto/NurPhoto via Getty Images

The 2017 edition of the study found a decline in the percentage of people using almost all media since the first year of the study in 2013, except for the internet, which increased. Some of these declines were modest while others were more significant. Television use dropped from 98 percent to 93 percent; radio use dropped from 59 percent to 49 percent; and newspaper readership dropped the most, going from 47 percent to 25 percent. Internet usage, on the other hand, jumped from 63 percent to 84 percent. When it comes to time spent with the media, the internet was clearly the winner, with people in the region going online for an average of thirty hours per week. Television followed that with nineteen hours and radio with nine.[84] (See Figure 15.1.)

▲ Figure 15.1 Popularity of Various Media in the Middle East



Source: Data are from Everette E. Dennis, Justin D. Martin, and Robb Wood, "Media Use in the Middle East, 2017," Northwestern University in Qatar, 2017, http://www.mideastmedia.org.

SECRET 6 ▸ In the Arab world, online media are most definitely mobile media (Secret 6), with a higher percentage of people going online with their phones rather than their desktop or laptop computers. The one exception to this was Egypt, where desktop access narrowly beat mobile use. For Syrian refugees attempting to escape from ISIS, smartphones are often the only media they have. Budget Android phones can be purchased for under £100, and second-generation iPhones can be found for approximately £25.

Social media are everywhere, but what is popular in each country in the study varied dramatically. For example, 92 percent of the people in the United Arab Emirates used the messaging app WhatsApp, while only 7 percent of the people in Tunisia did. Facebook, on the other hand, was most popular in Lebanon with 77 percent using it, while only 22 percent of the people in Qatar used it.[85] Unsurprisingly, residents of most countries in the Middle East prefer their own country's media over the media from other Arab nations. The one exception was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where 53 percent of those surveyed preferred news from another Arab country. Given the extraordinarily high level of government control of the media there, this isn't the most unexpected result.

Egypt, which is more secular than much of the Arab world, has a large media industry and produces movies, music, and television programming for much of the Arab and Islamic world.[86] Access to television, especially direct-broadcast satellite signals, varies significantly throughout the Islamic nations of the Middle East. The Saudi Arabian monarchy built a substantial television network in the 1960s, in part to respond to anti-Saudi broadcasts coming into the country from Egypt. In March 1994, Saudi Arabia officially banned ownership of satellite receivers to satisfy religious conservatives who objected to Western programming. The ban has not been enforced, however, and both the dishes and the

receivers are readily available.

In the words of Reporters Without Borders, Saudi Arabia permits no independent media. In its 2018 World Press Freedom Index, the group states that those who violate state censorship laws can be detained without trial, be mistreated in captivity, and even be flogged. The kingdom was ranked 169th out of 180 countries for press freedom by the organization.[87]

Al Jazeera.

The most significant of the advertising-supported channels is Al Jazeera.[88] Broadcast via satellite from the small Arab country of Qatar since 1997, the channel is not censored by the government.[89] Al Jazeera has carried interviews with everyone from Osama bin Laden to Colin Powell and has been criticized for doing so by both the United States and Arab countries. During the current war in Iraq, Al Jazeera came to worldwide attention, presenting an Arab point of view to the fighting between the United States and Iraq. It has a regular audience of forty million, which dwarfs CNN or Fox in scope.[90]

In the Arab Middle East, satellite news channels that can cross over national borders are clearly the top source of international news, and Al Jazeera is the most popular of the many Arab-language satellite channels. It is the most watched, or perhaps the most important, though many claim to dislike the controversial channel. According to NPR's *On the Media*, a recent survey shows that only 10 percent of Arabs who have access to satellite TV never watch Al Jazeera. In Iraq, the Saudi Arabia–based Al Arabiya is popular. But American channel Alhurra is clearly the last choice, with 53 percent saying they never watch it. Interestingly enough, the Hezbollah channel, Al-Manar, is similarly unpopular.[91] Although some observers accuse Al Jazeera of being a pro-Arab propaganda channel, others have described it as the CNN of the Arab world. Perhaps neither label is completely fair or completely accurate. It would seem instead that Al Jazeera is committed to presenting an Arab view of the world. That is, it works at telling the news accurately, but it tells it from a clear point of view. (Interestingly enough, taking a page from the American media synergy playbook, there is also an Al Jazeera sports channel.) What makes Al Jazeera interesting is that while its headquarters are in Qatar, it tends to take a broad Arab point of view, rather than that of one particular country. Too often, all Arab or Muslim countries are seen in the West as being the same, rather than having distinctly different views. It's easy for Americans to forget that Iraq and Iran were at war with each other for at least ten years.[92] Al Jazeera was founded by Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the emir of Qatar, in an effort to diversify his nation's economy. He started the satellite news channel following the failure of a 1994 BBC experiment with an Arab-language, Saudi-financed station. Hiring 120 of the unemployed journalists from the project gave Al Jazeera its start. Although Western governments have been highly critical of Al Jazeera, the network has carried criticism of Qatar's government, the Palestinian Authority, the Jordanian government, the Kuwaiti

government, and the Israeli government.[93]

Al Jazeera journalists certainly don't receive special treatment by Arab governments. In fact, they are often targeted for the in-depth reporting. Three reporters for Al Jazeera, Peter Greste, Baher Mohamed, and Mohamed Fahmy, were arrested in December 2013, and were convicted of multiple offenses against the Egyptian government in the summer of 2014. Fahmy and Mohamed received presidential pardons and were released in September 2015 for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. Greste was released in February 2015 and sent back to his native Australia, apparently without having charges dropped.[94]

Questioning the Media

Can global news operations such as Al Jazeera rely on cell phones and cell phone video to report from war zones around the world? Are Twitter feeds from people in war zones a reliable source of news? Why or why not?

Africa

The African continent provides a prime example of the range of approaches to development media theory—from a strong social responsibility approach to out-and-out authoritarian controls. The mass media first came to Africa through the European colonial powers; they were created to serve the needs of the colonists. Newspapers and early broadcast stations covered only white news and ignored black Africans, or else treated them as "subhuman beings."[95] After independence, colonial media continued to exist in some countries, whereas in other countries the press was taken over by the new governments, which did not permit private media. Although the media were serving a new population, they continued to focus on the needs of the elite.

▼ South Africa's vibrant pop music scene has gained fans around the world. Groups such as the Mahotella Queens, pictured here, and Ladysmith Black Mambazo routinely draw crowds in the United States and Europe.



REUTERS/David Rae Morris

Africa is still largely rural, and its smaller towns often do not have newspapers. However, according to Tawana Kupe, a media scholar from Zimbabwe and South Africa, most countries have a dominant daily newspaper that is distributed primarily in the capital city. Newspaper circulation is limited by high levels of poverty and illiteracy.[96] Radio is the most important medium in Africa, but both radios and the batteries to run them are expensive, and transmission equipment often is not good enough to reach an entire country. Television is not available in many countries. Even where there are broadcasts, television

can be received only where there is reliable electrical service, primarily in urban areas. Most of the programming consists of old European, American, and Australian reruns. Although many African countries seek to use television and radio to foster development by teaching people how to improve their standard of living, most of the development programming consists of speeches by politicians calling for development.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reports that press freedom varies wildly across the continent, with many of the countries embracing a development theory of the press. A 2011 report from the CPJ notes that many African leaders are claiming that they cannot achieve what they say are contradictory goals of balancing economic and social stability with freedom of the press. This approach goes so far as to shape how sports are covered. A star Cameroonian soccer player complained to a Senegalese reporter after the journalist raised a critical question about the team's play, saying, "You journalists, certain journalists like you, you who do not want Africa to advance, you who do not want Cameroon to advance, you are always negative. Try to change a little."[97]

Cléa Kahn-Sriber of Reporters Without Borders said that press freedom is "grim" in sub-Saharan Africa: "Several countries have lapsed into conflict or have continued to be in a conflict situation. . . . And over the whole continent we see that the issue of security and the fight against terrorism is often an argument that is being used by governments to justify a crackdown on the press."[98]

Language continues to be an issue for African media. Many African nations use the former colonial language (typically French or English) in their nation-building efforts, but this tends to be the language of the educated class, not of the majority of the people.[99] Except in Kenya and Tanzania, which have a Swahili press, virtually no major newspapers are published in African languages.

It is tempting in the West to view Africa as something akin to South America, but unlike South America, Africa as a continent does not share common languages or cultures. Africa is exceedingly culturally diverse, with more languages spoken there than on any other continent in the world.[100] Politically, many of the countries are dominated by single-party or military governments, though there are notable exceptions, such as South Africa, Mali, and Ghana.

South Africa was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to have radio, and today it has the best-developed system in that area of the world. Most of the country's radio is handled by the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Following heavy censorship in South Africa during the apartheid era, the South African press in the early twenty-first century has an organization of publishers, journalists, and members of the public that can reprimand newspapers when necessary. A committee made up of lawyers and media professionals regulates the broadcast industry.[101] South African television broadcasts in seven different languages: English, Afrikaans, northern and southern Sotho, Tswana, Xhosa, and Zulu. As

you can see, language is a big barrier when you consider the linguistic diversity within just a single country—South Africa has eleven language groups. African media experts Osabuohien P. Amienyi and Gerard Igyor recognize this dilemma: "This plurality [of languages] presents broadcasting with the dilemma of how to fulfill the natural desire of every community to be addressed in its own language or dialect."[102] If stations hope to reach a large group with a single language, they are likely going to have to transmit in the languages of the colonial whites, typically English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish. This furthers the problem of programming that will be accessible primarily to urban elites and not the rural population who need the service the most.

South Africa has also been a major source of inspiration for Western pop music. Among the Western musicians who have worked at bringing African music to the forefront of American pop culture are Paul Simon, Peter Gabriel, and Talking Heads frontman David Byrne.[103] Simon, a singer and songwriter, was captivated by the sounds of South Africa's township jive and in 1985 traveled to Johannesburg to record there with artists such as Miriam Makeba.[104] This collaboration resulted in the best-selling album *Graceland* and a world tour. Township jive emerged as a style during the apartheid era in South Africa. The music combines traditional African drumming and rhythms with Western instruments to create a unique musical style. Among the South African musicians who have found success in the West are the a cappella men's choir Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the group Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens, and musician Johnny Clegg and his band Juluka. Groups such as Bongo Maffin have combined the South African pop music style with rhythm and blues, reggae, and rap.[105] African pop music is no newcomer to the United States. In 1961, the Tokens recorded a hit single, "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," which was based on an African chant.[106]

One thing that has inhibited world music's popularity in the United States is the language barrier, though language differences have not stopped people in other countries from listening to American music. "People around the world have been listening to American and British music for the last thirty years, very often not understanding the words but enjoying the ways people put things together," says producer D. A. "Jumbo" Vanrenen. "As Third World artists have access to the same recording studios, it's becoming easier to present their music in a clear way. Language becomes less important. People go for the dance rhythms and the fine quality of people's vocals."[107] You can hear this branch of world music on Public Radio International's Afropop Worldwide or on the BBC's world music programming.

▼ Russian president Vladimir Putin is rarely, if ever, challenged by the Russian media. News outlets in the former Soviet country are dominated by government control.



Alexander Nemenov/Getty Images

Russia and the Former Soviet Republics

Media developed slowly in the old Soviet Union if for no other reason than the vast scale of its empire, which covered one-sixth of the world at its peak, inhibited its development. Along with the more conventional media, such as radio, people in the Soviet Union made use of alternative media, such as sending broadcasts out over phone lines that would then be played in communities over a loudspeaker system. Under communism, there was no ideal of an independent press. The goal of newspapers and broadcasters was to support the goals of communism, not to be detached and critical external observers. Janis E. Overlock, who specializes in study of the media of the old Soviet empire, describes the problem:

Test Your Media Literacy

How Free Are the World's Media to Report the News?

As discussed in several spots earlier in this chapter, every year, the group Reporters Without Borders for Freedom of Information issues a report on the state of press freedom around the world. In it, the organization analyzes the degree of freedom that "journalists, news media, and netizens" have in 180 countries. Among the items quantified by the study are cultural pluralism, media independence, self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, infrastructure, and the level of violence targeted against journalists. Countries gain points for things that discourage or limit freedom of the press, and they have points deducted for behavior that encourages free speech. In the 2018 study, scores ranged from 0 to 100 with the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden ranked in the top three for freedom of speech, all with scores of between 7.6 and 10.1. The countries in last place all had scores between 84.20 and 88.87, and included Turkmenistan, Eritrea, and North Korea. And how did the United States score? Take a look at the report's summary. You might be surprised at where it was ranked. (Hint: We talked about the United States' ranking back in the section of this chapter on the four theories of the press.)[134]

You can see the complete report here: https://rsf.org/en/world-press-freedom-index

WHO is the source?

Who are Reporters Without Borders? What do they do?

WHAT do they say?

Which three nations had the best records on freedom of the press? Which three nations were at the bottom of the list? Where did the United States fall in the rankings? Was it up or down from the previous year?

WHAT evidence is there?

For each of the countries you've listed above, why did it get the rating it did? How does each country behave as a democracy (or an authoritarian state)?

HOW do you and your classmates feel about the rankings?

How would you describe each of the highest- and lowest-ranked countries' approaches to freedom of speech and of the press? Based on what you have read, how would you describe the United States' approach to freedom of the press? What do you think about the rankings? Are they fair? Why or why not?

> One of the main problems of the media in the countries of the former Soviet Union is a basic lack of understanding of the role of the media in a democracy. After years of Soviet domination, many of the governments as well as journalists view the media as a propaganda tool for the government.[108]

She further explains that even if the government professes a belief in the free press, that freedom simply doesn't exist within the culture.[109]

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian press has had a troubled existence. Although many of the media are now in private hands, they are not necessarily free of government control, and they experience very high levels of self-censorship. The

independent media in Russia are owned by a small group of businesspeople who support the government and want to maintain control of their own media monopolies.

Russian media scholar Nataliya Rostova told the *Huffington Post* that Russian president Vladimir Putin keeps tight control over the Russian media, appointing the editors and managers of all major media outlets either officially or unofficially. "The editors and directors have so-called weekly meetings with the presidential administration to talk about the upcoming events, what will be significant in the next week, what the administration wants to cover," she said. "Additionally, media outlets are dependent on state funding and the TV advertising market is almost monopolized as well."[110]

Journalists who have been too critical of the Russian government have found themselves dead under mysterious circumstances. In April 2018, Russian journalist Maksim Borodin died after falling from his apartment's fifth-story balcony. Police say his apartment was locked from the inside and that they are not treating his death as suspicious.[111] In 2017, the *Washington Post* ran a story on ten critics of Putin who died violently or in suspicious circumstances, including several who were journalists.[112] Russia was ranked 148th in the 2018 World Press Freedom Index. The report states that there are at least five journalists currently being detained by the government along with many bloggers.[113]

Russian media has also been suspected of being involved in international propaganda efforts to affect elections in multiple Western nations. As we discussed in Chapter 10, Russian news organizations Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik spread false stories on social media during the 2016 U.S. presidential election through both regular messages and paid ads.[114]

Asia

Although Asia has many countries and cultures, in most of its nations, the broadcast media are either government controlled or run by public corporations. In many of these countries, we see a development philosophy for the media, in which broadcasters are expected to work to support the economic and social development goals of the government. China, Japan, and India stand apart from the rest of the continent as major media forces. Communist and former Soviet bloc countries, such as North Korea, continue to operate under the old Soviet-style communist model. Southeast Asia, which includes countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, tends to operate under a development philosophy. This can be seen in particular in Malaysia, where the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia sets guidelines on how broadcasters can portray Malaysian education, art, culture, and identity.[115]

India.

As of 2013, approximately 60 percent of India's households—an astonishing 129 million—had television sets.[116] Residents in about 40 percent of Indian households read a newspaper as well. A report on Indian media estimates that 90 percent of India's population has access to a radio set. Print media in India are heavily supported by advertising, and hitting a balance between serving the public and making advertisers happy is a major issue.

Newspapers are big business in India, with a daily circulation of seventy-two million, second only to China, which circulates eighty-five million copies a day. Whereas the big newspapers face the same sort of competitive pressures from newer media that U.S. papers do, community newspapers dealing with local issues are seen as a growth industry.[117] Journalists in the Kashmir and Chhattisgarh regions face both censorship and physical violence from a variety of sources, including police and security forces, criminal groups, and political party supporters.[118] All India Radio (AIR) is the dominant radio service and the exclusive source of radio news and public affairs programming. There are broadcast television stations in India, but the television market is dominated by cable and satellite networks. As was discussed at the beginning of the chapter, television is going through a period of growth because of the rise of commercially run satellite channels. Internet access is growing, especially through cybercafés and mobile phones, and India's major newspapers all have significant web presences.

When a group of terrorists killed 171 people and held the city of Mumbai, India, hostage for more than sixty hours, local journalists had to figure out how to respond to the story.[119] Arnab Goswami, then chief editor of *Times Now*, India's largest satellite news channel, said that the Indian government got very nervous about media coverage of the attacks, fearing that the reports were helping the terrorists. At one point, during the early phases of the

attacks, the government shut down television news for forty-five minutes. But Goswami said that when the government cut off the news flow, the response from viewers was

> massive, massive. . . . Every single phone was ringing. People were watching us so closely that if we were off for five seconds they would react, because cable and satellite television is largely the only form of receiving information at a time like this.[120]

▼ At a time when numerous American newspapers are downsizing, the Indian newspaper industry is booming. Local print newspapers saw double-digit growth in 2017.



Subhendu Sarkar/Getty Images

Goswami said that he and his reporters often did not report everything they knew for fear of endangering people and drawing government censorship. He told NPR's *On the Media*,

> India has had a largely . . . closed media with only state-run television for 40 years after its independence—that's 1947 to '87. The television media in its present form and private TV channels are only 10 years old. And the power of the television media and news channels is something that sometimes even scares the government. . . . We are fighting for self-regulation, and it is very important that we don't give the opportunity for anyone in the government to accuse us of giving away these kinds of details. That was uppermost in my mind when, on several occasions, I stopped my reporters from giving away such information.[121]

In one case, there were reports of explosives found at a railway station. Near the railway

station, thousands of people were gathered at the Gateway of India. Goswami said that if the news of the explosives had been televised, there might have been a deadly panic. Instead, he called editors at half a dozen other television stations, and they all agreed not to report it.

Despite being the world's largest democracy, India does not have a particularly free press, being ranked 138th out of 180 by the 2018 World Press Freedom Index. At least three journalists were murdered in connection to their work in 2017, and three more were killed for their work in March 2018. Laws in India allow journalists to be imprisoned for life for criticizing the government. The Index reports that no journalists have been convicted of this so far, "but the threat encourages self-censorship."[122]

China.

Until the 1970s and 1980s, the media in China were unapologetically political and propagandistic. The role of the media was not to entertain or market products; instead, they promoted public policies, such as water conservation programs; provided education to rural areas; and mobilized the public after natural disasters or industrial accidents.[123]

Over the past thirty years, Chinese media offerings and availability have changed rapidly. In 1978, China had fewer than one television set per hundred people. As of 2010, China had become the world's largest television market with more than 378 million households with television, and more than 180 million homes with multichannel television (i.e., cable/satellite). The average household watches approximately twenty-one hours per week. While international channels have only limited availability in China, local stations can get foreign programming blocks to put on the air.[124] The number of newspapers has similarly expanded, from 42 papers in 1968, most of which were run by the Communist Party, to approximately 1,900 newspapers in 2016.[125]

Talk radio is the most open mass medium in China. Prior to the 1990s, radio provided primarily government propaganda. Now lively call-in programs have audience members talking about controversial topics without having to identify themselves. Although party officials have told talk show hosts what they ought to be talking about, the hosts have violated these rules without punishment.[126]

SECRET 6 ▸ In China, as in the United States, online media are mobile media (Secret 6). As of 2011, China had more than 920 million mobile phone users. Of these, 100 million are registered with an app store, indicating that they use their phone for accessing the internet, and 35 million use mobile payments. China also has more than 640 million total people who are actively online.[127] Mobile phones serve as a major channel for the flow of news. Chinese phone users tend to upgrade their phones frequently, so new mobile technology spreads through the country fairly rapidly.[128]

▼ A woman cycles past a building covered in portraits of Chinese president Xi Jinping in

Shanghai. Dissident Chang Ping says relatives have been abducted after he was linked to a letter criticizing the president.



AP/Associated Press

China continued to be ranked 176th out of 180 by the 2018 World Press Freedom Index, ranking just above the bottom four of Syria, Turkmenistan, Eritrea, and North Korea.[129] China is famous for its so-called Great Firewall that monitors all internet traffic going in and out of the country.[130] When your author was there in 2013, there was no access to Facebook or other social media sites, Google was censored, and many news sites and blogs could not be accessed. "Making unauthorized criticisms" is against the law. More than fifty journalists and bloggers were being detained by the government as of 2018 under dangerous conditions. In 2017, Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo and dissident blogger Yang Tongyan both died of cancer that was left untreated while they were being held by the Chinese government.[131]

Japan.

Japan is in many ways the technological heart of our modern media world. Many of our essential electronic media devices come from Japan. Broadcasting started in the country in 1925 and was run by the government for the next twenty-five years. In the era after World War II, U.S. policy helped shape what Japan offered, which became a mix of public and commercial broadcasting.[132] NHK is Japan's public broadcasting corporation, and it provides both domestic and international service. It is financed through a fee that all television owners must pay. Japan has relatively high levels of television broadcast

viewership. The biggest difference between Japanese and U.S. broadcasting is that Japan has a much more even balance between commercial and public broadcasting.

The most popular category of magazines in Japan is not fashion, lifestyle, or hobbies; it's manga, or comic books. The word *manga* means comics or amusing drawings, and according to *Publishers Weekly*, the genre accounts for 40 percent of all books and magazines published in Japan. In the United States, manga-style comics are most popular with teenage boys and tend to feature action stories. Some examples are *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, *Pokémon*, and *Sailor Moon*. In Japan, manga cover just about every magazine genre. Douglas Wolk, who has covered manga in the United States, writes, "There are hundreds of manga for girls and for boys, men's manga and women's manga, romance manga, political manga, baseball manga, mah-jongg manga, and more."[133] Plots can range from the story of a teenage girl who becomes a superhero after using magic eye shadow to one that describes the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. There's even one that gives advice on how to get a divorce. Manga targeted at adults often contain violent or pornographic imagery.

Media Transformations

Are We Really Living in a Media World?

Marshall McLuhan is often better known for his catchphrases than for what he actually wrote. Aside from "the medium is the message," discussed in Chapter 2, he is best known for popularizing the term *global village*. He first used it in his 1962 book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, in which he discusses how electronic media, primarily radio and television, help people live and interact globally. Since the rise of the internet, it would seem that we are truly living in a world where we can interact with people in any place at any time. But this global village may be largely an illusion.

There is no question that through our media—what McLuhan would call the extension of our senses—we are able to travel to places we could never reach otherwise. In an IMAX theater, we can travel to the bottom of the ocean off the Grand Banks near Newfoundland and visit the wreck of the *Titanic*. Through the photos from the Mars rovers *Curiosity, Spirit*, and *Opportunity*, we can see into the craters on a distant planet. On a more down-to-earth scale, our electronic media take us into war zones, into the aftermath of disasters, and to celebrations in cities or countries we would likely never visit. But are we really becoming members of a global village, or are we just sightseers who get a glimpse of something we can't really understand?

Media reporter Ken Auletta, whose work we have discussed extensively elsewhere in this book, suggests that perhaps there is not a single wired global village, but rather hundreds or thousands of them, "each broadcasting in its own language, with its own anchor and news team, its own weather and sports and local slant."[139] Communications scholar W. Russell Neuman suggests that McLuhan's global village concept is misleading: "McLuhan envisioned Americans seeing what was going on live in an African village. But Americans may not want to watch that. And perhaps vice versa."[140]

HOW often do you communicate with someone who lives in another country? How often, if ever, do you communicate with someone who doesn't speak English? How do you communicate with that person?

DO you think that having access to a global communication network gives you a better understanding of people who live on the other side of the world?

DOES our new communication technology make the world a better place? Why or why not?



Activate your interactive ebook to watch the Media Transformation video that accompanies this story!

Manga started out in the tenth century as illustrated Buddhist scrolls. By the seventeenth century, silk-bound books created using woodblock printing and featuring text and drawings about actors and actresses became popular. Current manga can be the size of a small telephone book.[135] Estimates suggest that 95 percent of Japan's population reads manga on a regular basis.[136]

SECRET 3 ▸ The United States has been accused of imposing its culture on the world by exporting media products, but the same charges have been leveled against Japan, especially by other Asian countries. However, attempts to keep comics out of those countries have only led to the publication of pirate editions.[137] Manga are growing in popularity in the United States. They are based primarily on books connected to anime cartoon programs. Featuring characters with spiky hair, big heads, and big eyes, manga are seen by young people as exciting, dynamic, and sexy. Many American translations of Japanese manga are

printed to be read from the back of the book to the front, just as they would be in Japan. Why? In part because it's cheaper than redoing the pages in the American front-to-back style, but also because teen readers see the reverse style as cool.[138] Manga characters have also shown up in video games and on a wide range of products, such as clothing and plush toys. Manga's popularity in the United States is also an example of Secret 3—Everything from the margin moves to the center.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary ▶▶

Not all countries take the same approach to the relationship between the government and the press. This relationship can take a variety of forms, depending on the form of government and the culture of the country. Theories of the press include the authoritarian, communist, libertarian, social responsibility, and developmental theories. Although these normative theories of the press still have considerable value today, they have to be reexamined in terms of how the world has changed since they were first discussed in the 1950s. An alternative to the normative theories of the press is to look at the media dimensions of control, finance, programming goals, target audience, and feedback mechanisms.

Media in Western democracies generally operate under a combination of libertarian and social responsibility theories. Many countries have free speech as a goal but are concerned about preserving their national cultures from the power of the American media industry.

Latin America has a vibrant media industry, especially in Brazil and Mexico. These countries export Spanish-language programming, especially sports programs and telenovelas, to the United States.

The electronic media have a powerful presence in the Middle East, and satellite television is able to bypass national borders and bring outside content into otherwise closed media systems. The most popular source of news in the Arab-speaking countries of the Middle East is the satellite news channel Al Jazeera. Small media also have a significant presence in the Middle East because of their ability to bypass official government censorship.

Media in Africa face a number of problems, including the lack of a common language, poor economies, and a lack of newsprint and reliable electricity.

While the news media in the old Soviet Union were designed to serve the needs of the government and the Communist Party, they went through a brief period of relative freedom in the 1980s. Since that time, the government has cracked down on free speech, and the press tends to serve the specific goals of its owners.

Media in Asia tend to follow either a social responsibility theory or development theory, depending on the region. The major exception is Japan, which has strong public and private broadcasting businesses. Japan also exports content and media technology to the West and to the rest of the world.

Reporting around the world, and especially in the Iraqi war zone, is dangerous for reporters, with forty-two journalists killed on the job in 2008, including eleven in Iraq. Journalists also face the risks of injury and kidnapping.

Media theorist Marshall McLuhan suggested in the 1960s that the world would become a global village, linked together through electronic media. Although these media have become far more pervasive today than when McLuhan was writing, it is unclear whether they are bringing the world together or breaking it up into a series of disconnected villages.

Key Terms ▶▶

authoritarian theory 407
communist theory 408
libertarian theory 409
social responsibility theory 410
development theory 410
Al Jazeera 418
small media 419

Review Questions ▶▶

1. Who was Marie Colvin? What was her approach to covering wars? How did she die?
2. Why do some people think there should be a development theory to go with the original four theories of the press? What do critics say is wrong with that theory?
3. How does freedom of speech in the United States differ from that in Canada or France?
4. How do media in Africa differ from media in South America?
5. Why are social media and small media important in the Middle East?

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Glossary

above the fold:
: A term used to refer to a prominent story; it comes from placement of a news story in a broadsheet newspaper above the fold in the middle of the front page.

actual malice:
: A reckless disregard for the truth or falsity of a published account; this became the standard for libel plaintiffs who were public figures or public officials after the Supreme Court's decision in *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan.*

advertising:
: Defined by the American Marketing Association as "any paid form of nonpersonal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor."

advertorial:
: Advertising materials in magazines designed to look like editorial content rather than paid advertising.

advocacy ads:
: Advertising designed to promote a particular point of view rather than a product or service. Can be sponsored by a government, corporation, trade association, or nonprofit organization.

agenda-setting theory:
: A theory of media effects that says that the media tell the public not what to think but rather what to think *about*—thus the terms of public discourse are set by what is covered in the media.

Al Jazeera:
: The largest and most viewed Arabic-language satellite news channel. It is run out of the country of Qatar and has a regular audience of forty million viewers.

Alien and Sedition Acts:
: Laws passed in 1798 that made it a crime to criticize the government of the United States.

alphabets:
: A form of writing in which letters represent individual sounds. Sound-based alphabet writing allows any word to be written using only a few dozen unique symbols.

alternative papers:
: Weekly newspapers that serve specialized audiences such as racial minorities, gays and lesbians, and young people.

analog recording:
: An electromechanical method of recording in which a sound is translated into analogous electrical signals that are then applied to a recording medium. Analog recording media included acetate or vinyl discs and magnetic tape.

ancillary, or secondary, markets:
: Movie revenue sources other than the domestic box office. These include foreign box office, video rights, and television rights, as well as tie-ins and product placements.

anonymous audience:
: An audience the sender does not personally know. These are not anonymous, isolated people who have no connection to anyone else; they simply are anonymous in their audience status.

ARPAnet:
: The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network; the first nationwide computer network, which became the first major component of the internet.

authoritarian theory:
: A theory of appropriate press behavior that says the role of the press is to be a servant of the government, not a servant of the citizenry.

Bay Psalm Book:
: The first book published in North America by the Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The book went through more than fifty editions and stayed in print for 125 years.

Big Four networks:
: The broadcast landscape we know today: the Big Three networks plus the Fox network.

Big Three networks:
: The original television broadcast networks: NBC, CBS, and ABC.

blacklist:
: A group of people banned from working in the movie industry in the late 1940s and 1950s because they were suspected of being communists or communist sympathizers. Some of them, such as a few screenwriters, were able to work under assumed names, but others never worked again in the industry.

block bookings:
: Requiring a theater owner to take a whole series of movies in order to get a few desirable, headliner films. This system was eventually found to violate antitrust laws.

blockbuster era:
: A period from the late 1970s to the present day in which movie studios make relatively expensive movies that have a large, predefined audience. These movies, usually chock-full of special effects, are packaged with cable deals and marketing tie-ins, and they can be extremely lucrative if they are able to attract large repeat audiences.

bloggers:
: People who post their thoughts, typically with the most recent posts at the top of the page, on a regularly updated website.

brand image:
: The image attached to a brand and the associated product that gives the product a personality or identity that makes it stand out from similar products and stick in the mind of the consumer.

brand name:
: A word or phrase attached to prepackaged consumer goods so that they can be better promoted to the general public through advertising and so that consumers can distinguish a given product from the competition.

brick-and-mortar stores:
: Stores that have a physical presence at which you can shop.

British invasion:
: The British take on classic American rock 'n' roll, blues, and R&B transformed rock 'n' roll and became internationally popular in the 1960s with groups such as the Beatles and, later, the Rolling Stones and the Who.

broadband service:
: A high-speed continuous connection to the internet using a cable modem from a cable television provider or a digital subscriber line from a phone company.

broadsheet newspapers:
: Standard-sized newspapers, which are generally 17 by 22 inches.

business-to-business (trade) ads:
: Advertising that promotes products and services directly to other businesses rather than to the general consumer market.

categorical imperative:
: Kant's idea of a moral obligation that we should act in a way in which we would be willing to have everyone else act; also known as the principle of universality.

chains:
: Corporations that control a significant number of newspapers and other media outlets.

channel:
: The medium used to transmit the encoded message.

citizen journalism:
: Journalism created by people other than professional journalists, often distributed over the internet.

clutter:
: The large number of commercials, advertising, and other nonprogramming messages and interruptions that compete for consumer attention on radio, television, and now the internet.

communication:
: How we socially interact at a number of levels through messages.

communist theory:
: A theory of appropriate press behavior that says the press is to be run by the government to serve the government's own needs.

community antenna television (CATV):
: An early form of cable television used to distribute broadcast channels in communities with poor television reception.

community press:
: Weekly and daily newspapers serving individual communities or suburbs instead of an entire metropolitan area.

compact disc (CD):
: A digital recording medium that came into common use in the early 1980s. CDs can hold approximately seventy minutes of digitally recorded music.

computer-generated imagery (CGI):
: Movie special effects created digitally using computers. Sometimes known as computer animation.

concept album:

An album by a solo artist or group that contains related songs on a common theme or even a story, rather than a collection of unrelated hits or covers.

consumer magazines:
Publications targeting an audience of like-minded consumers.

cookies:
Tiny files that websites create to identify visitors and potentially track their actions on the site and the web.

correlation:
The process of selecting, evaluating, and interpreting events to give structure to the news. The media assist the process of correlation by persuasive communication through editorials, commentary, advertising, and propaganda and by providing cues that indicate the importance of each news item.

country music:
Originally referred to as hillbilly or "old-timey" music, this genre evolved out of Irish and Scottish folk music, Mississippi blues, and Christian gospel music and grew in the 1950s and 1960s with the so-called Nashville sound.

cover lines:
Teaser headlines on magazine covers used to shock, intrigue, or titillate potential buyers.

covers:
Songs recorded (or covered) by someone other than the original artist. In the 1950s, it was common for white musicians to cover songs originally played by black artists, but now artists commonly cover all genres of music.

CPM:
Cost per thousand exposures to the target audience—a figure used in media planning evaluation.

crisis:
Any situation that is perceived by the public as being damaging to the reputation or image of an organization. Not all problems develop into crises, but once a situation develops into a crisis, it can be damaging to an organization's reputation.

critical theory:
A school of thought that grew out of the time period between World War I and World War II that addressed the connection between ideas and values, the context of the development of ideas, and the commodification of culture.

cultivation analysis:
: An approach to analyzing the effects of television viewing that argues that watching significant amounts of television alters the way an individual views the nature of the surrounding world.

cutting the cord:
: Replacing traditional paid video services, such as cable or satellite television, with internet-based streaming video services.

decoding:
: The process of translating a signal from a mass medium into a form that the receiver can understand and then interpreting the meaning of the message itself.

demographics:
: The study of audience members' gender, race, ethnic background, income, education, age, educational attainment, and the like; a method typically used to analyze potential markets for products and programs.

development theory:
: A theory of appropriate press behavior that states that developing nations may need to implement press controls in order to promote industry, national identity, and partnerships with neighboring nations.

digital-first strategy:
: An approach to magazine publishing where online and electronic editions are more important than preserving circulation and revenue from print editions.

digital natives:
: Online media that do not have a traditional legacy media component; online-only media.

digital recording:
: A method of recording sound—for example, that used to create CDs—that involves storing music in a computer-readable format known as binary information.

dime novels:
: Inexpensive paperback books that sold for as little as five cents (despite their name). They were especially popular during the Civil War era.

direct-action message:
: An advertising message designed to get consumers to go to a particular place to do something specific, such as purchasing a product, obtaining a service, or engaging in a behavior.

direct-broadcast satellite (DBS):
: A low-earth-orbit satellite that provides television programming via a small, pizza-sized satellite antenna; DBS is a competitor to cable TV.

disco:
: The name of the heavily produced techno club dance music of the 1970s, which grew out of the urban gay male subculture, with significant black and Latino influences. In many ways, disco defined the look and feel of 1970s pop culture, fashion, and film.

domestic novels:
: Novels written in the nineteenth century by and for women that told the story of women who overcame tremendous problems to end up in prosperous middle-class homes.

drive time:
: The morning and afternoon commutes in urban areas; the captive audience makes this a popular time to advertise on radio.

e-book reader:
: A portable device for viewing, and sometimes selling, electronic books and other texts. Among the most popular are the line of Amazon Kindles.

economy of abundance:
: An economy in which there are as many or more goods available as there are people who want to or have the means to buy them.

electronic mail (email):
: A message sent from one computer user to another across a network.

embarrassment:
: Invasion of privacy where a journalist publishes something that is true but embarrassing and not newsworthy about a person.

emojis:
: A word borrowed from Japanese that refers to small icons that are used to express ideas and emotions in SMS and social media messages.

encoding:
: The process of turning the sender's ideas into a message and preparing the message for transmission.

engineering consent:
: The application of the principles of psychology and motivation to influencing public opinion and creating public support for a particular position.

entertainment:
: Media communication intended primarily to amuse the audience.

equal time provision:
: An FCC policy that requires broadcast stations to make equivalent amounts of broadcast time available to all candidates running for public office.

eSports:
: Organized video game team competition for an audience on streaming, cable, or broadcast television. Can also be played in front of a live audience.

ethics:
: A rational way of deciding what is good for individuals or society. Ethics provide a way to choose between competing moral principles and help people decide in cases where there is not a clear-cut right or wrong answer.

fairness doctrine:
: A former FCC policy that required television stations to "afford reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance."

false light:
: Invasion of privacy in which a journalist publishes untrue statements that alter a person's public image in a way that he or she cannot control.

feature-length film:
: A theatrical movie that runs more than one hour.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC):
: The federal agency charged with regulating telecommunications, including radio and television broadcasting.

font:
: All the characters of a typeface in a particular size and style. The term *font* is typically used interchangeably today with the word *typeface.*

format radio:
: A style of radio programming designed to appeal to a narrow, specific audience. Popular formats include country, contemporary hits, all talk, all sports, and oldies.

45-rpm disc:
: This record format was developed in the late 1940s by RCA. It had high-quality sound but held only about four minutes of music per side. It was the ideal format for marketing popular hit songs to teenagers, though.

#gamergate:
: A series of attacks on women in the video game industry that is framed as a critique of video gaming journalism ethics.

geographics:
: The study of where people live; a method typically used to analyze potential markets for products and programs.

girl group:
: A musical group composed of several women singers who harmonize together. Groups such as the Shirelles, the Ronettes, and the Shangri-Las, featuring female harmonies and high production values, were especially popular in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

golden age of radio:
: A period from the late 1920s until the 1940s, during which radio was the dominant medium for home entertainment.

golden mean:
: Aristotle's notion that ethical behavior comes from hitting a balance, a "just-right point between excess and defect."

gramophone:
: A machine invented by Emile Berliner that could play prerecorded sound on flat discs rather than cylinders.

group communication:
: Communication in which one person is communicating with an audience of two or more people. The roles of communicator and audience can be changing constantly.

hacker ethic:
: A set of values from the early days of interactive computing that holds that users should have absolute control over their computer systems and free access to all information contained on those computers. The hacker ethic shaped much of the development of the internet.

halftone:
: An image produced by a process in which photographs are broken down into a series of dots that appear in shades of gray on the printed page.

HD radio:
: Sometimes also referred to as high-definition radio, this technology provides listeners with CD-quality sound and the choice of multiple channels of programming, but it has not achieved a high level of popularity.

heterogeneous audience:
: An audience made up of a mix of people who differ in age, sex, income, education, ethnicity, race, religion, and other characteristics.

high-definition television (HDTV):
: A standard for high-quality digital broadcasting that features a high-resolution picture, wide-screen format, and enhanced sound.

high fidelity (hi-fi):
: A combination of technologies that allowed recordings to reproduce music more accurately, with higher high notes and deeper bass, than was possible with previous recording technologies.

hip-hop:
: A cultural movement that originated in the 1970s and 1980s that features four main elements: MCing, or rapping over music; DJing, or playing recorded music from multiple sources; B-boying, a style of dancing; and graffiti art.

Hollywood Ten:
: A group of ten writers and directors who refused to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee about their political activities. They were among the first people in Hollywood to be blacklisted.

House Un-American Activities Committee:
: A congressional committee chaired by Parnell Thomas that held hearings on the influence of communism on Hollywood in 1947. These activities mirrored a wider effort to root out suspected communists in all walks of American life.

hypertext:
: Material in a format containing links that allow the reader to move easily from one section to another and from document to document. The most commonly used hypertext documents are web pages.

hypertext markup language (HTML):
: One of the three major components of the web; the programming language used to create and format web pages.

hypertext transfer protocol (http):
: One of the three major components of the web; a method of sending text, graphics, or anything else over the internet from a server to a web browser.

ideograph:
: An abstract symbol that stands for a word or phrase. The written forms of the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese languages make use of ideographs.

inclusive access:
: Where a textbook publisher licenses textbooks and other course materials to a school so that all students have access to them at a reduced cost.

indirect-action message:
: An advertising message designed to build the image of and demand for a product, without specifically urging that a particular action be taken at a particular time and place.

industrialization:
: The movement from work done by hand using muscle or water power in small shops to mass production of goods in factories that used energy sources such as steam power or electricity.

instant messaging (IM):
: Email systems that allow two or more users to chat with one another in real time, hold virtual meetings that span multiple cities or even countries, and keep track of which of their "buddies" are currently logged on to the system.

integrated marketing communication (IMC):
: An overall communication strategy for reaching key audiences using advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and interactive media.

internet:
: "A diverse set of independent networks, interlinked to provide its users with the appearance of a single, uniform network"; a mass medium like no other, incorporating elements of interpersonal, group, and mass communications.

Internet of Things:
: Noncomputer devices that surround our lives that collect data and transmit it over the internet.

interpersonal communication:
: Communication, either intentional or accidental, between two people. It can be verbal or nonverbal.

intranets:
: Computer networks designed to communicate with people within an organization. They are used to improve two-way internal communication and contain tools that allow for direct feedback. They are a tool for communicating with internal publics.

intrapersonal communication:
: Communication you have with yourself. How you assign meaning to the world around you.

intrusion:
: Invasion of privacy by physical trespass into a space surrounding a person's body or onto property under his or her control.

jazz journalism:
: A lively, illustrated style of newspapering popularized by the tabloid papers in the 1920s.

kinetoscope:
: An early peep show–like movie projection system developed by Thomas Edison that could be used only by an individual viewer.

legacy media:
: The traditional media, often owned by large corporations. These may include newspapers, magazines, book publishers, and television networks.

libel:
: A published statement that unjustifiably exposes someone to ridicule or contempt; for a statement to be libel, it must satisfy the three elements of defamation, identification, and publication.

libertarian theory:
: A theory of appropriate press behavior that says the press does not belong to the government but is instead a separate institution that belongs to the people and serves as an independent observer of the government.

Linotype:
: A typesetting machine that let an operator type at a keyboard rather than pick each letter out by hand. The Linotype was the standard for typesetting until phototypesetting became common in the 1970s.

literary magazines:
: Publications that focus on serious essays and short fiction.

local advertising:
: Advertising designed to get people to patronize local stores, businesses, or service providers.

local cable television systems:
: The companies that provide cable television service directly to consumers' homes.

long-playing record (LP):
: A record format introduced by Columbia Records in 1948. The more durable LP could reproduce twenty-three minutes of high-quality music on each of two sides and

was a technological improvement over the 78-rpm.

long tail:
: The portion of a distribution curve where a limited number of people are interested in buying a lot of different products.

magazine:
: A periodical that contains articles of lasting interest. Typically, magazines are targeted at a specific audience and derive income from advertising, subscriptions, and newsstand sales.

mass communication:
: When an individual or institution uses technology to send a message to a large, mixed audience, most of whose members are not known to the sender.

mass media:
: The technological tools, or channels, used to transmit the messages of mass communication.

mean world syndrome:
: The perception of many heavy television watchers of violent programs that the world is a more dangerous and violent place than facts and statistics bear out.

media literacy:
: Audience members' understanding of the media industry's operation, the messages delivered by the media, the roles media play in society, and how audience members respond to these media and their messages.

media planning:
: The process central to a successful ad campaign of figuring out which media to use, buying the media at the best rates, and then evaluating how effective the purchase was.

media relations:
: Two-way interactions between PR professionals and members of the press. These can involve press conferences, press releases, video news releases, or interviews. Typically, media relations involve the placement of unpaid messages within the standard programming or news content of the medium.

message:
: The content being transmitted by the sender to the receiver.

misappropriation:
: Invasion of privacy by using a person's name or image for commercial purposes

without his or her permission.

modernization:
: The process of change from a society in which people's identities and roles are fixed at birth to a society where people can decide who they want to be, where they want to live, what they want to do, and how they want to present themselves to the world.

morals:
: An individual's code of behavior based on religious or philosophical principles. Morals define right and wrong in ways that may or may not be rational.

Mosaic:
: The first easy-to-use graphical web browser, developed by a group of student programmers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

MP3:
: Short for Moving Picture Experts Group audio layer 3; a standard for compressing music from CDs or other digital recordings into computer files that can be easily exchanged on the internet.

muckrakers:
: Progressive investigative journalists typically publishing in magazines in the early years of the twentieth century.

multiplex:
: A group of movie theaters with anywhere from three to twenty screens that share a common box office and concession stand. Largely a suburban phenomenon at first, the multiplex replaced the old urban Art Deco movie palaces.

national advertising:
: Advertising designed to build demand for a nationally available product or service and that is not directing the consumer to local retail or service outlets.

native advertising:
: Advertising materials mixed in with articles and written by staff writers designed to look like editorial content rather than paid advertising.

Net neutrality:
: Rules that would require internet service providers to give equal access to all online content providers.

network:
: A company that provides common programming to a large group of broadcast stations.

noise:
: Interference with the transmission of a message. This can take the form of semantic, mechanical, or environmental noise.

non-notated music:
: Music such as a folk song or jazz solo that does not exist in written form.

obscenity:
: Sexually explicit material that is legally prohibited from being published.

ombudsman:
: A representative of a publication's readers who takes the point of view of those who purchase or consume the news; also known as a reader's representative or audience advocate.

open contract:
: An arrangement that allows advertising agencies to sell space in any publication (and eventually on broadcast outlets as well) rather than just a limited few.

opinion leaders:
: Influential community members who invest substantial amounts of time learning about their own area of expertise, such as politics. Less well-informed friends and family members frequently turn to them for advice about the topic.

opinion leadership:
: A two-step process of persuasion that uses respected and influential individuals to deliver messages with the hope of influencing members of a community, rather than just relying on the mass media to deliver the message.

packet switching:
: A method for breaking up long messages into small pieces, or packets, and transmitting them independently across a computer network. Once the packets arrive at their destination, the receiving computer reassembles the message into its original form.

paper:
: A writing material made from cotton rags or wood pulp; invented by the Chinese between 240 BC and 105 BC.

papyrus:
: An early form of paper made from the papyrus reed, developed by the Egyptians around 3100 BC.

parchment:

An early form of paper made from the skin of goats or sheep, which was more durable than papyrus.

penny press:
Inexpensive, widely circulated papers that became popular in the nineteenth century. They were the first American media to be supported primarily through advertising revenue.

Pentagon Papers:
A top-secret forty-seven volume report commissioned by the Secretary of Defense to explain how the United States got involved and fought in the Vietnam War.

people meter:
An electronic box used by the ratings company Nielsen Media Research to record which television shows people watch.

phonograph:
An early sound-recording machine invented by Thomas Edison; the recorded material was played back on a cylinder.

phonography:
A system of writing in which symbols stand for spoken sounds rather than objects or ideas. Among the most widely used phonographic alphabets are the Latin/Roman alphabet used in English and the Cyrillic alphabet used for writing Russian.

photojournalism:
The use of photographs to portray the news in print.

pictograph:
A prehistoric form of writing made up of paintings on rock or cave walls.

plus-sized model:
A female fashion model who wears an average or larger clothing size.

podcast:
An audio program produced as an MP3 compressed music file that can be listened to online at the listener's convenience or downloaded to a computer or an MP3 player. Podcasts sometimes contain video content as well.

Postal Act of 1879:
Legislation that allowed magazines to be mailed nationally at a low cost. It was a key factor in the growth of magazine circulation in the late nineteenth century.

practical effects:

Movie special effects done with sets, miniatures, and stunt performers.

press agentry:
An early form of public relations that involved sending material from the press agent to the media with little opportunity for interaction and feedback. It often involved conduct that would be considered deceptive and unethical today.

principle of utility:
John Stuart Mill's principle that ethical behavior arises from that which will provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

print on demand:
A form of publishing in which the physical book is not printed until it's ordered, or until the distributor of the book prints additional copies in small batches.

prior restraint:
A judicial order that stops a media organization from publishing or broadcasting a story or image.

privilege:
A legal defense against libel that holds that statements made in government meetings, in court, or in government documents cannot be used as the basis for a libel suit.

producer:
The person who puts together the right mix of songs, songwriters, technicians, and performers to create an album; some observers argue that the producer is the key catalyst for a hit album.

product integration:
The paid integration of a product or service into the central theme of media content. This is most common in television programming or movies, but it can be found in books, magazine articles, web pages, or even songs.

Production Code:
The industry-imposed rules that controlled the content of movies from the 1930s until the current movie ratings system came into use in 1968.

proofs:
The ready-to-print typeset pages sent to book authors for final corrections.

psychographics:
A combination of demographics, lifestyle characteristics, and product usage; a method typically used to analyze potential markets for products and programs.

public:

Any group of people who share a common set of interests and goals. These include *internal publics*, which are made up of people within the organization, and *external publics*, which consist of people outside the organization.

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS):

A nonprofit broadcast network that provides a wide range of public service and educational programs. It is funded by government appropriations, private industry underwriting, and viewer support.

public relations (PR):

"The management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends."

public service ads:

Advertising designed to promote the messages of nonprofit institutions and government agencies. The messages are typically produced and run without charge by advertising professionals and the media. Many of these ads are produced by the Ad Council.

publicity model:

A model of the mass communication process that looks at how media attention can make a person, concept, or thing become important, regardless of what is said about it.

publishers:

The companies that buy manuscripts from authors, turn them into books, and market them to the public.

race records:

A term used by the recording industry prior to 1949 to refer to recordings by popular black artists. It was later replaced by more racially neutral terms such as *R&B*, *soul*, and *urban contemporary*.

Radio Music Box memo:

David Sarnoff's 1915 plan that outlined how radio could be used as a popular mass medium.

rap music:

This genre arose out of the hip-hop culture in New York City in the 1970s and 1980s. It emerged from clubs where DJs played and remixed different records and sounds and then spoke (or rapped) over the top.

rating point:
: The percentage of the total potential television audience actually watching a particular show. One rating point indicates an audience of approximately 1.14 million viewers.

receiver:
: The audience for the mass communication message.

reception model:
: A critical theory model of the mass communication process that looks at how audience members derive and create meaning out of media content as they decode the messages.

ritual model:
: A model of the mass communication process that treats media use as an interactive ritual engaged in by audience members. It looks at how and why audience members (receivers) consume media messages.

rock 'n' roll:
: A style of music popularized on radio that combined elements of white hillbilly music and black rhythm and blues.

rotary press:
: A steam-powered press invented in 1814 that could print many times faster than the older, hand-powered flat-bed presses.

satellite radio:
: The radio service provided by digital signal broadcast from a communications satellite. Supported by subscribers, this service covers a wider area than terrestrial radio and offers programming that is different from corporate-owned terrestrial stations. However, it is costly and doesn't provide local coverage, such as traffic and weather reports.

scriptoria:
: Copying rooms in monasteries where monks prepared early hand-copied books.

Sender Message Channel Receiver (SMCR) or transmission model:
: A dated model that is still useful in identifying the players in the mass communication process.

sensationalism:
: News coverage that panders to audiences with lurid and highly emotional accounts of crime, sex, violence, or celebrity missteps.

serial novels:
: Novels published and sold in single-chapter installments.

service magazines:
: Magazines that primarily contain articles about how to do things in a better way. These articles cover such topics as health advice, cooking tips, employment help, and fashion guides.

share:
: The percentage of television sets in use that are tuned to a particular show.

shield laws:
: Laws that give journalists special protection from having to testify in court about their stories and sources.

shock jock:
: A radio personality, such as Howard Stern, who attracts listeners by making outrageous and offensive comments on the air.

short head:
: The portion of a distribution curve where a large number of people are interested in buying a limited number of products.

small media:
: Alternative media, such as fax machines, photocopiers, video cameras, and personal websites, which are used to distribute news and information that might be suppressed by the government if published through traditional mass media channels.

soap operas:
: Serialized daytime dramas targeted primarily at women.

social justice warriors (#SJW):
: A negative term used within the #gamergate community and elsewhere to describe people who advocate for socially progressive causes, especially women's equality.

social learning theory:
: The process by which individuals learn by observing the behaviors of others and the consequences of those behaviors.

social media:
: Websites that allow users to generate content, comment, tag, and network with friends or other like-minded people.

social music:

Music that people play and sing for one another in the home or other social settings. In the absence of radio, recordings, and, later, television, this was the means of hearing music most readily available to the largest number of people.

social responsibility theory:
A theory of appropriate press behavior based on the concern that, although the press may be free from interference from the government, it can still be controlled by corporate interests; an outgrowth of libertarian theory.

socialization:
The process of educating young people and new members about the values, social norms, and knowledge of a group or society.

spiral of silence:
A theory that suggests that people want to see themselves as holding a majority opinion and will therefore remain silent if they perceive that they hold a minority opinion. This tends to make the minority opinion appear to be less prevalent than it is.

standard digital television:
A standard for digital broadcasting that allows six channels to fit in the broadcast frequency space occupied by a single analog signal.

status conferral:
The process by which media coverage makes an individual gain prominence in the eyes of the public.

streaming audio:
Audio programming transmitted over the internet.

studio system:
A factory-like way of producing films that involved having all of the talent, including the actors and directors, working directly for the movie studios. The studios also had almost total control of the distribution system.

subliminal advertising:
Messages that are allegedly embedded so deeply in an ad that they cannot be perceived consciously. There is no evidence that subliminal advertising is effective.

surveillance:
How the media help us extend our senses to perceive more of the world surrounding us.

sweeps:

The four times during the year that Nielsen Media Research measures the size of individual television station audiences.

symbolic interactionism:
The process by which individuals produce meaning through interaction based on socially agreed-upon symbols.

synchronized soundtrack:
Sound effects, music, and voices synchronized with the moving images in a movie.

synergy:
Where the combined strength of two items is greater than the sum of their individual strengths. In the media business, synergy means that a large company can use the strengths of its various divisions to successfully market its content.

tabloid laundering or tabloidization:
When respectable media report on what the tabloids are reporting as a way of covering sensationalistic stories on which they might not otherwise report.14

tabloid newspapers:
Newspapers with a half-page (11- by 14-inch) format that usually have a cover rather than a traditional front page like the larger broadsheet papers.

talkie:
A movie with synchronized sound; these quickly replaced silent films.

targeting:
The process of trying to make a particular product or service appeal to a narrowly defined group. Groups are often targeted using demographics, geographics, and psychographics.

TCP/IP:
TCP stands for transmission control protocol, which controls how data are sent out on the internet; IP stands for internet protocol, which provides the address for each computer on the internet. These protocols provided common rules and translations so that incompatible computers could communicate with each other.

telegraph:
The first system for using wires to send messages at a distance; invented by Samuel Morse in 1844.

telenovelas:
Spanish-language soap operas popular in both Latin America and the United States.

television network:
: A company that provides programs to local stations around the country; the local affiliate stations choose which programs to carry.

terrestrial radio:
: AM and FM broadcast radio stations.

the big idea:
: The goal of every advertising campaign—an advertising concept that will grab people's attention and make them take notice, remember, and take action.

trade books:
: General-interest fiction and nonfiction books that are sold in hardback or large-format paperback editions.

trade magazines:
: Magazines published for people who work in a particular industry or business.

typemold:
: A mold in which a printer would pour molten lead to produce multiple, identical copies of a single letter without hand-carving each.

uniform resource locator (URL):
: One of the three major components of the web; the address of content placed on the web.

university and small presses:
: Small-scale publishers that issue a limited number of books covering specialized topics. They are often subsidized by a university or an organization.

uses and gratifications theory:
: An approach to studying mass communication that looks at the reasons why audience members choose to spend time with the media in terms of the wants and needs of the audience members that are being fulfilled.

veil of ignorance:
: John Rawls's principle of ethics that says that justice comes from making decisions that maximize liberty for all people and without considering which outcome will give us personally the biggest benefit.

vertical integration:
: Controlling all aspects of a media project, including production, delivery to consumers in multiple formats, and promotion of the product through other media.

video on demand (VOD):
: Television channels that allow consumers to order movies, news, or other programs at any time over fiber-optic lines.

videocassette recorder (VCR):
: A home videotape machine that allows viewers to make permanent copies of television shows and, thus, choose when they want to watch programs.

Watergate scandal:
: A burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate office and apartment building that was authorized by rogue White House staffers. Its subsequent cover-up led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, two reporters from the *Washington Post*, covered the Watergate scandal.

weblog (blog):
: A collection of links and commentary in hypertext form on the World Wide Web that can be created and posted on the internet with relatively little effort. Blogs can be public diaries, collections of photos, or commentaries on the news.

whitewashing:
: Casting white actors to play nonwhite characters or rewriting characters who were originally people of color to be white.

wireless telegraph:
: Guglielmo Marconi's name for his point-to-point communication tool that used radio waves to transmit messages.

World Wide Web:
: A system developed by Tim Berners-Lee that allows users to view and link documents located anywhere in the world using standard software.

yellow journalism:
: A style of sensationalistic journalism that grew out of the newspaper circulation battle between Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst.

zoned coverage:
: When a newspaper targets news coverage or advertisements to a specific region of a city or market.

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Index

Abbott, Christopher, 158
Abbott, Robert, 158
ABC Television, 55, 58 (box), 67, 143, 231, 232, 236, 239
Abernathy, Ralph, 338
Above the fold, 139
Abrams, J. J., 197, 208
Abu Hajar, Mohammad, 181–182
Abuse, issue of, 31–32
Accounting Today, 113
Active audience effects, 41–42
Actual malice, 349
Ad agencies, 294–295
Adams, Cey, 71
Adams, John, 345
Addario, Lynsey, 156
Adelaide News, 60
Adele, 123, 180
Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), 259
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Twain), 3, 101
Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Twain), 3
Advertising, 286–315
    advertorials, 310
    advocacy, 292
    agency, 294–295, 297
    brand names, growth of, 290
    business of, 293–308
    children and, 306–308
    clutter, 304–305
    consumer culture, birth of, 289
    contemporary culture and, 304
    defined, 288
    development of, 288–293
    editorial control and, 125–126
    ethics and, 396–398
    future of, 308–312
    integrated marketing communication (IMC), 309–311, 333–334
    long tail of, 312–313
    media control and, 396–398

media supported by, 290–292
misconceptions about, 304
mobile, 311
native, 126, 310, 313
online, 354
persuasive communication, 396–401
product placement, 312
radio, 170, 299
social marketing, 313–314
subliminal, 305–306
television, 299, 301–302, 306–308, 311
top advertising by brand, 293 (table)
Advertising Council, 396
Advertorials, 310
Advocacy advertising, 292
Aesthetic dimension, of media literacy, 19
Affordable Care Act, 9, 375
Africa, media in, 422–424
African Americans, giving a voice to, 115
Agdal, Nina, 121–122, 122 (photo)
Agenda-setting theory, 44, 45
Agents, advertising, 294–295, 297
Aggregator sites, 283
Agha-Soltan, Neda, 266–267
al-Assad, Bashar, 405
Alcott, Louisa May, 101
Alexander the Great, 98, 377
Alien and Sedition Acts, 345
Al Jazeera, 281, 418, 422
Allen, Nicole, 95
Allen, Woody, 38 (photo)
All-sports radio, 184–185
Alphabet (company), 69–70, 72
Alphabets (writing), 83
Alptraum, Lux, 287
Alternative papers/press, 157–159
Alternative weeklies, 159
Altheide, David, 335
Altruistic democracy, 154
Amanpour, Christiane, 405
Amazon, 76, 77, 81, 88, 93, 93 (photo), 95, 207
Amazon Echo devices, 174

Amazon Kindle, 104
Amazon Prime, 239 267
America Held Hostage, 55
American Booksellers Association, 92
American free speech, roots of, 345–346
American Idol, 66
American Magazine, 110
America's Next Top Model, 124, 127
Amienyi, Osabuohien P., 424
Amos 'n' Andy, 172
Amusing Ourselves to Death (Postman), 16
Analog recording, 188
Ancillary, or secondary, markets, 220
Anderson, Carl, 184
Anderson, Chris, 74, 102, 222, 273
Andrea Doria, 143
Andreessen, Marc, 264
Andrews, Barbara, 90, 92
Andrews, Erin, 400
Android phones, 12, 54
Angelotti, Ellyn, 349
Angelou, Maya, 99
Anheuser-Busch, 295
Animal Locomotion (Muybridge), 199 (photo)
Aniston, Jennifer, 121, 352
Anne Frank, 100 (image)
Annie Hall (film), 38
Anonymous audience, 11
Anthony, Casey (photo), 36
Ant Man, 211
Antonio, Jose, 269
AOL (America Online), 62, 63, 260
Apologizing, and ethics, 389–390
Apple, 12, 54, 56, 68, 73, 280, 353
Apple HomePods, 174
Apple iPad, 130
Apple iPhone, 12, 77
Apple iTunes, 74, 77, 222
Appointment viewing, 41
Apprentice, The, 43
Arab Spring, 26, 281, 418–419
Arab world, press in, 419

Arafat, Yasir, 243
Arbuckle, Fatty, 217
Aristotle, 377–378, 399
Arm & Hammer, 293
Armstrong, Neil, 260
Arnaz, Desi, 230, 230 (photo)
Arnette, Alan, 266
Arnold, Eddy, 182
ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency), 259
ARPAnet, 259–260, 283
Artist, The (film), 205
Asia, media in, 426–429
Asian American gamers, 276
Assange, Julian, 279
Atlantic (Atlantic Monthly), 114, 118, 126, 130
Attia, Karen, 376
Attitudinal effects, 37
AT&T/Time Warner, 68, 370
Atwood, Margaret, 413
Audience(s)
    advertising and, 300–303
    advocate, 394–396
    anonymous, 11
    digital audio, 2018, 190 (figure)
    heterogeneous, 11
    movie, 220
    targeting, 302
Audio, 164–193
    future of sound, 189–192
    history of sound recording and transmission, 166–176
    music, youth culture and society, 176–189
    See also Music; Radio
Auletta, Ken, 56, 62, 65, 72, 239, 252, 397, 429
Australian (newspaper), 60
Authoritarian theory, of the press, 407–408
Avatar, 275
Avengers: Age of Ultron, 275
Avnet, Jon, 207
Ayatollah Khomeini, 101, 243
Ayer, Francis W., 294

Bachchan, Amitabh, 213

Bagdikian, Ben, 40, 68, 144
Bailey, Michael, 369
Ball, Lucille, 230, 247
Balthazar, Connor, 343
Bandura, Albert, 46
Banks, Tyra, 124, 127
Baran, Paul, 259
BarnesandNoble.com, 95
Barnett, Susan, 360
Barnouw, Erik, 244
Barnum, P. T., 318
Baron, Martin, 419
Barratt, Thomas J., 290
Barron, Manie, 115
Barron, Mary, 160
Barton, Marty, 344, 376
Baskerville, John, 85
Baum, L. Frank, 204
Bay, Kiva, 276
Bay, Michael, 220
Bay Psalm Book, 87
BBC, 170
B-boying, 181
Beach Boys, the, 180 (photo)
Beachler, Hannah, 197
Beasts of No Nation, 214
Beatles, the, 179, 180 (photo), 230
Beauty and the Beast, 59
Bechdel, Alison, 215
Bechdel Test, 215
Behavioral effects, 37
Belafonte, Harry, 348
Bell, Alexander Graham, 167
Benchley, Peter., 205
Bennett, Amanda, 417
Berg, Madeline, 241
Berger, Arthur Asa, 46
Berkowitz, David, 300
Berle, Milton, 230
Berliner, Emile, 15, 167, 187, 193
Bernays, Edward L., 320, 322, 326
Berners-Lee, Tim, 73, 261, 262–263, 264, 266, 272, 278, 281, 283, 411

Bernstein, Carl, 146, 149 (photo)
Bernstein, Danielle, 313
Bernstein, Jonathan, 331
Berry, Chuck, 177–178, 177 (photo)
Bertelsmann, 40, 65–66, 66 (box), 89 (box)
Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG), 66
Best Buy, 75
Best seller lists, and young-adult series, 97
Bettany, Paul, 206
Beyoncé, 74, 127, 180, 189 (photo)
Bezos, Jeff, 93, 148, 160, 274, 385, 419
Biddle, RiShawn, 187
Biden, Joe, 375, 419
Bieber, Justin, 288, 413
Big Four networks, 237
Big Hero 6, 58
Big idea, the, 295
Big media, 56–63
    Alphabet/Google, 69–70, 72
    Apple, 73
    Bertelsmann, 64–65
    Comcast/NBCUniversal, 67–69
    News Corporation and 21st Century Fox, 59–62
    Time Warner, 62–63
    Viacom/CBS, 63–65
    Walt Disney Company, 56–59
    See also Media business
Big Three networks, 231
Billboard magazine, 75
Billboards, 11, 290, 297, 298, 322
Bill of Rights, 345 (image)
Bing, 69
bin Khalifa al-Thani, Hamad, 422
bin Laden, Osama, 422
Birth of a Nation, The, 200
BitTorrent, 370
Black, Hugo, 356
BlackBerry, 12
Black Entertainment Television (BET), 63, 232, 244
Blacklist, 203
Blacklist, The, 203
Blackman, Aaron, 5, 6(photo), 274

Black Panther (movie), 197–198, 211, 214
Blacksmith Scene (film), 199
Blair, Jayson, 395
Blair, Tony, 375
Blair Witch Project, The (movie), 200, 221– 222, 222 (image), 267
Blanchard, Keith, 128
Blevins, Tyler, 274
Bliss, Edward Jr., 143
Block bookings, 201
Blockbuster, 200
Blockbuster books, importance of, 95–97
Blockbuster era, for the movies, 205–206
Blockbuster video, 64
Bloggers, 9, 266, 335, 426, 428
Blogs, 264–266
Bloxham, Mike, 240
Blumer, Herbert, 213
Bly, Nellie, 140
Bodney, David, 364
Bodoni, Giambattista, 85
Body image, magazines and, 121–125
Bogart, John B., 151
Bok, Sissela, 382
Bollywood films, 213–214
Bongo Maffin, 424
Book of the Dead, 83 (image)
Books, 80–107
    arrival of, 15
    authors of, 90–92
    blockbuster, 95–97
    buying and selling, 88–95
    censorship and, 99–102
    culture and, 95–97
    development of, 82–88
    early, 82–84
    electronic (e-books), 103, 104
    future of, 102–105
    large-scale and mass-produced, 88
    long tail and, 93–95
    mass culture and, 85–86
    in the New World, 87–88
    printing press and, 85–86

print on demand, 104–105
publishers of, 88–90
textbook business, 94–95
Booksellers, 92–93
Booster Redux, 343
Borodin, Maksim, 426
Boston News-Letter, 289
Boulle, Pierre, 203
Bourke-White, Margaret, 116–117
Boyd, Todd, 214, 215
BP oil spill, 329–331
Bracco, Lorraine, 305
Bradbury, Ray, 99
Bradford, Andrew, 110
Bradlee, Ben, 362
Brady, Mathew, 96 (photo), 112
Brand, Stewart, 277
Brand image, 296
Brand names, growth of, 290
Brando, Marlon, 348
Brave One, The, 203
Brick-and-mortar bookstore, 102
Bridge on the River Kwai, The (movie), 203
Brietbart (website), 41
Brill, Steven, 357
Brin, Sergey, 70, 71, 72
British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 55, 414, 420
British invasion (music), 179–180
British media, 413–415
Broadband service, 272
Broadcasting
alternatives to, 190
beginning of, 230
to narrowcasting, 236–244
Broadcast news, 142–143. *See also* News
Broadcast regulation, 368, 369, 370
Broadcast television, 228–236. *See also* Television
Broadsheet newspapers, 141
"Brokeback Mountain," 110
Bronner, Stephen, 36
Bronstein, Phil, 384
Brown, Helen Gurley, 119–120, 119 (photo)

Brown, John, 343
Brown, Keah, 257, 258
Brown, Michael, 366, 409
Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association, 275
Bruce, Bill, 302
Bryan, William Jennings, 35
Buchanan, Edna, 387
Buchwald, Naomi Reice, 271
Buckley, William F., Jr., 114 (photo), 115
Buffington, Brooks, 243
Bump, Philip, 227
Bunche, Ralph J., 242
Bunker, Matthew D., 356
Burger King, Google and, 295–297
Burke, James, 329
Burke, Steve, 69
Burnett, Leo, 295
Burns, Ken, 237
Burson-Marsteller, 328
Bush, George H. W., 398
Bush, George W., 228, 241, 266, 375, 398
Business-to-business magazines, 113
Business-to-business (trade) ads, 293
Butler, David, 333
Byrne, David, 424

Cable News Network (CNN), 232
Cable television, 67, 69, 231–233, 233 (figure)
Caesars Entertainment Studios, Las Vegas, 274 (photo)
Caldwell, Erskine, 117
California Disneyland, 57
California Milk Processor Board, 293
Call of Duty, 275
Calvin, John, 136
Cambridge Analytica, 53
Cameras, in the courtroom, 357, 359
Cameron, James, 204, 413
Campbell, Naomi, 124
Canada, media in, 412–413
Canterbury Tales (Chaucer), 84
Cantrell, Margaret, 352
Capital Cities Communications, 58, 239

Capital Gazette, 155
Capriolo, Ettore, 101
Caramanica, Jon, 165
Carlson, Margaret, 387
Carmody, Steve, 135, 136
Carnegie, Andrew, 98
Carr, David, 63, 126, 383
Carr, Louis, 244
Carradine, David, 241
Carroll, Jill, 157
Cash, Johnny, 180, 182
Caslon, William, 85
Castro, Fidel, 243
Catcher in the Rye, The (Salinger), 99
Cate, Fred, 345
Categorical imperative, 378
"Cat Person," 109
CATV (community antenna television), 231
Cave, Edward, 3, 110
Caxton, William, 85–86
CBS, 14, 64, 65, 143, 170, 231
CBS/Viacom, 68–69
CDs, 188
Celebrity Big Brother, 43
Censorship
    books and, 99–102
    movies and, 216–217
Centanni, Steve, 157
Center for Digital Democracy, 53
Central America, media in, 417–418
Cerf, Vint, 260
CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research), 262
Cesternino, Rob, 176
(CGI) Computer-generated imagery, 207
Chains (newspaper), 144
Chan, Janet, 126
Chang Ping, 427
Channel, 10–11
Chaplin, Charlie, 201
Chapman, Caron, 97
Charlie Hebdo, 415–417
Charter Communications, 63

Chase, Edna Woolman, 119
Chávez, Hugo, 411
Chen, Adrian, 279
Chen, Steven, 77 (photo), 268
Cheney, Richard, 375
Chester, Jeff, 53
Chethan, M., 268
Chiat/Day agency, 306
Chibbaro, Lou Jr., 159
Chicago Defender, 157–158, 172
Children
    ABC Children's Group and, 97
    advertising to, 306–308
    Cottage Door Press books for, 90
    effects of new media on, 24 (photo)
    Hale as writer of, 96
    marketing to, 307
    number of new magazine titles 2017/2018, 113 (table)
    television and, 49, 246, 247
China, media in, 427–428
Chipple, Leon, 111
Cho, Seung-hui, 380
Christian Science Monitor, 144, 157
Chronicles of Narnia (Lewis), 97
Cimino, Michael, 201
Cinématographe, 199
Citizen journalism, 266–267
Citizens for a Free Kuwait, 398
Civil rights movement, and public relations, 338–339
Clansman, The (Dixon), 200
Clark, Brian, 310
Clark, William, 85
Clarkson, Kelly, 123
Clayton, Hilda, 156 (photo), 157
Clear Channel, 189
Clegg, Johnny, 424
Clem, Todd, 184
Clement, Jemaine, 267 (photo)
Client, as advertising component, 293–294
Cline, Patsy, 182
Clinton, Bill, 154, 328, 337
Clinton, Hillary, 227, 278, 279

Clutter, 304–305
CNN, 9, 43, 55, 63, 143, 232, 376, 420
Coates, Ta-Nehisi, 114
Coca-Cola, 294, 307, 397
    and marketing, 303
Cochran, Elizabeth Jane (Nellie Bly), 140 (photo)
Cockerill, John, 140
Coco, 198
Codes of ethics, 395–396
Cognitive dimension, of media literacy, 19
Cognitive effects, 37
Cohen, Dan, 359, 359–360
Cohen, Michael, 385
Cohen v. Cowles Media, 359–360
Colbert, Claudette, 212
Colbert, Stephen, 16
Cole, Nat King, 348
College Humor (website), 317
Collins, Suzanne, 97, 401
Colón, Ernie, 100
Colonial publishing, 137–139
Color movies, advent of, 204–205
Color television, and movies, 204–205, 230–231
Coltrane, John, 178
Columbia Records, 187
Colvin, Marie, 405–406, 418
Comcast/NBCUniversal, 40, 54, 56, 67, 68, 69, 70 (box)
Comey, James, 279
Comic(s)
    books, 24, 100
    horror, 24 (photo)
    Manga (comic books), 428–429
    web, 214 (image)
Commentary magazines, 111, 114–116
Comments, on social media, 268
Commercial networks, 260
Committee on Public Information (CPI), 322
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 423
Common Sense (Paine), 318 (image)
Communication
    crisis, 327–331, 335
    definition, 5

group, 6
integrated marketing communication (ICM), 309–311, 333–334
interactive, 17–18
interpersonal, 6
intrapersonal, 5
levels, 5–8, 7 (figure)
mass, 7
one-way, 319
persuasive, 396–401
See also Mass communication
Communication Act of 1934, 368
Communications Decency Act, 371
Communist theory, of the press, 408
Community antenna television (CATV), 231
Community Journalism: Relentlessly Local (Lauterer), 149
Community newspapers, 149
Community press, 149
Compaan, Klaas, 188
Compact disc (CD), 166
Competition, television as, 246
Computer-generated imagery (CGI), 207
Concept albums, 179
Conflict of interest, corporate, 385
Connor, Eugene (Bull), 338
Connor, Richard, 390
Conrad, Frank, 169
Conrad, Joseph, 114
Conran, Kerry, 207
Consumer advertising, 292
Consumer culture, birth of, 289
Consumer magazines, 113
Contemporary culture, advertising in, 304
Contemporary minority/ethnic papers, 157–158
Content control, World Wide Web and, 281–282
Coogler, Ryan, 197, 211, 214
Cook, Tim, 73, 353
Cooke, Janet, 382
Cookies, 281, 299
Cooney, Joan Ganz, 236
Cooper, James Fenimore, 111
Cooper, Matt, 365
Copernicus, 87

Copic, Miro, 241
Copyright, and fair use, 367–368
Copyright Term Extension Act, 367
Corporate conflict of interest, 385
Corrections, The (Franzen), 103
Correlation, 43
Correll, Charles, 172
Corsetto, Danielle, 17
Cosby, William, 345
Coscarelli, Joe, 165
Cosmopolitan (magazine), 119–120, 127
Cottage Door Press, 90
Country music, 182–183
Coupland, Douglas, 413
Courtney, Susanne, 326
Courtroom, cameras in the, 357–359
Covered (songs), 177
Cover lines (magazines), 127
Cox, Laverne, 23, 245
CPM, 297
Crazy Horse, 302
Creative Commons, 368
Creel, George, 322
Crisis, 326–327
Crisis, 115
Crisis communication, 327–331, 335
Critical/cultural model, 35–36
Critical theory, 35–36, 45
Cronkite, Walter, 27, 143, 228, 364
Crosby, Bing, 171
Cruise, Tom, 211, 213
Crystallizing Public Opinion (Bernays), 320
C-SPAN, 43, 55, 150, 252
Cuarón, Alfonso, 204
Cullen, Art, 149
Cultivation analysis, 48–49
Culture
    and books, 95–98
    consumer, advertising and, 289
    contemporary, advertising and, 304
    mass, books and, 85–86
    transmission of, socialization and, 43–44

Cumberbatch, Benedict, 206 (photo)
Cumia, Anthony, 184
Cuppari, Scott, 333, 334
Curry, Adam, 174, 175
Curry, Tim, 23
Curse of the Blair Witch, The, 221
Curtis, Cyrus H. K., 118, 291
Customization, social media and, 268
Cut the cord, 251
Cybernetics, 279
Cyberspace, 279

Daily Kos (website), 41
Daily Show, The, 3, 4
Daily Times Democrat v. Graham, 351
Dale, Lynn, 360
Dana, Charles, 151
Daniels, Daniels, 337
Danish cartoons, and terrorism, 415–417
Dark Knight, 206
Dark Side of the Moon, 180
Darling, Julia, 252
David Miami Agency, 295
Davies, Donald, 259
Davis, Hannah, 123
Davis, Lanny, 337
Davis, Miles, 178
Davis, Viola, 197, 241
Day, Benjamin, 137
DC Extended Universe, 206
deadmau5, 413
Deadspin (blog), 228
Dean, Rick, 302
Decision making, and ethical principles, 376–382
Decoding, 10, 11
Defender, Chicago, 157–158, 172
Defoe, Daniel, 110
DeGeneres, Ellen, 197
Demby, Emanuel, 300
Demographics, 41
Denton, Nick, 251
Derrickson, Scott, 222

Desilu Studios, 230
Development theory, of the press, 410–411
Dewey, Caitlin, 399
Dial M for Murder, 204
Diana, Princess, 354, 387
Dicken-Garcia, Hazel, 138
Dickens, Charles, 88
Dick Van Dyke Show, The, 247
Dictionaries, 86
Diggs, Daveed, 166
Digital advertising, 299–300
Digital age, magazines in, 130
Digital divide, 280
Digital-first strategy, 130
Digital media, conflicts over, 280–281. *See also* Online media
Digital Millennium Copyright Act, 367
Digital native, 273
Digital photo manipulation, standards for, 394 (box)
Digital production and projection, 207–211
Digital recording, 188. *See also* Audio
Digital subscriber line (DSL), 272
Digital television, 234–236
Digital trespassers, 277
Digital video recorders (DVRs), 235
Dime novels, 88
Direct-action message, 292
Direct-broadcast satellite (DBS), 234
Direct effects model, 32–33, 152
Direct messaging, 261
#DisabiledAndCute, 257, 258
Disco, 180
Discord, 5
Disney, Walt, 56–58, 202
Disney Corporation, 148–149
Disneyland, 57
Divergent series (Roth), 97
Diversity
    movies and, 214–216
    Oscars and, 214–216
    television and, 240–244
    video games and, 276
Dixon, Thomas, 200

DJing, 181
Doctor, Ken, 298
Doctor Strange, 211, 216
Dole, Bob, 305
Domestic novels, 96
Domino's Pizza, and social media, 334–335
Donald Duck, 56, 57
Don Juan (film), 201
Dorsey, Jack, 270
Douglas, Michael, 362
Douglas, William O., 362
Douglass, Frederick, 157
Dove Campaign, 122
Dow Jones & Company, 61
Downey, Robert Jr., 206 (photo)
Downloads, economics of, 188–189
Doyle, Patrick, 335
Drain, Steve, 358
Drake, 166, 413
DreamWorks Animation, 67
Drew, Richard, 349
Drive time, 299
Du Bois, W. E. B., 115, 115 (photo), 131
Duhigg, Charles, 303
Dumbing of Age, 214 (image)
Dumenco, Simon, 395
Dungey, Channing, 242
Dunham, Lena, 123
Duplass, Mark, 222
Dweck, Michael, 396

Eagle vs Shark, 267
Early, Gerald, 178
Earthquake in slow motion, 239–240
Ebert, Roger, 213, 223
E-book reader, 103. *See also* Books
E-books, 103, 104
Economist, 39
Economy of abundance, 290
Edison, Thomas, 166, 187, 193, 198, 199, 201, 229
Editorial content, blurring with advertising, 125–126
Edmonds, Kenneth "Babyface," 180

Ed Sullivan Show, 230
Educational broadcasting (television), 236–237
Ehrenreich, Alden, 251 (photo)
Einstein, Albert, 36
Eisner, Michael, 57
Elba, Idris, 214
Electronic mail (e-mail), 261
Electronic media. *See* Audio; Movies; Online media
Electronic networks, 15
Electronic publishing, 104–105
Elliott, Stuart, 312
Ellsberg, Daniel, 39, 361–362, 362 (photo)
El Nuevo Herald, 158
E-mail, 261
Embarrassment, and invasion of privacy, 351
Emojis, 84
Emotional dimension, of media literacy, 19
Encoding, 10
End of Watch (King), 93
Engelbart, Doug, 261–262
Engineering consent, 320
Enquire Within Upon Everything, 262
Entertainment, 44
Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN), 232
Environmental noise, 11
Epshteyn, Boris, 227
Equal time provision, 368–369
Erdely, Sabrina Rubin, 350
Escape Artist, The (Meltzer), 93
ESPN, 59, 68, 123, 184, 232, 239, 241, 251
eSports, 274, 283
Esposito, Richard, 346
Esquire, 120
Estes, Billie Sol, 357
Eszterhas, Joe, 351
Ethical principles, and decision making, 376–382
    Aristotle, 377–378
    Bok, 382
    Hutchins, 381
    Kant, 378
    Mill, 378, 380
    Rawls, 380–381

Ethics, 376
advertising and, 396–398
apologizing and, 389–390
enforcing, 394–396
and news, 382–395
in public relations, 398
See also Media ethics
Ethnocentrism, 152
Europe, privacy law in, 354–355
European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), 262
European Right to be Forgotten Laws, 355
Evaluation, and public relations, 325
Evanovich, Janet, 96
Exodus (film), 203
External publics, 325–326, 336
Exxon Valdez oil spill, 329–331

Fabrications, catching, 383–384
Facebook, 21, 26, 53–54, 264, 268, 269
FaceTime, 282
Fahmy, Mohamed, 422
Fahrenheit 451 (Bradbury), 99
Fahrenthold, David, 344
Fairbanks, Douglas, 201, 201 (photo), 217
Fairness Doctrine, 369
Fairness on the air, mandating, 368–369
Fair trial/free press, 356–359
Fair use, and copyright, 367–368
Fake news, 3–4
Fallaci, Oriana, 243
False light, and invasion of privacy, 351–352
Farnsworth, Philo T., 229, 229 (photo), 234, 250, 254
Farquhar, Ralph, 240
Fashion/beauty/lifestyle magazines, 119–120, 125, 127
Fashionista, 127
Fault in Our Stars, The (Green), 97, 211
Fawker (website), 351
Fearn-Banks, Kathleen, 331
Feature-length film, 200
Federal Communications Commission (FCC), 14, 64, 173, 227, 230, 353, 368, 369
Federal Emergency Management Agency, 12
Federal Radio Commission, 368

Fenby, Jonathan, 388
Ferguson (Missouri) protests, 381 (photo)
Fessenden, Reginald, 168
Field, Robert, 318
Fields, James Alex Jr., 379
Field & Stream, 120
Filloux, Frederic, 54
Filmmakers, early French, 199
Financial Times, 43
Finberg, Daniel, 23
Finger Lickin' Fifteen (Evanovich), 96
First amendment, and development of a free press, 344–345
Fitzgerald, F. Scott, 120
FiveThirtyEight (online news source), 41, 279
Fleck, Béla, 192
Flynt, Larry, 369
Focus on Africa, 414
Foer, Franklin, 377
Foley, James, 156, 418
Folk, Michael, 263
Font, 85
Food ads, directed to children, 307
Food Lion v. Capital Cities/ABC, 360
Food Network, 240, 241
Ford, Gerald R., 351
Ford, Harrison, 213
Ford, John, 21
Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, 388
Foreman, Carl, 203
Format radio, 183
Fortune (magazine), 63, 116, 117
45-rpm disc, 188
"Four-Minute Men," 322, 322 (image)
Four-node ARPAnet, 260 (figure)
Four Theories of the Press (Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm), 406, 409
Fox Network, 135, 237
Fox News, 9, 60, 61, 143, 376, 385, 387, 420
Frank, Anne, 100
Frank-N-Furter, 23
Frankfurt School, 35
Franklin, Benjamin, 55, 87, 98, 110, 137, 166
Franklin, James, 137

Franzen, Jonathan, 103
Fraser, Brendan, 204
Frederick, John, 94
Frederick, Joseph, 364
Freed, Alan, 178
Freedom (Franzen), 103
Freedom Journal, 157
Freeform, 59
Free press
    development of, 344–347
    fair trial and, 356–359
    First amendment, 344–346
Free speech
    American, 345–346
    limits on, in the post-9/11 era, 346–347
    roots of, 345–346
    students and, 363–365
French, Martin, 267
Freud, Sigmund, 320
Frey, James, 383
Frozen, 58
Fuchs, Michael, 186
Fugitive, The (movie), 356
Fuller, Bonnie, 120, 127
Functional analysis, 42–44
Funk, Judith, 392
Furious &, 216
Fury, Nick, 198

Gaarder, Nancy, 25
Gable, Clark, 212
Gabriel, Peter, 424
Gadhafi, Moammar, 156, 243, 418
Gadot, Gal, 19
#Gamergate, 399
Gannett, 144
Gans, Herbert, 152, 154, 155
Garamond, Claude, 85
Garcia, Mario, 146
Garfield, Bob, 389
Gates, Bill, 139
Gay, Roxane, 245

Gaye, Marvin, 179
Gay market, advertising to the, 302
Gay press, 158–159
Gelfond, Richard, 208, 209
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 354, 355 (figure)
General Electric (GE), 67, 68
General Hospital, 171
Genetically modified organisms (GMOs), 292
Gentleman's Magazine, 110
Geographics, 41
Gerbner, George, 5, 48–49
Gertz, Elmer, 349
Gertz v. Robert Welch Inc., 349, *349*
Get Out, 212
Ghost in the Shell (movie), 216
Giardinelli, Bryan, 313
Gibson, Colin, 210
Gibson, William, 279
Giffords, Gabrielle, 350
Gilead (Robinson), 96
Gillett, Charlie, 180
Gilmore, John, 281
Girl groups, 178
Girls series (HBO), 123
Girls with Slingshots (GWS) (Corsetto), 17–18
Glaser, Mark, 192
Glasnost, 408
Glass, Ira, 185 (photo)
Glass, Stephen, 383–384
Global media, 404–429
    Africa, 422–424
    Asia, 424–429
    authoritarian theory, 407–408
    Canada, Western Europe, and Great Britain, 412–417
    Central and Latin America, 417–418
    Communist theory, 408
    Internet, in the 21st century, 410–411
    Islamic countries and the Middle East, 418–422
    Libertarian theory, 409
    press norms, in the 21st century, 410–411
    Russia and the former Soviet Republics, 424–426
    social responsibility theory, 410

standards, 411–429
Global village, 429
Glover, Henry, 177
Godey, Louis, 117
Godey's Lady's Book, 96, 117–118
God's Little Acre (Caldwell), 117
Godwin's Law of Nazi Analogies, 34
Goff, Trish, 122
"Gold-Bug, The," 109
Golden age of radio, 170–172
Golden mean, 377–378
Goldenson, Leonard, 232
Gone with the Wind, 57, 204, 206, 217
Gonzalez, Emma, 155
Good Luck, 205
Good Night, 205
Google, 20, 39, 53, 56, 69–72, 268–269, 288, 295–297, 355
Google Adwords, 312
Google Home speakers, 174
Google News, 36
Google Preferred, 288
Gorbachev, Mikhail, 408
Gordy, Berry Jr., 178, 179
Gosden, Freeman, 172
Gosling, Ryan, 413
Goswami, Arnab, 426
Government
digital television and, 234
free speech and, 345–346
public relations and, 322, 336–337, 337 (box)
U.S. Supreme Court and, 361
Government Publishing Office, 90
Graber, Doris, 37, 152
Grace, Nancy, 36, 152
Grady, Constance, 110
Graffiti art, 181
Graham, Ashley, 123 (image)
Gramophone, 15, 167
Grande, Ariana, 13
Grand Theft Auto V (video game), 275
G-rated movies, 219
Gravity (Cuarón), 204

Gray, F.Gary, 197
Great books, *versus* popular books, 95–97
Great Britain, media in, 412–417
Great Firewall, 428
Great Train Robbery, The (film), 199
Grech, Dan, 158
Green, Hank, 81
Green, John, 21, 81–82, 97
Green Mile, The (King), 88
Greenwald, Glenn, 39
Gremlins, 218
Greste, Peter, 422
Griffith, D. W., 200, 201
Griffith, Linda, 200
Griner, David, 309
Griswold, Erwin, 362
Gronkowski, Rob, 317, 325
Ground Theft Auto V, 275
Group communication, 6
Gruber, John, 266
Guardian, 152, 267, 308, 347, 415
Guerrero, Pablo Torres, 415
Gutenberg, Johannes, 85, 137
Gutenberg Galaxy, The (McLuhan), 429
Guyette, Curt, 135
Gygax, Gary, 97

Hacker ethic, 277–278
Hackers (Levy), 277, 277 (image)
Hacking 2016 presidential election, 278–279
Hadden, Briton, 62, 116
Hafez, Kai, 419
Haggard, Merle, 182
Haines, Derek, 88
Hajdu, David, 165
Halberstam, David, 338
Hale, Sarah Josepha, 96, 118, 131, 166
Halftone, 112
Halo or *Call of Duty,* 275
Halpern, Daniel, 89, 147
Halverson, Haley, 123
Hamilton, 165, 166

Hamilton, Alexander, 142, 165
Hamilton, Andrew, 345
Hamilton Mixtape, 166
Hamm, Charles, 167
Hannity, Sean, 22, 36, 184, 385
Hansen, Charles, 363
Hanson, Pam, 90, 92
Hardy, Thomas, 114
Hardy, Tom, 210
Harlequin, 96
HarperCollins, 90
Harper's Bazaar, 127, 313
Harper's Weekly, 112, 114
Harris, Benjamin, 53–54
Harris, Wynonie, 177
Harrison, Jim, 120
Harry Potter (Rowling), 97 (image)
Hart, James D., 87
Harte, Bret, 88
Hastings, Reed, 240
Hateful Eight, The, 209
Hauptmann, Bruno Richard, 357
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 96, 99, 111
Hayden, Steve, 306
Hayes, Susan, 356
Hays, Will, 217, 324
Hayworth, Rita, 321
Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 344
Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier, 363
HBO, 68, 236, 237, 251
HD radio, 173, 190
HDTV, 235–236, 235 (image)
Headphones (1920s), 169 (photo)
Hear It Now (documentary series), 230
Hearst, William Randolph, 140, 157, 388, 389
Heaven's Gate (movie), 201
Hefner, Hugh, 120–121
Hellman, Jerome, 219
Helton, Lon, 182
Hemingway, Ernest, 120
Hertz, Heinrich, 168, 193
Hesler, Wesley, 379

Hess, Mickey, 181
Heterogeneous audience, 11
Hetherington, Tim, 156
Hewitt, Don, 248
High-definition television (HDTV), 235
High fidelity (hi-fi), 167
Hill, Chris, 233
Hillbilly music. *See* Country music
Hill & Knowlton, 398
Hilton, Paris, 387
Hip-hop, 166, 181
Hitchcock, Alfred, 204
Hitler, Adolf, 142
Hobbit, The (Tolkien), 97
Hocking, Amanda, 103
Hoffman, Harry, 96
Hogan, Hulk, 351, 351 (photo)
Hollywood
    and morality, 217
    and VCR, 233
Hollywood Antitrust Case, 202
Hollywood Reporter, 10, 77
Hollywood Ten, 203
Home Box Office (HBO), 63, 231
Homer, 83
Home video, 206–207
Hondros, Chris, 156
Honesty, and the press, 359–360
Hope, Bob, 120, 171
Hornell Brewing, 302
Horror comics, 24 (photo)
Horsley, Loren, 267 (photo)
Hostel (movie), 48
House of Cards (TV series), 223
House Un-American Activities Committee, 203
How to be a Real Estate Investor (Pustejovsky), 93
Hughes, Gregg, 184
Hughes, Lisa, 130
Hulu, 56, 59, 207, 239
Human Rights Act, 354
Humans of New York, 265
Hunger Games, 216

Hungry Games (Collins), 97
Hurley, Chad, 77, 77 (photo), 268, 269
Hurricane Maria, 12
Hussein, Saddam, 398
Hustler v. Falwell, 358
Hutchins, Robert M., 381
Hwang, Dennis, 71
Hyman, Mark, 227
Hypertext, 262
Hypertext markup language (HTML), 262
Hypertext transfer protocol (http), 262, 283

Ibbott, Brian, 175
I Can Only Imagine, 211
Ice-T, 317
Ideas, dissemination of, 86–87
Ideograph, 82
Igarashi, Hitoshi, 102
Iger, Robert, 73, 239, 253
Igyor, Gerard, 424
iHeart Media, 56, 184, 190
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (Angelou), 99
Iliad (Homer), 83
I Love Lucy (sitcom), 230
Image management, 320
IMAX, 208
IM (instant messaging), 261
Immigrants and women, 139–140
Inclusive access, 94
Incredibles, 206
India
    media in, 426–427
    movie industry in, 213–214
Indiana Jones, 38, 206, 218–220
Indirect-action message, 292
Individualism, 155
Individuals, protection of, 347–359
Industrialization, and the growth of advertising, 289
"Infinite Dial 2018," 174, 176, 190
Information age, obscenity in, 367
Infowars (website), 71
Ingram Book Company, 92

Innis, Harold, 39, 98, 271
Instagram, 21, 269–270
Instant messaging (IM), 261
Integrated marketing communication (IMC), 309–311, 333–334
Interactive communication, 17–18
Internal publics, 326
Internet, 258
    cyberspace, notion of, 279
    development of, 258–267, 264
    hacker ethic, 277–278
    movie promotion on, 221–222
    next-generation, 260
    protocols, creating, 260
    publics and, 331–332
    regulation of, 371
    society and, 276–277
    21st century, 411
    use by movie industry, 267
    See also Social media
Internet of Things, 333
Internet Research Agency, 278
Internet service provider (ISP), 258–259
Interpersonal communication, 6
Interweave, 89
In the Heights (musical), 165
Intolerance (movie), 200
Intranets, 326
Intrapersonal communication, 5
Intrusion, 350–351
Invasion of privacy, 350–354
iOTA, 210
Islamic countries, media in, 420–422, 421 (figure)
It Happened One Night (movie), 212
iTune Store, 59, 73, 78, 250

Jackson, Andrew, 210, 388
Jackson, Janet, 14, 64, 228, 249–250
Jackson, Michael, 179, 387
Jackson, Samuel L., 198
Jackson, Shirley, 109
Jacobson, Sid, 100
Jaffe, Daniel L., 307

Jaffer, Jameel, 346
James, LeBron, 313, 395
Japan, media in, 428–429
Jaws, 205–206
Jazz journalism, 141
Jazz Singer, The (film), 201, 202
Jefferson, Thomas, 345
Jenkins, Patty, 10, 19, 401
Jennings, Ken, 258
Jewel of Medina, The (Jones), 103
Jezebel, 125
Jimmy Kimmel Live!?, 11
Jobs, Laurene Powell, 130
Jobs, Steve, 73, 78, 130, 250, 277
Johansson, Scarlett, 216
Johnson, Lyndon, 375
Johnson, Paul, 414
Johnson, Robert, 63
Johnson, Samuel, 4
Johnson, Scott, 175
Johnson & Johnson, 328, 330, 397
Johnston, Alan, 157
Jolson, Al, 202
Jones, Alex S., 395
Jones, Madeline, 122
Jones, Monique, 197–198
Jones, Sherry, 102
Jordan, Michael, 352
Jordan, Michael B., 197, 214
Jordan, Vernon, 384
Joseph, Frederick, 197
Joshi, Priya, 213
Journalism and Justice in the Oklahoma City Bombing Trials (Nye), 357
Journalism/journalists
    bloggers, 426, 428
    ethical principles, 377
    jail and, 365
    politics and, 150
    public relations and, 335–336
    shield laws and, 365
    yellow journalism, 140–141
    See also News; Newspapers

Journey to the Center of the Earth, 204
Jowett, Garth, 208
Joyce, James, 25
Judd, Ashley, 31
Jurasic World (movie), 275
Jurassic Park, 38

Kaffer, Nancy, 135
Kahn, Bob, 260, 283
Kahn-Sriber, Cléa, 423
Kalb, Marvin, 184
Kane, Susan, 127
Kant, Immanuel, 378
Kapas, Steve, 380
Kardashian, Kim, 387 (photo)
Karim, Jawed, 268
Karp, David, 265
Kaye, Gorden, 354
KDKA (Pittsburg radio station), 169, 170
Keisker, Marion, 177
Kellog, 291 (image)
Kelly, Ryan, 379, 380, 381, 406
Kennedy, Ted, 383
Kennedy-Nixon debate, 143 (photo)
Kennicott, Philip, 417
Kenny, Glenn, 212, 267
Kercheval, Hoppy, 393
Kerman, Piper, 245
Kerry, John, 419
Keurig 2.0 cup coffee brewing systems, 327 (image)
Key, Wilson Bryan, 306
Khan, Shah Rukh, 213
Kharkova, Katya, 122
Kharrazi, Kamal, 102
Khomeini, Ayatollah, 101, 243
Kim, Daniel Dae, 216
Kimmel, Jimmy, 11
Kinetoscope, 199
King, Martin Luther, 338, 348, 349 (image), 393
King, Stephen, 88, 93
Kirby, Jack, 197
Kit Carson on the Warpath (Munro's Ten Cent Novels), 87 (image)

Kjellberg, Felix, 288
Klein, Calvin, 16
Klein, Ezra, 104, 416
Knopf, Alfred A., 89
Kobe Bryant's Academy Award, 38
Koch, Tom, 3
Koegel, Kathryn, 311
Koo, Cannon, 332
Kool Herc, 181
Koppel, Ted, 143
Kraft Foods, 332
Krieger, Mike, 269
Kriz, Lucy, 125
Kruesi, John, 166
Kundun (movie), 57–58
Kupe, Tawana, 423

"Ladies' Friend, The," 111
Ladies Home Journal, 118, 119, 291
Lady Chatterley's Lover (Lawrence), 367
Ladysmith Black Mambazo, 424
Lamar, Kendrick, 6, 165, 166, 197
Lambird, Robyn, 258
LaMont, Sanders, 394
Lane, Charles, 383
Language, standardized, 85–86
Larger-than-life movies, 204
Lasch, Christopher, 4
Lasswell, Harold, 42
Last Rights (Nerone et al.), 412
Last Week Tonight, 228
Latin America, media in, 417–418
Lauterer, Jock, 149
Law. *See* Media law
Lawrence, D. H., 367
Lawrence, Florence, 200
Lawrence, Jennifer, 401
Lazarsfeld, Paul, 25, 33, 35
Leadership, 155
Leahy, Patrick, 375
Lean, David, 203
Leaves of Grass (Whitman), 96

Lee, Harper, 96
Lee, Ivy, 319–320, 326
Lee, Robert E., 379
Lee, Spike, 214, 219
Lee, Stan, 197
Lefsetz, Bob, 173
Legacy media, 4
Legends of the Fall (Harrison), 120
Lehrer, Brian, 184
Leibovitz, Annie, 112, 122, 123
Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, 408 (photo)
Lennon, John, 179
Lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT)
    press, 158–159
    video games and, 276
Lessig, Lawrence, 368 (photo)
Lester, Julius, 173
Levick, Richard, 335
Levy, Steven, 277
Lewinsky, Monica, 154, 327
Lewis, Clive Staples (C. S.), 97
Lewis, Meriwether, 86
LexisNexis, 264
LGBTQ programming, 242
Li, Charlene, 270
Libby, I. Lewis (Scooter), 365
Libel, 347–350
Libertarian theory, of the press, 408, 409–410
Liedtke, Michael, 77
Life (photo magazine), 63, 116
Limbaugh, Rush, 22, 36, 184, 369, 385, 397
Limited effects model, 33–35
Lindbergh, Charles, 357
LinkedIn, 268
Linotype, 88
Lippmann, Walter, 151
Lipschultz, Jeremy, 25
Listservs, 8
Literary magazines, 114–116
Little Mosque on the Prairie, 413
Little Women (Alcott), 101
Live television, 230–231

Livingston, Scott, 228
Local advertising, 292
Local cable television systems, 63
Loews Corporation, 64
Lohan, Lindsay, 387
London Jilt, The, 87
Long-playing record (LP), 166
Long tail, 74–78
    Advertising and, 312–313
    big players in, 76–78
    books and, 93–95
    characteristics of, 75–76
    consequences of, 76
    movies and, 222–223
    music and, 191
    short head *versus,* 74–75
Long Tail, The (Anderson), 74, 102, 222, 273
Looking for Alaska (Green), 81
Lord of the Rings, The (Tolkien), 96, 97
Los Angeles Times, 148–149
"Lottery, The," 109
Love, Courtney, 350
Lowery, Wesley, 366
LPs, *versus* 45s, 187–188
Lucas, George, 73, 200, 202, 207, 209
Luce, Henry, 62, 116, 117, 131, 381
Lumière, Auguste-Marie, 199
Lumière, Louis-Jean, 199
Luther, Martin, 87, 136
Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life (Bok), 382
Lynn, Loretta, 182

MacArthur, John R., 398
Maclean, Norman, 89
MacNeil, Robert, 387
Maddow, Rachel, 317, 376, 384
Mad Max: Fury Road, 205, 210
Madura, Nicholås, 411
Magazines, 108–132
    advertising and, 125–126, 298
    body image and, 121–125
    business of, 112–121

business-to-business, 113
consumer, 113
covers, importance of, 126–127
current trends in, 128
defined, 110
digital age and, 130
early, 110
economics of, 113
editorial control of, 125–126
future of, 127–130
literary and commentary, 114–116
men's, 120–121
modern society and, 121–127
national culture development and, 110–112
newsmagazines, 116–117
photojournalism, birth of, 111–112
Saturday Evening Post, 110–111
top categories 2017/2018, 113 (table)
top ten, average monthly audience, 2017, 121 (table)
trade, 113–114
twenty-first-century, 128
women's, 117–120
Mahotella Queens, 423 (photo)
Mainstream journalists, 150
Mainstream Media (MSM), 22
Makeba, Miriam, 424
Manchin, Joe III, 390–392
Manga (comic books), 428–429
Mangold, James, 219
Manjoo, Farhad, 239
Manning, Joe, 363
Manutius, Aldus, 85
Marconi, Guglielmo, 168, 169, 193
Marey, Étienne-Jules, 198
Marketing
to children, 307
social, 313–314
Marsden, Michael, 187
Martin, Marcus, 377
Martin, Richard, 307
Martinson, David, 377, 382, 398
Martling, Jackie, 173

Marvel Cinematic Universe, 197, 198, 206, 253
Marvel Entertainment, 59
Marx, Anthony, 98
Marx, Karl, 35
Mashima, Rieko, 367
Masnick, Mike, 192
Mason, Jessica, 327
Mass communication, 7
    contemporary models of, 13–14
    elements of, 8–14
    messages, 10
    models, 13 (table)
    process, players in, 7–13
    radio as, 168
    video games as, 273–276
    See also Mass communication effects; Media
Mass communication effects, 30–49
    active audience effects, 41–42
    medium effects, 38–40
    message effects, 37
    ownership effects, 40–41
    research, history of, 32–36
    theories of, 42–49
    See also Media
Mass culture, invention of, 85–87
Mass media, 8. *See also* Media
Mass printing, 15
Mass society, rise of, 32
Mast, Gerald, 212, 217
Match, Richard, 357
Matthews, Chris, 385
Matthews, Jason, 93
Maxim, 120, 128
Mayweather, Floyd Jr., 252
McAdams, Rachel, 413
McBride, Kelly, 395
McCarthy, Joseph, 142, 383
McCartney, Paul, 179
McClintock, Pamela, 10
McClure, Samuel S., 116
McCombs, Maxwell, 44
McDermott, Casey, 26

McGregor, Don, 197
MCing, 181
McLuhan, Marshall, 38, 39, 232, 429
McPaper, 145
McQuail, Denis, 5, 13, 411
McQueen, Steve, 312
McVeigh, Timothy, 356
Mead, George Herbert, 46
Meaning, importance of, 35–36
Mean world syndrome, 48
Mechanical noise, 11
Media
in advertising business, 297–300, 298 (table)
British, 413–415
control, advertising and, 396–398
convergence of old and new, 281–282
effects of, 37–42
old and new, convergence of, 281–282
political bias and, 152, 154–155
public concern about, 25
ratings for, dimensions, 411–412
secrets about, 20–27
social functions of, 42
socialization and, 43–44, 247
streaming, 266–267
See also Advertising; Audio; Books; Global media; Magazines; Mass communication; Mass communication effects; Media business; Media ethics; Media law; Media literacy; Media transformations; Media world; Movies; Newspapers; Online media; Public relations; Television
Media business, 53–78
big media, legacy, 56–63
big media, new players, 67–78
development of, in the United States, 54–56
economics, and the long tail, 74–78
Media ethics, 374–401
decision making and, 376–382
news and, 382–396
persuasive communication, 396–401
photo manipulation, 393–394
Public Relations Society of America's Statement of Professional Values, 399 (box)
women, attacks on, 399–400

Media law, 344–373
free press, development of, 344–347
individuals, protection of, 347–359
offensive speech and, 358
press, controlling the, 359–367
regulation, 367–371
Media literacy, 18–20
aesthetic dimension of, 19
cognitive dimension of, 19
defined, 18–19
emotional dimension of, 19
moral dimension of, 19–20
See also Test Your Media Literacy; Test Your Visual Media Literacy
Media Monopoly, The (Bagdikian), 144
Media planning, 297
Media relations, 326–327
Media Transformations
From Advertorials to Native Advertising, 310
Are We Really Living in a Media World?, 429
From Clay to Paper to Electronic Documents, 40
Coca-Cola Freestyle, 333–334
The Earthquake in Slow Motion Continues, 252–253
Going from Paper to Digital, 129
Importance of representation, 401
Net Neutrality, 370
The Textbook Business, 94–95
Video Games As A Spectator Sport, 274–275
What Is the Right Size? The Changing Scale of Media Companies, 68–69
When Media Connect Us to the Most Remote Places on Earth, 12–13
Where Do We Go for the News?, 153–154
Working and Living in the Long Tail, 191
As You Like It: Movie Viewership in the Digital Era, 208–209
Media world, 3–27, 429
communication, levels of, 5–8
evolution of the, 14–18
mass communication, elements of, 8–18
understanding, 18–27
Méliès, Georges, 199
Meltzer, Brad, 93
Melville, Herman, 96
Memmott, Mark, 382, 416
Men's Health, 120, 121

Men's magazines, 120–121
Meredith Corp., 117, 118
Mergenthaler linotype typesetting machine, 88
Mermigas, Diane, 77
Merton, Robert, 25
Mertz, Matthew, 26
Message, 10
Message effects, 37–42
Metropolis, 202
Metropolitan newspapers, 144–149
    Los Angeles Times, 148–149
    Washington Post, 146, 148
    See also Newspapers
Meyer, Eric K., 149
Meyer, Michael, 160
Meyer, Stephenie, 97
Meyers, Elana, 334
Meyrowitz, Joshua, 40, 248, 301
MGM, 201, 232
M.I.A., 250 (photo)
Michigan Chronicle, 158
Mickey Mouse, 56–58
Middelhoff, Thomas, 66
Middle East, media in, 418–419
Middleton, Dan (DanTDM), 8 (photo), 22
Midnight Cowboy (movie), 218, 219
Mill, John Stuart, 378–379
Millard, Bart, 211
Miller, George, 205, 210
Miller, Henry, 219
Miller, James, 187
Miller, Judith, 365
Miller v. California, 366–367
Million Little Pieces, A (Frey), 383
Mills, C. Wright, 9, 36
Minority/ethnic newspapers, 157–158
Minority Report, 12
Miranda, Lin-Manuel, 165, 166
Misappropriation, and invasion of privacy, 352
Mishra, Gaurav, 420
Mobile advertising, 311
Mobile apps, 186, 272, 273, 275

Mobile audio, 174–176
Mobile media, 17–18, 159–160, 161, 260–267. *See also* Online media
Moby-Dick (Melville), 96
Moderatism, 155
Modernization, 289
Modern press, inventing the, 138–143. *See also* Newspapers
Moffitt, Scott, 301
Mogos, Meron, 241
Mohamed, Baher, 422
Mohn, Reinhard, 65
Monk, Ian, 326
Monroe, Marilyn, 120 (image), 121
Moon Is Blue, The (movie), 218
Moon of Desire (Hanson), 90, 91
Moore, Allan, 179
Moore, Mary Tyler, 247, 249 (photo)
Moore, Michael, 214
Moore, Sara Jane, 351
Moral dimension, of media literacy, 19–20
Morality, and Hollywood, 217
Morals, 376
Moriarty, Liane, 74
Morita, Akio, 187
Morland, Howard, 362–363
Morris, Edmund, 383
Morris, Wesley, 216
Morrison, Rachel, 197
Morse, Deborah, 364
Morse, Samuel, 168, 193, 229
Morse v. Frederick, 364
Mortman, Howard, 252
Mosaic, 264
Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), 208, 219, 220
Motor Trend, 120
Motown Records, 178, 179
Mountain Dew, 301–302
Mourning, Alonzo, 305
Movies, 15, 196–224
    advent of color, 204–205
    blacklist in, 203
    blockbuster era of, 205–206, 207 (table)
    as a brand, 220–221

business of, 205–211
censorship and, 216–217
development of, 198–205
digital production/projection, 207–211
diversity in, 214–216
future of, 220–223
home video and, 206–207
Indiana Jones and PG-13, 218–220
influence of, 212–214
larger-than-life, 204
long tail and, 222–223
makers of, first, 198–200
multiplex theaters, 205
production code, 217
profitable, 211–212
promotion, on the Internet, 221–222
ratings system, 218–220
society and, 212–220
stars in, 200
studio system, 200–203
television and, 204–205
top, box office receipts of, 207 (table)
viewership today, 208–209
women in, 215
MP3, 174
MSNBC, 143, 376, 420
Muckrakers, 115–116
Multiplex theaters, 205
Munro, Alice, 90
Munro's Ten Cent Novels, 87 (image)
Murdoch, Rupert, 59–61, 98, 144, 237, 389
Murphy, Eddie, 240
Murrow, Edward R., 142, 230
Music
country, 182–183
experience, changing, 186–187
industry, 192
long tail and, 190
mass-produced, 167
performances, storing, 166–167
personal soundtrack, 186–187
popular, 178–179

popular radio formats, 183–185
public radio, 185–186
publishing, new way of, 167
rock 'n' roll, 177–178
social, 186–187
talk radio, 183–185
transmitting, 167–170
on TV, 64
young people and, 186
See also Audio; Radio
Musk, Elon, 268, 309, 311
Muybridge, Eadweard, 199 (photo)
My Best Friend's Wedding (movie), 218
Myrick, Daniel, 221

Nader, Ralph, 323
Napster, 77, 278
Narrowcasting, 235–244
Nasrin, Taslima, 102
Natasi, Blair Nicole, 318
Nation, 114, 115
National advertising, 292
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), 115, 172
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, 216
National brands, 290 (image), 291
National Broadcasting Company (NBC), 67, 69, 170. *See also* NBCUniversal (NBCU)
National news, growth of, 55–56
National newspapers, 144–145
National Public Radio (NPR), 185–186, 281, 389
Native advertising, 126, 310, 313
Navasky, Victor, 114
NBC news, 380
NBC television networks, 55, 142, 170, 171 (figure)
NBCUniversal (NBCU), 67, 152
NC-17, 219, 220
Near, Jay, 361
Near v. Minnesota, 361
Neff, Jack, 332
Nelson, Robert, 16
Nelson, Ted, 262
Nerds 2.0.1 (Segaller), 264

Nerone, John C., 406–407, 412
Net, bringing to the public, 264
Netflix, 20, 77, 222–223, 239–240, 251, 282
Net neutrality, 370
Network, 170
Networks
and affiliates, 236
commercial, 260
connecting incompatible, 260
online, 260–267
sports, 240 (box)
Neuman, W. Russell, 429
Neuromancer (Gibson), 279
Newman, Garry, 276
Newman, Omarosa Manigault (photo), 43
New media synergy, 281
New Republic, 114, 115
News, 134–162
in the age of mobile media, 159–160
business of, 143–149
characteristics of, 149, 151
concept of, 138
ethics and, 382–396
fake, 3–4
politics/society and, 149, 151
See also Newspapers
News as Myth: Fact and Context in Journalism, The (Koch), 3
News Corporation, 40, 59–62, 89, 144, 388, 389
Newsmagazines, 116–117. *See also* Magazines
News McNuggets, 145
News of the World, 60–61, 388
Newspapers, 134–162
advertising and, 297–298
audience by platform, 161 (table)
broadsheet, 141
consolidation and profitability, 144
future of, 161
gay, 158–159
modern press, inventing the, 136–143
news business, the, 143–149
News talk/radio, 183–185
Newsweek, 130, 143, 152

New York Blade, 158, 159
New York Daily News, 140, 141
New Yorker, 38, 109, 130
New York Evening Journal, 140
New York Journal, 140
New York Saturday Press, 109
New York Sun, 137
New York Times, 3, 95, 142, 144, 146
New York Times Co. v. United States, 362
New York World, 139, 140
Next-generation internet, 260
NeXTSTEP software, 73
Nichols, Terry, 357
Nickelodeon theaters, 15, 199
Nielsen Media Research, 238
Nieto, Enrique Peña, 386
Nightime, 55
Night of the Gun (Carr), 383
Niles, Robert, 291
Nin, Anaïs, 219
9/11 Commission Report, 90
"Ninja," 274
Nintendo, 96
Nixon, Richard, 146, 154, 327, 361, 375
Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth, 47–48
Noise, 11
Nolan, Christopher, 206, 208
Nolte, John, 366
Non-notated music, 167
Nook e-readers, 92
North Star, 157
No Sense of Place (Meyrowitz), 40, 248
Nosferatu, 202
Novak, Matt, 104 (image)
NPD BookScan, 105
NPR (National Public Radio), 174, 185–186, 281, 376, 416
Nye, Chad F., 356
Nygaard, William, 102
Nyong'o, Lupita, 127 (image), 400

Oakley, Annie, 199
Oates, Stephen, 338

Obama, Barack, 25, 243, 273, 359, 370, 375
Obamacare (Affordable Care Act), 9
Objectives, and public relations, 324–325
Obscenity, and the press, 365–367
    Miller v. California, 366–367
    Roth v. United States, 365–366
Ochlik, Rémi, 405
Ochs, Adolph, 146
Odom, Leslie Jr., 165
O'Donnell, Rosie, 118–119
Odyssey (Homer), 83
Of Mice and Men (Steinbeck), 99
Ogilvy, David, 295, 296, 310
O'Hara, Scarlett, 204
Ohlmeyer, Don, 395
Oklahoma City bombing case, 356–357
Olasky, Marvin, 318, 324
"Old-timey." *See* Country music
Oliver, John, 228
Olson, Bethany, 313
Omaha World-Herald, 24, 25
Ombudsman, 394–395
One-way communication, 319
Onion, The (site), 317
Online advertising, 354
Online audio, 174–176
Online bookstore, 93, 95
Online communities, 275
Online media, 17–18, 256–284
    blogs, 264–266
    e-mail, 261
    instant messaging (IM), 261
    Internet, 260–267, 276
    mobile apps, 262
    podcasts, 266–267
    search, 264–267
    short message service (SMS), 261, 262
    social media, 267–268
    streaming media, 266–267
    video games, 273–276
    women, attacks on, 399–400
    World Wide Web, 261–264

On the Media, 26, 389, 422
Open contract, 294
Opie and Anthony, 64, 184
Opinion leaders, 35
Opinion leadership, 322
Opinions, defense of, 348
Oppedahl, John, 151
Orange Is the New Black (drama), 245
Orbis Research, 94
Orlando, Tony, 21
Orwell, George, 99
Oscars, and diversity, 214–216
#OscarSoWhite, 214–216
O'Sullivan, Timothy H., 112 (photo)
Otera, Vanessa, 153, 154
O'Toole, John, 306
Outdoor advertising, 298–299
Overlock, Janis E., 425
Overstreet, Chord, 23
Ownership effects, 40–41
Oxford English Dictionary, 86

Packet switching, 259, 259 (figure)
Pacquiao, Manny, 252
Page, Larry, 70–72
PageRank, 72
Pail, Ajit, 227, 370
Paine, Thomas, 318
Paley, William S., 64, 170, 193, 232, 291
Palin, Sarah, 350
Pamela (Richardson), 87
Pandora, 174, 192
Paper, development of, 83
Papyrus, 83
Paramount Pictures, 56, 63, 201, 202
Parchment, 83
Park, Lee, 379
Parsons, Alan, 180
Parsons, L. E. (Mrs.), 231
Passion of the Christ, The, 219
PATRIOT Act, 346–347
Patriotism, and the press, 155–157

Patterson, Philip, 376
Paul, Jake, 287, 288, 305
Paul, Logan, 287, 288, 305
Paul, Trina, 343
Payne Fund, 212
PBS NewsHour, 317
PBS (Public Broadcasting Service), 236
Pearce, Anna, 17
Pearce, Matt, 228
Pearman, Raven-Symoné, 241
Pears' Soap, 290 (image)
Peele, Jordan, 212, 214
Penguin Random House, 66, 89, 95
Pennsylvania Gazette, 55, 137
Penny press, 55, 137–139, 152. *See also* Newspapers
Pentagon Papers, 39, 90, 361–362
People magazine, 126
People meter, 238
People's Choice Study, 33, 35
Personal Finance for Dummies (Tyson), 93
Personal soundtrack, 186–187
Persuasive communication, and ethics, 396–401
Peterman, Larry W., 367
Peters, Jeremy, 130
Peters, Scott, 252
Peterson, Theodore, 406
Petty, George, 120
PewDie Pie, 288
Pew Research Center, 12, 26, 27, 130, 143, 153, 160, 161, 183, 190, 273, 275, 298
Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project, 48
PG-13 rating, for movies, 218–220
Phair, Liz, 186
Phelps, Fred, 358
Phelps, Margie J., 358
Philadelphia Dollar Magazine, 109
Phillips, Dewey, 178
Phonograph, 166
Phonography, 83
Photography, and ethics, 393–394
Photojournalism, birth of, 111–112
Photo manipulation, 393–394
Pickford, Mary, 201 (photo), 217

Pickwick Papers, The (Dickens), 88
Pictograph, 82
Pine, Chris, 19
Ping, Chang, 427
Pink, 188
Pink Floyd, 188
Pinterest, 268
Pirates of the Caribbean, 206
Piretra, Dennis, 313
Pitch Perfect series, 216
Pittsburg Dispatch, 140
Pixar, 58
Pixar's Up, 204
Playboy, 120–121
Plum, Stephanie, 96
Plummer, Deborah, 242
PLUS Model Magazine, 122
Plus-sized model, 121
Podcasting, 174, 176
Podcast(s), 174, 266–267
Poe, Edgar Allan, 109, 111, 114
Pokémon GO, 275 (photo)
Pokémon Red and Blue, 274
Pole, Andrew, 303
Policinski, Gene, 250
Political activism, and public relations, 338
Political bias, and the media, 152, 154–155
Political talk radio, 183
Politics, news, and society, 149–159
Polo Grounds, 15
Poor Richard's Almanack (Franklin), 87
Popular books, *versus* great books, 95–96
Popular music, 182–183, 186, 423 (photo), 424
Popular radio formats, 183, 183 (table)
Porter, Edwin S, 199
Postal Act of 1879, 113
Posters, 11, 33 (image), 34, 186, 298, 322
Postman, Neil, 16, 229, 388
Potter, James, 10, 18, 19, 41
Powell, Colin, 422
Power of Habit, The (Duhigg), 303
Practical effects, 210

Preminger, Otto, 218
Presley, Elvis, 177–178, 182, 230
Press
agentry, 318–319
community, 149
controlling, 359–367
honesty and, 359–360
norms for, in the 21st century, 410–411
patriotism and, 155–157
theories of, 406–410. *See also* Media; Media ethics; Media law; Public relations
Priest, Christopher, 197
Princess Bride, The (movie), 19
Principle of utility, 378
Print media. *See* Billboards; Books; Magazines; Newspapers; Posters
Print on demand, 104–105
Prior restraint, 360–363
Prison, Evin, 419
Privacy
invasion of, 350–354
law, in Europe, 353–354
online, 354
smartphone and, 353–354
social media and, 281, 352–353
World Wide Web and, 280
Privacy, World Wide Web and, 281
Private ownership tradition, 54–55
Privilege, defense of, 348
Procter & Gamble (P&G), 317, 318, 324–325, 326–327
Producers, growing importance of, 180
Product, targeting for advertising, 301–302
Product integration, 312
Production Code, for movies, 217
Product placement, 312
Programming, and public relations, 325
Progressive case, the, 362–363
Proofs, 92
Propaganda, and the direct effects model, 32–33
Propaganda (Bernays), 320
Protestant Reformation, 86
Proulx, Annie, 109, 110
Psychographics, 41, 300–301
Psychological effects, 38

Public, 318, 326–327
Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, 236
Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), 236
Public broadcasting (television), 236–237
Public figures, and libel, 327
Publicity model, of mass communication, 14. *See also* Public relations
Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick (Harris), 55, 137
Public radio, 185–186
Public relations (PR), 316–403
    business of, 323–335
    civil rights movement and, 338–339
    conducting war through, 398
    crisis communication, 327–330
    defined, 318, 323–324
    development of, 318–323
    Domino's Pizza and, 334–335
    ethics in, 398
    false reports and, 321
    functions of, 323–324
    government and, 318, 319, 322, 336–337
    image management, 319
    journalism and, 335–336
    online, 331–335
    origins of, 318–322
    political activism and, 337
    process, 324–325
    as a profession, 322–323
    ROPES model, 324
    social media and, 332–336
    society and, 335–339
    spin control, 319, 335, 337–339
Public Relations Society of America, Statement of Professional Values, 399 (box)
Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), 398
Publics, external and internal, 326–327
Public service advertising, 292
Publishers
    of books, 88–90
    government publishing office, 90
    small, 90
    top global and U.S., 89 (table)
    top ten magazine, for monthly mobile visitors, 130 (table)
    university and small presses, 89–90

Publishing
colonial, 137
electronic, 104–105
See also Books; Magazines; Newspapers
Pulitzer, Joseph, 139–140, 388
Pustejovsky, Phil, 93
Putin, Vladimir, 424 (photo)

Quaker Oats, 290
Quiet Film, A (film), 258
Quinn, John, 145
Quinn, Zoe, 399

Race
magazine covers and, 126–127
radio and, 172
records, 177
See also Diversity
Rachel Maddow Show, The, 136
Radio, 15
advertising and, 170, 299
birth of, 167–170
as companion medium, 172–173
consolidation, and high technology, 189
formats, popular, 183, 183 (table)
golden age of, 171–173
HD, 173
as mass communication, 168
music box memo, 168–169
networks, 170
satellite, 173
transmitters, 169
See also Audio; Music
Radio Act of 1912, 368
Radio Act of 1927, 368
Radio Corporation of America (RCA), 67, 169, 188, 231–232, 411
Radio Music Box memo, 169
Rae, Issa, 241
Raffaelli, Ryan, 92
Rajkumar, Shruti, 257
Ramanathan, Mohan, 268
Ramos, Jorge, 243

Ramsay, Gordon, 317
Random House, 65–66, 66 (image), 89, 102
Rap music, 181
Rather, Dan, 266
Rating point, 238
Ratings
    defining, 237–238
    movies, 218–220
    television, 276
Rawl, Lawrence, 330
Rawls, John, 380–381
R&B, 166, 177
RCA radio monopoly, 169
Ready Player One (video game movie), 211
Reagan, Nancy, 44
Reagan, Ronald, 44, 383
Receiver (audience), 11–12
Receiver (radio), 169
Reception model, of mass communication, 14
Recording industry
    development of, 166–167
    making money in, 187–188
    See also Audio; Music
Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), 192
Redford, Robert, 90
Red Sparrow (Matthews), 93
Redstone, Shari, 64
Redstone, Sumner, 64
Reed, Americus, 325
Reeves, Jim, 182
Reformation, and the dissemination of ideas, 86–87
Refrigerated & Frozen Foods, 113
Reign, April, 214
Reilly, Ryan, 366
Reiniger, Lotte, 71
Reitman, Jason, 413
Remnick, David, 405
Renck, Petra, 327
Representation, in video games, 276
Research
    planning and, 294–295
    and public relations, 323

Responsible capitalism, 154–155
Responsible press, 381
Restrepo (documentary), 156
Reverent, The (movie), 215
Reverse synergy, 282
Reynolds, Burt, 119
Reynolds, Ryan, 413
Reynolds, Taylor, 276
Rezaian, Jason, 419
Reznor, Trent, 192
Rhimes, Shonda, 241
Rhodes, Leara D., 128
Richardson, Samuel, 87
Ridley, Daisy, 400
Ridley, Scott, 306 (photo)
"Right to Be Forgotten" laws, European, 355
Rihanna, 321 (photo)
Riley, Amber, 23
Ringer, Barbara, 367
Ringwood's Afro-American Journal of Fashion, 118
Riordan, Rick, 97
Ritual model, of mass communication, 13–14
River Runs Through It, A (Maclean), 90
Rivers, Joan, 227
Roberts, Brian, 69, 239
Roberts, Candice, 242
Roberts, John, 9, 358
Roberts, Julia, 213, 218
Robertson, Amy, 343, 344
Robertson, Pat, 44
Robinson, Jackie, 348
Robinson, Marilynne, 96
Robinson Crusoe (Defoe), 110
Roche, Thomas C., 112
Rockefeller, John D., 320
Rock 'n' roll, 177–178, 193
Rock radio, 178
Rockwell, Norman, 111
Rocky Horror Picture Show, The (movie), 23
Rogers, Henry, 321
Romenesko, Jim, 251, 321
Romney, Mitt, 375

Roose, Kevin, 270
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 348
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 33
Roosevelt, Theodore, 115
ROPES model, 324
Rosen, Jay, 22, 150
Ross, Alex, 38
Ross, Brian, 346
Ross, Tracee Ellis, 241
Rostova, Nataliya, 425
Rotary press, 88
Roth, Samuel, 365
Roth, Veronica, 97
Roth v. United States, 365–366
Rougher rock, 179
Roupenian, Kristen, 109, 110
Rousey, Ronda, 123 (image)
Rowell, George, 294
Rowling, J. K., 97
R-rated movie, 219, 220
RTL Group, 66
Rubin, Jennifer, 337
Rubin, Rick, 180
Ruffalo, Mark, 206 (photo)
Rushdie, Salman, 101, 102
Rusher, Matthew, 414
Russell, Jack, 5
Russia, media in, 424–426
Russian hackers, 278–279
Russia Today (RT), 278, 426
Russo, Richard, 90
Rust (game), 276
Ryan, Paul, 252
Rynja, Martin, 102

Safire, William, 337
Sago Mine disaster, 390–393
Saints Row, 276
Salehi, Yeganeh, 419
Salinger, J. D., 99
Samper, Ernesto, 243
Sánchez, Eduardo, 221

Sanders, Bernie, 37
Sanders, Sarah Huckabee, 336 (image), 337
Sarkeesian, Anita, 215, 400
Sarnoff, David, 168, 170, 188, 229, 232
Saro-Wiwa, Ken, 102
Sassa, Scott, 240, 241
Satanic Verses, The (Rushdie), 101
Satellite radio, 173, 190
Satellite television, 231–234, 232 (figure)
Saturday Evening Post, 110–111
Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update, 3
Saving Private Ryan (movie), 14, 219, 220, 228, 249
Saw (movie), 48
Scalia, Antonin, 275, 358
Scanlon, John, 337
Scarlet Letter, The (Hawthorne), 96, 99
Scherer, Michael, 128
Schindler's List, 205
Schneider, Alfred, 247
Schramm, Wilbur, 306
Schudson, Michael, 138, 289
Schumacher-Matos, Edward, 395
Schwarzenegger, Arnold, 352
Scott, Ridley, 204, 269, 306
Scott, Travis, 274
SCOTUSblog, 9
Scriptoria, 83
Search, as a news medium, 264
Seduction of the Innocent (Wertham), 24
Segaller, Stephen, 264
Segarra, Annie, 258
Seglin, Jeffrey L., 395
Segura, Jonathan, 104
Seiden, Hank, 296
Seiple, Pamela, 332
Semantic noise, 11
Sender, 8–9
Sender Message Channel Receiver (SMCR), 8
Sengstacke, John H., 158 (photo)
Sensationalism, and ethics, 385–388
Serial novels, 88
Service magazines, 118

Sesame Street, 236, 237 (image)
Sesame Workshop, 236–237
Seung-hui Cho, 352
Sevareid, Eric, 143
"Seven Sisters" magazines, 118–119
Sexual harassment, issue of, 31–32
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 179–180
Shah Rukh Khan, 213
Shakespeare, William, 99
Shame of the Cities, The (Steffens), 116
Share, 238
Sharma, Anupam, 213
Shaw, Donald, 44
Sheehan, Neil, 361
Sheidlower, Jesse, 25
Sheppard, Sam, 356
Sheppard v. Maxwell, 356
She Wore a Yellow Ribbon (film), 21
Shield laws, 365
Shock jocks, 173, 184
Shockley, Jhessye, 36
Short head, *versus* the long tail, 74–75
Short message service (SMS), 261
Shrivastava, Paul, 328
Shyamalan, M. Night, 212, 304
Siebert, Fred S., 406
Silver, Nate, 279, 406
Simmonds, Millicent, 258
Simon, Paul, 424
Simpson, O. J., 356, 359
Sims 4, The, 276 (photo)
Sinclair, 14
Sinclair Broadcast Group, 227–228
Sini, Rozina, 109
Sipple, Oliver (Bill), 351, 352 (photo)
60 Minutes, 55, 266, 334
Six Until Me (blog), 9
Skidmore, Linda, 391
Skrein, Ed, 216
Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, 207, 208
Sky News, 60
Skywalker, Luke, 42

Slate writer, 25, 103
Slaughterhouse-Five (Vonnegut), 99
Sloan, Michael, 147, 148
Slumdog Millionaire (movie), 213
Small, William, 330
Small media, 419–420
Small presses, 89–90
Small-town pastoralism, 155
Smartphone, privacy and, 353–354
SMCR (Sender Message Channel Receiver), 8, 13
Smiley, Jane, 101
Smith, Emily, 343, 344
Smith, Jada Pinkett, 213
Smith, Judy, 241
Smith, Julian Sinclair, 227
Smith, Justin, 130
Smith, Shep, 317
Smith, Will, 214
Smith Act, 1940, 346
Smith-Schuster, JuJu, 274
Smokey Bear, and advertising, 292
SMS (short message service), 261
Snapchat, 21, 54, 270
Snow, Robert, 335
Snowden, Edward, 39, 40, 48, 347
Snyder, Albert, 358
Snyder, Matthew, 358
Snyder, Ruth, 141
Snyder v. Phelps, 358
Soap operas, 171
Socialization, 43–44
Social justice warriors (#SJW), 399
Social learning theory, 46
Social marketing, 313–314
Social media, 161, 267–273
    content, 268
    Domino's Pizza and, 334–335
    libel and, 349–350
    privacy and, 281, 352–353
    public relations, and, 331–334
    sharing lives online, 267–273
    top sites, 269 (table)

Social music, 186–187
Social Network, The (movie), 269
Social networking, 267
Social order, 155
Social responsibility ethics, 381
Social responsibility theory, of the press, 410
Society
    Internet and, 276–282
    media and (*See* Mass communication effects, theories of)
    movies and, 212–220
    music and youth culture, 176–189
    politics/news and, 149, 151
    public relations and, 335–339
    television and, 244–246
Solo: A Star Wars Story, 251
Somaiya, Ravi, 63
Sony Walkman, 187
Sorenson, Erik, 152
Sound
    future of, 189–192
    music, youth culture, and society, 176–189
    online and mobile, 174–176
    recording and transmission, history of, 165–193, 166–167
    recording industry, 187–189
    See also Audio
Soundtrack
    personal, 186–187
    synchronized, 201
Soviet Republics (former), media in, 424–426
Soyinka, Wole, 102
Spam, 11
Span, Paula, 119
Spanish-language broadcasting, 183, 242–244
Spanish-language soap operas (telenovelas), 230 (photo)
Sparks, Nicholas, 74
Sparling, Kerri Morrone, 9
Spartacus (film), 203, 204
Spears, Britney, 24, 387
Spectator sport, video games as, 274–275
Spectre (movie), 215
Spencer, Octavia, 197
Spielberg, Steven, 12, 200, 205, 211, 212, 218–219, 228

Spin control, 319, 335, 337–339
Spin doctors, 337
Spiral of silence, 47–48
Sports Illustrated, 117, 123, 127
Sports networks, 240 (box)
Sports radio, 184–185
Spotify, 21, 174, 192
Springfield, Dusty, 179
Stallone, Sylvester, 214
Stand, The (King), 92
Standage, Tom, 411
Standard digital television, 235
Standard Oil, 320
Standards
    global media, 411–429
    for television, 247–249
Stander, Lionel, 202 (photo)
Stanton, Brandon, 265
Star, Kenneth, 375
Starck, Kenneth, 394
Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (movie), 378
Star Wars, 38 (film), 73, 202, 205, 208, 209, 253
Star Wars Episode II: Attach of the Clones, 207
Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope, 207
Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back, 42
Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens, 206, 208, 216, 275
Status conferral, 43
Staudacher, Cory, 313
Steffens, Lincoln, 116
Steinbeck, John, 99
Stelter, Brian, 228
Stephenson, Randall, 68
Stern, Howard, 64, 173, 184
Stevens, John Paul, 371
Stewardship, and public relations, 325
Stewart, Jon, 3, 4
Stewart, Potter, 362
Stine, R. L., 99
Stolley, Dick, 126
Stone, Biz, 270
Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 111
Straight Outta Compton, 197, 214, 216

Stranger Things (movie), 223
Strategic communication. *See* Advertising; Public relations
Streaming, economics of, 188–189
Streaming audio, 174
Streaming downloads, 174, 176, 188–189
Streaming media, 266–267
Strickert, Fred, 420
Students, and free speech, 363–365
Studio system, 200–203
Sturgeon, Marjorie, 25
Subliminal advertising, 305–306
Suburban newspapers, 157
Sullivan, L. B., 349
Sullivan, Margaret, 136, 416
Sulzberger, Arthur Jr., 160, 395
Sun (newspaper), 60, 137, 151
Suotamo, Jonas, 251 (photo)
Super Bowl, 306, 325
Supremes, The, 179 (photo)
Surveillance, 42
Swalwell, Eric, 252
Swarovski Beauty and the Beast, 59
Sweeps, 238
Swinton, Tilda, 216
Symbolic interactionism, 46–47
Synchronized soundtrack, 201
Synergy, 56
    and magazines, 125–126
    reverse, 282
Systrom, Kevin, 269

Tabloidization, 387
Tabloid laundering or tabloidization, 387
Tabloid newspapers, 141–142. *See also* Newspapers
Tagging, 268, 301–302
Tai, Tim, 298
Takei, George, 216
Talbot, Margaret, 82
Talkie, 202
Talking pictures, 201–202
Talk radio, 183–184
Tarantino, Quentin, 209

Tarbell, Ida, 116
Target, 75
Targeted advertising, 302–303
Targeting, 300
Tate, James, 343
Taylor, Bob, 260
Taylor, David, 327
TCP/IP, 260, 283
Teen Vogue, 127
Telecommunications Act of 1996, 189, 369–371
Telegraph, 15, 168, 411(photo)
Telemundo network, 243–244
Telenovelas, 243
Teletubbies series, 308
Television, 15–17, 226–253
advertising, 299, 301–302, 306–308, 311
broadcast, 228–231
business of, 236–244
cable, 67, 69, 231–236
changes in, 228–234
color, 230–231
decency and, 249–250
defining, in the 21st century, 250–253
digital, 234–236
diversity on, 240–244
interactive, 254
invention of, 229
as major social force, 244–246
movies and, 204–205
networks and affiliates, 236
news, and 24/7 coverage, 142–143
online and mobile, convergence of, 261–262
ratings, 226–227
satellite, 231–236
as a social force, 244, 246
society and, 244–246
standards for, 247–249
in the twenty-first century, 250–253
viewers' use of, 247
Television in the Lives of Our Children, 247
Temple of Doom, 218
Ten Commandments, The, 204

Terkourafi, Marina, 181
Terrestrial radio, 173
Territorial Enterprise in Virginia City, Nevada Territory, 3
Terrorism, 415–417
Tesler, Larry, 280
Test Your Media Literacy
    Can Television Take Anything Seriously?, 16–17
    False Reports Garner Publicity, 321
    How Do Words Get Into The Dictionary?, 86
    How Free Are the World's Media to Report the News?, 425
    Libraries, 98
    Limits on Advertising Food to Children, 308
    The Messages in Propaganda, 34
    Movie Ratings, 218–219
    No Sense of Place, 248
    Podcasting from the Long Tail, 175
    Recognizing Fake News, Consumer Responsibility, 386
    Should the President be Tweeting?, 271–272
    Target's Targeting, 303
    Updating the Four Theories, 412
    The View from Nowhere, 150–151
    What Did the Media's Future Look Like in the Past?, 27
    When Is a Radio Show Racist?, 172
    When Is Arresting Reporters Considered Acceptable?, 366
    Working with theory, 45
Test Your Visual Media Literacy
    Are Practical Effects "More Real" Than Digital Effects?, 210
    Are There Limits to What Media Images Should Display?, 415
    Comics Don't Have to Be Funny, 100
    Comic Strips Tells Story of Syrian Refugee Family, 147–148
    Does It Look Like Women Have Major Film Roles?, 215
    Emojis Bring Back Picture Writing, 84
    Google Doodles, 71
    Humans of New York, 265
    "It Was Such A Violent Collision," 379–380
    Messages in Propaganda, 34
    Presenting a Broader Range of Beauty, 124
    Should Legal Protections Extend to Offensive Speech?, 358
    What Does a TV Show Look Like?, 245
Textbook business, 94–95, 94 (figure)
Texting, 261
Theron, Charlize, 210

Thiel, Peter, 251
Thomas, J. Parnell, 203
Thomas, W. I., 46
Thompson, Robert, 249
3-D movies, 204
3M Company, 293
"Three miles of filth" (movie), 200
Tide Pod Challenge, 317, 318, 324–325
Tide Pot Challenge, 288
Timberlake, Justin, 14, 188, 249
Time, watching television and, 246
Time Inc., 63, 126
Times, The (magazine), 31, 60, 62, 116, 143, 146, 152, 161
Time Warner, 40, 58, 62 (box), 117, 232
Time Warner Cable, 63
Tisch, Laurence, 64, 239
Titanic (movie), 275
Tobacco Road (Caldwell), 117
To Kill a Mockingbird (Lee), 96
Tokyo Disneyland, 57
Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel (J. R. R.), 96–97
Tomlinson, Ray, 261
Tommasini, Anthony, 165
Tongyan, Yang, 428
Tony Orlando and Dawn, 21
Tortorella, Al, 327
Touchstone Pictures, 56
Toy Story movies, 58
Trade advertising, 293
Trade books, 96
Trade magazines, 113–114
Tran, Kelly Marie, 400
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (movie), 221
Transmission model, 8
Transmitters (radio), 169
Travolta, John, 182
Treasure Island, 103
Trip to the Moon, A (film), 199
Troisi, Dayna, 257
Trudeau, Margaret, 387
Trumbo, Dalton, 203
Trump, Donald, 3, 4, 43, 153, 154, 228, 264, 271, 278–279, 337, 375–376, 386,

409
Trump, Donald Jr., 385 (photo)
Truth, defense of, 348
Truthfulness, in journalism, 139–140, 382–385
Truth in advertising, 396
Tube of Plenty (Barnouw), 244
Tumblr blog, 8
Turnbull, Malcolm, 386
Turner, Ted, 63, 98, 143, 174, 227, 231–232, 232 (photo)
Turner Broadcasting System (TBS), 62–63, 227
Turtles All the Way Down (Green), 81
Twain, Mark, 3, 4, 101, 109, 114, 290
Tweets (Trump), 4, 271
Twelfth Night (Shakespeare), 99
21Century, defining television in, 250–253
21Century Fox, 54, 59–61, 61(box)
21Century Fox/Disney, 68
Twitchell, James, 297
Twitter, 5, 21, 54, 264, 268, 270, 376
Tylenol scare, 329
Typeface/typesetting, 85
Typemold, 85
Tyson, Eric, 93

Ulysses (Joyce), 25
Underground newspapers, 159
"Underground Papers," 159
Underwood, Carrie, 182
Ungar, Sanford, 361
Uniform resource locator (URL), 262, 283
United Airlines (UAL), 282
United Artists, 201
United Independent Broadcasters (UIB) network, 170
United Paramount Network (UPN), 64
United States v. Paramount Pictures, 230
University presses, 89–90
Univision and Spanish-language broadcasting, 238, 242–244
U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), 307
U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO), 90
U.S. News & World Report, 130
U.S. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), 55
U.S. Supreme Court, government and, 361

U.S. VALS™ Types, 301 (figure)
USA FREEDOM Act, 347
USA Today, 56, 95, 144, 145, 391 (image)
User-created generated content, 268
Uses and gratifications theory, 44–46
Utility, principle of, 378, 380

Valdez, Javier, 418
Valenti, Jack, 218, 220
VALS types, 300–301, 301 (figure)
van der Wal, Frederique, 122
VanDerWerff, Todd, 149, 216
Van Dyke, Dick, 247
Vanrenen, D. A. (Jumbo), 424
Vargas, Alberto, 120
Vargas, Jose Antonio, 53, 269, 384–385
Variety (magazine), 31
V-chip, 248, 369
VCR (video cassette recorder), 234–235
Veil of ignorance, 380–381
Veloso, Ruben, 232
Verizon, 370
Verrone, Patric, 312
Vertically integrated, 62
Viacom, 58
Viacom/CBS, 40, 58, 63–65
Vicary, Jim, 305
Victorian Internet, The (Standage), 410
Video Advertising Bureau, 304
Video cassette recorder (VCR), 233
Video games, 273–276
    diversity and representation in, 276
    as mass communication, 273–276
    percentage of consumers playing, 276 (table)
    profitability of, 275
Video on demand (VOD), 235, 253
Viewers, use of television, 247
Virtue, and the golden mean, 377–378
Visual media literacy. *See* Test Your Visual Media Literacy
Vogue, 125
Voice, The, 13
Voight, Jon, 218

Vonnegut, Kurt, 99
Voter studies, and the limited effects model, 33–35
Vox, 110

Wagoner, Becky, 391
Waitti, Taika, 267, 267 (photo)
Walden, Dave, 263
Waldman, Gunnar, 396
Walking Dead, The, 239
Wall, Chris, 396
Wallack, Todd, 344
Wall Street Journal, 56, 61, 144, 145
Walmart, 75
Walt Disney Company, 40, 56–59, 58 (box)
Walter Cronkite New Voices Act, 364
Warner, Harry, 202
Warner Bros., 62–63, 201, 202
Warner Media, 62
Warner Music Group, 63
War of the Worlds (Wells), 47
War photography, 112 (photo)
Warren Commission Report, 90
Washington, Booker T., 115
Washington, Kerry, 241
Washington Blade, 158, 159
Washington Post, 58, 144, 146, 148, 391 (image), 405
Watercooler principle, 385
Watergate scandal, 146
Weaver, Paul, 139
Webbe, John, 110
Weblog (blog). *See* Blogs
WeChat, 54
Weeknd, The, 413
Weinstein, Harvey, 31–32
Weisberg, Jacob, 103
Welles, Orson, 47
Wells, Alan, 411–412, 414
Wells, H. G., 47
Wemple, Eric, 149
Wertham, Fredric, 24
West, Kanye, 180, 387 (photo)
Westboro Baptist Church, Kansas, 358

Western Europe, media in, 413–415
WhatsApp, 54
Whipp, Glenn, 222
Whitaker, Mark, 387
Whitehurst, Andrew, 210
Whitewashing, in movies, 216–217
Whitman, Walt, 96
Whitney, Ruth, 127
Whitney, Wheelock, 359
Whole Booke of Psalmes, The, 54, 87
Whole Earth Catalog (Brand), 277
Wiig, Olaf, 157
WikiLeaks, 279
Wilkerson, Bob, 327
Wilkerson, Carter, 14
Wilkins, Lee, 376
William Paley's Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), 170
Williams, Doug, 188, 191
Williams, Evan, 270
Williams, Hank, 182
Williams, John, 38, 205
Williams, Telisha, 191
Williamson, Kevin, 130
Willkie, Wendell, 33
Wilson, Mary, 179
Wilson, Michael, 203
Wilson, Woodrow, 322
Winer, Dave, 174
Winslet, Kate, 123, 125
Wireless telegraph, 168
Wizard of Oz, The, 204
Wloszczyna, Susan, 212
Wolk, Douglas, 428
Women
    immigrants and, 139–140
    movie roles for, 215
    online media attacks, 399–400
Women's magazines, 117–120
Women's Wear Daily, 113
Wonder Woman (Jenkins), 10, 19, 20
Wonder Woman/Justice League, 208
Wong, Benedict, 206 (photo)

Wood, Anne, 289
Wood, James, 118
Woods, Keith, 36
Woods, Tiger, 387
Woodward, Bob, 146, 149 (photo)
World, 140
WorldNetDaily (website), 71
World of Warcraft (game), 273
World War I, and public relations, 322
World Wide Web
World Wide Web, 261–264, 280–281, 283
    birth of, 262–263
    bringing the net to the public, 264
    controlling content on, 280–281
    predecessors of the Web, 261–262
    privacy and, 281
    vision of the Web, 263
Wozniak, Steve, 73, 277
Wreck-It Ralph, 58
Wright, Charles R., 25, 42
Writing, origins of, 82–83
Wu, Brianna, 400 (photo)
Wu, Tim, 370

Xerox PARC, 280
Xiaobo, Liu, 428
Xi Jinping, 427 (photo)
X Problem, 219
X rating, for movies, 218–220

Yai, Anok, 124, 124 (photo)
Yellow journalism, 140–141
"Yellow Kid, The," 140, 141 (image)
You Have Seen Their Faces (Caldwell and Bourke-White), 117
Young-adult book series, and best-seller lists, 97
Young people, effects of music on, 186
Youth culture, music, and society, 176–189
YouTube, 22, 26, 54, 65, 77, 266, 268–269, 317

Zalben, Alex, 210
Zannella, Jeff, 287
Zappa, Frank, 180 (photo)
Zenger, Anna Catherine, 345

Zenger, John Peter, 345, 348
Zerzan, John, 187
Zharkova, Katya, 122
Zoned coverage, 298
Zootopia, 58
Zuckerberg, Mark, 52 (photo), 53–54, 53 (photo), 269 (photo), 384
Zworykin, Vladimir, 229