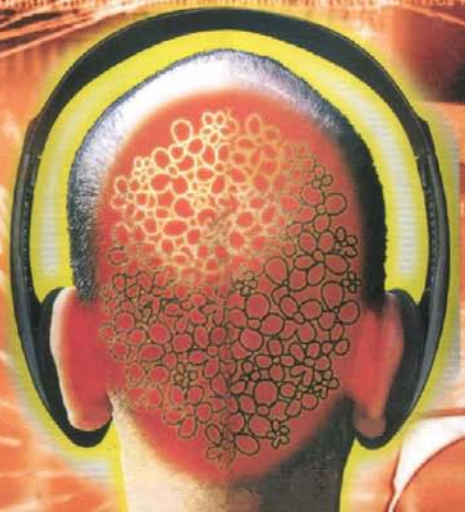
Modern Mass Communication

(Concepts and Processes)

Deepak Nayyar



OXFORD BOOK COMPANY

Modern Mass Communication

(Concepts and Processes)

"This page is Intentionally Left Blank"

Modern Mass Communication

(Concepts and Processes)

Deepak Nayyar

OXFORD
BOOK COMPANY

ISBN No. : 978-81-89473-13-1

First Published 2007

Oxford Book Company
267, 10-B-Scheme, Opp. Narayan Niwas,
Gopalpura By Pass Road, Jaipur-302018
Phone: 0141-2594705, Fax: 0141-2597527
e-mail: oxfordbook@sify.com
website: www.abdpublisher.com

© Reserved

Typeset by :
Shivangi Computers
267, 10-B-Scheme, Opp. Narayan Niwas,
Gopalpura By Pass Road, Jaipur-302018

Printed at :
Rajdhani Printers, Delhi

All Rights are Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. Responsibility for the facts stated, opinions expressed, conclusions reached and plagiarism, if any, in this volume is entirely that of the Author, according to whom the matter encompassed in this book has been originally created/edited and resemblance with any such publication may be incidental. The Publisher bears no responsibility for them, whatsoever.

Preface

For thousands of years the complex symbolic code known as language has allowed humans to share thoughts with one another. Even before written language, humankind communicated orally and pictorially. Communication—including state news, sports reports and gossip—helped in holding together people in a unified statehood. As modern technology is radically transforming, the reach, speed and methods by which individuals and organisations communicate are also witnessing tremendous changes.

We use technology every day to inform to be informed. We watch television or listen to radio for entertainment and information. We talk and listen to people across the town or around the world using telephones and cellular phones. Increasingly, we send and receive faxes, use e-mail and use electronic-based systems or commercial network services. We use video-conferencing and chat with people in any corner of the world through internet. These and many other means of communication have opened new avenues for accurate, fast and instant communication among

people but humankind's thirst for communication and information is still seemingly unquenchable. Multimedia technology has helped a great lot in the field of communication.

Mass communication is often used loosely to refer to the distribution of entertainment, arts, information and messages by television, radio, newspapers, magazines, movies, recorded music and associated media. In this usage mass communication refers to the activities of the media as a whole and fail to distinguish among specific media, modes of communication, genres of texts, production or reaction situations or any questions of actual communication. Therefore, the present book makes description on media and communication at the outset, and then describes concepts, processes and theories of mass communication. The book also delves on modern systems of communication network.

Deepak Nayyar

Contents

"This page is Intentionally Left Blank"

1
Media and Journalist

Ignorant, inaccurate, partisan even in presenting fact, negligent of the serious, tenacious of the trivial, greedy of bad news—journalists are worth studying, because study might remedy a few of their weaknesses; and that would be a result worth reaching, because their work can be important to the way the world is run.

No journalist of any length of service could deny that he has at one time or another earned all those labels. The question is how to achieve an improvement. You could establish a body with power to compel improvement. But wherever its power came from, its standards could not suit everyone: some people would still find that journalists were being allowed to put the wrong things in or leave them out; and since all power comes from the state in the end, the standards which would win would come from the state too, or from the people in charge of it at the time. Willingly or unwillingly, journalists would then grow ignorant of the state's failures, inaccurate about the size of its successes, partisan about its proposals, unamused even by the trivial unless it carried the

state seal, and silent about bad news. There are countries where that happens already.

Reaching that point in the argument, journalists tend to suppose that there is no more to be said. Life in the confident Northcliffe tradition can go on.

But an encouraging movement in late years has been the growth, in the United States and now in Britain, of the study of broadcasting and newspapers by dons. University people, students as well as teachers, can examine the business of journalism without any of the risks which would flow from their having authority to put it right. Academics have no authority, after all, beyond the quality of their findings. But if their findings are clear enough, and their case against journalists sound enough, then a strong moral impulse is set up towards the only kind of reform likely to last or work: reform put in hand by journalists themselves.

What a working journalist can add to this study is a little experience of how journalists work, how they work on politicians, and how at least some of them see their function. Since our work has been with radio and television news programmes and a 'quality' newspaper, and mainly with the kind of news which makes up the subject matter of politics, we think of those parts and topics of the trade in particular when we use the terms journalism and journalist.

The reason why journalism is worth saving from its sins is that it forms a first line of defence for the rule of reason in public affairs. That rule is now under insistent threat.

2
Print Media versus Television

If it is true that television's range will not now increase significantly, then there is a case for saying that newspapers have survived the coming of broadcasting to remain the leading means of communication in public affairs. The case is only worth making at the outset because it indicates where the responsibilities of leadership rest.

If the race were to the swift, newspapers would not have a chance. Technical progress is a struggle they often seem to have given up. British newspapers do as well as those of any other Western country in improving, with computers and cameras, a technology which was invented in the fifteenth century and brought substantially to its present state in the nineteenth. But the flag of advance is flown in the provinces, not the capital: interested foreigners are taken to Hemel Hempstead, not Fleet Street; and the ideas which British national newspapers ought to have been looking at are in full use in Japan. The system of printing by remote control at a second location which is now used by Japan's

leading daily paper, *Asahi Shimbun*, was in fact devised for the *Manchester Guardian* before it began to print in London in September 1960; but the *Guardian* did not use it.

People who make a business of peering into the future like to look forward to a time when newspapers are delivered to each subscribing household electronically. Successive sheets will fall from a televisual photocopier inside the front door. But the vision is slow in materialising; and meanwhile more ordinary methods of delivery continue unimproved. In many parts of continental Europe, as in rural Britain, the only way to get a newspaper delivered to your door is to have it brought by the postman—yesterday's paper at twice the price. In urban Britain and America your paper is delivered by child labour, if at all. In Britain the child is normally employed by a local newsagent, who can exercise some supervision; and the culture dictates that the paper should be dropped near the front door, if not through it. In America the child is employed by the newspaper itself, so that the supervision is more distant; and custom asks no more than that the paper should be thrown towards the door. In bad weather it can be unreadable when recovered.

Written news will never travel as fast as broadcast news. Its edge is not speed but penetration. Reading has this advantage in particular over listening, that it can be done in the reader's own time. To him an interruption or a distraction is merely a delay. But distraction is peculiarly damaging to the listener, because the moment of inattention cannot be made up.

The spoken word on television and radio runs a constant gauntlet of distractions. On television it has to compete not just with the pictures but with all the trivial alarums of domestic life. Radio lives on distractions, in the sense that what has saved it from extinction in the television age is the fact that you can do something else as well as listen to it—drive a car, bake a cake. Anyone who has listened to the news as he drives is aware that

he has sometimes missed a detail because he has been attending to a child crossing the road, a traffic light, another car. Just as well, too.

It would be absurd to decry the power of the spoken word. One of the most powerful poems in the history of man, the *Iliad*, almost certainly began its life before the invention of writing. Its mere existence is proof that it triumphed over the natural inattentiveness of its after-dinner authences in ill-lit Aegean banqueting-halls. But the rhapsode who declaimed a story from it had a number of advantages not vouchsafed even to television newscasters.

He was a rare presence, although his story had a delightful half-familiarity to his listeners. More than that, he was a real presence. He compelled attention where a moving photograph only asks for it. He would notice the discourtesy of inattentiveness. But also he was there. He supplied a verbal image of the battle-fields beyond the firelight; but he was not himself an image. If he had been on a television set in the corner of the hall, his story would have been at a double remove from the real: images furnished by an image.

There is another Hellenic parallel for television, drawn a few hundred years later by Plato with chilling foreknowledge. In the *Republic*, he ascribes to Socrates a long simile designed to show the great distance which the natural man must travel before he attains a state of reasoned understanding. Shackled prisoners in a cave see pictures projected on a wall in front of them. The projector is a fire behind them: the objects are carried on the heads of people walking past it. The technology is of the cinema: the prisoners are in the front stalls, and the carriers (as far as the simile is clear) parade across the back of the circle, with only their burdens in line with the light from the projection-box. But the product is television. The objects, images of men and beasts and instruments, recur on a partially predictable pattern, and are taken by the prisoners to be real. In fact they are not just images but

images of images; and the slow process of learning which Plato—never an admirer of the common man—proposes for his prisoners is that they should look first of all at the original or material images, then (their eyes dazzled by exposure to the daylight) at the shadows of real objects in the real world outside, then at the real objects themselves, and finally—only for choice spirits, this—at the sun, which represents the controlling source of goodness and intelligence. Then they are ready to go back down the rocky slope into the cave and start spreading the news—with the likelyhood of getting killed for their pains. (Plato allows Socrates, his narrator in the dialogue, that much foreknowledge of a more immediate future. By the time the *Republic* was written, Socrates had already been executed for the insistent radicalism of his teaching.)

Images of images? True of a television play, clearly. Not always true of television news. The film camera often shows things which would have been there anyway as part of the real world. But people are very seldom quite unconscious of anything as obtrusive as a sixteen-millimetre sound film camera, and much that is shown on news bulletins is a modification of normality with television in mind: an interview, a press conference, a street protest, a pause in a doorway. A television interview or discussion, the standard tool of investigation and reporting, is a representation on the screen of a representation in front of camera:, of how two or three people might have talked if they had been by themselves. It is not in any important sense fraudulent, since the viewers understand all this if they bother to formulate it: they are better off than the shackled prisoners in the darkened cave; but it is an image of an image.

The printed word, on the other hand, is not an image. It is as direct a representation of thought as speech is, and more controllable. Further, its subject matter is not an image, or need not be. Out of sloth or necessity, writing journalists sometimes use an

arranged situation like a press conference; but they can live without it, and their work is better if they do.

The philosophical arguments for the primacy of the printed word thus shade into the practical. Making the change from television to newspaper work, we have been struck by how much less easy it is for a television reporter to find out what has happened or is happening than it is for a newspaper reporter.

"It is not simply that I can get about better now: that I am one instead of at least three that I have no camera crew with me whose movements I delay and who delay mine that the luggage with me need consist only of a suitcase and a typewriter instead of more than a dozen bulky boxes." It is not even that getting a story into a newspaper is so much less arduous a business than getting a piece of television on to the air: a typewriter and a telephone replace the whole rigmarole of aeroplane and satellite and film labs and viewing theatres and editing machines, with the result that the reporter has much more time to work in before the material need leave his hand. What counts is the psychological difference between a camera, or any recording device, and a notebook. You notice it as soon as you sit down with someone who can tell you what you want to know. If there is a camera behind you, your man is aware that he is not really talking to you at all. He is talking to anyone who might be listening, total strangers, his family, his employers, his voters. His words are guarded, self-conscious. It is the same if there is a microphone in front of him, and two rotating rolls of magnetic tape slowly recording the sound for radio (or even for use in a newspaper; but if they are, then the newspaper has only itself to blame for their uninformativeness, since the published question-and-answer form belongs now to broadcasting if anywhere).

It is not the same if the only piece of recording equipment produced is a notebook. Even if he is self-conscious at first, your informant quickly sees that not everything he says is written

down. (Not everything he says can be written down, since as a rule the only reporters whose shorthand can compass a verbatim transcript of any length have perfected it over long years in law court or parliamentary press gallery, and are in consequence imprisoned there still.) There will be gaps—there may be long gaps—between the interesting or important things he says; and in consequence there will be long periods while the notebook is unused, and he rapidly forgets so apparently innocuous a device in his admirable anxiety that you should see the affair in hand as he does.

There are many occasions when a newspaper reporter need not use a notebook at all until after the talk is over. Storing the mind with things said, like a chipmunk filling its checks with maize, and then disgorging them on to the pages of a notebook, is a technique comparatively easily learnt. It has the advantage that it makes not merely the answers flow more readily but the questions too, since the reporter is not half-preoccupied with writing down the answer to one question while he devises the next. It can only be used if the results of the interview are either not going to be quoted at all or quoted anonymously, since for attributed quotation it is not precise enough. But those are often the most interesting quotations—too revealing, or too damaging, to be fathered on their originator without his express permission: the borough architect's reflection on his council's collective taste, the backbencher's unease about the party leadership.

Television reporters hear that kind of observation at least as often as newspaper reporters—perhaps more often, in moments of post-interview relaxation, when the subject is relieved and a little surprised at having guarded himself so well from indiscretion. But television reporters cannot use it. They have to use the interview itself instead, the discreet bromide. Those are the terms on which they got it.

That ought to mean, none the less, that television reporters

are at least as well informed as newspaper reporters about the detail of the scene they cover. But it does not: they are spared having to write it in detail. Writing about something, as a means to learning it, beats even teaching: areas of vagueness are less easy to dissimulate. As a television reporter, we are very seldom needed to know about anything in detail, because we very seldom wrote about anything in detail. When four hundred words—less than the length of this printed page—is a long piece, detail is dispensable.

The cant in the trade, not wholly discouraged by broadcast journalists, is that it is more difficult and time-consuming to write briefly than to write at length. So it might be, if the same volume of information and ideas had to be packed into the short piece as into the long one. But there is no question of that in broadcasting. It was natural for a crime reporter on a popular paper to get as many facts as he could into his piece about an obscure MP who was acquitted in May 1970 on a spying charge: "The former pit boy, who had admitted receiving £2,300 from the Czechs in eight years, walked from the dock after the 13-day trial. Twenty minutes later he was smuggled out of a side entrance on his way home to a ham-salad tea at his semi-detached house in Woodstock Road, Carshalton." Even the worst of broadcasters would discover that a spoken offering could not be quite so full of currants and stay digestible. And since he did not need to use so many facts, he would not need to discover them either. He would have the extra time to get his stuff back to the office instead.

If that scrap of testimony is accepted, it contains the germ of an answer to the claim that most people in developed countries get the bulk of their information about public affairs from television. The bulk of the information is not on television. If people do indeed understand and retain what they learn from television, then their understanding will be in broad terms at best.

The rest of the answer is partly flippant. It is that television

gets most of its news ideas from newspapers anyway, so people who get their news from television are in fact getting it from newspapers at one remove. In so far as this is true, it is to some extent unavoidable. News bulletins come round more often than once a day: many broadcast journalists have less time to find things out in than newspapermen have, technical pressures aside. For just the same reasons, daily newspapermen draw on the information in weekly papers. Further, there is the simple point that broad-casters find it a great deal easier to consult newspaper archives than their own. Newspaper cuttings have a convenient physical existence, and television news organisations have cuttings libraries hard by their newsrooms. Re-running an old news bulletin or even the tape-recording usually taken of it, is a much more arduous business. That is part of the pre-eminence of the printed word. Anthropologists date the dawn of civilisation from the moment when the spoken word could be written down. It could then be looked at again. The community's wisdom became cumulative, not evanescent.

Clearly, newspapermen draw on television too. Few newspapermen do anything on election nights except watch television. The results of televised sporting fixtures are regularly taken from the screen. It would be pointless labour to do anything else, when the evidence is already so well gathered. And television's capacity to harvest its own news can only increase. What has partly held back the development of the necessary specialist reporters has been the difficulty (given a news bulletin's small compass) of finding them enough to do, and hence of training them to do it with enough aplomb.

Another reason why television journalism retains few staff thinkers is that most thinking journalists like an occasional chance to say what they think, and the chances on television are few or none. Newspapermen have plenty of opportunities, if they want them: editorials, signed leader-page articles, diary or notebook

entries, to say nothing of the kind of reporting of sport or the arts which is chiefly a critique of performance: anywhere where the reader is made aware that he is being offered a statement of opinion rather than of fact. (It can happen even within news reports, if the reporter feels that his own coming down on one side of the question or the other is itself an event worth noticing. When *The Times* abandoned anonymity, it was the paper's most senior correspondents who most freely larded their copy with the first-person pronoun.)

Television reporters are less lucky. The special genius of the form demands that their report should be chiefly drawn up in terms of the comparative objectivity of pictures. More than that, television news bulletins and current affairs programmes are not rich in opportunities for staff men to unload their opinions. There are no leading articles, no expressions of editorial view, on British television. The BBC and the independent television companies are specifically forbidden to voice their own views. The prohibition is in the Television Act and in the terms on which the BBC's licence is from time to time renewed. And there would almost certainly be no editorials even if no such prohibition were in force. Commercial television in the United States is free of it, and uses the freedom sparingly. Broadcasters all over the world have too strong a sense of officialdom peering over their shoulder—the same officialdom which allows their organisation a licence to broadcast and a frequency to broadcast on, and whose benevolence is therefore worth retaining. Whether in an editorial or a piece of reporting, an opinion which is not balanced by a contrary opinion may call down sour looks from people in government. But to counterbalance the opinion of an editorialist, or even a staff reporter, in this way is to voice total self-mistrust. Better to leave the whole thing alone.

Newspapers are no strangers to official displeasure; but in most Western countries they can afford to be undismayed by it,

because they are not dependent for their very existence on official goodwill. Certainly a ban on editorialising in newspapers would be thought as odd as it is thought unsurprising in broadcasting.

For a newspaper, the freedom to editorialise is extremely useful (quite aside for the moment from the question of whether it is effective). It allows a newspaper to react to an item of news, a politician's speech, a government proposal, more overtly than by merely putting it at the top of page one or the bottom—of page five. The newspaper can make it clear that it prints the news with enthusiasm, with reservations, or with distaste. When Anthony Wedgwood Benn accused Enoch Powell, during the 1970 election, of hoisting in Wolverhampton—with his 'obscene racialist propaganda'—the same flag that fluttered over Dachau and Belsen, *The Times* carried what must have been one of the shortest leaders in its history. It read, in full: "We publish on another page an attack made last night on Mr. Powell by Mr. Benn. Though *The Times* has always strongly opposed Mr. Powell on immigration, we believe that this attack cannot conceivably be supported on the evidence of anything that Mr. Powell has said. We have decided to publish this attack because we believe that the fact and character of the attack, including its astonishingly intemperate language, should be known accurately to the public."

The device enables the staff of a newspaper to disclose what kind of people they are. Newspaper leaders are arrived at in different ways in different newspaper offices. In some they result from a meeting of an editorial 'cabinet' which is not wholly unlike a ministerial cabinet, though a little less solemn: there is an opening statement from the member most concerned, discussion, a consensus identified from the editorial chair, and a member detailed to put it into effect in words. In some they result more often from a straightforward brief to the leader-writer from the editor. In no case could they for long be wholly at variance with what most other journalists on the paper could stand: either the

staff would gradually change, or the leaders would. A leading article therefore becomes an expression of the highest common factor of opinion among most of the people on the paper's staff; and it is thus a signal to the reader, more rapid and reliable than he could collect from scanning the way items have been selected and presented, about what kind of paper he is reading. It is more than that: it is an acknowledgement that a newspaper is a live entity, with a mind of its own.

3
Media as a Means of Public Communication

When Anthony Wedgwood Benn became Postmaster General in the first Wilson Government and wanted to explain to his staff what the new administration's aims for the Post Office were, he concluded that the easiest way to do it was to hire the Albert Hall. (He got the idea from Sir Stafford Cripps, who had hired the Central Hall, Westminster, early in the first Attlee Government to address the staff of the Board of Trade.) Any large department of state or public corporation presents the same problem: the right hand has grave difficulty in discovering what the left hand is up to. Failing the Albert Hall, news organisations can help. The officials of any large public body will scan the newspapers, in particular, for word of what is going on not just in the world around them but in other parts of their own concern.

Newspapers and news broadcasts are undoubtedly one of the means by which one part of central government learns what is happening or what might happen in another, and by which local government learns what is happening in central government.

They give MPs some of their information and ideas. Backbench MPs regularly find subject for questions in the press: indeed, it is not uncommon for a reporter to suggest a subject for questions to an MP, in order to strengthen his report with the news that a question is to be asked in the House about it. For events which fall somewhere between history and actuality, MPs are used to regarding newspapers as their chief source. When the *News Chronicle* closed in 1960, its library of newspaper cuttings went to the House of Commons.

Our governors have many other sources of information, though, about what has happened or is happening in government. The Vote Office, a mullioned window in the members' lobby of the Commons, dispenses it to MPs by the armful: records of debates, order papers, select committee findings, government white papers, drafts of bills, reports of nationalised bodies, and so on. The executive has its own more private and even more voluminous system for circulating papers.

The governed, on the other hand, are without all this. They are largely dependent, for their knowledge of what government is up to, on journalists.

If it is lucky, or overbearing, a government can use at any rate part of the work of journalists simply as a mouthpiece, presenting its views without inconvenient objections and without much notice of rival activities or comments. That was how the ORTF seemed to read its function during the de Gaulle years. Its view of news began to change after he left office; but as the new news director of its principal channel, Pierre Desgraupes, said to *L'Express* in July 1970: "If a man has fallen into the habit of going to a government office every day to collect his orders, I know of no serum which can change his attitude overnight. Not even lion serum. And if I'd had some lion serum, and transformed one of these journalists, I'd still have to transform the man he goes to see as well; because if he'd seen the journalist suddenly coining on

like a lion, he would have taken him for a lamb and kicked his bottom (*s'il l' avait vu tout d'un coup arriver en lion, il l'aurait pris pour un agneau et il lui aurait botté les fesses*)."

If it is less lucky, a government may find factual accounts of its words and deeds footnoted, in the press or on the air, with equally factual statements of the corresponding objections: that the promised bill cannot be law for another three years, that the new motorway still indicates a rate of road construction far slower than the rate of new car registration. These may come from an opponent of the government: they may come from the reporter himself. Government ministers value the uninterrupted ministerial broadcast, straight to camera, because it assures them not just of publication in full but of freedom from that kind of talk-back. American presidents seem to have found it especially precious. (The talk-back sometimes comes up all the same, if the broadcasting organisation arranges for studio comment to follow the great man's message—a practice which used to give rise to recurrent Washington arguments between the White House and the networks.)

Journalists are at least as active, though, in ferrying information in the opposite direction: from the governed to their governors. This is not necessarily state-of-the-nation stuff. Where the information is fact, it is as a rule specific fact. General fact—unemployment figures, housing statistics—is usually gathered by official agencies. Where it is opinion, it is often specific opinion, with a name attached. But governors are also extremely curious about general opinion, states of mind among people at large. Journalists take it as part of their task to meet this curiosity.

Few newspapers or broadcasting organisations would maintain that actual audience participation is much use for the purpose. Letters to the editor, phoned-in contributions to telethons or radio talk shows, are the preserve of the untypically self-confident or strong-minded; and they are chosen, where choice is

possible, to be interesting rather than representative. Even the letters page of *The Times*, enlarged since September 1970 and unique in journalism as a notice-board for the great and good, is clearly edited not so much with a view towards giving a small minority of the paper's readers their opportunity for a public statement—they have plenty of others—as with a view towards entertaining the readers as a whole.

When W.T. Arnold, Matthew Arnold's nephew, toured Ireland early in 1880 for the *Manchester Guardian* to report on the condition of the people in a winter when the potato crop had failed, journalists were still bold enough to be their own sociologists. It was an important journey for the paper: it began the *Guardian*'s slow conversion to Irish Home Rule in parallel with Gladstone's. In thirteen long articles, Arnold drew on his own observations of how people lived, his own record of what they said. He was unabashed by any thought that what he saw and heard might not be representative: he backed his own judgement that it was. Reporters continued to use this method, without suspecting that there might be anything wrong with it, until about the time of the Second World War. Then two new instruments began to cast doubt on the usefulness of the old one: the social survey and the opinion poll.

Dr. George Gallup forecast his first American presidential election result in 1936. (It was not a difficult one: it was the beginning of President Franklin Roosevelt's second term, when he overwhelmed Governor Alfred Landon of Kansas by 523 electoral votes to 8.) The first opinion poll appeared in a British newspaper, the *News Chronicle*, in 1937. Sociology made the eastward crossing of the Atlantic less rapidly, but no less inexorably. It began to become established at European universities after the Second World War (when the word sociology itself, and the study, were already about a hundred years old); and in Britain *New Society*, the weekly review which first brought some of the findings

within reach of ordinary journalists, was founded late in 1962.

The slow consequence of these imports has been to make journalists in Britain chary of social generalisation except on the basis of other people's figures—of which the most comprehensive, the results of the national census, are only collected in full every ten years—and of electoral or political prediction except on the basis of opinion polls. In successive general elections, more and more attention was paid to opinion polls; and in the 1970 election, journalists made them their main focus of interest. At least as much heed was paid to what the voters thought, or were thought to think, as to what the candidates said. The lead story in the *Sunday Times* was about opinion polls on each of the four Sundays before polling day.

The result was an interesting débâcle. Of five opinion polls, four gave as their final forecast a Labour victory; and the fifth, Opinion Research Centre, only hazarded a narrow Conservative win—narrower than it was in fact—as a result of a carefully calculated guess at the amount by which zeal to vote among Conservative supporters would exceed Labour zeal.

Even more interesting was the extreme brevity of the slump in the standing of opinion polls among journalists. A year later the debate about whether or not Britain should join the Common Market was being conducted almost entirely in terms of opinion poll findings. Mr. Heath had been unwise enough to undertake not to lead Britain into the Market without the "full-hearted consent" of the British people, as if that were something which could be clearly identified; and the claim that consent was barely even half-hearted was much used by opponents of entry.

The responsibility for encouraging public men in these simplicities lies with journalists. When they report opinion-poll findings, journalists do not always explain as rigorously as they should that sampling error may have distorted each side's real score by 3 per cent, which could throw the gap between the two

sides out by 6 per cent; nor are they always scrupulous in explaining that, even if there is no sampling error, the results are only valid for the time (perhaps a week ago) when the questions were in fact asked. The pollsters themselves could of course insist that these qualifying points should be made; and so they do, retrospectively, whenever their judgements are proved wrong by the hard arithmetic of an electoral result. But the pollsters are uncomfortably aware that newspapers would not print, nor broadcasters broadcast, propositions of the form: "A week ago the state of public opinion produced something between a 2 per cent lead for Labour and a 4 per cent lead for the Conservatives"; and yet the pollsters like their work published, not least because their bread and butter is in commercial market research— enquiries about whether people prefer their chocolate biscuits milk or plain sometimes appear in the same list as the political questions—and they believe their political polls to be a useful advertisement for their firms. So journalists are allowed to go on overplaying opinion poll results.

On more complicated questions than voting intention, there is a more serious difficulty. It is that pollsters cannot help eliciting opinions which are sometimes held lightly or not at all. Even on a much discussed issue, like Britain and the Market, to have an opinion requires an effort of mind, and one which—judged by the impressionistic methods of the journalist—most people were not disposed to make. They were content to leave the decision to the Government. But they were not prepared to say so to the pollsters: few people will cheerfully confess to opinionlessness. So they summoned up the scrap of information they could most easily grasp, which was in most cases the likely further rise in the cost of food, and they evolved from it—on their own doorstep, with their supper cooling behind them—an opinion they had never owned till then.

On issues which have not been the subject of much public

discussion, this virtual fabrication of public opinion by the pollsters becomes an active absurdity. With commendable honesty, Opinion Research Centre demonstrated this in a poll it ran in April 1971. The issue chosen was the desirability of a referendum on Market entry: it was a device which a few politicians who foresaw the impossibility of changing Mr. Heath's mind by any other means were beginning to advocate. Would it be a good idea, ORC enquired of its sample of opinion, if the Government asked the people to vote yes or no before it decided whether we should go into the Common Market? Yes, a majority thought it would. But a majority also said—as each suggestion was put to them—that they would like the same motions gone through before MPs' pay was put up, before food prices were increased and before a wage freeze was imposed. It was an impressively consistent demand for more power to the people. But then a similar majority spoilt it all by saying that they thought important national decisions should be taken by the elected government rather, than by the people.

The inescapable impression is of people prepared to hail anything that looks like a good idea as their own opinion. But such a measurement is strictly valueless. It does not mean that the body of opinion of which this is supposed to be a sample does in fact exist: it does not even mean that public agreement could be secured to the idea put forward, since it has been put forward by the pollsters (quite properly) without the due objections. Opinion Research Centre had intended to test the idea that public demand for a Market referendum was weak and thoughtless. The idea proved all too well founded. The result suggested the dangerous thought that almost any opinion discovered by a pollster might be weak and thoughtless too.

Surveys, treading more factual ground than polls, come up against another obstacle. Because a question is factual, the answer is not necessarily factual too. Jeremy Tunstall, an academic

sociologist, compiled his entertaining book *Journalists at Work* from questionnaires sent to a number of specialist journalists. The questions were all perfectly fair and sensible; but some of them were impossible to answer truthfully. How often did you call your news desk? We had absolutely no idea, without running a laborious exercise in self-observation over what might then turn out to be a quite untypical period. How many of our stories did we think up, and how many did our office? Most stories seemed to think of themselves: they simply happened. Did we make more telephone calls than we received? Well, probably; and yet it seemed such an acknowledgement of an unloved life that we were sorely tempted to fiddle the figures. Did we ever have to treat our news sources with deference? We would be reluctant to say so if we did. . . .

When Mr. Tunstall put the book together, he was clearly aware of such problems and kept them scrupulously in mind. The fact remains that, since the man answering this kind of questionnaire has to put something down, if only to get the thing off his desk, not all the answers are of the same degree of reliability.

Happily, even if the journalist is shy now of impressionistic evidence, surveys and opinion polls are not the only first-class source material available to him as he goes about the task of telling governments about the physical and mental condition of the governed. There remains the journalist himself. It is a commonplace of television or radio interviewing technique that the interviewer asks those questions which the ordinary intelligent and concerned citizen will want answered. How does he know what questions are in that citizen's mind? By looking into his own.

4
Commission and Omission by the Media

If the journalist asks questions of government with the voice of his readers or listeners or viewers, then he ought in some sense to be like them. It is a matter of common complaint that he is not. He exhibits social and political biases which contrive to separate him from one group after another in the population which surrounds him.

Most journalists working for organs of mass communication can be said to be on the side of the established order. They would stop well short of the assertion that whatever is, is right; but much of their work shows a broad approval of the way things are arranged in their own country and of the standards current among people most disposed to accept that arrangement, together with a marked scepticism about alternative systems—particularly if they come from abroad.

That observation is not entirely cancelled out by the fact that journalists are also regularly attacked for exhibiting the opposite tendency. No journalist can expect to stand up in front of a

Conservative audience without being made answerable for the shortcomings of all journalists, from making fun of anti-pornography crusaders to disrespectful editing of Conservative speeches. But this charge of iconoclasm, of cultural and political subversion, is not incompatible with the charge that journalists are forehead-knucklers in their hearts. To misapply the language of the Church, establishmentarianism and disestablishmentarianism can coexist in the same body. It is possible to believe in the natural inferiority of the working classes (without setting out the belief in so many words) and still supply them—in order to keep them contented in their cave—with an occasional dig at their betters. Popular organs do it a lot. One of the men who taught me the craft of writing commentaries for news film on commercial television used to take as his imaginary referee, his guide to the choice of phrase and illustration, a figure he called 'Mum in Wigan'—a name filled with the scorn felt for the uneducated by the half-educated; and Mum in Wigan was known to relish a little naughtiness, an occasional irreverence, as long as the context left no doubt that the Queen was still on her throne and the flag still flew.

Nor is it a total explanation of either tendency, towards conformism or towards irreverence, to say that they are both a natural consequence of literacy—that the educated mind recoils from extremes, whether of anarchism or reaction. The sad fact is that journalists, as a body, are not as literate as they would like to think. In any newspaper on any day you can find examples of words misused (*pristine* to mean *shining* instead of *ancient*, *hopefully* to mean *I hope* instead of *in hope*) and commas left out ("Mr. Barber, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said last night . . ."): the immediate effect is to impede understanding, and the slow effect is to lessen the language's precision and versatility.

Unmeditated metaphor abounds. On the day of writing this paragraph a well-known freelance columnist in *The Times*, with plenty of time to write carefully, takes a "sudden evaporation of

interest" to mean that an issue has "come off the boil". Sudden evaporation more ordinarily follows from staying on the boil. On the same day, a well-known columnist in the *Guardian* discusses a quarrel between an MP and his constituency party: three times (until it is put right in the last edition) the wrong town is named. Accuracy, of phrase and fact, is not an unfailing commodity even at the top of the trade. And a mistake made in nine-point type will be acknowledged—if at all—in much smaller six-point type.

'OH, ENGLAND, ENGLAND!' The *Daily Mirror's* huge page-one headline, ten days before polling in the June 1970 general election, was not a lament for the falling standard of political debate. The England football team had lost to Brazil in the World Cup by a single goal. The next day, though, the *Mirror* turned back to the election in what the paper thought were the terms that mattered: "Man for man, who would you put YOUR money on?" The question was developed over the next few issues of the paper in paired studies of leading people in both main parties. "Who do you want on your side in a crisis? Unruffled Jim—or Excitable Quintin? Cool-it Callaghan or Hot-beneath-the-collar Hogg?"

Determined triviality, deliberate personalisation—the failings are not hard to document; and they are less excusable in print than on the television screen, where the need for pictures sometimes enjoins them. To them is often added a preoccupation with violence, or with any situation that gives promise of it. No eggs were so much counted as the ones thrown at Harold Wilson during that campaign. Demonstrations are another draw. They are mounted to demonstrate belief: what brings journalists out is not the belief but the chance that there will be a rough encounter with unbelievers or the police.

Besides what might be called social biases of that kind, there is also old-fashioned political bias to be reckoned with. The long-heard Labour cry about Britain's Tory press has a certain force. By one method of reckoning, the national press is evenly balanced

between the two main parties. If you add together the circulations of the national newspapers which declared in the June 1970 general election for one party or the other, and count daily papers six times for a Sunday paper's once, then the two sides show remarkable symmetry. Some fifty-seven million papers a week were being sold on each side of the argument. But that simple sum leaves several considerations out of account.

First, it omits provincial morning and Sunday papers, which are almost uniformly Conservative. More important, Labour papers only declared their decision towards the end of the campaign: except for the *Sunday Times*, the ones that came out for the Conservatives made very little secret of their allegiance from the start. There were three tabloid dailies then in existence. Of these, the *Sketch* was the first national daily paper to give its readers advice on how to vote, with exactly a month still to run before polling day. "If the choice is between Happy Harold's half-hour on TV and a return to honest government at Westminster . . . we know where we'd put our X on the ballot paper." The next day the *Mirror* and the *Sun*, in leaders which they ran as their lead stories, both made it clear that the party which was to get their endorsement would have to wait for it. The *Mirror* wrote: "This newspaper will give a fair show to each political side. . . . When the time comes, nearer polling day, . . . the *Mirror* won't be sitting on the fence. You will be hearing from us loud and clear." And the *Mirror*'s sworn rival: "The Sun has a mind of its own—like you. We will speak our mind." They both kept their nerve, and their counsel, when a prospective newspaper stoppage (which in fact lasted four days) made it seem that their issue nine days before polling would be their last of the campaign; and they only spoke their minds in the end, for Labour, with a day to go.

Conservative newspapers did not simply pin their hearts to their sleeves earlier than Labour: they also let their enthusiasm seep out of their leader columns and into their news columns. Unfair

things are said on both sides in any election: the Conservatives were better supplied than Labour with newspapers prepared to stress the unfair things said on their side and omit the awkward things, while making as much as they could of the flashes of truthfulness on the other side. The *Daily Express* used a rhetorical prediction of Edward Heath's about "the three-shilling loaf" (the price was then a little over half that) as a main front-page headline: it reported a speech of Quintin Hogg's about Enoch Powell, an *Express* hero for his low view of black immigration, without carrying the crucial sentence "The Conservative party does not support Mr. Powell"; and a mild observation by James Callaghan to the effect that a Labour government would have to "give attention" to wage increases after the election was greeted with a page-one shout of "Callaghan lets it out: new pay freeze threat". Parallel examples were to be found in the *Daily Mail.*

Public men have sometimes had the idea that the antidote to this kind of partiality is the impartiality of broadcasters, secured not so much by the camera's inability to lie (in which there are few believers left) as by the extent to which broadcasters are open to political bullying. Impartiality is then indeed secured, but at the expense of pungency. The 1970 general election furnished an impressive volume of examples. ITN's *News at Ten,* the longest and most watched news programme on television, was displaced by party commercials (with the happy connivance of the BBC, which also had to carry them) on thirteen out of the last sixteen weekday evenings of the campaign. The Conservatives added parody to larceny by casting their own commercials in very much the same form as *News at Ten.* Using the fact that under the Representation of the People Act 1969 the withdrawal of any one party's spokesman from an election programme meant the programme's collapse, the parties were able to veto the BBC's most cherished election project—two-and-a-half-hour courtroom examinations of each party's policies. They had no difficulty in stopping

reports on any constituency (and there were several) where any party had a candidate which embarrassed it, nor in imposing a virtual ban on any programme which risked bringing politicians into contact with actual voters. Harold Wilson succeeded in imposing his choice of anodyne interviewer on both ITV and BBC at the beginning of the campaign, and in dictating his own choice of party spokesman and therefore of subject to the BBC's *Panorama* at the end.

To these enforced absurdities the broadcasters added one or two of their own. Even before the campaign began an ITV company, Thames, withdrew an episode of a popular thriller serial because it was about an attempt on the life of a politician with certain similarities to Enoch Powell; and the BBC suppressed an item on an arts programme about Edward Heath as an organist. During the four-day newspaper stoppage in the middle of the campaign itself, the rigidity of commercial programming meant that only the BBC could lengthen its news and current affairs coverage; and the time was given over to unsynthesised outside opinion rather than to any additional analysis of the news by the BBC's own specialist reporters.

Television had its industrial misfortunes as well as newspapers, Granada, another ITV company, had intended to wall up a hundred voters in a hall of residence at Leeds University and bombard them with political television of a quite untypical rigour. The hundred would have been exposed to largely academic lectures which gave the fullest information possible on each of ten issues: only then would they have been laid open to the rhetoric of party spokesmen. The lectures would themselves have been broadcast, albeit to small midday audiences; and the hundred subjects would have had their voting intentions tested before and after each stage, to see if either fact or argument made any difference. But Granada had a technicians' strike, and the experiment was called off.

Broadcasting's feebleness at election time is only part of a larger phenomenon: systematic sins of omission by news organisations in general. There are a number of wide open spaces where the journalist treads rarely. Foreign affairs is in danger of becoming one such, even for newspapermen. No British newspaper can now claim to be a journal of record for even the principal events in even the foreign countries most important to Britain, like America or France; and newspapers and broadcasting organisations turn more and more to a figure who should have died with the thirties, the fit-all foreign correspondent. He jets from trouble-spot to trouble-spot, equipped with little besides a portable typewriter and a serviceable turn of phrase: his principal sources are taxi-drivers, barmen and other fit-all foreign correspondents. British staff journalists abroad dwindle all the time; and there are several capitals where the day-to-day interests of British readers and viewers are very patchily served. A few years ago I was approached by a Greek in Addis Ababa—not the least active diplomatic capital in Africa—who showed me a card which seemed to indicate that almost every newspaper in London regarded him as their local correspondent. On nights when there was news in Addis, the paper which paid him the least generous retainer must have had to wait a little while for word.

Even at home, there are large tracts of government where a journalist is a rare sight. Whitehall is largely unwatched: the doings of ministers are regularly brought into the open, but their officials ply their trade in private. And what is true of Whitehall is truer still of town halls and local government offices, where even the doings of elected representatives are to a great extent unscanned. Admission to council committee meetings has been a right much demanded by local newspapers. One council which lets the press in is at Weston-super-Mare. In September 1971 a long meeting of the council's finance and general purposes committee passed 49 minutes on matters like local government reorganisation,

capital expenditure and rural bus services. Yet the only two items which the local evening paper thought fit to print dealt with a staff social club ("Civil servants' rest room", said the headline) and a lavatory for the information bureau ("It's such relief").

Even if the whole of government were well reported, there would still be a lacuna in the coverage of public affairs. The gap is dissent. Journalists are better at reporting the fact than the matter of protest. The antics of the unilateral nuclear disarmers were always better copy than their arguments—to the point where journalists must bear some of the responsibility for the fact that their arguments are now so little heard. Trade unionists have often voiced something of the same complaint. A report prepared by the union which covers technicians in television itself, ACTT, pointed out that BBC television news went right through an evening of long reports on a day of protest against the Industrial Relations Bill in January 1971 without any interviews to elicit the views of protesters. The political fringes—anything to the left or right of those two great coalitions of the centre, the Labour and Conservative parties—are seldom written about now by political correspondents: they get their mentions, if they get any at all, from the gossip columnists.

The young, perhaps the most notable omission, are heard from hardly at all; or if they are, in last year's slang, and patronisingly.

It is no sufficient answer to say that the alternative society is reported by its own alternative system of communication, the underground press. The trouble with the underground press is that it is largely unread. The name suggests smudged sheets passed furtively from hand to hand behind the backs of the police. In fact its papers can be bought at any bookstall which cares to carry them. But they are not bought. "Idiot International has collapsed, Black Dwarf is dormant, the bailiff is at IT's door, Friends flails valiantly. . . ." The list is from a 1971 editorial in Oz. It is a striking echo of a 1712 letter of Jonathan Swift's to Stella,

when he told her that Grub Street was dead: "The Observator is fallen, the Medleys are jumbled together with the Flying-post, the Examiner is deadly sick. . . ." But that was the effect of a new newspaper duty in the Stamp Act. The modern Grub Street's problem looks much more like a plain failure of professionalism. The barely legible typography, with coloured print plastered on top of coloured pictures; the insistent use of a few short and ugly words, whether or not they fit the sense; the fascination with a very narrow range of experience, returning again and again to pop music and drugs: all this argues an indifference to the reader. That its chosen public does not read the underground press is perhaps no great matter. The sad thing is that it is unreadable by the very people who need to read it. The conformist world needs to be made aware how the non-conformist world thinks and lives, and these papers cannot do it. The message is hardly to be deciphered even by journalists. So the gap in news from the alternative society remains.

The common point in all these gaps is that available knowledge is not drawn upon—about the administration of national and local affairs, about people whose views are not heard within the ordinary processes of government. The citizen's oldest complaint against journalists is that as soon as they report on anything he knows about, they get it wrong. This is partly the natural man's instinct to make a mystery of his own specialty, and to contest the notion that anyone can learn in a day or two what it has taken him years to master; but the general scepticism which it suggests has a grounding in truth. Specialist knowledge is the great scarcity. Advances in scholarship, or in the multitudinous disciplines which now subsist on the borders of scholarship, risk going unrecorded. Discoveries stand their best chance of being disinterred from specialist journals if they are amusing (as that toothpaste is after all no use) or ghoulish (as that the end of the world is at hand).

There is a body of people who make a living by claiming that they can overcome, for a fee, this tendency among journalists to leave uncovered what they ought to have covered. These people are public relations men: flaks, in a useful Washington coinage. (Flak came to mean anti-aircraft fire as the acronym of a long German compound. William Safire, in his dictionary *The New Language of Politics*, traces the transference to the fact that anti-aircraft shells emit smoke puffs and public relations men verbal puffs.) Where the flak's task is to secure coverage for a motor-car or a holiday resort in a form which is in effect unpaid advertising, he can sometimes manage it—though it often happens that, by an arrangement which does credit neither to the newspaper nor to the advertiser, paid advertising for the same client is to be found close by. Where the problem is to secure coverage for events or opinions which might otherwise go unnoticed, the flak is a good deal less successful, notably in the world of politics and public affairs. That is why senior politicians in London are undisturbed by the number of junior politicians who become flaks in order to eke out their salary as MPs: their activities have very little effect on the course of journalism, let alone the course of events. This becomes a shadier area when flaks are in effect lobbyists, and seek to secure not so much press interest as government interest in some cause: commercial broadcasting, or friendship with the regime in Greece.

The trade survives because many things to which flaks draw journalists' attention do in fact get published, and no one can ever demonstrate that the flak's action was wholly irrelevant. He capitalises on this uncertainty. He cannot show his client a list of journalists whose intentions he has changed, but he can produce a list of journalists to whom he sent a press release or a party invitation. Much of his activity, in short, is an exercise in justifying his fee.

The reef which flaks founder on is the powerful distrust

which most journalists entertain for them. Since many flaks are journalists who have for one reason and another left journalism, journalists tend to regard them as failures or deserters. This is less strongly felt about the staff of Whitehall press offices, even where they are ex-journalists, because their role is a comparatively neutral one: they pass out documents and answer questions, usually on a basis of no greater information than has already been published. Perhaps journalists recognise that they are themselves toilers in the same vineyard, although with different loyalties. Or perhaps they simply need the information.

5
Political Perspectives on Media

Besides technical and economic reasons, there are also political reasons which go some way to explain the evident imperfections of the way the news gets out.

If journalists do indeed live in the pockets of people in power, to the neglect of people who are not in power and not likely to be, it argues a certain brutal insight into what life is like and what their clients want. The private citizen, just as much as the citizen engaged in government, wants to learn first about people and bothes whose doings can affect him—by raising or lowering his taxes, improving or worsening his surroundings; and so on. In people with better ideas who are out of power his interest may be lively, but it will be secondary; and the more distant they are from power, the more distant will be his interest. When journalists neglect dissent, even expert dissent, and over-cultivate the established order, they are only interpreting the prime needs of the customer by sticking close to where the power is.

There is a more mechanical reason still. Perhaps in order to

feel that they control at least scraps of it, people like reading about the future. A good deal of journalism is an attempt to meet this wish. A good deal of journalism, too, itself depends on foreknowledge. You cannot turn up to report the key meeting, still less get a picture of it, unless you know when and where it is going to be held. There must be times and places written in the news desk diary. By far the most prolific source of them is the orderly and resourceful world of government. Governments set timetables: oppositions only react to them. Journalists who want to witness the present and foretell the future must pay their main court to the people in power.

Or take the personalisation of political news. For television, and even for radio, this is almost a technical necessity: it is very hard to report an idea except in terms of a spokesman for it. But for all types of news organisation it is a political obligation too, at any rate in Britain. Ministerial responsibility is the name of the doctrine. The useful constitutional fiction is that the minister, the politician at the top, himself takes every decision which comes out of his department—even one like the Department of the Environment, which puts out dozens of detailed planning decisions every day, and could only get through the work on a system whereby some are not even seen by junior ministers. The minister no longer resigns if his department is shown to have made a deplorable decision, but the discovery will do his career no good; and the system is at any rate non-fictional to the extent that he must answer for the decision in public. So journalists have a good deal of excuse for seeing the measure in terms of the man. And if they try not to, the departmental press officer will try to see that they do. It will make the minister available to the press, or at any rate a statement in his name; but it will shield his officials, except from the most gentlemanly and no-names-named enquiry, with a maternal protectiveness.

This is chiefly why Whitehall is so badly reported. Constitutional

theory, and civil servants' reading of it in practice, make it difficult for the journalist to get at anyone in a Whitehall department between the minister at the top and the press office at the bottom. Shortage of expertise is a cause too: journalists are often not well enough informed even to know where the gaps in their own knowledge are.

The system has virtues. It preserves a non-political civil service, and one which can speak as it finds. Officials who were publicly identified with a certain line of policy might not be wholly trusted under new masters, and with that possibility in mind they might speak less freely to their present masters. Most of them like the arrangement. They are not sorry to be spared standing up for their policies in Parliament. It is not exactly power without responsibility: a civil servant identified with a bad decision is as much haunted by it later as a minister. "A really bad mistake is known all around Whitehall", Anthony Crosland said of civil servants after he had left office as a Labour minister in June 1970. "The gossip that goes on is something absolutely out of this world."

Whitehall men must occasionally sigh for the system pertaining in Washington, where officials who find the prevailing current of opinion running against them can take their case to the press. But if they invoke the aid of the press when they want it, they cannot complain at getting it when they would rather do without it. The minister would learn to look to the press as a regular party to the argument; and the officials would lose what is most precious to them, the prize for which they count wordly notoriety well lost— the monopoly of the ministerial ear. A press ignorant of the detailed arguments cannot dispute it with them.

Often it is right that the press, and therefore the public, should be ignorant of the detailed arguments going forward. For six days, in October 1962, President Kennedy kept secret the knowledge that there were Russian missiles on Cuba. It gave him

time for cool discussion with his advisers: telling journalists would have meant bringing the Russians into the debate before counter-measures were decided. Commercial and economic decisions sometimes have to be taken in almost the same strategic secrecy. But a fine line separates what it is in the embattled state's interest to conceal and what it is in the embarrassed official's interest to conceal.

Britain's first Official Secrets Act became law in 1889 after a temporary clerk in the Foreign Office had covered his superiors with confusion eleven years before when he learnt by heart, and sold to a London evening paper, the eleven clauses of the Anglo-Russian treaty negotiated at the 1878 Congress of Berlin. (The pace at which stable doors were shut was slower in those days.) Stifler acts were passed in 1911 and 1920, both remaining on the statute book; but in February 1971 the Home Secretary set up a committee of enquiry into the working of part of the 1911 act after the failure of a prosecution under it. The occasion had been the publication in the *Sunday Telegraph* in January 1970 of a British diplomat's private report on the Nigerian civil war.

The acts had not been originally aimed at the press, though the point that the press were prime traffickers in official information—missed in the charged heat of the 1911 summer—was raised in both Houses before the 1920 bill went through. But in 1932 an elderly clerk at Somerset House was imprisoned under the 1911 act for disclosing, and a *Daily Mail* reporter for receiving, details of three wills; and there were a handful of other such instances between then and the *Sunday Telegraph* case.

Officials, and even ministers, found the acts particularly useful to scare gullible reporters away with; and they had another instrument in D (for Defence) notices, warnings to editors that certain items might contravene the acts. It was a system of selective censorship set up after the passing of the 1911 Act: Harold Wilson conceded, in his record of his years as prime minister,

that his own attempt to call the arrangement in aid in February 1967 was one of his costliest mistakes. On that occasion the *Daily Express* had published an account of a banal arrangement for the government scrutiny of international cables which had been unchanged for over forty years. Mr. Wilson—"gratuitously", to use his own word— complained in the House of Commons that the story was a breach of two D notices, and inaccurate as well. A privy councillors' committee found that it was neither. Mr. Wilson rejected their report. Journalists in other organisations, at least one of them in the light of direct experience, read the affair as a sign that they were increasingly expected to be in the Wilson corner or now here. He himself wrote: "I was wrong to make an issue of it in the first instance. It was a very long time before my relations with the press were repaired."

There are times when the nation's safety demands secrecy. Wartime is commonly conceded to be one of them. Yet even in time of war, once the argument has shifted from national safety to the shakier ground of national morale, concealing facts known to government can be a way of stifling discussion about whether the war in progress ought to be fought at all. It was the method used over Vietnam. When in June 1971 the *New York Times* and then the *Washington Post* began to publish copies they had obtained of the secret report prepared in the Pentagon on the origins of the Vietnam war—a publication challenged by the United States Government and upheld by the Supreme Court—admirers of the system of open government in Washington were cast down by what they learnt. The system was not as open as all that. It was not open enough to have kept the Administration from totally hiding the truth—that the main pretext for American military involvement, the 'unprovoked' North Vietnamese attack on two American destroyers, in fact came at a time when South Vietnamese guerrillas were bombarding and harassing the North under strict American control; or that the American war aim, contrary to

everything said by public men, was to rescue American prestige much more than Vietnamese democracy. As a result the informed public debate that ought to have been a forerunner of any military action was never held. Without the *New York Times* it would not have been conducted even in retrospect.

The United States authorities could claim that they were not, in the words of the First Amendment to the Constitution, "abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press". There are cruder ways of doing that. In the course of 1971, to take examples almost at random, the Pakistan army compelled Pakistani TV to make and show films of the 'return to normalcy' in the area of East Bengal which the army had overrun before the war with India: the Prime Minister of Singapore forced the closure of two newspapers and imprisoned four senior men on a third: in Russia (where some 1500 journalists had lost their jobs in 1970, according to the International Press Institute, as part of a political purge), people heard nothing of Nikita Khrushchev's death for 36 hours after it happened, and then only as the eleventh item in a radio news bulletin: in South Africa, official newspapers themselves demanded sanctions—and looked like getting them—against papers that dared to criticise the working of the Terrorism Act, which allows detention without trial: in Greece, the editor of an English-language paper was given a fine and a prison sentence for a misleading headline about Vice-President Agnew's visit (it read 'Bombs, recruited school children greet Agnew', which was true, but the substantiating paragraph had fallen out by mistake): in Spain the Ministry of information closed down the country's only independent-minded daily paper.

And it should not be supposed that this kind of attitude towards journalists is confined to countries with notoriously illiberal regimes. It is not unknown nearer home; and it goes some way to suggest another reason besides capitalist caution why news organisations sometimes slip into a self-protective identity of view with

the powers that be. Even for journalists in the Western democracies, keeping government sweet has a long history. In England and America the first cautious champions of liberty were not at all sure that it ought to be extended to journalists. Cromwell's parliamentarians believed in censorship. The first American newspaper, published in Boston in 1690, was suppressed by the Governor of Massachusetts after one issue; and its successors showed the circumspection natural to journals published from government post offices. At the end of the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth century in England, papers which supported the Government could expect heavy official advertising and even subsidy; a succession of radical working-class papers, on the other hand, was harassed into the ground. The last of the newspaper taxes was removed in 1855; but the notion that the newspaper-man should know his place in relation to his rulers persisted in the British breast. Axel Caesar Springer, the West German newspaper emperor, got his start after the Second World War by showing a proper regard for the sensitivities of the occupying British.

Some of the countries where the songs of freedom are most fervently sung have been most forward, since then, in abridging the freedom of the press. The Parliament of Ireland, in September 1971, legislated against the encouragement of certain kinds of manifestation although the new law effectively prohibited reporting them as well. The Prime Minister of France, the same month, held down the news-stand price of daily papers in the full knowledge that it would mean the death of some of the weaker—and, as it happened, the less complaisant among—them. (The arithmetic was inexorable. Average net revenue from the sale of each copy, 25 centimes: average production cost, 65 centimes: average advertising revenue, 31 centimes: shortfall on every copy, 9 centimes. Only rich papers could sit it out till their rivals fell into their laps.)

Radio and television have provided new areas for influence.

In France, the brief reprise of revolutionary fervour in May 1968 did little for the Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française: post-Gaullist politicians continued both to hold it in line and to denounce it for suspected deviation. In the United States, President Nixon said nothing to disavow a Vice-President who called American broadcast news reporting "a cacophony of seditious drivel".

Broadcasting is always more open to straightforward state pressure because the state, in order to avoid literal cacophony, has to control the use of the airwaves. The state also collects the revenues of state broadcasting chains, through licence fees, and regulates the take-home profits of commercial chains, through taxation. For the first fourteen months of its life, in 1927 and 1928, the BBC was forbidden to broadcast "speeches or lectures containing statements on topics of political, religious or industrial controversy". (The *Morning Post,* opposing the lifting of the ban, opined: "The average man or woman, when at leisure with the world, has not the slightest desire to be plunged into disputes on any of these subjects.") During the Second World War, the Government had far less difficulty in imposing its absolute will on the BBC than on the *Daily Mirror.*

"It ill behoves those who live by the sword", wrote the *Guardian* in June 1971 during the latest bout of the Labour party's long quarrel with the BBC, "to bleat when they cut themselves shaving." Labour had lived by the sword: its quarrel, born out of pique at not being treated with due deference when the party was first back in office in 1964, was conducted in terms of private threats to individual staff members and public humiliation of the Corporation as a whole (notably by imposing a chairman brought across from its despised rival, the Independent Television Authority); and when BBC producers or reporters showed signs of returning a little of this animus, Labour bleated stridently. Well before the 1970 election the Conservatives began to bleat too, in case there was party advantage in it. One of the two would form the next

government, and it was hard for BBC men to be sure which. ITV journalists, aware that their own comparative immunity from criticism could be destroyed by a single moment of bad judgement, watched the whole scene uneasily. Small wonder that both organisations succumbed without a blow to most of the demands which both parties made of them at the time of the 1970 election itself.

The reason why this recurrent struggle between politician and broadcaster is not fought on equal terms is that the politician has an ultimate deterrent and the broadcaster has not. Governments which license broadcasting organisations can also close them down. It is true that the BBC, being a great deal larger, would in practical terms be more difficult to replace than any constituent part of the fragmented ITV; and this might be held to explain the BBC's greater daring. On the other hand, commercial prudence might have something to do with ITV's greater docility. Working journalists, in any case, would prefer not to irritate their own superiors by obliging them even to contemplate that kind of threat.

Along with the threat comes the blandishment. The alternation of cuffs and kindnesses is a traditional technique of interrogation: politicians might sometimes be thought to have forgotten, in their dealings with journalists, who is getting information out of whom. But they find blandishment productive, in their dealings with writing as well as broadcasting journalists; and the organisation of both Whitehall and Fleet Street sometimes makes it hard to resist.

The clasp sometimes known as the establishment embrace is easily enough shrugged off. It gives, in any event, diminishing returns; even the most impressionable new editor realises in time that the information to be had at the dinner-tables of the great, to say nothing of the food, seldom repays the time spent taking it in. But there is a group of journalists, and not the least important,

who live their whole professional lives within the arms of that embrace. They are the Lobby: the corps of political correspondents at Westminster.

All specialist correspondents are to some extent smothered by their sources. Many of them—specialists in defence, or the environment, or education, or the welfare services—get by far the largest part of their information from a single department of state. They are therefore very well aware that if they gave offence to that department, their work would become very difficult. They are susceptible to official suggestions that in the general interest a certain piece of information would be better unpublished. The more useful an acquaintance within the department, the less they will be inclined to use what he tells them, in order that he shall feel free to tell them more. But they are at any rate not generalists: they concentrate their knowledge on a given field; and they therefore have certain sieves through which to pass the official information they are fed.

Lobby men are specialists who are also generalists. They are the top generalists in the trade. Politics covers the whole of human life, and they cover politics. All reports made to the Government, all legislation promulgated by the Government, all parliamentarians and their rise and fall and their private causes, all Whitehall, all party activity—they have a big bag to rummage in. And they seldom have time to travel more than two hundred yards from New Palace Yard.

They are probably the hardest-working journalists in Fleet Street. On the rare occasions when they have nothing else to do, they stand about in the members' lobby which gives them their name—the stone-flagged ante-room to the Commons chamber, where MPs pause to collect documents and messages, and to gossip. Sometimes the lobby men have no-one to talk to except each other and the policemen: sometimes the place is like a cocktail party without the liquor, with people's eyes flickering over

each other's shoulders to see who else is there. The lobby men may learn here of an early-day motion by one group of back-benchers, or an approach to the Chief Whip by another; but the real stuff of their work is not here. Increasingly, they get the word from Downing Street.

Every morning at a fixed time, and sometimes every afternoon too, they wander across Whitehall to the Prime Minister's house; and before the first hand falls on the knocker the door opens, and the doorman bows them in, and they file into the Press Secretary's rounded office overlooking the street. He tells them the Prime Minister's engagements, and then there is a half-hour exchange of loaded badinage. On afternoons when the House is sitting, to save them the walk, the Press Secretary comes across to a little turret room in the Palace of Westminster, high above the river, with the names of past chairmen of the Lobby inscribed on the wall; and on Thursdays he brings the Leader of the House with him, and sometimes the Prime Minister; and later on the Leader of the Opposition clambers up; so the Thursday night news bulletins, and the Friday morning papers, are full of strangely concordant speculation about the Government's legislative plans and the Opposition's schemes for opposing it. It may be no more than the mechanics of political life, but lobby men have a delightful sense of being in on the marrow of it.

At the White House, the Press Secretary talks on the record. The ethos of Washington political journalism prefers a named source. In London he talks off the record; and so does anyone else who talks to the Lobby. This privacy is so well observed that a surprising number of MPs and even ministers—to say nothing of newsdesks—are unaware of the orderly daily schedule, or the Thursday galas, or even the little turret room. That is how lobby men like it, and what their solemn etiquette demands. Besides the incidental gratifications it offers, the whole arrangement has its usefulnesses too. Except by express agreement, a lobby journalist

never names his sources. This leaves him free to protect them—if he is reporting backbench mutterings against ministers, for example. It also leaves him free to invent them. It enables him, after a conversation with one parliamentary secretary, to write: "Ministers were saying last night . . . " It even enables him to write the same thing after a conversation with one departmental press officer—whose ministers doubtless would have been saying the same thing if they could have been fallen in with. On a big day, certain evening-paper lobby men file their first stories from home before breakfast. In their account of what MPs are discussing at Westminster there is bound to be an element of conjecture.

Far more, though, the arrangement has its usefulness for the Prime Minister, his officials, the Leader of the House, and such other of his ministers as meet the Lobby when they have proposals to explain. If what they said was to be ascribed to them, between quotation marks, they would have to make sure that it was defensible line by line and did them credit. Since it is ascribed merely to "the quarters that matter" or "those in the know" or simply "senior ministers", they can cast what they like upon the waters: innuendo, denigration, childlike optimism. Lear-like undertakings to do terrible things: if it floats they can derive the advantage, and if it sinks with a nasty gurgle they can disclaim all responsibility.

Lobby men would not have it otherwise. If the machinery were public, their job would look too easy. In November 1971 James Callaghan, as shadow Home Secretary, met the Lobby to talk about Northern Ireland: it is a facility open to senior opposition figures. The Conservative Government's policy was foundering, and he uttered imprecise sounds about radical rethinking. Some lobby men thought he meant really radical: the *Mail* man, in particular, had a story next morning to the effect that Mr. Callaghan would soon be suggesting direct rule and the

withdrawal of all British troops. It was the paper's lead story: the headline hardened it, as headlines will, to 'Labour Pulls Out on Ulster'. To purge the resulting puzzlement, Mr. Callaghan confessed to a Parliamentary Labour Party meeting that the confusion had arisen at a lobby briefing. Lobby men were cross: if secrecy bound them, they said, it bound Mr. Callaghan too. What they also partly meant was that they disliked their newsdesks getting the idea that lobby men, so far from engaging in high-level political detective work, simply went to inefficiently conducted press conferences.

For lobby journalists, albeit among the senior reporters on their papers and with long-service stripes stretching back to Ramsay MacDonald, are by no means immune from the ordinary curses of competition. They know the terms of that competition, the anxious scrutiny by their superiors of the rival product; and they are no strangers to the slight heart-sickness of the man who fears he is losing his employer's favour, however few rational grounds he may have for apprehension. The Lobby is a large body now, with representatives from all the London morning and evening and Sunday papers, and from ITN and the BBC, and several provincial papers and groups; and it is much more active in pursuit of hard news man it was even in the early sixties, when reflections on the passing show would still do. A lobby man's principal anxiety is that he should not be scooped or left by his competitors. He will construct conspiratorial cartels in order to lessen that risk. Until not so very long ago, lobby men from a handful of Sunday newspapers, not being able to meet at the shuttered House of Commons on a Saturday, would phone each other at their offices instead to establish that none of the group was likely to put the rest at a disadvantage by knowing too much; and if a stranger answered, they would use false names.

This was harmless enough. It probably contributed to the greater good by raising the general level of knowledge. But competition

also takes more pernicious forms. Lobby men will pass on forecasts of unattainable government successes ('Ministers will act soon to curb rent sharks'): they will write a story which they know to be a waste of their readers' or listeners' time, or which they suspect that Downing Street is particularly anxious for them to write in spite of its slender link with truth; and they will write it only because they know that their competitors will write it, and rather than offer long explanations to the newsdesk when the phone rings at home at midnight, they find it easier to write the story now.

The besetting sin of the Lobby, committed nightly for the same reason—that their competitors will commit it too—is to present guesswork as fact. "When I was first in the Lobby I was amazed by the omniscience of my colleagues, and despaired of ever attaining it; but then I began to notice that they were in the same places as me all day, and seemed to have few special sources of information; and the seditious thought began to dawn that these confident assertions, these detailed readings of the minds of ministers, could not strictly be classed as more than inferences: inferences based on experience and evidence, but still not quite what they seemed. And these men and women (there is a handful of women among them) are a *corps d'élite* among journalists; and if the rest of the trade too supposes that the sun rises out of the Thames below the Terrace and sets in Parliament Square, and that pressures towards conjectural reporting need not be resisted, then the Lobby must bear its share of the blame."

6
Jobs for Broadcast Newsmen

Broadcasting is not a big field of employment. The Television Information Office estimates there are only 43,000 full-time employees of radio stations and 32,000 of television stations in the entire country. The average radio station has less than fifteen workers, and the average TV station less than fifty-five. The four, big national radio networks employ a total of 1,000 persons and the three nationwide TV networks 9,000.

Only a small fraction of the total broadcast employees are newsmen, because, although all stations broadcast news, only a minority cover it themselves.

A survey of 2,677 young men and women who graduated from journalism schools in 1965 turned up only 74 who found jobs in radio and 85 in television. Of 15,820 journalism students of all kinds, only 709 were studying major sequences in radio and television.

These data do not, however, accurately reflect the annual entry into the broadcast field, since many recruits come not directly

from colleges but from the ranks of working newspapermen.

As news operations of radio and television are constantly being increased, more jobs will appear in the future. However, the number of stations is not increasing, so the United States Department of Commerce expects new jobs of all kinds in the industry to be created at the rate of only 2,000 a year. Of these, possibly 200 will be newsmen. Ultra high-frequency is not expected to make a great change in the employment outlook since most of the stations will be small.

TV is typically a big city job. Seventy per cent of all TV jobs are in cities of over 100,000 population; but 60 per cent of all radio jobs are in smaller centres. Twenty-five per cent of all broadcasting jobs are in New York and California. New York City and Los Angeles are the principal centres of employment, followed by Chicago and then the larger cities of Texas, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

News on Small Stations

The smallest stations (Category 9) have no newsmen on their staffs. The announcer simply tears the hourly, five-minute, radio news summary off the A.P. or U.P.I. ticker and reads into the microphone the first seven or eight bulletins, interspersed with commercials and station announcements, leaving a net of three and one-half minutes of news.

If a local programme is desired in addition, a reporter from the local newspaper may be hired part time to write a ten-minute summary of community news that can be read on the air at breakfast or dinner time. The quality of this local news may be judged from such typical items as the high school lunch menu, automobile accidents from the police blotter, catches of fishing boats in the harbour.

Some small, though not the smallest, stations have a news staff of one, all-around man. He rewrites the bulletins from the wire service teletype and also items of community news from the

local paper. If he has enough time on the air for a feature, he may tape an interview with a town official or interview a visitor live in the studio. He then broadcasts the entire news show himself, including commercials. Indeed, he may also have to go out and hustle the commercials to realise his salary!

News Staffs of Medium-size Stations

A medium market-size radio station may employ two or three newsmen, who will share all the duties. A small TV station may require its only reporter to handle the camera as well as the tape recorder.

The news staff is increased not only with the category of station (determined by power of transmitter and population reachable), but also with its interest in covering news. A staff of any size will include cameramen, lab technicians, perhaps a film editor. An active news staff will have at least one mobile unit—that is, a truck with sound camera, generator, lights, reflectors, all equipment to broadcast live from the field, such as the scene of a fire.

Some Typical Operations

Here are a few setups and operations typical of the broadcast news field outside of the big networks, as cited by the National Association of Broadcasters:

1. A top power radio-TV station in the Northeast has nine reporter-rewritemen and three cameramen handling the two major newscasts on TV daily through Saturday and one on Sunday, plus five fifteen-minute radio newscasts, two ten-minute radio newscasts and half a dozen five-minute summaries daily.
2. A TV station in Florida has twenty-two men, including a day editor, night editor, two newscasters, eight cameramen-reporters, three lab technicians, a film editor and a film librarian. It operates four mobile units. It produces one ten-minute and two fifteen-minute news shows and two ten-minute sports shows daily.

3. A top power radio-TV station in a big Midwestern city employs thirty-four persons in news, including a director, a TV news editor, a radio news editor, an assignment editor, special events director, sixteen news writers, three two-man camera crews, two film editors. They produce four fifteen-minute TV shows each weekday, two half-hour TV local summaries on weekends, and a dozen newscasts from five to fifteen minutes each daily.

In addition, here are some other stations, outside the major networks, that are important in the news field:

KNX, Los Angeles, biggest news broadcaster outside New York City, employs twenty-four newsmen. WOR, key station of the small Yankee Network, has seventeen newsmen in New York and an equal number of staff correspondents elsewhere, including foreign countries, owned by *The New York Times*, and WINS, operated by the Hearst chain, are notable among the many broadcast stations that are owned by newspapers. They use the paper's reporters as occasional broadcasters as the day's news may indicate, and thus have available a large staff without employing them full time.

News Staffs of Networks

The largest employers of newsmen are the three major, nationwide networks. Of these, the two giants, Columbia and National, each have about 500 men and women full time in their news divisions; American has fewer. Roughly half of each force are editorial workers, while the rest are manual workers, technicians, engineers, clerks, administrators and so on.

The three big networks compose the big leagues of broadcast news. They do the most comprehensive and professional job, employ the best newsmen, pay the highest wages. Since all three have headquarters in New York, a majority of their newsmen are stationed there. Washington, of course, has a good number of resident correspondents. The rest are stationed throughout the

world or jetting about on short missions.

A Network Staff Organisation

Of the 250 editorial employees on a network news division, about 170 will be assigned to television and 80 to radio. Some correspondents and some other employees are put to work inter-changeably between the two media.

The network also has on call a large number of stringer correspondents, who are usually newsmen employed full time on an affiliated station. These are used as occasion demands for a particular job and are paid on a fee basis.

The news division is headed by a president or vice-president who corresponds to the managing editor of a newspaper. Under him are a man in charge of television news and another in charge of radio news. Each of these has assistants. All these top-level executives correspond roughly to assistant managing editors; indeed, all have had impressive experience on newspapers or in news broadcasting or both.

The working news staff is organised differently from that of a newspaper or news magazine. Each 'show', whether a regular, five-days-a-week news summary, a late evening roundup, a morning feature programme for housewives, a weekly documentary in series, or a special, one-shot feature, is set up as a unit.

Each show unit is headed by an executive producer, who has under him a staff of fifteen to thirty journalists and about an equal number of cameramen, soundmen, other technicians, craftsmen, and clerks. The editorial men include associate producers, directors, editors, writers, researchers, reporter-contact men, copyreaders, film editors, sound editors, correspondents.

When unexpected news breaks that requires a special show outside the regular schedule, as, for example, Pope Paul's visit to New York in 1965, a special 'task force' is put together for the purpose. Its makeup is similar to that of a regularly scheduled 'show' team.

The Newsroom

The newsroom of a network or of a large independent radio or TV station rather resembles the city room of a newspaper. It has a similar clutter of paper-strewn desks, the same clatter of typewriters and teletypes, the same chatter on the telephone, the same shirt-sleeved informality. As in a newspaper, most of the staff sits together in the open room without private offices, each man concentrating on his own work as best he can.

In plain sight from every desk is a big wall clock with a running second hand, for time is the thorn in the side of every electronic newsman. There is one unique fixture—on the wall a bank of three television screens constantly monitors not only that network's output but also the output of its competitors.

A similar battery of TV screens is constantly running in every executive's private office. The important men even have this set of multiple screens, perhaps several sets, at home. They say they don't mind living with this eternal bedlam, but to an outsider it seems a hellish torture.

In the newsroom, a skeleton staff is on duty at all times. Each man works an eight-hour day, although the nature of news may require frequent overtime, of course. It takes about eight hours to put a half-hour news show together. The main staff will come to work about 11:00 A.M. for a show that goes on the air at 7:00 P.M.

Duties of Each Job

Assignment Editor— Assignments, local, national and foreign, are made by an assignment editor. Ninety per cent of the spot news on radio and TV originates on wire service tickers and in the daily newspapers. Very rarely do you see an exclusive spot news story of any importance on the air. However, you do see many exclusive features and documentaries on current topics. Ideas for these come from correspondents, from press agents who want to publicise their clients, and from editors themselves. Thinking up such ideas is an important part of the editor's job.

The television assignment editor must always keep in mind one vital consideration which the newspaper editor can ignore—visualisation. Is there film in it that will tell the story? The ideal TV story tells the news without one word from the newscaster. The astronaut floating in space, Jack Ruby shooting Lee Oswald in Dallas Police Headquarters are examples of perfect picture stories.

Every TV newsman, whatever his job, should have a film sense. A good news story without good film will not get the relative play on TV which it gets in a newspaper.

When the assignment editor decides to cover a story, he dispatches a crew to the scene. The minimum crew consists of two men—a cameraman and a reporter. A full crew may include one or more cameramen, a soundman, a light man, a number of other hands, and the reporter-contact man.

Reporter-Contact Man—The reporter-contact man is in charge of the crew and the job. His work is analogous to that of a newspaper reporter, but there are differences, too.

The newspaperman can go to work instantly, anywhere, with a pencil and notebook. He can stand silently aside, watching, listening, taking notes, or he can roam freely, interviewing a dozen persons informally to gather facts for his story.

The television reporter is accompanied by camera and tape recorder, perhaps also lights, reflectors, power cables, the equipment that Fred Friendly, former president of CBS News, calls our "one-ton pencil". It is not always possible to take that one-ton pencil into the scene of news. Then people in the news must be brought out to the equipment.

It is the reporter-contact man who must gel them, set the stage for the interview, discussion, or statement. He not only handles the microphone and does the interviewing, but, like a movie director, he also directs the filming and sound recording, trying to capture it candid-camera, documentary, unstaged feeling.

All the time he is making notes to guide the script writers and editors in the home studio. Finally, he must see to it that the film is put onto a plane, or taken to the nearest lab for processing and then to a studio for transmission to headquarters as fast as possible.

Cameramen—Just as every TV reporter ought to have some picture sense, so every TV photographer must have some news sense. The next time you watch TV news, pay attention to the camera work.

If the reporter, off-screen for the moment, is describing a flood, the film may open on a wide shot of Main Street under water. Do you notice the building sign, 'Riverville National Bank'? The photographer picked that shot to 'establish' the locale.

While the reporter is interviewing survivors and rescue workers, the camera roves from closeups of the speakers to the swirling river, to children being carried off a floating house, to refugees, and back to the speakers—the pictures always keyed to the words, yet never riveted too long on one thing.

Reporting with film takes considerable skill. Some journalism schools give courses in it, and so do some schools of photography.

In the end, however, it must be learned by apprenticeship to good men on the job.

TV Editors—In the newsroom, the editors take the film and cut it into the news programme. It is always cut.

The anchorman may say, "For that story, we take you now to Mike Rafone in Kashmir." You then see Mike briefly and hear him talk for one or two minutes while the camera shows turbaned soldiers fighting in the Himalayas. The crew in the field may have shot 3,000 feet of film that would take forty-five minutes to roll. To snip that big spool to 200 feet or less is the fearful job of the editorial editor and the film editor. Working together, they see to it that the news is told properly and dramatically. They cut not only for content but also for technical quality.

The editorial chief has the responsibility of deciding how

much of each film and story to use on a show. Sometimes he faces the dilemma of a top story with poor or no film, and great film with a less important story. Then he consults the film editor, director, newscaster, chief writer and, with their aid, makes his decision. In the end, he may be overruled by the producer, who is the top man.

Broadcast Writers—Meanwhile, the writers are pounding out the basic script. News writing for radio or television is not exactly like news writing for a newspaper. It is, first of all, very much briefer. What a newspaper takes a column to tell, the TV or radio programme clicks off in eight lines. The writing is also simpler, more informal, more relaxed. There is no desire for striking prose.

Most radio news writing is straight rewrite of wire copy. The writer scans ten, twenty or forty news stories as they come over the ticker, selects the most important and rewrites them into the show. If the news does not change before the next broadcast, he faces the problem of rewriting the same stuff to make it sound fresh. If fresh news does break, he must write a new top for the show and drop something out. In an eight-hour stint, he may handle fifty items.

Television writing is more conversational than radio writing, since the narrator is seen as well as heard. Full sentences are not always required. To key his words to the film, the TV writer must either view the film or consult a 'spot sheet', which is a summary description, scene by scene. On each story, he writes a lead-in, rather than a newspaper lead, and also a summary conclusion, which, ideally, bridges over to the following item.

Radio scripts are typewritten in measured lines, TV scripts in half-lines. In an accompanying column are capsule descriptions of the scene and/or sound, which are cues to the newscaster to help him keep his comments in step with the film. In another column is the time each item should take and the log of accumulated

time. Reading at the standard rate of 2 to 2½ seconds per half-line, the newscaster must keep the show on schedule.

The newswriter's script is edited by a copyreader, who does much the same job as his opposite number on a newspaper, except write headlines. The copy is edited again by the editor, and a final editing is given by the newscaster himself. It will be seen, therefore, that the task of radio or television newswriter is hardly one for a wordsmith, a prose artist. It is always teamwork, always anonymous, and rarely distinguished.

The writer of a radio or television documentary has more time and more opportunity to express himself, to coin a phrase. He also gets credit on camera or on the air for his authorship. But even documentaries are always contributions of more than one man and are heavily edited by editors and newscaster.

Researcher—Facts for a documentary or big special news feature are gathered by researchers. A network may employ forty of them—mostly bright girls. Their work is similar to that of researchers on news magazines like *Time*. They gather and check facts by interviews in the field and by digging in libraries.

Correspondents—Correspondents are the top reporters, the men you hear on the air and see on the screen. Some are identified with a particular news show, but all appear occasionally on other, special shows as well. Most double in radio and television where a station or network serves both.

A network or a big independent station like WOR may have fifteen to forty correspondents.

Whether they work out of the home office or far away, they are all called correspondents. Some are on general assignments and are sent out on big news stories anywhere in the world—to Winston Churchill's funeral in London or to Brazil on a documentary about agricultural development of the Amazonian jungle. Others are specialists in affairs of state, labour, art, theatre. Some are Washington correspondents. Many are foreign correspondents

on fixed stations abroad, although their tours of duty in any one place are much shorter than the usual three-year hitch of newspaper correspondents.

A correspondent's work is similar to that of a newspaper correspondent's, which is why former newspapermen are preferred. The main difference is that the broadcast correspondent must be able not only to cover and write a story but also to deliver it into a mike and before a camera. In the field, he must also act as the reporter-contact man and make all the physical arrangements for the entire crew's work.

Anchorman—The star of a news show, the chief correspondent, the newscaster who speaks the body of the news and who introduces the other correspondents for one- or two-minute spot reports, is called the 'anchorman'. The show's popularity depends so much upon his personality that he gets billing in the little—'The Huntley-Brinkley Report.'

People say, "Walter Cronkite said last night . . ." But the work of sixty researchers, reporters, writers, and editors went into what he said. Most of them remain anonymous, though a few names may be flashed on the credits at the end of the show.

Director—In broadcasting, the title 'director', is used for two quite different jobs. The news director is the man in overall charge of the operation of broadcasting news, even on a tiny radio station with a staff of one. In networks and large stations, each news show also may have a director in charge; this is an executive job.

Each news show also has a technical director. Like a movie director, he calls the shots for film, voice, sound, switches the projection from full view to closeup, devises background stills called 'telops'. Stopwatch in hand, he or an assistant calls cues, speeds or slows things, cuts things out, keeps film and voice coordinated.

Unfortunately for the technical director, it is not possible for him to rehearse a news show before it goes on the air. When you consider how rarely the announcer's words fail to coincide exactly

in time and content with film, you appreciate his skill. Since his primary object is to project news, he must have a news sense, as well as a dramatic one.

Producer—The producer is the executive boss of the show, as has been indicated. He is responsible for everything—the content, presentation, hiring the personnel, the cost.

The Lineup

Two to four hours before the news show goes on the air, the lineup session is held. This is analogous to the daily news conference of editors in a newspaper. The chief writer, the chief editor, the director, and the newscaster go over together all the material in hand and expected, discussing the relative time and emphasis to give each item and in what order. They arrive at a tentative schedule so that the writers, film cutters, map and chart makers, *et al.* can go to work on the show.

Changes, of course, are made right up until show time as required by late-breaking news, by film that does not arrive in time or comes in bad, by other emergencies sure to occur every day.

What it Takes to Make a Broadcast Journalist

The requirements of broadcast journalists are the same as for newspapermen—and more.

The education demanded is the same: a broad, general, college education. Undergraduate vocational courses, acceptable to many newspaper employers, are not valued at all by broadcasting executives. Graduate courses in broadcasting are acceptable but not demanded.

Previous newspaper experience is always desirable. On networks and larger stations, it is demanded. But not all, or even most, good newspapermen make good broadcast newsmen.

"The correspondent must have not only the reporter's skills but also the ability to project believability, seriousness, intelligence, dignity on the air or screen", explains Ralph Paskman, assistant director for TV news of CBS. "He must have the face, voice,

manner to convince an audience he knows what he is talking about and has a serious interest in the subject. He must be able to think fast on his feet, ad lib in spot interviews and fast-breaking events. He must be alert; quick yet relaxed; deliver without stuttering, hemming and hawing, repetition, or nervous tics. He must use good (but not pedantic) grammar, diction, and taste, speak well without any regional or class accent, and not like an actor."

Television editors, both of words and film, must have an eye for pictures, as well as a nose for news. They also must have special skill at cutting, far beyond that required of a newspaper editor. To snip two hours of videotape down to thirty seconds without losing the essential story requires a talent that perhaps not everyone is born with.

To be a producer takes all the qualities of the reporter, writer, editor and technical director—in other words, the ability to put on the show. And many producers will actually take part in the writing, editing and directing. It is not surprising that they are men of indefatigable energy. It is said that Fred Friendly, who produced the one-hour documentaries 'CBS Reports', went into the film-cutting lab on Friday afternoon and lived there, constantly at work, until Sunday night.

Broadcast news executives unanimously advise beginners to work a few years as a newspaper reporter and then to begin their broadcasting career on a small station. Work on a small station gives wide experience in the business quickly. The all-around newsman will have to function as reporter, writer, editor, newscaster, perhaps cameraman, soundman, film editor, director and producer.

"In no other branch of journalism does a newsman require such a broad range of skills", says one network director.

After he has gone through this spectrum but still early in his career, the young broadcast newsman should decide whether he

wants to become a writer, a correspondent, or an editor. If he has ambition to become a producer eventually, he should take the editor's route, since producers rarely develop from the reporter-writer-correspondent group.

Broadcast jobs tend to divide into on-camera, on-air or off-camera, off-air; into word men or picture/sound men; into creative jobs like reporter, writer, correspondent, or production jobs like editor, director, producer. Seldom can a career, once in motion on one track, be switched to another.

The four national radio networks and three national television networks, all with headquarters in New York City, are the goal of all broadcast newsmen.

These networks and some of the largest local stations as well never employ beginners right out of college as newsmen. All their writers, reporters, correspondents, editors, directors, producers have had experience on newspapers or smaller broadcasting stations for at least five years, and many for much longer. The networks demand not only experience but superior ability besides.

Even researchers at the networks have had some comparable experience on news magazines or in big libraries.

Once in a while, NBC will take on an interne to learn the business, but he is rarely rewarded with a permanent job there, even if he turns out well. More likely, a promising youth will be farmed out to a small, wholly-owned station of the network for seasoning. CBS takes some beginners out of college for the lowest, manual jobs like copyboy, messenger, camera grip, and so on.

Women in Broadcasting

Prejudice against women in broadcast journalism is worse than on newspapers; 70 to 90 per cent of the editorial staff is male.

Most job opportunities for girls are in research, but no station below medium size can afford a researcher, and below network level research staffs are always small.

Women have become film cutters and film editors, assistant

directors and associate producers of news shows. Some have gotten jobs as reporters, writers and editors. A few have become full-fledged correspondents. Pauline Frederick, Aline Saarinen. Nancy Dickerson, Jeanne Paar, among half a dozen on the Big Three networks, are all mature journalists who made their reputations on newspapers.

Broadcasting executives deny prejudice against female journalists.

"We have more women in editorial jobs than our competitors", boasts Julian Goodman, vice-president of NBC News. "We have no prejudice against women and do not stick them with so-called women's specialties exclusively. We have at least one woman news producer, and a number of correspondents who do general work like the men."

"We are looking for good women reporters all the time, but we cannot seem to find any qualified", laments Mr. Paskman of CBS. "They would have to be smart, well-informed, capable, and good-looking without being affected or disturbing. We are accustomed to hiring men as correspondents, and possibly unconsciously accept lower standards for them."

Nevertheless, women journalists consider themselves as good as men on the air or screen, and assert they are unfairly barred by male executives.

Salaries in Broadcast News

The average starting salary of journalism graduates in radio news in 1965 was $100.38 a week, in television, $90.67, less than same as on daily newspapers. Beginning wages on the smallest stations approximated those on the smallest weekly newspapers, about $70 a week. And like the reporter on a country weekly who has to sell ads, the newsman on the little broadcasting station may have to sell commercials to make his pay.

"A good TV reporter on a small station in a small town may earn half of what a rewriteman earns on the local paper", says

Harry Reasoner, CBS correspondent and former newspaperman. "At the networks, all reporters, writers and editors earn more than their counterparts on any newspaper."

Surveys indicate that women's pay averages $10 a week less than men in the equivalent job, purely because of sex prejudice.

Wages in general rise with the size of station and of the city, but even within one city there are wide variations. For instance, one radio station in Chicago pays newsmen $90 a week, another $142.

Copyboys and clerks at the networks in New York start at $65 a week, almost as much as a newsman makes on a small radio station in a country town. Researchers on the networks start at $150 a week.

On the networks and many larger stations of both radio and television, some minimum wages are set by contract with two unions. The Writer's Guild of America bargains for newswriters and deskmen, the lower grade of editors. The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists bargains for reporters and some correspondents. The highest paid correspondents, however, are exempt from any union regulation of wages and hours.

In New York, Writer's Union minimums for newswriters include these: NBC, $160 a week to start, $224 after two years; CBS, $155 to start, $205 after two years; WOR and WINS, $170 to start, $215 after three years; WNEW, S165.50 to start, $231 after three years. Better writers are paid above minimum.

Editor is a higher paid category than newswriter. A broadcast deskman, corresponding to a newspaper copyreader, would start in a big city at about $200 a week. The union minimum in New York is now $247. Many editors make much above this.

AFTRA members rank higher than Writers' Guild members. Kenneth Groot, executive secretary of the New York local of AFTRA, estimated recently that base pay of news reporters throughout the country varied upward from $125 a week on small, rural stations.

In New York, the AFTRA minimum for reporters varies all the way from $140 to $425 a week, depending upon whether they appear on camera or are heard on the air and how often. The base pay for those appearing on network news programmes of fifteen minutes or less, five days a week, is $331, for instance.

This base pay is augmented considerably by "talent fees" for performances on camera or on the air in excess of the minimum, either on the same or additional programmes.

Premium pay for overtime is also provided.

Pay of a news director may vary from $4,000 a year on a small, rural station where he is the whole news staff to $30,000 a year on a New York network, according to the Radio-Television News Directors Association.

Producers of news shows, despite their high-sounding title, can start as low as $15,000 a year, well below the pay for some of the "talent" on their staff. However, in New York they can make $50,000 or even $100,000 a year.

Wages of correspondents are determined in individual bargaining, whether they belong to AFTRA or are exempt, as long as they do not fall below the union minimum. Probably no national network correspondent gets less than $15,000 a year, some perhaps $100,000. Star anchormen like Walter Cronkite are said to earn "a couple of hundred thousand a year".

7
Modern Media Environment

For thousands of years the complex symbolic code known as language has allowed humans to share thoughts with one another. Even before written language, humankind communicated orally and pictorially, through paintings on cave walls, for example. Communication—including state news, sports reports, and gossip—helped hold the Roman Empire together for five hundred years. Communication can also help hold a marriage or community together as well. As modern technology is radically transforming the reach and speed and methods by which individuals and organisations communicate, it is useful to inquire whether this new global web can be used to hold communities together or whether it is serving the needs of modern day empires exclusively.

We use technology every day to inform and to be informed. We watch television or listen to the radio for entertainment and for information. We talk and listen to people across town or around the world using the telephone. Increasingly we send and receive faxes, use e-mail, and use electronic bulletin-board systems or

commercial network services. Some of us may even use video conferencing systems or correspond with others using electronic mail that contains graphics or video clips.

Humankind's thirst for communication and information is seemingly unquenchable, and technology is playing an increasing role. The speed by which these new technologies are advancing should cause many of us to pause and ponder some fundamental questions about new communications technology. The means with which we communicate and the policies that guide their use may not be as neutral or as beneficent as we think. Besides allowing us to share our thoughts, our media systems may be shaping them.

The commonplace nature of familiar modes of communication prevents us from looking at them objectively and, often, from thinking about them at all. The simplest question we can ask about them is "What does the technology allow us to do?" In other words, when the technology is operating correctly, "What do we use it for?" In the case of the telephone in its conventional use, two people communicate with each other synchronously using sounds—usually voice.

A television, on the other hand allows people in one location to watch and listen to moving pictures and sound that are broadcast from a different location. The converse of the previous question, "What doesn't it allow?" is rarely asked, although it's a very useful question to consider. We can't smile at a person whom we're talking with on the telephone, for example, and expect to receive a smile in return. And although the rare television programme allows viewers to telephone in to a live show to express an opinion or ask a question, television is generally used for broadcasting, and viewers are never participants in any real way. People have been known to talk back, yell, or, even, shoot their television set, but these attempts at feedback fall on deaf ears. Television is a one-way street.

Although we're not accustomed to thinking along these lines, technological systems (and modern mass-media systems

are certainly technological systems) affect us in many ways. Don Norman writing in *Things That Make Us Smart* describes this phenomenon quite clearly:

> Technology is not neutral. Each technology has properties—affordances—that make it easier to do some activities, harder to do others: The easier ones get done, the harder ones neglected. Each has constraints, preconditions, and side effects that impose requirements and changes on the things with which it interacts, be they other technology, people, or human society at large. Finally, each technology poses a mind-set, a way of thinking about it and the activities to which it is relevant, a mind-set that soon pervades those touched by it, often unwillingly. The more successful and widespread the technology, the greater its impact upon the patterns of those who use it, and consequently, the greater impact upon all of society. Technology is not neutral; it dominates.

Although Norman describes constraints imposed by the technology itself, the actual technology is just one aspect of mass-media communications systems we generally take for granted. To understand the system as a whole it is necessary to examine political, social, and economic aspects as well as the technological aspects. In this light, much of the irrelevance, vulgarity, commercialism, and lack of balance of the mass media can be viewed as a natural by-product of the pattern of near monopoly ownership and commercial dominance. While the prospect offered by community networks for overturning corporate dominance is small, it may be possible to develop alternative media systems that are community-oriented, open, accessible, and democratic that co-exist—however precariously—with the traditional closed media systems.

Influence of Television

The birth of mass communication systems has made radical changes in our consciousness that we're just beginning to contemplate. As the prospectus from the Cultural Environment (CEM) explains,

"For the first time in human history, most children are born into homes where most of the stories do not come from their parents, schools, churches, communities, and in many places, not even from their native countries, but from a handful of conglomerates who have something to sell" .

This passage notes the relatively recent appropriation and overwhelming control of cultural symbols and messages by what former University of California at San Diego Professor Herbert Schiller calls the "global cultural factories." University of Pennsylvania professor George Gerbner, the founder and chair of the Cultural Environment Movement organisation has conducted extensive research that reveals how far the effects of media extend. For one thing, the constant barrage of television, print ads, and billboards has helped to stamp product mottos, jingles, and images in our consciousness. Ninety per cent of all U.S. six-year-olds, for example, can identify the Joe Camel character and most 10-year-olds can name more beer brands than U.S. presidents.

Gerbner has been studying the effects of television on collective consciousness for over 25 years. At the core of his research is exhaustive analysis of thousands of prime time television shows involving tens of thousands of characters; his analysis revealed patterns that are wildly inconsistent with reality. The incidence of crime and violence, for example, is 55 times more likely to occur on television than in real life, while elderly people, a rapidly growing and powerful age group in the United States, are shown infrequently and in stereotypical roles that are often silly, impotent, or irrelevant.

That television helps to promulgate these views throughout society is strongly implied by Gerbner's research. In one experiment, Gerbner and his assistants devised a multiple-choice questionnaire designed to learn how close the world view of the test-taker matched actual real-world statistics. The conclusions were clear—and cut across all age, income, level of education, and ethnicity distinctions:

The more television a person watched, the more his or her world view matched the phony world view that beams continuously into the minds of hundreds of millions of viewers.

Funding for Media

While some may quibble at some of Gerbner's conclusions, the actual and potential effect that the consciousness industries have on what we think about and how we think about it is staggering. Thus Gerbner recommends that we think both about what the current media is doing to us, and what the media could do, both to us and for us. He believes hat cultural policy that addresses these issues explicitly belongs on "centre stage...where it has long been in most other democracies."

Although the idea is absent from public consideration in the United States, countries in Europe and especially in Scandinavia often levy taxes on theater admissions, videotapes, and other cultural events and artifacts which are paid into a fund that loans money for independent productions. Community computer networks would obviously be good candidates for such public funding and there would be scores of other viable candidates.

Talk of public funding along these lines is not currently fashionable. Politicians, corporate media moguls, and right-wing radio talk show hosts uniformly denounce public funding options of any type. Rejection of this option, however, virtually guarantees that global corporate fare will increasingly shape the images, symbols, and messages that people see, and as a consequence, the parameters of acceptable thinking.

New Media Movement

Many of us read, listen to, or watch the news as part of our regular schedule. While the companies and organisations that produce this news are undoubtedly proficient at what they do—gathering information from around the world, organising and packaging it, maintaining a worldwide organisation, employing advanced technology, soliciting advertisers, and presenting annual

reports to stockholders or owners—it is less clear why they're doing it. The ubiquitous nature of the mass media generally prevents people from posing important questions, and the owners of mass media systems are unlikely to provide forums that could challenge their *modus operandi.* Nevertheless, the question should be asked: What use is the news?

Let's begin this query by looking at the product itself—the news and the system that produces it. Is the reportage accurate? Is it biased? And why is one story newsworthy while others are not? Who makes those determinations and by what criteria? And, finally, if we could redefine or reorient 'information and communication'—the media—to enhance the role of the citizen and community, what would this new medium look like? To begin to answer this question, let's first examine some of the deficiencies of the existing mass media systems.

A Black Box

The first thing we notice about the mass media is that it's a 'black box.' A black box performs a function, but since it is black, the mechanism inside it can't be viewed and how it works remains a mystery. The media industry, exemplified by the medium of television, gathers information, determines its entertainment-worthiness, and packages it behind the scenes. News production is their business while news consumption is ours. When we consume 'the news,' we assume that what we see is accurate and, less obviously, that it is news. Conversely, what we don't see isn't news. These black boxes are extremely powerful, as they play a large part in defining public consciousness. And since the box is opaque, the community neither understands nor participates in the process.

Profits and Value

Commercial media has to make a profit in order to stay in business. This is, of course, an economic truism of capitalistic society. A stronger statement, but an element of conventional wisdom nonetheless, is that a company's primary—if not sole—obligation

is to maximise profits. This stronger form has serious implications for an industry that in theory carries the responsibility of providing citizens with the information they need to actively participate in a democratic society. If a violent television programme, for example, on the average can deliver more viewers and hence more advertising revenue than say, a science programme for kids, the violent programme will be aired. And since advertisers financially underwrite television programming, their influence over what gets aired will be far greater than that of community members with special communication and information needs.

Disjointed Offerings

Sometimes television stations or networks broadcast documentaries or 'specials' on some vexing problem of society. The topic might be homelessness, drive-by shootings, youth violence, substandard education, or some other popular tragedy. Although these shows are often intended to entertain—rather than engage—they are generally more honest and useful than much of television's usual fare. However valid these documentaries might be, their context can only be described as arbitrary and schizophrenic. For example, a special on the short life expectancy of homeless children might pop up on a Wednesday at 9:00 p.m., preceded by an hour of situation comedies and followed by half an hour of Wall Street news. The audience was not prepared for the show in any way and no discussion, update, or sequel followed it. It was a unique and unrelated event in history, lost in a series of other unique and unrelated events.

Finally, there is literally no use to the news. While there are sporadic exceptions, news is generally useless in that there are no reasonable ways to follow up on a story, get more information, or to become involved in some positive action.

Media Integration

When a form of medium begins to connect to community activities, it becomes integrative. Fortunately, there are many ways

for television, radio, or newspapers to become better integrated and enmeshed in community and civic responsibilities, and community networks can play a strong role.

The media integration could go further than providing information, however. By using the community network's electronic forums, discussions could precede the airing of the show and be integrated into the show itself. Similarly, there could also be on-line discussions after the show, and people who appeared on the show could also be available on-line to answer questions and to facilitate discussion. In this scenario, a television show could be augmented by introducing an additional medium—that of an on-line community network system. By incorporating additional media-including newspapers, radio, and a variety of face-to-face meetings—interesting, exploratory public experiments could be implemented. These experiments have been tried in some locations: 'We the People,' in Wisconsin, is one example. The 'Puget Soundings' project in Seattle, which combines community television, radio, and community networks, is another.

Discussion forums on computer-based systems encourage conversations in which public dialogue is constructed in ways unlike that encountered with other information and communication technology. Forums—both moderated and unmoderated—are based on contributions from participants, and each contribution is captured and becomes a permanent part of the forum itself, a record that can be printed or distributed and may contain seeds upon which additional discussion is spawned.

Unmoderated computer-based discussions reject the producer-consumer model. Any potential 'consumer' of information, commentary, issues, or questions in an electronic forum is a potential 'producer' as well. Compare this to television news programmes, where an organisation numbering in the hundreds dispenses its version of news to people numbering in the tens of millions. In the United States this consumer-producer ratio has

been steadily shrinking in recent years. According to Ben Bagdikian, former dean of the School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley, "twenty-three corporations control most of the business in daily newspapers, magazines, television, books and motion pictures,"

The current Internet model seriously undermines the 'information as commodity' world view. Millions of people routinely supply information—facts and opinions—into a shared and increasingly global knowledge resource. Additionally, new tools such as Mosaic, gopher, MUD software, and the like are being distributed without charge. Without direct financial reward, millions of people are making available information, services, and technology that is not only cheaper, but is often of higher quality than the commercial competitors. Whether this model will endure is a matter of speculation, however, as there are strong efforts underway to commercialise many of these services.

Public Journalism Movement

In the last few years the concept of public journalism has been raised as an alternative approach that could circumvent some of the problems with current mass media. Public journalism promotes a more participatory approach to journalism in which the media acts as an agent to help citizens develop their own agenda and address their own problems. NYU journalism professor, Jay Rosen explains that "the newspaper's willingness to intervene, its concern for the resolution and not just the existence of the dispute, its determination to create discussion where none existed, its aggressive style of proactive neutrality—are all signs of a public journalism approach."

Public journalism strives to be professional and neutral while shifting the focus to solution-driven from problem-driven journalism. For example, when potentially divisive disputes arose in Charlotte, South Carolina between users of a popular city park, the journalists at the Charlotte Observer worked with community members

to develop an op-ed page that carried suggestions for solutions and commentaries that reflected the points of views of all the concerned parties. People in the area credit the newspaper with averting a confrontation. The park was reopened the following weekend and a panel was initiated to study the park situation and develop new youth programmes.

The Charlotte Observer also launched inquiries into some of Charlotte's systematic problems, such as the city's crime rate, which had risen to nineteenth in the country although its population ranking was thirty-fourth. The city's six-month 'Taking Back Our Neighbourhoods' initiative combined newspaper and radio coverage, town meetings, and efforts of neighbourhood organisations to help understand Charlotte's crime problem and begin devising community solutions.

Two newspapers, the Wichita (Kansas) Eagle and the Charlott Observer are in the forefront of the public journalism movement, but the effort is spreading to many other locations including Seattle, San Francisco, Dallas, and Boston. Many newspapers are active in election issues, in which citizens are being encouraged to develop a political agenda that suits their needs rather than the politicians'.

Although these efforts are far from being commonplace, there are indications that wide-ranging experimentation in new forms of public journalism are happening at the same time that newspapers and other information purveyors like radio stations are 'reinventing' themselves. One interesting aspect of this change is that different types of media organisations often collaborate on a project—two rival newspapers, or radio and television stations and a newspaper, for example.

Newer electronic forms like e-mail and collaborations with community networks are being explored, and 'old-fashioned' venues such as salons and neighbourhood parries are being revived as forums for public discussion of civic issues. In Spokane, Washington, the Spokesman Review newspaper purchased pizza

for 500 groups that met in local homes and backyards to discuss concerns, hopes, and suggestions for the future of the region. The newspaper published summaries of these meetings and sent the comments to elected officials.

While public journalism is just one aspect of the solution, it is an important one. But public journalism is not without disadvantages and risks. For one thing it may be costlier in some ways because preparing information for use rather than consumption takes more time and demands critical skills. Preparing graphic presentations of statistical information that help convey complex information requires artistic, mathematic, and communication expertise.

A more serious danger, however, could come from a media that adopted the mantle of neutrality and public interest while practicing flawed public journalism by presenting information based on false consensus, bias, exclusionary participation, or sloppy reporting. There is no solution to this problem except a new community that expects and demands excellence from the media.

Effects of Media Images

We've noted how unresponsive and inattentive the mass media is to community needs. Unfortunately, the situation is often much worse: In many cases the mass media actively battles against civil life and community values. Often the media will place the focus on some aspects of a situation, artificially elevating those aspects while ignoring other possibly more important aspects. When a person is murdered, especially if the person was rich or famous or the method itself was particularly gruesome or novel, the gory details are disseminated quickly and easily through the media and, more importantly, into our consciousness. This act of violence becomes central to the lives of many, and society's resources are marshalled toward its reportage, discussion, and judicial and penal ramifications.

While the details of one crime are forgotten until the next one occurs, the lingering mood is one of fear and suspicion. The

incessant barrage of violence in the media has taken its toll. While crime has actually decreased somewhat in recent years in the United States, people perceive increased danger and hence experience fear and mistrust. Unfortunately, there is no analogous chain reaction or fanning out of influence accompanying the good or humane act. In the words of social critic Neil Postman, we Americans seem to prefer "amusing ourselves to death." Bad news makes good news, but good news is no news at all.

People will view graphic violence if it's made readily available. It is also known that some people in certain age groups are more likely to gravitate towards violent entertainment than do people in others. According to George Gerbner's research, the ratings of nonviolent television shows are—on the average—higher than of those violent shows and that difference increases as the amount and severity of the violence increases. But younger viewers (who are more desirable to advertisers) seem to prefer the more violent fare, and this provides the financial incentive for continued bloodletting on the screen.

Gerbner quotes the producer of the mega death movie *Die Hard 2* as stating that "violence travels well around the world." Jokes might not translate well and sexual themes can run into trouble with local censors, but violence is apparently universal. Exporting boosts the profitability of any television show and violent shows are more likely to be exported. Gerbner's findings reveal that crime/action shows comprise only 17 per cent of domestically shown programmes but 46 per cent of the exported ones. Violent American shows can now be regularly seen throughout the world. Thus, the consciousness of non-Americans is now being altered according to unhealthy stereotypes and distorted views of reality manufactured in the cultural factories of America.

Mass Media as Diversion

Carl Jensen of Project Censored and others use the expression 'junk news' for the wide variety of entertainment that goes under

the guise of news. This was anticipated, of course, in 1984, George Orwell's distopian treatise on totalitarian possibilities. In 1984, the production and distribution of cultural material was based on the existence of two distinct social tiers. For party members, the ostensible citizens, the Ministry of Truth supplied "the citizens of Oceania with newspapers, films, textbooks, telescreen programmes, plays, novels—with every conceivable kind of information, instruction, or entertainment, from a statue to a slogan, from a lyric poem to a biological treatise, and from a child's spelling book to a Newspeak dictionary." The party member of 1984 corresponds most closely to the intellectual and political elite whose opinions do matter and whose high positions and power make them indispensable allies in maintaining the *status quo*. For the rest of the people, the masses or proletarians in 1984:

There was a whole chain of separate departments dealing with proletarian literature, music, drama, and entertainment generally. Here were produced rubbishy newspapers, containing almost nothing except sport, crime, and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs which were composed entirely by mechanical means on a special kind of kaleidoscope known as a versificator. There was even a whole subsection—Pornosec, it was called in Newspeak... engaged in producing the lowest kind of pornography, which was sent out in sealed packets and which no Party member, other than those who worked on it, was permitted to look at.

Although private corporations—rather than the state—orchestrate and define current 'proletarian culture,' the results are remarkably similar to those in 1984. Graphic violence—sometimes coupled with sexuality—is apparently the pornography of choice in present-day America. Violence and sex can provide a fleeting 'sugar high' that removes the person—at least for the moment—from a life of deprivation, boredom, and lack of purpose or meaning. Unfortunately, this approach rarely offers even a

glimpse of any social problem or a community response to a community problem. At the same time, it helps breed an entire class of apathetic, uninformed, and disconnected people who are singularly unprepared to deal with community problems.

While discussion is at the base of a democratic society, new forms of electronic network involving film, video, audio, and computer-manipulated images are becoming increasingly widespread. It is important to consider what effects these new media will have on society and whether they can be used to support the new community. One of the first questions to ask is: Who can participate? Words—both spoken and written—are easily produced by commoners as well as kings. The written form, moreover, is particularly amenable to replication and distribution in books, newspapers, pamphlets, and on community networks.

It should be noted that although text is in itself easily produced and replicated, the average person's access to an audience of potential readers has traditionally been severely limited. This is expressed in the adage about the freedom of the press being limited to those who could afford one. It is this barrier—the distribution barrier—that has been breached by computer-mediated communications. Electronic BBSs, Fidonet echoes, conferences on Usenet, and community networks all provide nearly unlimited forums for the free exchange of ideas using text.

Multimedia information, however, changes the equation. Each aspect of the media system—its form, content, production, distribution, and access—is changed with the increased emphasis on non-textual information in the on-line world, altering the 'affordances' in various ways. The first consideration is what can be portrayed by the medium.

Postman argues persuasively that text is ideally suited for ideas and dialogue, while dynamic images are better suited for entertainment. In terms of production, multimedia artifacts such as movies or television shows have been produced for broadcast by

teams of people working together with ample resources. Historically, at least, the more complicated the artifact is, the more expensive it is to produce and distribute, and the more likely it is to be a well-funded corporate effort designed for profitable mass consumption.

Multimedia technology is becoming increasingly available. Prices are dropping rapidly and tools are proliferating that make tasks such as editing video much easier. It's estimated that one in six households in the United States now owns a camcorder, an estimated 16 million having been sold. Since many households do not even own telephones, it seems unlikely that every household will be able to mount its own video productions any time soon. The availability of increasingly affordable and usable technology does mean that community centres, schools, libraries, and public access television centres could lend equipment and provide inexpensive or free training to community members of varying income levels.

Video Revolution

Availability is just one part of the picture, however. Another aspect is use. Will people use video technology for democratic and community ends? While there are some examples of that community orientation, much of the evidence suggests that today's camcorder users record "family documentation and ritualistic leisure practices, just as they did with the home movie camera and the Brown Box Brownie," according to media critic Laurie Oulette. Oulette points out that the 'video revolution' was hailed as a tool for democracy in other countries such as China and Czechoslovakia, while both the professional media and the video technology producers themselves stress more prosaic use within the United States.

Lastly, there are questions of distribution and demand. While independent video producers have been active for years, their work has been largely ignored. The first problem is distribution:

What good is access to the means of production if distribution fails? The other problem is demand. Although it's relatively difficult to see independent and alternative productions, they can be viewed if people are persistent in their efforts. But if the large majority of people would rather "amuse themselves to death," as Neil Postman suggests, then neither increased access nor distribution would make any difference.

8
Concepts and Processes of Mass Communication

Concepts of Mass Communication

The term 'mass communication' is a term used in a variety of ways which, despite the potential for confusion, are usually clear from the context. These include reference to the activities of the mass media as a group, the use of criteria of a concept, 'massiveness,' to distinguish among media and their activities, and the construction of questions about communication as applied to the activities of the mass media. Significantly only the third of these uses does not take the actual process of communication for granted.

Mass communication is often used loosely to refer to the distribution of entertainment, arts, information, and messages by television, radio, newspapers, magazines, movies, recorded music, and associated media. This general use of the term is only appropriate as designating the most commonly shared features of such otherwise disparate phenomena as broadcast television, cable, video playback, theater projection, recorded song, radio talk, advertising,

and the front page, editorial page, sports section, and comics page of the newspaper.

In this usage mass communication refers to the activities of the media as a whole and fail to distinguish among specific media, modes of communication, genres of text or artifact, production or reception situations, or any questions of actual communication. The only analytic purpose this use of the term serves is to distinguish mass communication from interpersonal, small-group, and other face-to-face communication situations. A second use of the term involves the various criteria of massiveness which can be brought to bear in analyses of media and mass communication situations.

These criteria may include size and differentiation of audience, anonymity, simultaneity, and the nature of influences among audience members and between the audience and the media.

Live television spectaculars of recent decades may be the epitome of mass communication. These may include such serious events as the funerals of John Fitzgerald Kennedy or Martin Luther King, Jr., and such entertainment spectaculars as the Olympic games, the Superbowl, and the Academy Awards. These transmissions are distributed simultaneously and regardless of individual or group differences to audience members numbering in several tens or even a few hundreds or millions. Outside of their own local groups, these audience members know nothing of each other. They have no real opportunities to influence the television representation of the events or the interpretation of those representations by other audience members.

By contrast the audience for most cable television channels is much smaller and more differentiated from other audience groups. The audience for newspapers, magazines, and movies is less simultaneous, again smaller and more differentiated, and there is the potential for a flow of local influences as people talk about articles and recommend movies. But compared to a letter, phone call,

conversation, group discussion, or public lecture all of these media produce communication immensely more massive on every criterion.

All of the criteria used in defining mass communication are potentially confused when one is engaged in a specific research project or critical examination. The most confounding problem is encountered when determining the level of analysis. Should the concern be with a single communication event or with multiple events but a single communication channel? Should the focus be upon multiple channels but a single medium? Does the central question concern a moment in time or an era, a community, nation, or the world?

Radio provides an excellent example of the importance of these choices. Before television, network radio was the epitome of mass communication; it was national, live, available and listened to everywhere. Today it is difficult to think of radio this way because the industry no longer works in the same manner. Commercial radio stations depend on local and regional sources of advertising income. Essentially all radio stations are programmed to attract a special segment of a local or regional audience, and even when programming national entertainment materials such as popular songs, stations emphasise local events, personalities, weather, news, and traffic in their broadcast talk.

Radio is an industry characterised by specialised channels each attracting relatively small, relatively differentiated audiences. But the average home in the United States has five and half radios, more than twice the number of televisions. Cumulatively the U.S. audience for radio is just as big, undifferentiated, and anonymous as that for television. Is radio today, then, a purveyor of mass commu- nication? It depends on whether the concern is with the industry as a whole or with the programming and audience of a particular station.

Most uses of the term 'mass communication' fall into one of these first two categories, either to refer to the activities of the

mass media as a whole, or to refer to the massiveness of certain kinds of communication. Both uses have in common that they take issues of communication for granted and instead place emphasis on the massiveness of the distribution system and the audience. Attention is given to what are called the mass media because they are the institutional and technological systems capable of producing mass audiences for mass distributed 'communications.'

Communication, then, ends up implicitly defined as a kind of object (message, text, artifact) that is reproduced and transported by these media. For some purposes this may be exactly the right definition. But it diminishes our ability to treat communication as a social accomplishment, as something people do rather than as an object that gets moved from one location to another. If communication is something people do, then it may or may not be successful, may or may not be healthy and happy. If communication means 'to share', for example, rather than 'to transmit,' then what, if anything, of importance is shared when people watch a television show.

Scholars of mass communication are often more interested in communication as a social accomplishment than they are in the media as mass distribution systems. This interest is based on an intellectual independence from both existing habits of terminology, and most importantly, from media institutions as they exist. The term mass, however it may be defined, is then treated as a quailfication on the term communication, however it may be defined. Such intellectual exercises, of course, can work out in a great variety of ways, but a few examples will suffice.

At one extreme, if communication is defined so that interaction between parties is a necessary criterion, as in "communication is symbolic interaction," and mass is defined as an aggregate of non-interacting entities, then mass communication is an oxymoron and an impossibility. At the opposite extreme, if the couplet mass communication is defined as involving any symbolic behavior addressed "to whom it may concern" then choices of clothing,

furniture, and appliance styles, body posture, gestures, and any other publicly observable activity may well count as mass communication.

Both of these extremes may seem like mere intellectual games but they are important precisely because their intellectuality frees them of the practical constraints under which we operate in other realms. The contribution of such intellectual games is precisely to stimulate new thinking. Perhaps pausing to consider the idea that mass communication may be an impossibility could help us to understand some of the paradoxes and incoherencies of contemporary American culture.

Consider a third example in which we use a model of communication to evaluate industry practices. Definitions of mass communication that take communication for granted and focus on the massiveness of the medium are always in danger of implicitly adopting, or certainly failing to question, the taken for granted criteria of evaluation already used in industries. In commercial television, just like any of the other commercial media, what is assumed is that it is a business. The conventions of the industry are to evaluate things in business terms. Is this television show good for business? Would increasing network news to an hour be a good business decision? Would noncommercial, educational programming for children be a successful business venture? In such an environment it is an important intervention to point out that these industries are communicators as well as businesses. As such they can and should be held to communicative standards. The public has a right to ask whether a television show is good for communication, whether an hour of network news would be a successful form of communication, whether there is a communication need for noncommercial, educational children's programming. As the terms of the questions shift, so, of course, may the answers. Becoming aware of such possibilities begins with being sensitive to the definitions of such terms as mass communication.

The elements such as poster, brochure, book, radio, TV, Internet, cinema, theatre, etc., used to communication with masses are called mass communications.

Development of Mass Media

Mass communications have certain properties:

1. Generally one-sided communication is valid.
2. They can choose the target audience.
3. They can reach a wide range of audience.
4. They may use symbols to draw attention of the wide range audience.

Mass media has certain tasks in social life:

1. It does an important public service by establishing the rules and policies of democracy.
2. It gives opportunities to social groups that have different ideologies, philosophy and beliefs.

The term mass media was coined in the 1920s with the advent of nationwide radio networks and of mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. The mass-media audience has been viewed by some commentators as forming a mass society with special characteristics, notably atomisation or lack of social connections, which render it especially susceptible to the influence of modern mass-media techniques such as advertising and propaganda.

During the 20th century, the advent of mass media was driven by technology that allowed the massive duplication of material at a low cost. Physical duplication technologies such as printing, record pressing and film duplication allowed the duplication of books, newspapers and movies at low prices to huge audiences. Television and radio allowed the electronic duplication of content for the first time.

Mass media had the economics of linear replication: a single work could make money proportional to the number of copies sold, and as volumes went up, units costs went down, increasing profit margins further. Vast fortunes were to be made in mass media.

In a democratic society, an independent media serves to educate the public/electorate about issues regarding government and corporate entities. Some consider concentration of media ownership to be the single greatest threat to democracy.

During the last decade of the 20th century, the advent of the World Wide Web marked the first era in which any individual could have a means of exposure on a scale comparable to that of mass media. For the first time, anyone with a web site can address a global audience, although serving high levels of web traffic is still expensive. It is possible that the rise of peer-to-peer technologies may have begun the process of making the cost of bandwidth manageable.

Although a vast amount of information, imagery, and commentary has been made available, it is often difficult to determine the authenticity and reliability of information contained in web pages. The invention of the internet has also allowed breaking news stories to reach around the globe within minutes. This rapid growth of instantaneous, decentralized communication is often deemed likely to greatly alter mass media and its relationship to society.

Mass Media and Society

Despite being a relatively recent development the mass media plays a crucial role in forming and reflecting public opinion. It communicates the world to individuals, and it reproduces modern society's self-image. But how much exogeneous influence does the media wield? Early critiques suggested that the media destroys the individual's capacity to act autonomously. Later empirical studies, however, suggest a more complex interaction between the media and society, with individuals actively interpreting and evaluating the media and the information it provides.

Theories of the Public Sphere

Habermas

In historical terms, the development of communications and transport is one of the driving forces behind the development of

modern society. It made possible the industrial revolution and continues to be essential to the coherence of modern society.

For Jiirgen Habermas, the development of mass media was a crucial factor in the transition from an absolutist regime to liberal-democratic society. He develops the notion that society became increasingly polarised into the spheres of 'public authority' on the one hand (referring to the emergence of the state and associated political activity); and the 'private' sphere on the other (which was the intimate domain of private relationships and the family).

With the invention of the printing press and the subsequent availability of newspapers and various other forms of printed literature, however, Habermas sees the emergence of an intermediate sphere which he refers to as the bourgeois public sphere'. Here, individuals gather together to critically discuss and evaluate contemporary issues, stimulated by the contents of the open press, in a fashion reminiscent of the Greek agora. Habermas claims that this public use of reason not only acts as a regulatory mechanism over the state, which is now highly visible, but also as a catalyst for the replacement of the absolutist regime with a liberal democratic government.

However, this sphere of public discourse is transient, and will eventually disappear as increasing state intervention blurs the boundaries between public and private. At the same time, commercialisation of the media will radically alter its characteristics, as it becomes merely a tool for political manipulation, largely dependent on satisfying advertisers, readers and information sources such as the government. This can easily lead to a chase towards the lowest common denominator. This can be justified on the grounds of the massive widening of audience compared to the pre-industrial press, but it must be remembered that what is being conveyed to the masses is radically different from what was newsworthy then.

Mass media today is about culture—but a culture selected for

representation by the media. This process of the 'refeudalisation of the public sphere' will leave the public exempt from political discussions. It could be argued that a new kind of absolutism emerges as a result of an abuse of democracy.

Frankfurt School

Habermas depends to some extent on some early critiques of the media from the 'Frankfurt School', such as that of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, for whom the media was a 'culture industry' impacting on a sea of passive individuals, who merely absorb any information they are exposed to. The cause of this is the commodification of art and culture, which allows the possibility of "manipulation by demagogues".

The Frankfurt School, which arose as an attempt to explain the success of Nazism in Weimar Germany, sees the loss of individuality through decline of privacy as the cause of dependence on great mass organisations. The interdependence of highly specialised individuals, or what Emile Durkheim called 'organic solidarity', is seen as being succeeded by a new and barbarous homogeneity. Only a 'mechanical' cohesion is possible, dependent on similarity and standardisation. Horkheimer argued that, paradoxically, individuality was impaired by the decline in the impulse for collective action. "As the ordinary man withdraws from participating in political affairs, society tends to revert to the law of the jungle, which crushes all vestiges of individuality."

In this analysis the Frankfurters saw totalitarianism emerging as a result of corrupt social institutions and the decline of liberal principles. Thus Horkheimer: "Just as the slogans of rugged individualism are politically useful to large trusts in society seeking exemption from social control, so in mass culture the rhetoric of individuality, by imposing patterns for collective imitation, subverts the very principle to which it gives lip service." Adorno in *The Jargon of Authenticity* notes that "mass media can create an aura which makes the spectator seem to experience a non-existent

actuality". Thus a mass-produced, artificial culture replaces what went before.

As in Jerry Mander's work, atomised individuals of mass society lose their souls to the phantom delights of the film, the soap opera, and the variety show. They fall into a stupor; an apathetic hypnosis Lazarsfeld was to call the 'narcotysing dysfunction' of exposure to mass media. Individuals become 'irrational victims of false wants'—the wants which corporations have thrust upon them, and continue to thrust upon them, through both the advertising in the media (with its continual exhortation to consume) and through the individualist consumption culture it promulgates. Marcuse describes this as a process where addiction to media leads to absolute docility, and the public becomes "enchanted and transformed into a clientele by the suppliers of popular culture."

Davis Reisman in *Lonely Crowd* claims that "Glamour in politics, the packaging of the leader, the treatment of events by the mass media, substitutes for the self-interest of the inner directed man the abandonment to society of the outer directed man." In other words, the creation of the public sphere implies a fundamental change in social relations and individuals' ability to model their self-image on some projected normality.

Thus, according to the Frankfurt School, leisure has been industrialised. The production of culture had become standardised and dominated by the profit motive as in other industries. In a mass society leisure is constantly used to induce the appropriate values and motives in the public. The modern media train the young for consumption. "Leisure had ceased to be the opposite of work, and had become a preparation for it."

Marcuse points out the 'Bach in the kitchen' phenomenon: the fact that modern methods of reproduction have increased the quantity of music, art, and literature available to the public does not mean that culture spreads to the masses; rather that culture is destroyed in order to make entertainment. "At its worst mass

culture threatens not merely to cretinise our taste", argues Rosenberg, "but to brutalise our senses while paving the way to totalitarianism". Lazarsfeld and Merton put the case succinctly: "Economic power seems to have reduced direct exploitation and to have turned to a subtler type of psychological exploitation" they wrote of the US in the 50s. Overt totalitarian force was increasingly obsolescent. Radio, film and television seemed even more effective than terror in producing compliance.

Marcuse notes a key part of this process is its sheer, relentless omnipresence: "The preconditioning does not start with the mass production of radio or TV (at a given point in time). The people enter this stage as preconditioned receptacles of long standing. In this more complex view the public do no abdicate rational consideration of their interest blindly. More subtly, the whole basis of rational calculation is undermined."

Some argue that this is a highly pessimistic view of individuals' cognitive and interpretative capacities. Thompson thinks that individuals do not absorb information from the media passively. In his words:

> "Media messages are commonly discussed by individuals in the course of reception and subsequent to it . . . (They) are transformed through an ongoing process of telling and retelling, interpretation and reinterpretation, commentary, laughter and criticism. . . . By taking hold of messages and routinely incorporating them into our lives. . . . we are constantly shaping and reshaping our skills and stocks of knowledge, testing our feelings and tastes, and expanding the horizons of our experience."

Unlike Baudrillard and others, Thompson does not see 'mediated quasi-interaction' (the monological, mainly one way communication of the mass media) as dominant, but rather as intermingling with traditional face-to-face interactions and mediated interactions (such as telephone conversations). Contrary to Habermas'

pessimistic view, this allows both more information and discussion to come into the public domain (of mediated quasi-interaction) and more to be discussed within the private domain (since the media provides information individuals would not otherwise have access to).

There is also some empirical evidence suggesting that it is 'personal contact, not media persuasiveness' which counts. For example, Trenaman and McQuail found that 'don't knows' were less well informed than consistent voters, appearing uninterested, showing a general lack of information, and not just ignorance of particular policies or policies of one particular party. A similar view is Katz and Lazarsfeld's theory of the two-step flow of communication, based on a study of electoral practices of the citizens of Erie county, Ohio, during the 1940 presidential elections. This examined the political propaganda prevalent in the media at the time during the campaign period to see whether it plays an integral role in influencing people's voting.

The results contradict this: Lazarsfeld *et al.* find evidence for the Weberian theory of party, and identify certain factors, such as socio-economic circumstances, religious affiliation and area of residence, which together determine political orientation. The study claims that political propaganda serves to re-affirm the individual's pre-disposed orientation rather than to influence or change one's voting behaviour.

In other words, political advertising impacts not on blank-sheet individuals but on people with existing beliefs formed over long periods of time, which they are correspondingly reluctant to change. Moreover, the people who are most exposed to the media are those who know from the outset whom they will vote for, and are therefore least likely to be influenced by propaganda. Thus it appears that the notion that the people who switch parties during the campaign are mainly the reasoned, thoughtful people convinced by the issues, is completely unfounded.

Lazarsfeld *et al.* claim the real influence on undecided voters is the 'opinion leader', the individual whose own vote intention is secure, and who is well informed on the issues. Thus personal influence is primarily of greater importance than media influence albeit using information initially acquired through the media. This may have something to do with trust and authority: both opinion leaders and the general public will select the evidence and information which supports their view, placing greater weight on more trustworthy sources.

For the opinion-leader theory to be true, then, the general public would have to place greater trust in opinion leaders than in the media, so that the opinion leaders act as mediators between the public and the media, personalising and making authoritative the information the media provides. Thus " . . . the person-to-person influence reaches the ones who are more susceptible to change and serves as a bridge over which formal media of communications extend their influence."

From a psychological viewpoint, we may understand the personal influence of the opinion leaders in terms of group association: perceived as representing the group's desirable characteristics, other group members will aspire to the leaders' viewpoints in order to maintain group cohesiveness and thus indirectly self-assurance. However, the separation of group leaders from the general public is arguably an over-simplification of the process of media influences.

There are also empirical problems with many of these early surveys, with researchers often ignoring important findings which would ascribe significant influence to the media. Other studies supporting the opinion leader theory failed to distinguish between opinion leading in consumer and political behaviour. In political behaviour opinion leading tends to correlate positively with status, whereas this is not the case in consumer behaviour (breakfast cereals, etc). So for political behaviour, the general conclusion that the

media merely fixes (confirms) people's opinion is not supported. Hovland, using experimental psychology, found significant effects of information on longer-term behaviour and attitudes, particularly in areas where most people have little direct experience (e.g., politics) and have a high degree of trust in the source (e.g., broadcasting). It should be noted that since class has become an increasingly less good indicator of party (since the surveys of the 40s and 50s) the floating voter today is no longer the apathetic voter, but likely to be more well-informed than the consistent voter—and this mainly through the media.

Agenda-setting Process

The commodification of the media inevitably led, through the competitive processes of capitalism, to the commercial character of the modern media industries. These have escalated into large-scale commercial concerns such as Rupert Murdoch's News Corp —Murdoch himself, of course, being a quintessentially global citizen, having changed nationality for business reasons.

The consequences and ramifications of the mass media relate not merely to the way newsworthy events are perceived (and which are reported at all), but also to a multitude of cultural influences which operate through the mass media. Thus Lang and Lang claim that "The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about."

The agenda-setting process is partly one which is an almost unavoidable function of the bureaucratic process involved in newsgathering by the large organisations which make up much of the mass media. For example, in order to get into the news, events have to happen in places convenient for the newsgathering agencies, come from a reliable and predictable source, and fit into journalists' framework of news values. Jean Seaton notes that

" . . . journalists, who are better seen as bureaucrats than as

> buccaneers, begin their work from a stock of plausible, well-defined and largely unconscious assumptions. Part of their job is to translate untidy reality into neat stories with beginings, middles and denouements. . . . The values which inform the selection of news items usually reinforce conventional opinions and established authority. At the same time, a process of simplification filters out the disturbing or the unexpected. The need of the media to secure instant attention creates a strong prejudice in favour of familiar stories and themes, and a slowness of response when reality breaks the conventions."

Stuart Hall points out that because some of the media produce material which often is good, impartial, and serious, they are accorded a high degree of respect and authority. But in practice the ethic of the press and television is closely related to that of the homogeneous establishment, providing a vital support for the existing order. But independence is not "a mere cover, it is central to the way power and ideology are mediated in societies like ours." The public are bribed with good radio, television and newspapers into an acceptance of the biased, the misleading, and the *status quo.*

The media are not, according to this approach, crude agents of propaganda. They organise public understanding. However, the overall interpretations they provide in the long run are those which are most preferred by, and least challenging to, those with economic power. Greg Philo demonstrates this in his 1991 article, 'Seeing is Believing', in which he showed that recollections of the 1984 miners' strike were strongly correlated with the media's original presentation of the event, including the perception of the picketing as largely violent (violence was rare), and the use of phrases which had appeared originally in the media of the time.

McCombs and Shaw demonstrate the agenda-setting effect at work in a study conducted in Chapel Hill, USA during the 1968 presidential elections. Having selected a representative

sample of un-decided voters, they were asked to outline the key issues of the election as they perceived them. Concurrently, the mass media serving these subjects were collected and analysed as regards their content. The results showed a definite correlation between the two accounts of predominant issues. "The evidence in this study that voters tend to share the media's composite definition of what is important strongly suggests an agenda-setting function of the mass media."

The long-term consequences of this are significant in conjunction with the continuing concentration of ownership and control of the media, leading to accusations of a 'media elite' having a form of 'cultural dictatorship'. Thus the continuing debate about the influence of 'media barons' such as Conrad Black and Rupert Murdoch. For example, the UK Observer reported the Murdoch-owned Harper-Collins' refusal to publish Chris Patten's East and West, because of the former Hong Kong Governor's description of the Chinese leadership as 'faceless Stalinists' possibly being damaging to Murdoch's Chinese broadcasting interests. In this case, the author was able to have the book accepted by another publisher, but this kind of censorship may point the way to the future. A related, but more insidious, form is that of self-censorship by members of the media in the interests of the owner, in the interests of their careers.

Long-term Effects of Mass Media

While in the short term individuals can be expected to evaluate biased information in accordance with their existing beliefs, in the long term the cultural influence of the media on the average beliefs of individuals may be significant. This operates through a process of using the symbolic materials available to us in society and from our interaction with others to formulate a sense of self-identity (which then impinges further on our self-identity through its effects on our interaction with others and our interpretation of the symbolic materials).

New encounters and experiences mean the self-image is constantly re-constructed, and the media here is a crucial source of symbolic material of everything in the world outside the private circle: ii mediates Habermas' public sphere to us, and distortions in that window on the world will impinge on how we perceive the world, how we interact in our private sphere and how we interact with the public sphere.

It is because of this that many sociologists view the media as negatively affecting the individual's autonomy. However, others have attempted to demonstrate that the media provides an invaluable source of multi-cultural information which enriches one's perception of the world (by enlarging our window of perception on the world) and of life, allows for a well-balanced opinion, and that the interpretation of symbolic interaction is largely dependent on cultural and socio-economic circumstances.

Jerry Mander, in *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television,* takes the negative view. Mander argues that television has become the new transmission mechanism for cultural influences, but that because of the nature and structure of the medium, it encourages a global homogeneity of culture based on US cultural influences. He quotes as an example the introduction of television to the Northwest of Canada, populated mainly by Dene Indians and Inuit, which led to the erosion of traditional values, pastimes and occupations, and the desire of the young to learn English arid acquire material possessions such as cars.

The previous mode of cultural transmission—nightly story-telling—ended almost completely with the introduction of television, destroying "a bond of love and respect between the young and the old that was critical to the survival of native culture. The old people were windows to the past and to a sense of 'Indianness'". Instead of dealing with their own problems, issues and culture, "they're watching a bunch of white people in Dallas drinking martinis while standing around their swimming

pools and plotting how to steal from each other." Mander describes television as "the instrument for re-shaping our internal environments—our feelings, our thoughts, our ideas and our nervous systems—to match the recreated artificial environment that increasingly surrounds us: Commodity life; Technological passivity; Acceleration; Homogenisation."

Mander's theory is related to Jean Baudrillard's concept of 'hyper reality'. We can take the 1994 Oj Simpson trial as an example, where the reality reported on was merely the catalyst for the simulacra (images) created, which defined the trial as a global event and made the trial more than it was. Essentially, hyper reality is the concept that the media is not merely a window on to the world (as if a visiting alien were watching TV), but is itself part of the reality it describes. Hence (although additionally there is the question of navel-gazing) the media's obsession with media-created events.

It is this which lead Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s to say that "the medium is the message", and to suggest that mass media was increasingly creating a "global village". Thus, for example, there is evidence that Western media influences in Asia are the driving force behind rapid social change: "it is as if the 1960s and the 1990s were compressed together." A notable example is the recent introduction of television to Bhutan, with dramatic effects in terms of very rapid Westernisation. This raises questions of 'cultural imperialism' (Schiller)—the *de facto* imposition, through economic and political power and through the media, of Western (and in particular US) culture.

What is crucial is the control of knowledge and the flow of information. Whether controlled by lack of easy means of dissipation, by feudal absolutism, state control of mass media or big business, the media sets an agenda based on who controls it, rather than necessarily being a kind of forum for bourgeois discussion of public issues. In certain circumstances this may be

the case, but it will be the exception rather than the rule, and it is difficult to identify this kind of a forum with a particular stage in the development of the media. However, this does not exclude individuals from continuous, active interpretation and evaluation within the private sphere, with some feedback to the public sphere, through such mechanisms as letters to newspapers, polls and informal contacts with people who act within the public sphere.

Ultimately, such interpretation and evaluation can also lead to changes in behaviour, such as voting patterns or consumer behaviour, or in social attitudes, particularly in non-Western societies open to Western media, bringing Western ideas, values and culture. Individuals' interpretation and evaluation is constrained by the context the media provides—and the more homogeneous the media, and the more the media's agenda is uniform, the more individuals' ability to understand the 'big picture' by playing off alternative sources of information and alternative viewpoints is undermined. For the future, the internet through blogs, forums, wikis, etc.—may play a role in reclaiming the public sphere for liberal-democratic debate.

9
Theories of Mass Communication

Agenda-setting Theory

According to Ghorparde, "agenda-setting is a relational concept that specifies a transfer of salience from agenda primers (media) to agenda adopters (consumers)". Agenda-setting research has shown that there is a correlation between what the media deems important and salience in the public mind. In simpler terms, agenda-setting claims that what the media finds important will eventually be mirrored in what people think are important. It is important to note that the notion of agenda-setting is positive association between the media and the audience. From agenda-setting stems the formation of public opinions and the distribution of pros and cons of a particular issue. "Agenda-setting shifts the focus of attention away from immediate effects on attitudes and opinions to longer term effects on cognitions". The notion of agenda setting relies on the transfer of issues from the media to the public.

Origins of Agenda-setting Theory

Traditionally, agenda setting theory explores the relationship the

news media has on the perceived salience of key political issues. But it is important to note that the transfer of salience between media and the public should not be limited to a single aspect of the mass communication process. McCombs and Shaw empirically tested this theory during the 1972 presidential campaign between Helms and Hunt. They wanted to try and show that the media has the ability to influence what issues people think, about even if it doesn t tell people what to think of those particular issues.

This study tested the hypothesised voting behaviour of people in a specific region of North Carolina. The study used television commercials, television news, and telephone survey of registered voters. Data taken from the television commercials was measured using 15 different pre-selected issues, and the commercials were also coded as either depicting a positive or negative image of the candidate. The television news agenda was coded using the same format as the commercials. And the people who were surveyed on the phone were chosen by a random-digit-dialing technique. Whereas the commercials and the news was used to expose people to the candidates the telephone survey was used to find out what issues people found to be most important and whom they were planning on voting for. All the data that was collected was measured against the money each candidate spent on advertising.

According to McCombs and Shaw, the "transfer of salience from both news and advertising to the public mind can be demonstrated". The first step in the model shows that advertising salience contributes to salience in the public mind. The second part of the model depicts a relationship from the salience in the public mind to the behavioural outcome. This part of the model was determined by looking for possible associations between the voters' agendas and the advertising of the particular candidate. In conclusion, this study was devised as a test of the agenda-setting component of advertising. It is important to note that this theory needs to be continually tested to enhance its validity.

According to the agenda-setting theory, media set the agenda for public opinion by highlighting certain issues. Studying the way political campagings were convered in the media, Shaw and McCombs found the main effect of media to be agenda-setting, telling people not what to think, but what to think of.

1. *Gatekeeping:* Control over the selection of content exercised by media.
2. *Priming:* Giving more importance to some content over other content.
3. *Framing:* Presenting content in a way as to guide its interpretation along certain forced lines.

Agenda-setting and Advertising

Advertising's main goal is to 'focus consumers' attention on what values, products, brands, or attributes to think about rather than try to persuade consumers what to think of these". To date, there are many methods to test advertising's effectiveness: surveys, focus groups, charts, etc. One such method is through the use of the agenda setting function. With this method, the relationship between consumer choice and advertising can be analysed and measured for effectiveness. This is an uncommon method so there is not a lot of research measuring the validity of the agenda-setting theory.

There are some 'contingent conditions' for agenda-setting that affects the relationship between advertising and the consumer. First of all, the duration of exposure to a particular issue can be a factor because some things will catch on quicker than others. Secondly, geographic proximity is a factor. According to Palmgreen and Clarke, national issues as opposed to local ones are more likely to result in agenda-setting taking place. Lastly, there is what type of medium is involved, which happens to be the most controversial factor. The majority of studies performed conclude that newspapers are more likely to create salience than any other medium.

Hypodermic Needle Theory

Some of the earliest thinking about media theories credited immense power to mass communication to influence its audiences. The first theory concerning the media's effect on society is known as the Magic Bullet or Hypodermic Needle Theory. This analysis includes a brief discussion of the central tenets of the theory, an example of the theory—the 'War of the Worlds' broadcast that made history in the area of media thinking, a short biography of the theory's primary critic, an explanation of the People's Choice Study that uses propaganda to illustrate the most significant theoretical critique of the Magic Bullet Theory and a list of primary and secondary sources for further study.

Dating from the 1920s, this theory was the first attempt to explain how mass audiences might react to mass media. It is a crude model and suggests that audiences passively receive the information transmitted via a media text, without any attempt on their part to process or challenge the data. Don't forget that this theory was developed in an age when the mass media were still fairly new—radio and cinema were less than two decades old. Governments had just discovered the power of advertising to communicate a message, and produced propaganda to try and sway populaces to their way of thinking. This was particularly rampant in Europe during the First World War and its aftermath.

Basically, the Hypodermic Needle Model suggests that the information from a text passes into the mass consciouness of the audience unmediated, i.e., the experience, intelligence and opinion of an individual are not relevant to the reception of the text. This theory suggests that, as an audience, we are manipulated by the creators of media texts, and that our behaviour and thinking might be easily changed by media-makers. It assumes that the audience are passive and heterogenous. This theory is still quoted during moral panics by parents, politicians and pressure groups, and is used to explain why certain groups in society should not

be exposed to certain media texts, for fear that they will watch or read sexual or violent behaviour and will then act them out themselves.

Central Tenets

Early thought about the mass media surrounded the thinking that when media audience members were isolated from one another, they were vulnerable targets easily influenced by mass media messages. The Magic Bullet Theory, which originated in the 1920's and 1930's, proposed that as an audience, we were all passive and equally susceptible to media messages. The media were thought to have the ability to shape public opinion and persuade the masses toward nearly any point of view desired by the author of that particular text. Early thinking was that messages were like magic bullets; they struck all members of the audience equally and created uniform effects among them in a very different way. This theory has also been known as the Hypodermic Needle Theory, using the metaphor as a reference to how the media are assumed to be injecting all audience members with the same message, causing a uniform thinking among them that the author of the media text intended.

Example: 'War of the Worlds'

The classic example of the application of the Magic Bullet Theory was illustrated on October 30, 1938 when Orson Welles and the newly formed Mercury Theatre group broadcasted their radio edition of H.G. Wells' 'War of the Worlds.' On the eve of Halloween, radio programming was interrupted with a 'news bulletin' for the first time. What the audience heard was that martians had begun an invasion of Earth in a place called Grover's Mill, New Jersey.

It became known as the 'Panic Broadcast' and changed broadcast history, social psychology, civil defence and set a standard for provacative entertainment. Approximately 12 million people in the United States heard the broadcast and about one million of

those actually believed that a serious alien invasion was underway. A wave of mass hysteria disrupted households, interrupted religious services, caused traffic jams and clogged communication systems. People fled their city homes to seek shelter in more rural areas, raided grocery stores and began to ration food. The nation was in a state of chaos, and this broadcast was the cause of it. Media theorists have classified the 'War of the Worlds' broadcast as the archetypal example of the Magic Bullet Theory. This is exactly how the theory worked, by injecting the message directly into the 'bloodstream' of the public, attempting to create a uniform thinking. The effects of the broadcast suggested that the media could manipulate a passive and gullible public, leading theorists to believe this was one of the primary ways media authors shaped audience perception.

Two-step Flow of Communication

As with most theories now applied to Advertising, the Two-step flow of communication was first identified in a field somewhat removed from communications-sociology. In 1948, Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet published *The People's Choice*, a paper analysing the voters' decision-making processes during a 1940 presidential election campaign. The study revealed evidence suggesting that the flow of mass communication is less direct than previously supposed. Although the ability of mass media to reach a large audience, and in this case persuade individuals in one direction or another, had been a topic of much research since the 1920's, it was not until the *People's Choice* was published that society really began to understand the dynamics of the media-audience relationship. The study suggested that communication from the mass media first reaches 'opinion leaders' who filter the information they gather to their associates, with whom they are influential. Previous theories assumed that media directly reached the target of the information. For the theorists, the opinion leader theory proved an interesting discovery considering the relationship

between media and its target was not the focus of the research, but instead a small aspect of the study.

Lazarsfeld, *et al.* suggested that "ideas often flow from radio and print to the opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of the population." People tend to be much more affected in their decision making process by face-to-face encounters with influential peers than by the mass media. As Weiss described, "Media content can be a determining influence .... What is rejected is any conception that construes media experiences as alone sufficient for a wide variety of effects." The other piece in the communication process is the opinion leader with which the media information is discussed. The studies by Lazarsfeld and his associates sparked interest in the exact qualities and characteristics that define the opinion leader.

The Opinion Leaders

A study by Robert Merton revealed that opinion leadership is not a general characteristic of a person, but rather limited to specific issues. Individuals, who act as opinion leaders on one issue, may not be considered influential in regard to other issues. A later study directed by Lazarsfeld and Katz further investigated the characteristics of opinion leaders. This study confirmed the earlier assertions that personal influence seems more important in decision making than media. Again, influential individuals seem constrained in their opinion leading to particular topics, non-overlapping among the individuals. The opinion leaders seem evenly distributed among the social, economical, and educational levels within their community, but very similar in these areas to those with whom they had influence.

Katz and Lazarsfeld did not identify any particular traits amongst opinion leaders that stand out. The traits that characterise each of the opinion leaders in their niche did have things in common, though. For one thing, the opinion leaders were identified as having the strongest interest in their particular niche. They

hold positions within their community affording them special competence in their particular niches. They are generally gregarious, sociable individuals. Finally, they had/have contact with relevant information supplied from outside their immediate circle. Interestingly enough, Katz and Lazarsfeld observed that the opinion leaders receive a disproportionate amount of their external information from media appropriate to their niche.

Studies by Clock and Nicosia determined that opinion leaders act "as a source of social pressure toward a particular choice and as a source of social support to reinforce that choice once it has been made." Charles Clock explained that opinion leaders often develop leadership positions in their social circles.

Criticisms

Although the theory of indirect flow of information from media to the target was quickly adopted, the original study performed by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet was not. It had a few faults. The panel method by which they attempted to better understand the influences reaching a voter was unfaulted. It very effectively allowed the researchers to notice changes in a voter's feelings almost immediately. The resulting unit of change was an objective measurement that could easily be recorded and compared. The faults lie in the manner with which the researchers addressed the flow of influences.

Since the research was not designed to specifically test the flow of influence, the experiment was decidedly lacking in explanations. The first problem concerning the findings of the study were that the data had to be collected in a random sample, but subjects in a random sample can only speak for themselves. For these reasons, each person could only say whether or not they considered his/herself an advice giver. Lazarsfeld and his associates in the 1940 election study were unable to determine the specific flow of influence. They determined there were a number of opinion leaders spread throughout the socio-economic groups; however,

these leaders were not directly linked to particular groups within the socio-economic levels.

Even within studies specifically designed to determine who opinion leaders are and how they are different from the average populace, there have been problems born from experimental design. "The criticisms of the concept of opinion leaders has focused mainly on its methodological deficiencies" As Weimann suggested in his 1989 study of pervious research, much of the design problems involved determining the opinion leaders while studying the flow of information. There seemed to be too many factors to control. Despite the difficulties in qualifying the influentials, the theory of a group of individuals that filter the flow of media information has lived on.

Support

Although the empirical methods behind the two-step flow of communication were not perfect, the theory did provide a very believable explanation for information flow. The opinion leaders do not replace media, but rather guide discussions of media. Brosius explains the benefits of the opinion leader theory well in his 1996 study of agenda setting, "The opinion leaders should not be regarded as replacing the role of interpersonal networks but, in fact, as reemphasising the role of the group and interpersonal contacts."

Lazarsfeld and his associates detailed five characteristics of personal contact that give their theory more validity:

1. *Non-purposiveness/casualness:* One must have a reason for tuning into a political speech on television, but political conversations can just 'pop-up'. In this situation, the people are less likely to have their defences up in preparation, they are more likely open to the conversation.
2. *Flexibility to counter resistance:* In a conversation, there is always opportunity to counter any resistance. This is not so in media, a one sided form of communication.

3. *Trust:* Personal contact carries more trust than media. As people interact, they are better able through observation of body language and vocal cues to judge the honesty of the person in the discussion. Newspaper and radio do not offer these cues.
4. *Persuasion without conviction:* The formal media is forced to persuade or change opinions. In personal communication, sometimes friendly insistence can cause action without affecting any comprehension of the issues.

Menzel introduced another strong point in favour of the two-step flow of information theory. First, there are an abundance of information channels 'choked' with all types of journals, conferences, and commercial messages. These are distracting and confusing to their target. With the barrage of information humans are flooded with daily, it is not hard to understand why someone might turn to a peer for help evaluating all of it.

Recent Studies

The true test of a theory lies in its timelessness, its ability to spark interest and provoke thought years after its introduction. The two-step flow of communication theory has been able to remain relevant throughout the years. This should not be difficult to believe considering it has fueled at least the past few pages this year, forty years after its debut. There have been several recent studies that have addressed issues arising from Lazarsfeld's, Katz's, and Merton's studies from the 1940s. In two such studies Gabriel Weimann and Hans-Bernd Brosius addressed the setting of agendas as a two-step flow of communication.

In Weimann's paper addressing the re-emergence of the opinion leader theory into modern day, he addresses several problems that have been overcome sparking the new interest in the old theory. The two-step flow of communication theory is difficult to witness in the field. Many researchers have attempted to design credible models for testing the theory, but with only minor success.

Brosius and Weimann set out to explain agenda setting using the basis of the two-step flow of communication theory determined by Lazarsfeld, Katz, and the many other researchers. To avoid the difficulties in studying the actual flow of communication, Weimann and Brosius separated the opinion leaders from their two-step flow of communication theory. Participants were studied against a scale to determine the 'Strength of Personality'.

The Brosius-Weimann study attempts to describe the individuals whose personal communication has impact on agenda-setting. These individuals are the archetypal opinion leaders, who still control the flow of information. Weimann and Brosius define agenda setting as a two-step flow, wherein certain individuals (influentials) "collect, diffuse, filter, and promote the flow of information" from media to the community. The difference between these influentials and the opinion leaders, as Weimann stresses, is that these influentials are usually elitists, not spread throughout the community as the old theory suggested. Are these influentials a new breed? Or is there really a difference between influentials and opinion leaders? This, as yet, has not been addressed. Weimann and Brosius suggest the influentials are a subsection of the opinion leaders.

Applications of the Theory

To those who claim that there are no applications of a socio-political theory in advertising, there is the barrage of articles written daily on the very subject. No longer does the advertising industry doubt the existence or qualities of influentials, as they are most commonly referred to today. Instead, the discussion revolves around effectively targeting messages to reach these influentials.

For fifty years, the research organisation Roper has considered the group of 'influentials' important enough to track. Regularly, reports and studies are performed in an attempt to unlock the secret to reaching these influentials. Who are they? What has the

term 'influential' come to describe? According to Diane Crispell, these people are the 'thought leaders' and 'pioneer consumers'. "Influentials are better educated and more affluent than the average American, but it is their interest in the world around them and their belief that they can make a difference that makes them influential."

The influentials today seem to be isolated in the upper class. They are the trend-setters. It is this group that is first to adopt new technology, and remains on the leading edge of trends. This is the group that advertising attempts to reach. Daily articles are published on maximising the market by reaching these influentials. The idea remains that the most efficient media is word-of-mouth, and it is by reaching the influentials with other forms of media that this word-of-mouth is generated. It seems the opinion leaders of yesterday have been overlooked for the smaller subset of influentials.

Uses and Gratifications Approach and the Dependency Theory

Over the past few decades, technology has truly revolutionised our lives. Perhaps one of the biggest transformations has occurred within mass communication. Prior to the industrial revolution, society had a virtually nonexistent form of mass media. However, as life began to transform, mass communication began to grow in all aspects. With each decade within the twentieth century, edge-breaking theories were presented in relation to the communication field. Two theories that brought forth a relatively astonishing perspective to this field were the Uses and Gratifications Approach and the Dependency Theory. These theories truly revolutionised the way one characterises mass communication.

Elihu Katz first introduced the Uses and Gratification Approach, when he came up with the notion that people use the media to their benefit. The perspective emerged in the early 1970's as Katz and his two colleagues, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch continued to expand the idea. This theory was contemporary

because it contradicted older views that assumed the audience was a passive group. The Uses and Gratifications Approach views the audience as active, meaning that they actively seek out specific media and content to achieve certain results or gratifications that satisfy their personal needs.

The sources of the media chosen are distinctive. As Jay Blumler points out in his book *The Use of Mass Communication*, "Studies have shown that audience gratifications can be derived from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media." It is clear that audiences spend time using the media in various ways. Whether they are killing time or using it as a social tool, each medium is unique in its purpose.

The Uses and Gratifications Approach has five basic assumptions. As Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch explain in the book *Mass Communication Research*, the first assumption is that "the audience is conceived as active." This idea focuses around the assumption that the viewers are goal oriented and attempt to achieve their goals through the media source. This directly reflects and responds to the needs of the audience member in obtaining the media source.

According to the book, the second basic assumption is that "in the mass communication process much initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member." This is encompassing the idea that people use the media to their advantage more often than the media uses them. The receiver determines what is going to be absorbed and does not allow the media to influence them otherwise. The individual opinion is more powerful than what the media is portraying.

The third basic assumption that *Mass Communication Research* directs us to is that "the media competes with other sources of need satisfaction." This focuses on the idea that each individual has several needs. In response to this, they have created a wide

range of choices that will meet these needs. The strongest rival to media based sources include face-to-face communication. This can often help an individual cope with circumstances surrounding them most effectively. Because of this, mass communication must compete strongly with non-media related sources and help create a need for itself as well as a proper balance between the two.

The forth basic assumption that the book points out is that "many of the goals media use can be derived from data supplied by the individual audience members themselves." This idea claims that people are very aware of their motives and choices and are able to explain them verbally if necessary. There have been several studies in all parts of the world that have sampled viewers and come to conclusions about the type of media used as well as the content explored. Furthermore, it was found that audience members use these media forms to shape their own identities.

The final basic assumption taken from the book *Mass Communication Research* is that "value judgments about cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience operations are explored on their own terms". The theorists believe that the audience can only determine the value of the media content. It is the individual audience members who make the decision to view the media; therefore, they place the value on it by their individual decision to view it.

These basic assumptions provide a framework for understanding the exact correlation between the media and the viewers. In addition, it provides a distinction as to how the audience is more or less active and the consequences of their involvement in the media as a whole.

When one explores the Uses and Gratifications Approach, another theory that has emerged becomes quite prevalent, The Dependency Theory. Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach first described The Dependency Theory in 1976. It was, in a

sense, an extension or addition to the Uses and Gratifications Approach brought about a few years earlier. The theory is in essence an explanation of the correlating relationship between the media content, the nature of society, and the behaviour of the audiences. It states that people in an urban society have become dependent on mass communication to assist them in receiving the information that they need, in order to make a variety of decisions concerning their everyday lives. As Stephen Littlejohn explains in his book *Theories of Human Communication*, "First you will become more dependent on media that meet a number of your needs than on media that provide just a few." Since each persons needs are different, what they depend on is clearly going to fluctuate. Therefore, if a person finds a medium that provides them with several functions that are central to their desires, they will be more inclined to continue to use that particular medium in the future.

In his book, Littlejohn goes on to explain, "The second source of dependency is social stability." In times of conflict, such as in war periods, society as a whole tends to become more dependent on the media for a sense of stability. Furthermore, one may see an increase in media usage when something important is coming up, such as a presidential election. These special circumstances make viewers more dependent on the media to find out what is happening in society.

The dependency theory brings forth many unique propositions and functions. As Sandra Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur explain in the book *Communication Research*, "The basic propositions of The Dependency Theory can be brought together and summarised as follows: The potential for mass media messages to achieve a broad range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects will be increased when media systems serve many unique, and central information functions." This again reiterates the idea that the more the medium has to offer, the more useful it will become.

The cognitive changes that the Dependency Theory bring forth are multi-fold. The media brings forth attitude formation and an impact on agenda-setting. Since the theory complies with the idea that people rely on it for information determining their decisions, it clearly can help individuals develop certain attitudes regarding given subjects. In addition, it encourages them to converse about certain things. The affective nature of the media is quite distinctive. It can create many different feelings such as fear, anxiety, and happiness. The media also can promote behaviour changes. This can result in an audience member doing something that they would not ordinarily do. The mass media possess these three abilities and because of that, society has become dependent on the media for virtually all it's outside resources in order to make decisions.

When analysing any theory, one must looks towards some form of criteria to judge it by. The criteria that seems to be appropriate for the Uses and Gratifications Approach and The Dependency Theory seems to be logic, consistency, testability, and simplicity.

First, when analysing the logical approach to both theories, they seem to pass. One can see with these theories that it is logical that individuals would choose what they want to view and can clearly gain from that. This is why we see an increase in viewers when important circumstances are happening within our country.

Second, when focusing on the consistency aspect to the theories, this area is one that is somewhat differential. Although the theories are not highly contested, they do not correspond completely with previous research. One may find it hard to believe that the media has no influence over the viewer at all. There are several circumstances within the field of advertising that suggest that people are influenced by the media. This suggests that people can be persuaded.

The testability aspect seems somewhat unreliable. The way that the theories were primarily tested were through sampling

the audience viewers. The results could possibly be biased because individuals may not realise the power that the media has over them. In essence, the sampling was one sided.

Finally, when one looks at the simplicity of the theories, they seem to pass. Both of the theories are extremely easy to understand and comprehend. In addition, they link together, which helps the perception of them become more explicit.

With every theory, some criticism must be expected. Both the Uses and Gratifications Approach and The Dependency Theory are no exception to this act. One main criticism is based on the idea that the audience is completely active. It seems as though the theorists feel that there is not room for any middle ground. In many cases people turn to viewing the media as a result of habit. This factor is not mention in their theory. Other critics argue that the broader public does not effect individual decisions regarding the media. According to Ronald Rice, in his book *The New Media,* states, "Larger social purposes and effects have to do with why an individual, for the most part, reads a newspaper". This is simply stating that the reason why most people view media or read newspapers is to gain societal information.

Mass Communication has come a very long way over the last thirty years. Many different perspectives have been brought forth and analysed in terms of effectiveness. The Uses and Gratifications Approach and The Dependency Theory were two theories that brought forth a new genre of ideas and aspects of cognition to mass communication. The mass media is an extremely complex system that responds to the foundation of these theories in media's everyday production.

Media Richness Theory

Media Richness Theory is the most influential theory of media choice in the organisation and information sciences today. It was developed to examine the relationship between the content of managerial communication and media selection. Originally, MRT

addressed traditional intraorganisational communication media such as facetoface and telephone. It has more recently been extended to include electronic means of communication. Past studies used the theory in a prescriptive mode assuming that media choices influenced employees' effectiveness. Markus results support this approach. More recently, studies have used the theory to describe and explain how individuals actually perceive and select media rather than the implications of these choices are for effectiveness. Thus, Media Richness Theory can help explain why senior managers choose to rely heavily on face-to-face meetings and telephone calls for sensitive or important communication and e-mail or written methods for routine communications. In 1987, Trevino, Lengel, and Daft first brought attention to three general reasons that managers choose particular media which were then used as the new foundations for MRT.

1. Ambiguity of the message content and richness of the communication medium.
2. Situational determinants such as time and distance.
3. Symbolic cues provided by the medium.

Content Reasons

Content reasons involve ambiguity or equivocality (the latter term will be used throughout to mean both) and the richness of the medium. Media Richness Theory states that effective managers will choose different media for different situations based on task-related factors and the richness of the media. Richness, for media, is defined as the capacity to facilitate shared meaning, insight and rapid understanding. Communications that foster shared meaning, insight, and rapid understanding are considered rich.

Original research on MRT classified two relevant influences on information processing: uncertainty and equivocality. Uncertainty is defined as the absence of information and represents the difference between the amount of information required to perform a task arid the amount of information already given about the

task. Managers respond to uncertainly by acquiring information and analysing data. They do so by asking questions and obtaining answers. Periodic reports, group meetings, rules, and procedures can be used to reduce uncertainty within an organisation.

Communication that is used simply to gather more information or data does not require rich media: and in fact is best supported through the use of leaner media. Highly equivocal communication, on the other hand, does require rich media. Equivocality has been defined as ambiguity and the existence of multiple and conflicting interpretations about a situation. Confusion and disagreement go hand-on and with equivocality. In equivocal situations, managers have to interpret the situation from vague cues (e.g., voice inflection and body language) and come up with a reasonable solution. Thus, richer media are seen as the most appropriate choice for reducing equivocality.

The media studied in the development of MRT were ranked in their ability to process equivocal information. The ranks were based on their ability to provide feedback, the availability of a number of cues to resolve confusion, language variety, and personal focus. Face-to-face communication was ranked the richest as it allows for rapid mutual feedback, permitting messages to be re-interpreted, clarified, and adjusted immediately.

In addition, face-to-face communication conveys emotion, uses nonverbal behaviour to modify and control communication exchange, and therefore allows simultaneous communication of multiple cues. Since body language and visual cues are not found with telephone communication, it is not as rich as face-to-face communication. However, it still allows for fast feedback and the use of language content and audio cues. These factors, its personal nature, and its ability to use natural language, made it second on the richness scale. Written communication fell lowest on the scale. Feedback is slow, only textual information is conveyed, voice cues are absent, and visual cues are limited. These classifications

were identified during early studies before electronic mail was introduced. Since then, however, more studies have been conducted which have placed electronic mail between telephone and written communication media on the media richness scale.

Since many decision-making tasks have at least some equivocal aspect, managers frequently have to interpret vague cues and negotiate solutions. Equivocal situations are novel and non-recurring and require hunches, discussion, and social support. Newer information systems, such as electronic mail, are not well suited to problems involving equivocality. When a medium is chosen that provides information that is needed to resolve the equivocality of a message, MRT researchers conclude that more effective communication will result.

Situational Reasons

Situational reasons effect media choices as well. Certain situational determinants constrain media choice behaviour while others may expand manager's choices. Distance, expediency, structure, and role expectations can all constrain media choice. On the other hand, determinants such as availability and access to certain media are considered situational enablers. If people do not have access to electronic mail, that choice is obviously eliminated.

Two other situational determinants have been identified in previous research: geographic dispersion and job pressure. As communication technology has advanced, the importance of distance has diminished. Since capabilities such as e-mail and teleconferencing are available, face-to-face communication may not be required, allowing organisations to less save time and money. Job and time pressure can also influence media choices. Steinfield and Fulk found that managers were more likely to use the telephone when acting under time pressure, regardless of the degree of equivocality inherent in the situation. It is possible that e-mail offers managers a means to alleviate some of the time pressures they are constantly faced with.

Symbolic Reasons

Considering symbolic cues of the medium itself is also important in making media choices. Feldman and March suggest that managerial communication behaviour often represents ritualistic responses to the need to appear rational, legitimate, competent, and intelligent. They offer that some managers may request more data than needed or send out professional looking reports in an attempt to show that their decision was rational and legitimate. On the other hand, face-to-face communication is more useful to symbolise caring or concern. For example, using e-mail to congratulate someone on a major promotion instead of doing so in person may convey a lack of concern. In addition, using new technologies may symbolise a high-tech scientific quality or desired image of status. Written communication on the other hand, may be used to symbolise authority.

Medium Theory

M. McLuhan challenged conventional definitions when he claimed that the medium is the message. With this claim, he stressed how channels differ, not only in terms of their content, but also in regard to how they awaken and alter thoughts and senses. He distinguished media by the cognitive processes each required. McLuhan popularised the idea that channels are a dominant force that must be understood to know how the media influence society and culture.

Medium theory focuses on the medium characteristics itself (like in media richness theory) rather than on what it conveys or how information is received. In medium theory, a medium is not simply a newspaper, the Internet, a digital camera and so forth. Rather, it is the symbolic environment of any communicative act. Media, apart from whatever content is transmitted, impact individuals and society. McLuhan's thesis is that people adapt to their environment through a certain balance or ratio of the senses, and the primary medium of the age brings out a particular sense ratio, thereby affecting perception.

Medium theory is an analytical theory with few empirical model building. Some of the methods used are: analysis of media characteristics and historical analysis of human perception.

Medium theory examines physical, psychological and social variables as the senses that are required to attend to the medium; whether the communication is bidirectional or unidirectional, how quickly messages can be disseminated, whether learning to encode and decode in the medium is difficult or simple, how many people can attend to the same message at the same moment, and so forth. Medium theorists argue that such variables influence the medium's use and its social, political, and psychological impact.

Knowledge Gap Theory

The knowledge gap theory was first proposed by Tichenor, Donohue and Olien at the University of Minnesota in the 70s. They believe that the increase of information in society is not evenly acquired by every member of society: people with higher socio-economic status tend to have better ability to acquire information. This leads to a division of two groups: a group of better-educated people who know more about most things, and those with low education who know less. Lower socio-economic status (SES) people, defined partly by educational level, have little or no knowledge about public affairs issues, are disconnected from news events and important new discoveries, and usually aren't concerned about their lack of knowledge.

The knowledge gap can result in an increased gap between people of lower and higher socio-economic status. The attempt to improve people's life with information via the mass media might not always work the way this is planned. Mass media might have the effect of increasing the difference gap between members of social classes.

Tichenor, Donohue and Olien present five reasons for justifying the knowledge gap.

1. People of higher socio-economic status have better communication skills, education, reading, comprehending and remembering information.
2. People of higher socio-economic status can store information more easily or remember the topic from background knowledge.
3. People of higher socio-economic status might have a more relevant social context.
4. People of higher socio-economic status are better in selective exposure, acceptance and retention.
5. The nature of the mass media itself is that it is geared toward persons of higher socio-economic status.

Media presenting information should realise that people of higher socio-economic status get their information in a different way than lower educated people. Furthermore, this hypothesis of the knowledge gap might help in understanding the increased gap between people of higher socio-economic status and people of lower socio-economic status. It can be used in various circumstances.

The knowledge gap was used in a research for presidential campaigns. The knowledge gap hypothesis holds that when new information enters a social system via a mass media campaign, it is likely to exacerbate underlying inequalities in previously held information. Specifically, while people from all strata may learn new information as a result of a mass media campaign, those with higher levels of education are likely to learn more than those with low levels of education, and the informational gap between the two groups will expand. The results of the analysis show that knowledge gaps do not always grow over the course of presidential campaigns and that some events, such as debates, may actually reduce the level of information inequality in the electorate.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory (sometimes referred to as the cultivation hypothesis or cultivation analysis) was an approach developed by

Professor George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. He began the 'Cultural Indicators' research project in the mid-1960s, to study whether and how watching television may influence viewers' ideas of what the everyday world is like. Cultivation research is in the 'effects' tradition. Cultivation theorists argue that television has long-term effects which are small, gradual, indirect but cumulative and significant.

They emphasise the effects of television viewing on the attitudes rather than the behaviour of viewers. Heavy watching of television is seen as 'cultivating' attitudes which are more consistent with the world of television programmes than with the everyday world. Watching television may tend to induce a general mindset about violence in the world, quite apart from any effects it might have in inducing violent behaviour. Cultivation theorists distinguish between 'first order' effects (general beliefs about the everyday world, such as about the prevalence of violence) and 'second order' effects (specific attitudes, such as to law and order or to personal safety).

Gerbner argues that the mass media cultivate attitudes and values which are already present in a culture: the media maintain and propagate these values amongst members of a culture, thus binding it together. He has argued that television tends to cultivate middle-of-the-road political perspectives. And Gross considered that "television is a cultural arm of the established industrial order and as such serves primarily to maintain, stabilise and reinforce rather than to alter, threaten or weaken conventional beliefs and behaviours". Such a function is conservative, but heavy viewers tend to regard themselves as 'moderate'.

Cultivation research looks at the mass media as a socialising agent and investigates whether television viewers come to believe the television version of reality the more they watch it. Gerbner and his colleagues contend that television drama has a small but

significant influence on the attitudes, beliefs and judgments of viewers concerning the social world. The focus is on 'heavy viewers'. People who watch a lot of television are likely to be more influenced by the ways in which the world is framed by television programmes than are individuals who watch less, especially regarding topics of which the viewer has little first-hand experience. Light viewers may have more sources of information than heavy viewers. Judith van Evra argues that by virtue of inexperience, young viewers may depend on television for information more than other viewers do, although Hawkins and Pingree argue that some children may not experience a cultivation effect at all where they do not understand motives or consequences. It may be that lone viewers are more open to a cultivation effect than those who view with others.

Television is seen by Gerbner as dominating our 'symbolic environment'. As McQuail and Windahl note, cultivation theory presents television as "not a window on or reflection of the world, but a world in itself". Gerbner argued that the over-representation of violence on television constitutes a symbolic message about law and order rather than a simple cause of more aggressive behaviour by viewers (as Bandura argued). For instance, the action-adventure genre acts to reinforce a faith in law and order, the *status quo* and social justice.

Since 1967, Gerbner and his colleagues have been analysing sample weeks of prime time and daytime television programming. Cultivation analysis usually involves the correlation of data from content analysis (identifying prevailing images on television) with survey data from audience research (to assess any influence of such images on the attitudes of viewers). Content analysis by cultivation theorists seeks to characterise 'the TV world'. Such analysis shows not only that the TV world is far more violent than the everyday world, but also, for instance, that television is dominated by males and over-represents the professions and those involved in law enforcement.

Audience research by cultivation theorists involves asking large-scale public opinion poll organisations to include in their national surveys questions regarding such issues as the amount of violence in everyday life. Answers are interpreted as reflecting either the world of television or that of everyday life. Respondents are asked such questions as: "What percentage of all males who have jobs work in law enforcement or crime detection? Is it 1 per cent or 10 per cent?". On American TV, about 12 per cent of all male characters hold such jobs, and about 1 per cent of males are employed in the USA in these jobs, so 10 per cent would be the 'TV answer' and 1 per cent would be the 'real-world answer'.

Answers are then related to the amount of television watched, other media habits and demographic data such as sex, age, income and education. The cultivation hypothesis involves predicting or expecting heavy television viewers to give more TV answers than light viewers. The responses of a large number of heavy viewers are compared with those of light viewers. A tendency of heavy viewers to choose TV answers is interpreted as evidence of a cultivation effect.

Cultivation theorists are best known for their study of television and viewers, and in particular for a focus on the topic of violence. However, some studies have also considered other mass media from this perspective, and have dealt with topics such as gender roles, age groups, ethnic groups and political attitudes. A study of American college students found that heavy soap opera viewers were more likely than light viewers to over-estimate the number of real-life married people who had affairs or who had been divorced and the number of women who had abortions.

The difference in the pattern of responses between light and heavy viewers (when other variables are controlled), is referred to as the 'cultivation differential', reflecting the extent to which an attitude seems to be shaped by watching television. Older people

tend to be portrayed negatively on television and heavy viewers (especially younger ones) tend to hold more negative views about older people than lighter viewers. Most heavy viewers are unaware of any influence of television viewing on their attitudes and values.

Cultivation theorists argue that heavy viewing leads viewers (even among high educational/high income groups) to have more homogeneous or convergent opinions than light viewers. The cultivation effect of television viewing is one of 'levelling' or 'homogenising' opinion. Gerbner and his associates argue that heavy viewers of violence on television come to believe that the incidence of violence in the everyday world is higher than do light viewers of similar backgrounds. They refer to this as a mainstreaming effect.

Misjudging the amount of violence in society is sometimes called the 'mean world syndrome'. Heavy viewers tend to believe that the world is a nastier place than do light viewers. Pingree and Hawkins studied 1,280 primary school children (2nd-11th grade) in Australia using viewing diaries and questionnaires. They found that heavy viewing led to a 'television-biased' view of Australia as a 'mean and violent' place. The children with the bleakest picture of Australia were those who most watched American crime adventure programmes. Oddly, they did not judge the USA to the same extent by these programmes.

Gerbner reported evidence for 'resonance'—a 'double dose' effect which may boost cultivation. This is held to occur when the viewer's everyday life experiences are congruent with those depicted in the television world. For instance, since on television women are most likely to be victims of crime, women heavy viewers are influenced by the usual heavy viewer mainstreaming effect but are also led to feel especially fearful for themselves as women. The cultivation effect is also argued to be strongest when the viewer's neighbourhood is similar to that shown on television.

Crime on television is largely urban, so urban heavy viewers are subject to a double dose, and cultivation theorists argue that violent content 'resonates' more for them. The strongest effects of heavy viewing on attitudes to violence are likely to be amongst those in the high crime areas of cities.

10
Media and Social Responsibility

A simple model of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) starts with the relationship between corporate officers and shareholders. Individuals investing in a firm expect managers to maximise profits. The problems of hidden actions and hidden information give managers some ability to put their own interests ahead of shareholders. One theory of CSR reminds company officials that their primary responsibility is to look after the interests of investors. Another theory of CSR stresses that at times companies impose costs on society without factoring these costs into business calculations. Economists refer to these as negative externalities, since the costs are external to the production decisions of firms.

The CSR movement offers one way to get companies to incorporate their negative effects into firm decision-making, such as attempts to get firms to recognise and reduce the impact of their pollution releases. Companies also generate positive spillovers through their operation, such as increases in education, health outcomes, and community development. CSR can be a vehicle to

lead firms to produce more of these positive externalities. The preferences of consumers, investors, and workers also give rise to firms' adoption of CSR. Some consumers have preferences over the ways products are generated. Individuals may care whether fragrances are tested on animals, whether coffee is grown in the shade of tropical forests, and whether chlorine is used in a production process. These consumers create a demand for products that have brand identities associated with concepts such as sustainable development.

Socially conscious investors care about the way profits are generated by a firm. These investors may be willing to trade off some profits for the knowledge that firms they support are less likely to generate negative impacts on society. Companies also use CSR as a way to build and sustain morale. Some firms use CSR as a way to attract and retain workers, with the firm's CSR efforts becoming a signal about the 'type' of company it is.

In many countries multinational companies are seen as a resource that can be tapped to solve problems the government is unable or unwilling to tackle. CSR projects in some areas may become part of the price for gaining access to markets. Threats of protest or boycott by NGOs may lead to further expenditures by firms on projects favoured by governments or nonprofit advocates. CSR efforts can emerge from efforts by industry to head off stronger government regulations, since firms may prefer the flexibility of self regulation. If compliance with CSR is less costly for some firms, they may support CSR efforts since this raises rivals' costs.

The multiple definitions of CSR make tracking a company's performance extremely difficult. Conflicts among these theories also raise questions about whether an increase in CSR activities by a firm is necessarily desirable. In the utilitarian framework favoured by economists, efforts by firms to maximise profits, reduce negative externalities, or encourage positive externalities will increase social welfare. If CSR actions emerge from government

pressure or NGO actions, there may be increases in welfare if firms are led to consider their impact on the environment. Yet there also may be pressures to adopt policies that are inefficient or generate income redistribution, at very high costs. These efforts may be politically popular, but they can leave society worse off as measured by the standard of efficiency. Understanding the motivations and impacts of CSR is one of the many challenges faced by journalists who chose to write about this aspect of company performance.

CSR Stories

In his classic work entitled *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Anthony Downs identified four different types of information demands that people express. Producers want data that help with their business and production decisions. Consumers want news about prices and quality to help with purchase decisions. People pursue some information simply for entertainment and diversion. Voters and citizens need information to help them make informed choices in politics.

CSR stories contain elements of all four information demands. Managers in some industries follow CSR stories to anticipate how their companies may be affected. Consumers may read about green products or individual investors may search out information on socially conscious investment funds. Reporters aiming to satisfy entertainment demands can frame CSR stories as about human interest, drama, scandal, violence, corruption, or protest. Because CSR stories often revolve around policy issues such as pollution or sustainable development, they also contain elements of public affairs coverage.

To the extent that CSR involves public policy issues, however, coverage will be affected by rational ignorance. Even if individuals care a great deal about sustainable development or social policy, the likelihood their political action will make a difference leads them to remain rationally ignorant about details of these

policies. This implies that journalists will not invest in story development or gather the skills necessary to cover policy details. This means that policy stories will be under covered in the press because individuals do not take the time to invest in learning about decisions they cannot influence.

Other characteristics of CSR stories predict they will be less likely to earn space in print and broadcast outlets. In the United States readers and viewers express low interest in international stories. The marginal readers and viewers of U.S. media outlets and the younger demographic set of 18-34 year olds who are highly valued by advertisers are much less likely to express an interest in international stories. The transaction costs of travel and setup costs involved in learning make international news more costly to produce. Lack of corporate transparency raises the costs of accurate reporting for journalists, who find it costly to go beyond company pronouncements in assembling a story about CSR.

The difficulty of quantifying and measuring progress on issues such as the environment, sustainable development, and human rights makes it hard to assess CSR performance, although companies and NGOs are working to develop more accessible CSR indicators. CSR issues often involve concentrated costs (e.g., those borne by the company) and dispersed benefits. The logic of collective action means that beneficiaries may not join together to lobby for CSR changes. Political entrepreneurs and NGOs, who can earn a return in terms of policy change, ideological satisfaction, and fundraising, may represent their interests. Covering the CSR story can involve trying to determine the performance and motivations of NGO actors, which represents an additional challenge for reporters.

Journalists writing about the impact of CSR will find it difficult to assess the impact of company actions. Many corporate efforts are aimed at long-term effects. The causal chain that links

a CSR activity with a real-world outcome may be very long, making it difficult to prove whether an effort had the intended effect. Good news will not be news for reporters interested in-using an entertainment frame (e.g., scandal, corruption). Editors may simply suspect that corporate ethics is an oxymoron and be reluctant to trust company claims about CSR. The messages from researchers on CSR are mixed. Reporters talking with academics would be hard pressed to determine if CSR is profitable, implemented, driven by altruism or self-interest, or results in improvements in social welfare.

The incentives readers/viewers have to follow CSR stories and the costs facing journalists covering the stories generate predictable patterns in media coverage. Business press outlets will offer articles aimed at satisfying producer and investor information demands. The popular press will focus on entertainment frames in providing CSR stories. Papers such as New York Times, Wall Street Journal, or Financial Times will provide more extensive coverage of policy issues as part of the hard news offerings that differentiate their products.

Development of the Idea of Media's Responsibilities

That the media have a social responsibility to fulfil is certainly not new idea. It was already mentioned by the Hutchins Commission in 1947. Over the past decade the discussion on social responsibility of the media has moved from a rather abstract analysis to more concrete proposals, from a general responsibility idea to concrete mechanisms of accountability, from liability to answerability, while: at the same time remaining mainly an academic exercise. Despite this long-standing discussion, one must wonder whether one is asking the right questions, since one cannot define a proper conduct for media unless there is some idea about how the media have an impact on our societies. The political role of the media is an extensively researched mechanism, but probably not the most important. The largest impact of the media is to be

found in their cultural role, in the way they change values and norm structures, in the way they influence personal and group identity. These questions have so far not been answered in a definitive manner.

To understand the proper role of the media, one can start from classical sociological analysis about the transition from modern society to its post-modern form as can be found in the work of Beck and Giddens. The clear functional differentiation and role structures that characterised modernity are quickly evaporating. The disappearance of these compartments in society has created new freedom for the individual, but at the same time new problems for identity formation. The individual has lost its unity, is fragmented, differentiated, ambivalent in its many commitments and so forth. Increased personal freedom is therefore at the same time accompanied by increased uncertainty. Value structures are fluctuating so quickly that it is hard for anyone to find solid ground.

But increased personal freedom does not necessarily imply that there is less social control. As Foucault points out in his Surveiller et Punir, the mechanisms of power and control have become much more subtle. Pressure is no longer coming from the outside with strong hierarchical systems, but comes from the inside. Discipline is everywhere, in family structures, schools, organisational life as well as the media. Foucault's analysis squares well with that other sociological tradition routed in the work of Durkheim and Parsons. Both stress that the relation between the world and man is always symbolically mediated and that external control mechanisms are being replaced by forms of internal control: by our feelings, knowledge, beliefs, etc. Because of this evolution, education has become an important variable in sociological explanation. It is of course along these lines that we have to find an explanation for the role and impact of the media. The latter confront the individual with a permanent stream of symbols

that mediate our view and understanding of the world. It is beyond doubt one of the most important mechanisms of social control of our times.

A third element that we want to bring up is somewhat less familiar and rests upon the anthropological writings of Mary Douglas who combines elements of Durkheim with the sociolinguistic work of Basil Bernstein. From Emile Durkheim she takes the concept of group pressure, which can be either strong or weak. From Bernstein comes the notion of grid, which stands for the richness of conceptual differentiation that a language allows, e.g., pure/impure, men/women, religious/profane, and so on. That again can be either weak or strong.

Combining these two dimensions one gets four types of groups. A first group is characterised by a highly diversified conceptual differentiation (lots of grid) and strong social pressure. This is comparable to the hierarchical society of modernity. In these groups personal freedom is very limited. Weak group pressure and weak grid equals great personal freedom and can be connected to the individualistic society of our times.

A third possibility is lots of group pressure, but limited potential for conceptual differentiation. Here we are in an enclavistic group, which relies on strong borderlines between the ins and the outs, those who belong to the group and those who do not. It is also a group that has limited possibility of understanding or explaining the world precisely because the grid is so reduced.

Not so long ago the media discovered the powers of marketing. It proved to be a successful combination, which has become impossible to neglect. One of the techniques used in marketing is to create target groups, a virtual group at which products are aimed. Public broadcasters, newspapers, radio stations and advertisers were all restructured along these virtual group lines. Once one creates a virtual group, one will use all kinds of mechanisms to magnify the group identity, in order to give real people who

tune into the group a sense of belonging. An early example of this strategy appearing in Europe is, for instance, the Dutch TV channel 'TROS,' which presented a completely new style of programming. "It is characteristic that after only a few years in operation, the TROS stressed its virtual group identity using slogans such as The TROS is there for you".

With more entertainment and a light-handed presentation of serious topics, TROS introduced the marketing laws that came to dominate the entire media market. By now, virtual groups abound, and recent sociological work has indicated that some of those virtual groups correspond to real groups. That in itself might not be problematic, it is only when one confronts these groups with clearly different pictures of the world on a long term base, that problems can surface. Given the importance of sym-bolic representation in social control mechanisms today, virtual group structure has at that point turned into a new mechanism of class differentiation. And that is precisely what seems to happen in Flanders between VTM and VRT viewers.

Virtual differentiation has turned into real differentiation and this expresses itself in differences in political sympathies, for instance, with respect to migration problems or the attitude towards politicians. Of course it would make no sense at all to presume that it is the media channel itself which has created the real groups; undoubtedly self-selection plays an important part, but the possibility of a circle setting in which self-selected groups are constantly affirmed in their identity is more than real. Where does all this leave us with respect to media ethics? To put it bluntly, at this point the most important question becomes what is the conceptual richness – the grid – that is offered to the media consumer.

Reduced grid could well turn a virtual group into an enclavistic group that is not very supportive for the society at large. There is some research to corroborate this view. Norris points out that the

kind of programmes one is watching does matter. Especially light entertainment programmes seem to be erosive for civic attitudes. Hooghe finds a clear correlation between sender preference and political preference, but even more between programme preference and a general picture of the world. His study corroborates findings by Uslaner, which show that regular watchers of family series have a stronger sense of insecurity. Again, self-selection plays a role, but being caught up in the world of soap opera certainly does not enhance one's view of the world.

What can media regulators do about this? It would seem somewhat odd to scrap all light entertainment from now on, or to put a regulator besides each person forcing him or her to avoid the ultimate soap opera. But there might be other ways, related to media content, that can be helpful. A few years ago the Flemish public broadcaster created the virtual group Radio Donna, characterised by an easy listening profile. However, the news presented at Radio Donna is made by the same team as the one making the news for Radio 1 and it covers the same items. This might seem trivial, but it is not, in terms of grid it is essential that one brings in somewhat of a 'fremdcorper' in order to break reductionist views of the world. This is of course a fine balance; on the one hand a 'fremdcorper' cannot be too strange, otherwise the listener will simply switch. On the other hand, one cannot give in too easily to consumer preference for simple views of the world. The Radio Donna example can be extended to other cases. Each time the central target will be to differentiate the basic picture that is presented in a particular media outlet. One might, for instance, do this with classical regulation that insists on part of the programmes being locally produced, as local programme's will often contrast sharply with the standard Hollywood picture of the world. The consumer should at least be given the possibility to take a step back from the virtual group he or she is committed to. On a larger scale, this rule extends to a plea for a strong public

broadcaster in each country, as a kind of counterbalance to the dominant commercial media. From this it also follows that if a public broadcaster commercialises too much so that the difference between its programmes and that of the commercial counterpart is, this broadcaster loses its very reason for existence. Again, a fine balance will have to be found, and carefully guarded by the controlling authorities.

Media Responsibilities in Time of Elections

The mass media have a range of duties that equally apply to all the media in time of elections: in particular, the duty to prevent misuse of press freedom, to comply with the prescribed timing of election campaign, to duly publish opinion poll findings, etc. At the same time, the legislation sets apart a special class of mass media, which are charged with the heaviest load of responsibilities as regards election campaigns.

Election campaign shall mean the activities of citizens, candidates, electoral associations, electoral blocs, and public associations, which is aimed at encouraging voters to participate in the election, and to vote for or against certain candidates.

The mass media does not constitute an independent entity conducting election campaign. However, any entities whose right to do so is recognised by law may conduct such campaign through the media.

One ought to note that election commission members having a full vote, government authorities, bodies of local self-government, charitable organisations, religious associations, persons holding state and municipal offices, government and municipal employees, as well as servicemen are restricted from participation in election campaign when performing their official or service duties or employing any advantages of their office or position. The media are obliged to assure that this prohibition is duly observed.

Conduct of election campaign in the media should fit the same deadlines as those fixed for campaigning if favour of appropriate

candidates or lists of candidates proposed by electoral associations or electoral blocs. Election campaign starts from the day when any candidate (list of candidates) is registered, and stops at midnight, 24 hours prior to voting day.

In case of a repeat vote, election campaign resumes from the day when any decision prescribing a repeat vote is officially published and stops at midnight, 24 hours prior to the repeat vote day.

The law expressly provides for time limits as regards election campaign by registered candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs via any channels of regulated electronic media. As a rule, such campaign starts after free airtime is apportioned among the candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs.

The regulated mass media must allow placement of election commissions' printed information, and must provide election commissions with free airtime in order to advise the voters on the timing and procedure of electoral actions, the progress of election campaign, and the candidates. Any expenses these media incur in such case should be covered from their regular budgetary funds. Other media are obliged to provide the election commissions with necessary information and materials, and to reply to their requests within any time limits prescribed by law. Besides, any acts and resolutions of election commissions adopted within the limits of their jurisdiction are binding on the mass media.

The regulated electronic media are obliged to provide free airtime to registered candidates, electoral associations, and electoral blocs. Provision of free airtime depends of the size of the area covered by the respective medium's TV or radio broadcasts.

A candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc may independently determine the form and nature of their media campaign, subject to certain exceptions established by law. Thus, the law provides that at least one third of total free airtime allowance

shall be provided to candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs for holding joint discussions, round table shows, or similar campaign events.

As a rule, free airtime is distributed by a draw of lots held by election commissions in the presence of the candidates, representatives of electoral associations or electoral blocs, and representatives of the respective media organisations. Airtime is apportioned among the candidates, electoral associations or electoral blocs equally, i.e., none of them enjoys any advantage in access to airtime on better terms and conditions (as regards airtime duration, time slot, etc.).

The editors of regulated periodicals circulated in the territory that holds the election are obliged to provide printing space for publication of campaign materials submitted by candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs. As a rule, periodicals are understood to include any printed media published at least once a week. The above obligation does not apply to any periodicals established by government authorities and bodies of local self-government with the sole purpose of publishing official communications and materials, regulations and other acts. Specialised publications (for children, on technology, science, etc.) may also be exempted from the obligation to publish printed campaign materials for free, provided they take no part whatsoever in the election campaign.

The minimum total of printing space that a periodical is obliged to provide for free is established by the law governing elections to the respective government authority or any body of local self-government.

Free printing space is provided to candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs after such space is apportioned, normally in a draw of lots organised by the respective election commission. All candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs participate in this distribution equally.

In case of free publication of campaign materials, the item so published should contain an express reference to the effect that its publication is free, plus an indication as to which candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc has been so allowed to publish the campaign materials. The candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc independently determines the form of such publication.

The procedure for free airtime provision somewhat differs between the regulated and other electronic media. The regulated electronic media broadcasting in the election territory must reserve pay airtime for election campaign conducted by candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs. Such reserved airtime total may not fall below the free airtime total.

Paid airtime should be provided as requested by candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs. A contract for provision of pay airtime is made between the regulated medium and respective candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc. In such case, the payment rate may not be determined separately for each candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc. There should be a single rate across all candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs. The rate should be established in advance and published on or before the day when nomination of candidates (lists of candidates) starts. In case of election pursuant to the majoritarian system, when a constituency map has to be approved, nomination of candidates would normally start on the day when such constituency maps are approved; otherwise, nomination of candidates starts on the day when the election is called. Each candidate has the right to an equal share of paid airtime. The candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc independently determine the way of utilising their paid airtime.

Any broadcasters other than the regulated media may provide airtime to candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs under contract. In this case, such entities must assure an equal

airtime charge, as well as equal terms and conditions of availability (in terms of slot timing and other key parameters) across all candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs.

In all cases, regardless of the broadcaster's nature, the airtime shall be paid for only via the campaign funds of respective candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs, and such payment must be made in full before the airtime is provided to them. Actual airing time of the pay slot is normally determined in a draw of lots performed by the broadcaster in question.

The regulated periodicals are obliged to provide paid printing space for publication of any materials submitted by candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs. The minimum amount of such space is established by the law governing elections to the respective government authority or any body of local self-government.

Unregulated periodicals may provide printing space to candidates, electoral associations; or electoral blocs under a contract. Such publications must assure equal pay rates for the printing space and equal terms and conditions of providing such space (in terms of placement on a page and other key parameters) across all candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs. The law establishes only one exception: the requirement of providing printing space on equal terms does not apply to any editors of periodicals, if the periodical in question is founded by any registered candidate, electoral association, electoral bloc, or by any electoral association(s) comprising an electoral bloc.

In all cases, regardless of the publication's nature, the printing space must be paid for only via the campaign funds of respective candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs, and such payment must be made in full before the printing space is provided to them. Normally, such printing space is apportioned among the candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs in a draw of lots arranged by the respective media organisation.

Any material so published in a periodical and paid for from the campaign funds of any candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc should contain an indication as to which candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc has drawn on its campaign funds to pay for the publication. The candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc independently determines the way of utilising such printing space.

The election legislation establishes a number of special requirements as regards the content of any information published or broadcast by the mass media in the time of elections.

The law establishes some special rules for mass media publication of opinion poll findings, election result forecasts, and other election-related research in the time of elections. When publishing any election-related opinion poll findings, the media must identify the polling organisation, the time of poll, the number of those polled (sample size), the method of information gathering, the exact wording of the question, and the statistical estimate of potential error. Within three days to the voting day and on the voting day, no mass media may publish any opinion poll findings, election result forecasts, or other election-related research.

When participating in election campaigns, the regulated media may not allow disclosure (publication) of any information capable of affecting honour, dignity, or business reputation of any candidates, unless the medium in question allows such candidate to issue (publish) a rebuttal or any other clarification as required to protect his or her honour, dignity, or business reputation before the time allocated for election campaign expires.

The election commission that has registered any candidate (list of candidates) should, from time to time, present the mass media with data on receipt and expenditure of money by the campaign funds of any candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs, in order to have such information published. The regulated media are obliged to publish the said information within

three days of receipt at the expense of their regular funding. Final financial reports of candidates, electoral associations, or electoral blocs are also forwarded to the media for publication.

Any registered candidates working in mass media are relieved of their official duties for as long as they run in the elections. Within three days of their registration, they should provide the election commission with a notarized copy of an appropriate order or directive temporarily believing them of their official duties. In addition, in their own campaign they may not take any advantage of their office or position. In particular, taking advantage of office or position is understood as priority access to regulated media in order to collect signatures or to conduct election campaign.

Journalists, other creative workers, editorial officials of mass media, as well as officials and creative workers of government broadcasting organisations are restricted from covering the election campaign in the media if the said persons are candidates or agents of any candidates.

DECLARATION ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MASS MEDIA TO STRENGTHENING PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING, TO THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO COUNTERING RACIALISM, APARTHEID AND INCITEMENT TO WAR

Final text adopted at the 20th Session of the General Conference, Paris, October-November 1978
UNESCO Document 20C/20 Rev., 21 November 1978

Preamble

The General Conference,

Recalling that by virtue of its Constitution the purpose of UNESCO is to "contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law

and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Art I, 1), and that to realise this purpose the Organisation will strive "to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image" (Art I, 2),

Further recalling that under the Constitution the Member States of UNESCO, "believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives" (sixth preambular paragraph),

Recalling the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as specified in its Charter,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 and particularly Article 19 thereof, which provides that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966, Article 19 of which proclaims the same principles and Article 20 of which condemns incitement to war, the advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred and any form of discrimination, hostility or violence,

Recalling Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1973, whereby the States acceding to these Conventions undertook to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, racial discrimination, and

agreed to prevent any encouragement of the crime of apartheid and similar segregationist policies or their manifestations,

Recalling the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1965,

Recalling the declarations and resolutions adopted by the various organs of the United Nations concerning the establishment of a new international economic order and the role UNESCO is called upon to play in this respect,

Recalling the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1966,

Recalling Resolution 59(1) of the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted in 1946 and declaring:

'Freedom of information' is a fundamental human right and is the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated;

Freedom of information requires as an indispensable element the willingness and capacity to employ its privileges without abuse. It requires as a basic discipline the moral obligation to seek the facts without prejudice and to spread knowledge without malicious intent;

Recalling Resolution 110(11) of the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted in 1947, condemning all forms of propaganda which are designed or likely to provoke or encourage any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression,

Recalling resolution 127(11), also adopted by the General Assembly in 1947 which invites Member States to take measures, within the limits of constitutional procedures, to combat the diffusion of false or distorted reports likely to injure friendly relations between States, as well as the other resolutions of the General Assembly concerning the mass media and their contribution to contribution to strengthening peace, trust and friendly relations among States,

Recalling resolution 9.12 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1968, reiterating UNESCO's objective to help to eradicate colonialism and racialism, and resolution 12.1 adopted by the General Conference in 1976, which proclaims that colonialism, neo-colonialism and racialism in all its forms and manifestations are incompatible with the fundamental aims of UNESCO,

Recalling resolution 4.301 adopted in 1970 by the General Conference of UNESCO on the contribution of the information media to furthering international understanding and co-operation in the interests of peace and human welfare, and to countering propaganda on behalf of war, racialism, apartheid and hatred among nations, and aware of the fundamental contribution that mass media can make to the realisations of these objectives,

Recalling the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twentieth session,

Conscious of the complexity of the problems of information in modern society, of the diversity of solutions which have been offered to them, as evidenced in particular by the consideration given to them within UNESCO, and of the legitimate desire of all parties concerned that their aspirations, points of view and cultural identity be taken into due consideration,

Conscious of the aspirations of the developing countries for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order,

Proclaims on this twenty-eighth day of November 1978 this Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War.

Article I

The strengthening of peace and international understanding, the promotion of human rights and the countering of racialism, apartheid and incitement to war demand a free flow and a wider

and better balanced dissemination of information. To this end, the mass media have a leading contribution to make. This contribution will be the more effective to the extent that the information reflects the different aspects of the subject dealt with.

Article II

The exercise of freedom of opinion, expression and information recognised as an integral part of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is a vital factor in the strengthening of peace and international understanding.

Access by the public to information should be guaranteed by the diversity of the sources and means of information available to it, thus enabling each individual to check the accuracy of facts and to appraise events objectively. To this end, journalists must have freedom to report and the fullest possible facilities of access to information. Similarly, it is important that the mass media be responsive to concerns of peoples and individuals, thus promoting the participation of the public in the elaboration of information.

With a view to the strengthening of peace and international understanding, to promoting human rights and to countering racialism, apartheid and incitement to war, the mass media throughout the world, by reason of their role, contribute to promoting human rights, in particular by giving expression to oppressed peoples who struggle against colonialism neo-colonialism foreign occupation and all forms of racial discrimination and oppression and who are unable to make their voices heard within their own territories.

If the mass media are to be in a position to promote the principles of this Declaration in their activities, it is essential that journalists and other agents of the mass media, in their own country or abroad, be assured of protection guaranteeing them the best conditions for the exercise of their profession.

Article III

The Mass media have an important contribution to make to the strengthening of peace and international understanding and in

countering racialism, apartheid and incitement to war.

In countering aggressive war, racialism, apartheid and other violations of human rights which are inter alia spawned by prejudice and ignorance, the mass media, by disseminating information on the aims, aspiration, cultures and needs of all peoples, contribute to eliminate ignorance and misunderstanding between peoples, to make nationals of a country sensitive to the needs and desires of others, to ensure the respect of the rights and dignity of all nations, all peoples and all individuals without distinction of race, sex, language, religion or nationality and to draw attention to the great evils which afflict humanity, such as poverty, malnutrition and diseases, thereby promoting the formulation by States of the policies best able to promote the reduction of international tension and the peaceful and equitable settlement of international disputes.

Article IV

The mass media have an essential part to play in the education of young people in a spirit of peace, justice, freedom, mutual respect and understanding, in order to promote human rights, equality of rights as between all human beings and all nations, and economic and social progress. Equally, they have an important role to play in making known the views and aspirations of the younger generation.

Article V

In order to respect freedom of opinion, expression and information and in order that information may reflect all points of view, it is important that the points of view presented by those who consider that the information published or disseminated about them has seriously prejudiced their effort to strengthen peace and international understanding, to promote human rights or to counter racialism, apartheid and incitement to war be disseminated.

Article VI

For the establishment of a new equilibrium and greater reciprocity in the flow of information, which will be conducive to the institution of a just and lasting peace and to the economic and

political independence of the developing countries, it is necessary to correct the inequalities in the flow of information to and from developing countries, and between those countries. To this end, it is essential that their mass media should have conditions and resources enabling them to gain strength and expand, and to co-operate both among themselves and with the mass media in developed countries.

Article VII

By disseminating more widely all of the information concerning the universally accepted objectives and principles which are the bases of the resolutions adopted by the different organs of the United Nations, the mass media contribute effectively to the strengthening of peace and international understanding, to the promotion of human rights, and to the establishment of a more just and equitable international economic order.

Professional organisations, and people who participate in the professional training of journalists and other agents of the mass media and who assist them in performing their functions in a responsible manner should attach special importance to the principles of this Declaration when drawing up and ensuring application of their codes of ethics.

Article IX

In the spirit of this Declaration, it is for the international community to contribute to the creation of the conditions for a free flow and wider and more balanced dissemination of information, and of the conditions for the protection, in the exercise of their functions, of journalists and other agents of the mass media. UNESCO is well placed to make a valuable contribution in this respect.

Article X

With due respect for constitutional provisions designed to guarantee freedom of information and for the applicable international instruments and agreements, it is indispensable to create and maintain throughout the world the conditions which make it

possible for the organisations and persons professionally involved in the dissemination of information to achieve the objectives of this Declaration.

It is important that a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information be encouraged.

To this end, it is necessary that States facilitate the procurement by the mass media in the developing countries of adequate conditions and resources enabling them to gain strength and expand, and that they support cooperation by the latter both among themselves and with the mass media in developed countries.

Similarly, on a basis of equality of rights, mutual advantage and respect for the diversity of the cultures which go to make up the common heritage of mankind, it is essential that bilateral and multilateral exchanges of information among all States, and in particular between those which have different economic and social systems, be encouraged and developed.

Article XI

For this Declaration to be fully effective it is necessary, with due respect for the legislative and administrative provisions and the other obligations of Member States, to guarantee the existence of favourable conditions for the operation of the mass media, in conformity with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with the corresponding principles proclaimed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966.

11
Modern Communication Network

The community network provides a 'social space' for the community, a place where community members can interact with each other, a place to learn, discuss, persuade, or just have fun. The community network is also a community institution, an organisation that is supported by the community, helps support the community, and is situated within the community. The community network organisation provides the framework and the institutionalisation hit helps create, administer, and promote continuing development of the community network. Both the community-network system and the community-network organisation exist within a social and political context that helps shape the community-network system and organisation and, in turn, is shaped by them.

On-line Community

The on-line community is the group of people who participate in the community network by offering their opinions, by reading those of others, and by using and providing information and services.

The on-line community is at the centre of the social and political architecture. If this community is inactive or dysfunctional, the entire community network is deficient.

The character of the on-line community is influenced in three basic ways: by the system itself, the users, and the culture. The first influence, the system itself, makes its presence felt through its user interface, capabilities, and content. The user interface should make the system easy to use and be free of surprises, and the system should do what users expect it to do. The system capabilities include various ways in which users communicate with other users, including the use of static files of information, forums, real time 'chat,' or e-mail, as well as by other available capabilities that could include file transfer capabilities or access to other community networks and the World Wide Web.

The second major influence is the user population, including its numbers, interests, and formal and informal roles. The third influence is the culture of the on-line community or society, with its interaction patterns, themes, conventions, folkways, and cast of characters that has evolved and will continue to evolve over time. Community-network developers and participants alike should keep these influences in mind as they work on the system. Although it is neither possible nor desirable to precisely mould the on-line community according to specific requirements, it is both possible and desirable to attempt to steer the system in ways that best advance community goals.

In a community network—as in all other communications technology—technology plays a mediating role. The manner in which people use the system is circumscribed and partially shaped by the system. At a general level, the technology allows or affords certain activities. A telephone affords voice communication, whereas community networks afford text and sometimes graphics and other information. At a more subtle level, the technology also mediates. Usenet newsgroups, consisting of 'postings' contributed

by readers, are dedicated to a topic following a fairly rigid naming convention.

Network Citizenship

There is a growing body of literature on the sociology of cyberspace that reflects the growing number of participants and the emerging diversity of forms of on-line communication. Although much of this is relevant and should be studied by developers, we will not include an extended discussion here, but instead turn to the concept of community network 'citizenship'. This concept helps define the responsibility that individuals should have for the on-line community and the responsibility that the on-line community should have for individuals.

The community that is made possible by a community network is in actual a multitude of smaller communities, each with an individual style and level of intimacy and purpose, much as a geographical community is comprised of neighbourhoods, families, and associations, each with their own distinct characteristics.

Forums and e-mail distribution lists can support information, sharing solely. They car, be used to share feelings or opinions through conversation, or they can be used to accomplish specific tasks—planning a conference, or writing a proposal, for example. Shared purpose is an important way of unifying electronic communities. Confusion over the purpose of a mailing list or a forum is a common situation and can result in a disjointed electronic conversation, as can happen in a more traditional conversation in which participants have diverse expectations.

While passive participation will toke place in all types of forums, it is far less disturbing than the aggressive antisocial behaviour that scorns to crop up all too frequently in electronic forums. Unfortunately, there are endless variations of these behaviours, varying from simple sarcasm to violent and sexual threats to 'virtual rapes'. While a single person car fairly easily turn a pleasant (nonvirtual) social scene into an unpleasant one through

loudness, vulgarity, or threatening behaviour, the electronic venue seems exceedingly vulnerable to many types of abuse, probably because of the fart that people are not interacting face-to-face.

Discussion Modelling

While open computer-based discussions seem to be generally immune to outright rigging or controlling by those that established the system or by other participants, there is a strong need to preclude or curb some of the potential for antisocial behaviour that the systems seem to allow or even to promote. Ken Phillips, the originator of the Santa Monica PEN system, feels that many of the forums on PEN became overly contentious. When such a situation arises, those with less aggressive natures are likely to lose interest in the forum and drop out.

While monitoring forums or policing them in other ways represents reactive approaches, positive proactive approaches are also possible. Evelyn Pine, former executive director of Community Memory in Berkeley, says that "discussion modelling is critical but notoriously difficult." By definition, 'modelling' a discussion forum is a conscious attempt to guide the conversational flow, primarily by providing good examples by engaging in exemplary on-line behaviour. Pine says that the writers' group on the WELL is a good example of a cordial and convivial environment. When a new writer posts a short story to the group, the other participants are very supportive. Since the discussion actuary creates a micro-culture, behaviour is shaped by the sum of the participants—not by a moderator or discussion leader alone, that reason, the mores and attitudes need to be shared and enforced by the whole group—or at least a percentage of it—for the shaping to be effective. People have the right to disagree and to offer dissenting op or the forum will become lifeless. On the other hand, a forum must have standards of conduct if it is to be useful. Contrary to the view of some people, the beauty of cyberspace is not that it's easy, or acceptable, to be a jerk.

Limits and Restrictions

Although rarely used in practice, software could, in theory, prevent some types of antisocial postings, such as messages that were too long or messages that were going to too many recipients. This type of software protection could have prevented the recent incident in which a religious enthusiast dispatched his apocalyptic warning to over one hundred Usenet newsgroups on a single day. Current technology would not prevent this person from electronic proselytising in this way on a daily if not hourly basis.

A more common phenomenon is that of a frequent poster dominating a discussion: "The one who posts the most wins." Suppose Jane works fifty hours a week as a nurse and barely has time to check in on her favorite discussions once every couple of weeks. John, on the other hand, does not have a job and apparently does not have a life outside of posting to forums. Obviously, John can more easily influence others—all other things being equal—than can Jane, who barely has time to read and post at all. System imposed limitations on size, number, and frequency of postings could be employed to dampen this brand of built-in bias. An artificially low limit could, on the other hand, act against people who are less succinct in their postings, or have more ideas, or who provide more detailed analysis. People with less popular ideas would also need latitude to adequately defend their position. In those situations, posting limits would act as an electronic rule, preventing a person from exercising the right. Realistically, there are times when time limits or restrictions must be imposed on discussion in the non-cyberworld.

Administrators need to have authority to warn, then later to suspend or ban a user from the system. Some possible abuses include sending e-mail to a person who has requested that he or she not receive e-mail from that person. Other offenses may include some malicious use like broadcasting to all users or sending

chain letters. Advertising or using the system for financial gain could also be inappropriate in some cases. Using the system to gain illegal access to other machines needs also to be expressly prohibited.

Community-Network Organisation

The community-network organisation is the organised body whose primary responsibility it is to ensure that the community network is as effective as possible. Some of its tasks include the actual administration of the system, financing, and other organisational duties. The organisation must be involved with day-to-day operations, including system maintenance and administration, as well as community outreach, fundraising, and participation in the political process at the local, slate, and federal levels. The organisation itself may be a nonprofit organisation, a public development authority, a nonprofit/government cooperative venture, a governmental organisation, or a for-profit organisation. The organisation could also be allied in coalitions, cooperatives, or associations with other organisations.

Information-usage Policy

At its basic level, all information on a computer looks the same—a parade of bits, each holding the value of one or zero, in patterns no human eye can discern. Viewed from higher levels, however, the bits become information. And information is an important, highly scrutinised, and valuable commodity indeed.

Information policy determines the 'rules of the road' for what information can be conveyed, by whom, and to whom, and under what conditions. The information policy will also cover what happens to an alleged or actual transgressor and specify who's liable in illegal communications. Unfortunately, the legal frontier in many areas has not been settled, and costly duels are being waged with lawyers, lobbyists, and politicians, leaving community-network participants and organisers in uncertain territory. The community-network movement is singularly under

funded and underorganised among the players weighing into the networked arena.

A community network's policy statement is the explicit attempt to formulate the guidelines by which the principles or goals are addressed. It can set up conditions under which an effective on-line society can grow, promoting successful use of the system to meet the needs of the new community. The policy statement also establishes the rules—or procedures—that will be followed when problems arise involving the use of the system. A sound information policy is critical to a community network, for it must address the wide range of issues that undoubtedly will arise.

Privacy on the Network

Privacy on the network is an important, yet not widely considered, aspect of community networks. Since the electronic media exacerbates many concerns over privacy it is vitally important to consider these issues in the design of the system—not as an afterthought. The most important aspect or privacy probably has to do with e-mail. It is important that the contents of any private e-mail remain as private as the system administrators can possibly ensure.

Just as telephones can be tapped, there are ways that computer-network communication can be intercepted with no indication to sender or recipient that the message has been inspected. For this reason, privacy cannot be totally guaranteed, but the system's administrators must consciously and conscientiously strive to ensure a high degree of privacy. Besides the contents of e-mail, all peripheral information must be kept secure. This certainly includes registration data, which could include address, phone numbers, and other information that the registrant regards as private. If it is necessary to collect other peripheral information such as records of to whom a user sent e-mail, from whom a user received e-mail, what forums he or she visited, and what files

were downloaded by the user, then this information should be deleted regularly and subject to the same high standards of privacy as e-mail, private files, and user records.

It is not difficult to imagine ways in which electronic records could be used in ways that the user did not envision, intend, or expect, for legal, economic, or political reasons. Law enforcement officials and others, for example, sometimes attempt to find out what books people have checked out from the public library, while telephone companies have expressed the desire to sell telephone-call records to clients to aid in their marketing activities.

Computer systems don't know whether a user's identity is real or manufactured. But the value of knowing or not knowing the true identity of a user varies according to context. User anonymity is important, for example, when users ask sensitive questions about sexually transmitted diseases in an on-line forum or submit such questions on-line to a doctor or nurse who's volunteered to field such questions. On the other hand, delivering anonymous e-mail is not the main responsibility of a community network. It should not necessarily be trivial for people to send anonymous threatening letters to the president, their neighbour, or anybody else that's reachable via e-mail.

Participants of Community Network

Of course there would be no on-line community without contributors. The people and organisations that add information, opinions, issues, and questions to the system while noting what others have added are the life blood of the system. These contributors can best be thought of as belonging to one of two categories—individuals or organisational contributors.

As in a geographical community, people who participate in a community network do so for a variety of reasons. Some will use the system to find information, while others want to find conversation. Some will use the system to communicate on a one-to-one basis, others will be interested in forums—as active participant

of passive 'lurkers'—while others will want to assume even more active public roles in the on-line culture.

People who assume the responsibility for running an on-line forum are called 'moderators.' A moderator generally has strong interest, experience, or knowledge in a particular topic and wants to communicate with others on that topic. A moderator of a forum is like the host of a party, but how strenuously this role is assumed varies widely from moderator to moderator just as it does among party hosts. A moderator can also be seen as a discussion facilitator. If this role is assumed, it becomes a moderator's responsibility for ensuring that lively conversation occurs and that the conversation keeps on track if, indeed, keeping on track is important.

While some types of forums—question and answer forums, for example—are less likely to be troubled, others may boil over with controversy and a moderator may need to wield some of the power of the role. If postings are too long or too numerous or if they contravene other established guidelines by being irrelevant, abusive, or libelous, the moderator is obliged to prune or excise the posting. As mentioned previously, guidelines should be established so that the moderator does not act capriciously or is viewed as acting capriciously. Since this area is among the most potentially hazardous realms for community-network developers and participants, these guidelines are critical.

Community Organisations

Many community organisations are interested in exploring opportunities offered by community networks. These opportunities range from e-mail use to large programmes that use network facilities extensively. The League of Women Voters, for example, could distribute electronically some of the vast amount of information they collect on issues and candidates. They could also devise more ambitious projects as well, such as 'electronic townhalls' in which citizens could question candidates directly on issues.

Virtually all organisations have information that they'd like to distribute electronically. Initially this effort may duplicate what they already distribute on paper: newsletters, briefing papers, and contact information, for example. Lack of resources or technical expertise may inhibit their desire to participate in a community network, although the promise of increased visibility in their community, reduced communication costs, and the desire to 'modernise' that operations often helps to overcome these obstacles.

Furthermore, organisations that are thinking about making their information or services available electronically may reduce their costs considerably by foregoing the development of an independent BBS system that they would have to purchase and maintain themselves. Using an existing community-network system also makes it easier for potential clients to use by providing a common access point-the 'one-stop shopping' advantage.

All community organisations might feel the need to participate and none should be excluded. While some organisations may have exclusionary, undemocratic, or anticommunity principles, there is no valid reason for preventing them from using the system. As a matter of fact, denying them access to the system would be seen—justifiably—as exclusionary. While organisations should not be denied the right to participate, it is possible to argue that some types of electronic postings should be barred because of the content of the posting, such as the nature of an event being advertised.

An analogous situation exists within the public library in regard to their meeting-rooms policy and their public-notices policy. A group is barred from using the facilities of the public library for meetings that deny participation on the basis of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, and the like. The public library also permits the posting of announcements for events that have no admission charge and are open to all. Whether or not policies like this are adopted for public postings (in forums, and so on) these restrictions would not apply to private e-mail correspondence.

Currently the largest group of players in the social architecture that encompasses the community-network universe doesn't even play. This is the large group of 'nonusers' whose presence as a potential voice in the discussion of future technology is largely nonexistent. Users of electronic information and communi- cation systems tend to be white, middle-class males between the ages of 20 and 50. They tend to be employed, have greater than average incomes, speak English, and have few disabilities.

It is extremely unlikely that a community network will be the only computer-based resource that the community uses. It is far more likely that some combination of independent bulletin-board, referral, special-purpose, commercial, library, and govt. based systems will be used to meet a community's diverse needs. The existence of thin network stew has advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages is the higher likelihood that the desired information would exist and that organisations would compete with each other, working harder to provide valuable services to the community. And competition would help ensure that rates were relatively low for access to useful community information. Competition also has its disadvantages.

Competing networks might fight each other, squandering resources while missing important opportunists to cooperate; they might both concentrate on enlisting certain high-prestige or high-popularity information providers while neglecting others. They might compete for funds from the same sources. In addition to productive competition, the existence of many networks could present a daunting 'user interface' (writ large) to the public. If every system had its own telephone number, user interface, registration procedure, policies, mail system, and so on, the public would be more likely to be puzzled than charmed.

Fortunately, there are many cooperative approaches that can strengthen community-network organisations while keeping community concerns uppermost. One approach is to provide reciprocal

access to each others' machines. This means that the user would need to memorise one less phone number and make one less telephone call. Community networks could also cooperate on a Registration system that would give users accounts on both machines, while going through one process. In a similar vein, it would be useful to provide e-mail access from both systems. Although this could result in more accounting and policy work, the benefits to the community are significant. With BBS systems, it makes sense for a larger community-network system to act as an e-mail gateway between the BBS and the Internet. The BBS system and the community network could also arrange for certain newsgroups and forums to be shared or 'echoed,' just like the Usenet community does with its newsgroups.

While it is technologically feasible to maintain the facade of a single community network by connecting multiple smaller systems together, this approach may also have its drawbacks. One danger is that the individual components of a 'mega-network' might lose their individual identities. Without a discernible identity it might be difficult to find the necessary funding. And a community network with no discernible identity might offer no coherent theme or approach to the community. Additionally, a distinct identity may be irrelevant or over-whelmed if one of the network components is much larger and more conspicuous than the others.

There are many other ways in which geographically-based community networks can cooperate. At a minimum, it should be possible to send e-mail between them, over the Internet or via a variety of lower-tech ways, and community networks should be able to share forums that cross geographical lines. Community networks could share principles, policies—even user interfaces—and they could collaborate on fundraising and information sharing on how best to run a system. It will probably be necessary to negotiate roles and responsibilities for improved cooperation to take root. An important form of collaboration could come from citizens

who gain an increased understanding of people in adjoining communities and who work on projects for the benefit of both communities.

Community Network Technology

From a technological standpoint, a community network provides an orienting framework and a collection of software services. On this level it is similar to an electronic bulletin board system, except that it can accommodate hundreds of simultaneous users with specialised needs and a user base of tens of thousands. The orienting framework often uses a city metaphor, but this particular approach is not required.

The basic software services that community networks generally provide are: forums or discussions (moderated and unmoderated), access to static information contained in files, e-mail, and file download-upload capabilities. Other possible services include: chat, remote login, search capabilities, World Wide Web access, and database facilities. There is no real limit to the types of services. Community networks of the future could contain MUDs, and audio and video services. In addition, a simple menu structure with which to navigate information and services is often used. The system must also easily incorporate new capabilities as they become available, such as new search techniques, multimedia applications, or wide information servers.

E-mail

Sending and receiving electronic mail (e-mail) is an essential feature of a community network; this capability allows users to send and receive private messages to and from other users. E-mail users might include people using the community network as well as users of other systems throughout the world including Internet sites, commercial networks like Compuserve and Delphi, and, in many cases, to homegrown, hobbyist networks such as Fidonet, which serves thousands of PCs around the world. Tens of millions of people around the world currently use e-mail, and this figure is growing rapidly.

Electronic mail implies an ability to send and receive messages over a network. Those messages nearly always contain text only, but voice or graphic messages are becoming more common. In addition to sending and receiving e-mail, mail readers provide the ability to manage e-mail. A user can view a list of e-mail; messages and is able to act on them. A user might respond to a message, include it in another letter, or save it as a file on the computer. Mail readers and mail systems also allow message to be sent to lists of people as easily as they might be sent to individuals, thus making committee or other group work more viable electronically. Thus people often maintain mailing lists that contain e-mail addresses of people concerned about a particular issue.

Listservs and Mail Lists

Listservs and mail lists offer similar approaches to electronic discussions on community networks and on the Internet in general. A mail list is basically just a type of e-mal alias. For example, there might be an alias called 'outreach-volunteers' that includes the e-mail addresses of all the members of the outreach committee, and any mail sent to 'outreach-volunteers' will be forwarded to every address on the list. A listserv, on the other hand, is more powerful, as users can send a variety of commands to the listserv via e-mail, to get the names of all listservs at a particular site, or the names and e-mail addresses of all subscribers, for example.

Electronic Forums

Electronic forums are essential to community networks. A forum—sometimes called a 'room' or 'board' or 'newsgroup'—enables a group of people to participate in an extended conversation on any topic. The conversation can be tightly focused or extremely broad, loosely conversational or concentrating on specific goals. The tone can be encouraging and welcoming or contentious and abusive. There are two main types of forums: a moderated forum that employs a moderator and an unmoderated forum that does not.

A user that wants to read forum postings will usually select the desired forum with a menu choice or by indicating that he or she wants to bring up a 'news reader,' which is functionally similar to a mail reader. The main distinction is that a user reads e-mail that is 'owned' by that user, while a user reads news that is available to anybody who wants to participate in that particular forum.

A message sent to an unmoderated forum is automatically posted to the forum. A message sent to a moderated forum is sent to the forum's moderator. The moderator then reads the posting and determines its suitability to the forum according to whatever criteria are relevant to the forum. Ideally, these criteria have been explicitly defined by the moderator and usually include relevance to the topic at hand (including clarity) and respect for other participants. Sarcasm and *ad hominem* attacks are often screened out, along with profanity and other strong language.

The moderator has several choices after receiving an intended posting. The first is to send the posting unchanged to the forum. The second is to post portions of the posting, omitting irrelevant or inflammatory remarks. If parts of the posting are deleted, it's customary to indicate where the deleted material had appeared and why the material was deleted. If the moderator interjects his or her comments into the posting, the changed portions must be made obvious to avoid any confusion as to authorship of the various sections. The third option is to not post the article and send it back to the author along with the reasons why the article was rejected and what would be needed to make it acceptable. In some cases, aspects of the posting might be unclear or confusing to the moderator. In those situations, the moderator will raise the issues with the author, who can then rewrite the posting and try submitting it again.

It is generally recognised that moderated forums have higher-quality material—called a 'high signal-to-noise ratio' in techno-slang—than unmoderated ones and have fewer digressions and

flaming. The responsibilities of a moderator can be very demanding, as the moderator must read every posting that is submitted to the forum. Moderators have the sometimes difficult chore of justifying their decisions to users whose contributions have been rejected. For that reason, and for the integrity of the entire community network, it is the responsibility of the moderator to articulate a clear policy for forum submissions.

Chat and IRC

While e-mail or posting notes to electronic forums is analogous to sending letters to individuals or to a newspaper, the chat capability offered on many community networks is more like a telephone conversation, with the keyboard serving as a mouthpiece. With char, a user can type at the keyboard and the text is displayed on the terminals of all people who are also currently chatting. The capability often exists on community networks as well as on commercial systems like America Online, where it is frequently used as a social-opportunity on-line singles bar.

Internet Relay Chat or IRC is the equivalent of chat except that anybody on the Internet with the IRC software participate over any number of 'channels,' generally named for the topic to which the channel is dedicated. Although IRC, like chat, is often used for 'idle' conversation, it has also been used as a way lo rapidly disseminate information on a current events. Because chat is often used for conversation and has been used for flirtations conversation, it is sometimes considered frivolous by developers or not worth overcoming its costs and hence not instituted or even removed from the system after being in operation for some lime. However idle or potentially problematical the chat capabilities are for the community-network organisation chat systems offer informal conversational capabilities that are needed in convivial, community settings.

Navigating and Searching

When the amount of information increases to the extent that there

is information of interest to everybody, it will necessarily contain more and more information not of interest for an individual person. As the community network becomes larger, the issue of finding information of specific interest becomes simultaneously more important and more difficult. The related issue of navigating through the system as quickly and as effectively as possible also becomes more important, and more difficult.

In the traditional community network, users navigate through the system via a series of menus. At each menu, there are one or more choices that a user can make. Some choices will cause information to he displayed, some choices initiate actions like opening n mail or forum reader, white other choices bring up additional menus. This series of menus can be arbitrarily deep. Navigation through menus is a serviceable method of locating the desired information or service on a community network. It is a method that new users can rapidly comprehend and use. It's not without drawbacks, however.

Ideally, a community network should support browsing as well as searching. Although a Free Port user can get a list of all the go commands which provides some type of global view of the system, there is very little support for a directed search, in which a user is looking for specific information. A community network should have at least one type of search capability. This capability would allow a user to focus in immediately on information in the system even though the location is unknown. Generally a user indicates that he or she wants to search for information and then must provide some indication on what is being sought. Sometimes the user also indicates the range of the search.

The user interface to a community network ideally supports many ways for users to accomplish their goals. Terse or complex ways to find and manipulate information may be ideal for experts, whereas menus may be sufficient for inexperienced users. The user interface should also support the complementary

modes of searching and browsing: Sometimes a user is looking for something precise—the time and location of the neighbourhood Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, for example. Sometimes the user is just curious about the system and wants to casually amble around, heading down paths that happen to be appealing at the moment.

FTP, Telnet, Gopher, and Other Internet Tools

FTP and Telnet are the two applications that have traditionally formed the backbone of intensive Internet applications. FTP, which stands for File Transfer Protocol, allows a user to connect to another computer on the Internet, list or retrieve files on the remote computer, or transfer files from the local computer to the remote computer. People often set up extensive FTP 'sites' where information can be made more widely available to other users. It is common practice to set up public FTP site where 'anonymous' is the login name and the user's e-mail address is the password. The Telnet program enables a user with an account on another computer to connect to the other computer and interact with it as if directly connected. Many community-network systems allow users ID Telnet to them and login as 'visitor.' Some community networks also allow users to Telnet out of the community-network system, but this is often limited to a prè-selected number of other community-network sites.

A wide range of other Internet tools that were developed for the most part by universities are becoming available; these have the potential to be used with community-network systems. Many of these tools have names from the Archie comics family: Archie (for locating files on the Internet), Veronica (a searching agent that's used with Gopher), and Jughead (which is similar to Veronica). Gopher is a network retrieval tool that provides access to files, online phone books, library catalogs, information stored in WAIS databases, Usenet news, e-mail directories, and Archie servers, all contained in one easy to use interface.

MUDs

A MUD (standing nominally for Multi-User Dungeon or Multi-User Dimension) is software that allows multiple users to connect over a network to a shared 'text-based virtual reality', creating a social setting that Howard Rheingold characterises as a "virtual water cooler" (1993). This type of computer-mediated communication (CMC) allows users to communicate with each other and also to add and modify 'objects' (such as 'rooms', 'notices', or other programmable 'things'), which other users can then interact with.

MUDs are text-based and users interact with each other using a simple language that is reminiscent of older text-based computer games like Adventure. For example, a user can type in look and the system will print out the text description of the 'location' of the person. If the description of the location contains a sign. Based on the sign's text (printed on the screen) the user might type go east, go up, or other commands, to change locations within the MUD.

From a technical point-of-view, merging, MUDs and community networks is not overly daunting. One approach would be just to use the MUD software, with minor modifications, as the community-network software. The rooms of the MUD world would become buildings in the community network. Moving from one location to another with Free Port software is accomplished with go, same as with many MUDs. A MUD 'note' could be the Free Point menu, containing a list of other locations. This note would serve as the location description that MUDs usually employ. All the MUD commands would be operational, so somebody in the Public Safety Building could communicate with other people that were in the building. If there were no other occupants, the person could leave a 'note' there for others to read later, asking a question, making a comments, or suggesting a time when people could 'meet' in the room and communicate. It would be interesting to build special-purpose MUDs for community use that incorporated democratic protocols or new objects that would be useful in supporting

the new community, for example, agendas, resolutions, petitions, or soapboxes.

Filters and Agents

Developers are current designing new types of software that may permanently demolish the notion that network media is analogous to non-network media. These new types of software will enable users to develop environments and applications that are more capable of being tailored to the user's own needs; this effort might include setting up new and idiosyncratic services that will act in the user's behalf. Thus a user could receive a regular electronic 'magazine' that contained only articles on pre-selected topics. At the same time, commercial vendors will be spending large amounts of resources on environments and applications that meet their needs with the citizen or user as the intended target.

Filters, especially mail filters, are at the low end of technological sophistication. Mail filter allow the e-mail recipient to set up rules to deal with his or her e-mail. At the simplest level, this takes the form of a 'hozo filter' lo delete upon receipt any e-mail received from anybody on the user's list of 'bozos', generally people that have flamed, threatened, berated, or otherwise earned the wrath of the intended recipient A more extreme version of the bozo filter is also possible. With this approach, the intended recipient makes a list of people that he or she will accept mail from, and all other mail is deleted. For example, the recipient could accept all mail emanating from specified companies, networks, or machines. Note that in this version, it is entirely possible to disallow a lot of e-mail that a user might really want to receive, such as e-mail from a friend or relative who just established a new e-mail account. In many—but not all—cases, the sender of a rejected message would receive an electronic reply stating that the mail filter rejected the message.

Moving slightly up the technological ladder are e-mail filters that process the contents of the e-mail in some way, generally to

automate routine tasks like sorting the mail into appropriate mail folders. Mail from relatives might go into a personal folder and mail from the boss into an urgent folder, for example. A full discussion of processing e-mail is beyond the scope of this book, but the idea does have implications for the community network because collecting e-mail testimony, tabulating votes from an online meeting, tabulating survey results, and many other e-mail processing activities are directly e-mail or computational e-mail hold similar potential for structuring communication and for building interactivity into e-mail messages.

'Agents' are a still more unusual software technology. At their most exotic, they're envisioned as being as competent as humans that serve as round-the-clock, unpaid, artificially intelligent assistants. Although many people blithely assume that agents will exist in a few year; or so, their existence in this most advanced form depends on developers solving many of the problems that the field of artificial intelligence has largely abandoned, such as how to automatically extract 'meaning' from text. In a more prosaic form, an agent could be employed to scan an on-line newspaper every day for news on a given topic, say, Romania, and the excerpts then could be e-mailed to the agent's owner. While this would provide handy assistance, it is by no means intelligent and shouldn't be considered in any way as a substitute for a trained-human-librarian or researcher. Such an agent might constrain its results too much so that potentially interesting information is not returned. On the other hand, an under-constrained search might produce a mountain of unwanted information. Agents can also search through archives of material in many ways as well as range through a wide variety of archives.

Index