

# COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS



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## Media Literacy

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# Media Education, Media Literacy

## Editor's Introduction

The Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture (CSCC—established in 1979), the founder and originator of COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS, became involved in media education early on in its existence, in the 1980s. Located in London, the Centre forged connections with the very lively British media education movement, headed by Len Masterman and others. Initially involved in reviewing and promoting research, helping with some conferences, and collecting and examining media education practices from various parts of the world, the Centre took on a much greater role under the leadership of John Pungente, S.J.

During his time as a visiting fellow at the Centre (1983-1985), Pungente, already involved in the media education movement in Canada, spent a year visiting practitioners and programs around the world. From this research, he published *Getting Started in Media Education* (London: Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, 1985). Returning to Canada, Pungente continued the work in media education, authoring resource guides for the government of Ontario and a textbook for 11–15 year olds; he has also worked to promote media education in the context of the Jesuit schools around the world. Among his many other works, Pungente founded the Jesuit Communication Project to promote media education across Canada. The group's website notes, "The Jesuit Communication Project (JCP) is working in response to this call [for media education] by providing a variety of resources and services for teachers, parents, church groups, school boards, students, and other interested groups. The goal is to encourage, promote, and develop Media Education across Canada."

After Pungente's work at the CSCC, the Centre focused its media education work primarily in the United Kingdom, among the Jesuit schools. In addition, it published a review of media education research in 1992 (COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS, volume 13, number 2).

This issue of TRENDS returns to the topic, noting with Professor Kamerer the development of media education into media literacy. The name acknowledges the reality that children and young people face not just

communication media like television and film in their world, but a range of screen technologies, most driven by the digital revolution. Despite all the talk of "digital natives," young people still need some guidance in the face of this world of communication—a literacy in these new media.

At the same time, the United States lagged behind much of the world in any kind of media education or media literacy, for reasons that Professor Kamerer discusses in his review essay. Restricting himself to U.S. approaches, he first provides a brief history of the impetus for media study in the United States and then identifies some common approaches before turning to the more current work in computer or digital literacy. He concludes his essay with a review of recent empirical studies that focus on media literacy.

This issue of TRENDS also presents some supplementary material assembled by its staff. First, we offer a short list of websites (most in the United States, in keeping with the focus on Kamerer's review) that promote media literacy. These range from long-established centers to material provided by media content producers such as the Discovery Channel. Many of them have extensive lists of resources. Second, we offer some additional bibliographic material: reviews, studies, and policy discussions published in the last 10 years. The first section lists some literature reviews, while the second presents material relevant to digital literacy. The third section offers a sampling of work describing media literacy around the world. The last section lists research studies and policy debates, extending what Kamerer presents in the sixth part of his own review of the literature.

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# Media Literacy

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## 1. Prologue

Senator William Proxmire, D-Wisconsin, famously made fun of government waste with his “Golden Fleece” awards, which were “given to the biggest, most ridiculous or most ironic example of government waste.” In December 1978, he selected the United States Office of Education:

For spending \$219,592 to develop a “curriculum package” to teach college students how to watch television. The product of the contract, according to its recipient, will enable college students to “. . . distinguish between television’s fact and fiction, recognize its various viewpoints, and evaluate its messages.”

Under its Special Projects Act, the Office of Education—which has in fact developed some outstanding programs, like *Sesame Street* and the *Electric Company*—has let four contracts totaling \$823,651 to develop “critical television viewing skills” at the elementary, middle, secondary, and post-secondary school levels. Another \$800,000 to train teachers and distribute the materials developed and tested in phase one is contemplated. In view of the amount of violence on television or the attempt of advertisers to aim commercials at children, there may be some justification for the elementary, middle, or secondary proposals. But the spending of \$219,000 for the college program gets such low ratings it should be cancelled. (Wisconsin State Historical Society, 2013)

Proxmire’s award had the effect of marginalizing the field of media literacy education in the public’s mind. While media literacy and education has deep roots, the field grew substantially in the 1960s, bringing together disparate elements including film theory, access to new tools such as videotape, and new ideas from scholars such as Marshall McLuhan, largely played out in classrooms from primary school to college.

Proxmire’s news release continued:

The grant raises a whole series of issues. Should the government be involved in developing curricula to teach students how to watch the mass media? If needed, why shouldn’t it be done by individual university faculties to fit their own specific needs? Why shouldn’t the materials be developed and produced by one of the many private textbook publishing houses? Is it clear that college students are, in fact, watching too much television or that they are unable to criticize it intelligently? Should the federal government be offering inducements for the proliferation of new courses to substitute for the limited time students have for fundamental subjects?

In my view, in this period of inflation and budget stringency the money should not be spent at all.

This criticism has been revisited many times by media literacy advocates. If media literacy education is added to a curriculum, then what should be removed? What ages are appropriate for this kind of instruction? And where is the natural home of media literacy education? English classes have proven popular, in part due to the affinity of film and television for fictional narratives. And media literacy education has been found in media production classes, “American studies,” and other social science classes. But others have advocated that media literacy education should be taught across the curriculum.

When Proxmire gave his Golden Fleece award, media literacy education was growing for a reason. Media had become pervasive in society, and media use was on the rise. Consider how television had grown by the end of the 1970s: the average screen size had increased to 21 inches; cable television was in 16 million homes; the remote control empowered viewers; half of all homes had multiple televisions; and the television became a connecting point for video games and video cassette recorders (Carey, 2002). According to Nielsen, the average household had a set on for 6 hours and 36 minutes a day in 1980 (TVB, 2013).

Examined from another perspective, America had just experienced the Viet Nam war, the first “living room war” played out on television. America witnessed the Kennedy assassination, the civil rights movement, and the explosion of youth culture, all on television. TV had become the cultural glue that held society together.

So, while it may have been a good time for media literacy education, the Golden Fleece award sent it into decline. The award was followed by a new “back to basics” curriculum advocated by Ronald Reagan’s

Secretary of Education William Bennett. Next, a recession further decreased Federal support for media literacy education in the early 1980s (Heins & Cho, 2002). In its place rose a heightened interest in computer literacy, which was seen to have vocational value; it was a “hard” skill compared to the “soft” skills of critically examining media messages. It would take some time, but media literacy education would eventually re-emerge, as digital and social media would eventually redefine the concept of media.

## 2. What is Media Literacy Education?

Media education (the term generally used in the United Kingdom; in the U.S. “media literacy” is more common) is “the knowledge, skills, and competencies required in order to use and interpret media” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 36). Hobbs states that “most conceptualizations of media literacy now involve a type of ‘critical’ literacy based on reflection, analysis, and evaluation, not only of the content and structural elements of specific media texts but of the social, economic, political, and historical contexts in which messages are created, disseminated, and used by audiences” (Hobbs, 2005, p. 866). In a textbook widely used in college classes, Potter writes, “Taking control is what media literacy is all about. Becoming more media literate gives you a much clearer perspective to see the border between your real world and the world manufactured by the media. When you are media literate, you have clear maps to help you navigate better in the media world so that you can get to those experiences and information you want without becoming distracted by those things that are harmful to you” (2013, p. 10).

A monograph published by UNESCO defines media literacy as:

The process of assimilating and using the codes involved in the contemporary media system as well as the operative skills needed to properly use the technological systems on which these codes are based [and as] the capacity to access, analyze and evaluate the power of the images, sounds, and messages with which we are faced every day and which play an important role in contemporary culture. It includes the individual capacity to communicate using the media competently. Media literacy concerns all media,

including television, film, radio, and recorded music, the press, the Internet, and any other digital communication technology. . . . They share the idea that media literacy is a basic skill, one that supports many others and that it therefore should not solely be taught as a specific field of knowledge, nor simply as a skill, nor as a collective practice. (Pérez Tornero & Varis, 2010)

Hobbs shared an applied model of media literacy, developed by high school teacher Joanne McGlynn. It asks students to answer these five questions when reflecting on a text, such as a film, commercial, or television show:

- Who is sending the message and what is the author’s purpose?
- What techniques are used to attract and hold attention?
- What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in this message?
- How might different people interpret this message differently?
- What is omitted from this message? (2007, p. 9)

These questions express the range of media literacy education. For example, one thread that many have pursued is the notion of learning production skills. By learning to “construct” meaning in a text, the student implicitly also learns to “deconstruct” messages received through the mass media. Some researchers have additionally endorsed media production as a way to encourage teamwork and collaborative problem solving.

Another thread has to do with the economic base of media; this kind of education helps students understand the economic motives behind media messages.

For example, while most understand that newspapers are in the business of disseminating news, an economic analysis would teach that the “news hole” in a newspaper is the space that’s left after the ads are placed in a layout—that fundamentally, newspapers are in the business of accumulating an audience to sell to advertisers.

Representation in the media is another area frequently addressed by media literacy education. What’s included in the message, and what’s left out? For example, packaged foods or fast foods are frequently represented in commercials, while fresh or non-branded foods are seldom shown. How does this influence what children eat or want to eat? Representation also looks at the prevalence of different groups in the mass media, such as ethnic groups, ages, genders, as well as how members of these groups are portrayed in the narratives.

Access is an area of media literacy education that has grown in importance, as digital media have become part of the information landscape. To understand the access dimension, consider reading a book. To read, one access element is to understand the language. Another is knowing that the story is told in linear fashion, working from the front to the back. While we may take these things for granted, it’s a large part of successfully using digital media. Here, access can relate to finding information, using search engines, using plug-ins to access content, downloading information, or using a database.

#### *A. The need today: Our media-saturated culture*

Media have come to dominate our daily lives so much that one analyst, Steve Rubel from public relations firm Edelman, has coined a term for the malady of the age: the attention crash. Writing in 2007, Rubel noted:

In-boxes, smart phones, and IM windows are overflowing. Always-on connections, mobile devices, and new publishing tools have expanded the media we consume to include content from peers. Further, new networks and platforms for participation are sprouting up and going supernova overnight, with no end in sight.

The problem is that human attention, unlike technology, has limits. There are only so many digital inputs we can realistically pay quality attention to in our busy, multitasked lives. Demands for our attention have outstripped our finite supply of time. A crash is coming, folks. But this time it’s not financial—it’s personal. (2007)

Despite our daily need to work, sleep and eat, media use dominates how we spend our days. The three main categories of media use today are television, computers, and mobile devices.

While the impact of digital media is large and growing, “The TV screen remains the dominant platform on which to consume content,” in the U.S., according to an AC Nielsen report from the last quarter of 2011 (2012a). Including new program sources (such as watching a movie on a game box), the average American watches nearly five hours of video a day, 98% on a traditional television.

Computer use is tricky to assess, because many applications—such as writing—are not media use per se. Social networking is the most prevalent media use on computers today. According to Nielsen, in late 2011, the average man in the U.S. spent six hours and 13 minutes on social networking on a PC in a month, with an additional six hours and 44 minutes social networking on a mobile device. For women, these numbers are even higher, with eight hours and 37 minutes on the PC and nine hours and 43 minutes on a mobile device. These numbers are a moving target; according to Nielsen, between July 2011 and July 2012, desktop social networking declined 4% while mobile access from an app increased by 85% and mobile browser access increased 82%.

The largest social network by far is Facebook, with more than 152 million unique monthly visitors in the U.S. (Nielsen, 2012b). Examined in the aggregate, Facebook is the number two website in the U.S. with daily reach of almost 45% of the U.S. population. The average of time on this single site is more than 29 minutes a day. Other social networks ranked in the top 20 U.S. websites include YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Tumblr (Alexa, 2013).

Since so much media literacy education focuses on children, it’s worthwhile to break out juvenile media use. In 2009 the Kaiser Family Foundation surveyed children ages 8–18, and found that children engage with media an average of 10 hours and 45 minutes a day. While television dominates (4 hours, 29 minutes) there’s also a mix of activities, including music/audio (2 hours, 31 minutes), computer (1 hour, 29 minutes) and video games (1 hour, 13 minutes) that all may be done on the same digital hub, the home computer. The study found media use by children had increased by almost two and a quarter hours daily in just five years. Print media is a small part of the diet, constituting only

38 minutes a day, including only three minutes with a newspaper (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010).

The Kaiser study also found a large increase in mobile media use. Mobile use helped boost overall media consumption, and also increased multitasking of media. In five years mobile phone ownership increased from 39% to 66%, portable music player ownership increased from 18% to 76%. Compared to five years ago, mobile video game playing increased by 24 minutes a day and mobile music listening increased by 47 minutes.

### *B. Qualitative changes brought about by digital media*

The pervasiveness of digital media is but one reason to encourage media literacy education. Digital media also rewrites much of what we know about mediated messages.

Because barriers to entry are low, anyone can publish. The self-published content mixes freely with mainstream news and entertainment sites. A consumer can choose to receive news from a respected journalism site like NYTimes.com, a comedy site like TheDailyShow.com, or from an advocate site that presents limited information from an ideological frame. While they all may look legitimate, not all adhere to the traditional canons of journalism. Evaluating the quality of information on a site is a learned skill. And a source of noise in social channels occurs when people share information they have not personally confirmed or that comes from sites of unknown quality.

The very nature of journalism is changed when people get their breaking news from social feeds like Twitter. While it can be useful to witness political events in the words of those involved, such as the Arab

Spring, and while many credible journalists use Twitter, individual messages from people you don't know are of very little value (see, for example, Howard, et al., 2011).

The means of financial support for digital channels is often not clear, yet may guide the content they publish. It's common for bloggers to receive free products, trips, or money in exchange for a flattering post, yet sites seldom tell their readers about this material connection. Many bloggers also participate in affiliate programs in which they receive a kickback when a reader purchases a product under review. Celebrities may tweet about brands for a fee, not always disclosing that the tweet is a commercial (see Davis & Gilbert, 2011, for a discussion of FTC rules on this issue). Review sites have been compromised by fake reviews, written by people who have a personal stake in a business's success or failure (Streitfeld, 2011).

Access issues are also worth addressing in the digital domain. The web and digital technology is inherently complicated and changes quickly. Phishing, distributed denial of service attacks, copyright infringement, advertiser tracking, search engine manipulation, hacking, and identity theft are part of everyday life online.

Beyond these dimensions of media literacy education lie questions of greater importance: Does our media exposure improve our knowledge? Help us in our daily lives? Make us better people? Here is the biggest payoff for media literacy education: by improving our choices and better understanding the content that we consume, people can put all of those hours of exposure to work in the pursuit of a richer life, family, and culture.

## **3. The Growth of Media Culture**

When parents first taught their children, the lessons were immediate and practical: how to plant, harvest, build, repair. As our society became industrialized, education was given over to public or private schools, which offered a Eurocentric world view today often derided as "dead white male" education. By 1917, all U.S. states had compulsory attendance schools in place. Curricula featured Greek, Latin, Euro-centric classical literature, math, and science.

In the early 20th century, popular culture may have been the talk of the playground, but it was not a

subject for study at school. Indeed, many authorities were mistrustful of new technology and voiced concern over widespread adoption. For example, composer John Philip Sousa railed against Edison's recording device, saying "The time is coming when no one will be ready to submit himself to the ennobling discipline of learning music . . . everyone will have their ready made or ready pirated music in their cupboards" (Ross, 2005).

While we take mass culture for granted today, at the beginning of the 20th century there were very few mediated experiences that helped to create a common

culture. Newspapers were the primary transmission of news information. Much of our musical culture was transmitted through sheet music performed at home on the piano, or by traveling acts on the vaudeville circuit.

But early in the 20th century, several technological innovations—audio recording, cinema, and radio—became part of everyday life. The second half of the century brought us television. In each case, while the technology may have been jaw-dropping, it was through mass adoption that the technology affected our culture.

#### A. Audio recording

Thomas Edison developed the first cylinder recording apparatus in 1877, and through his own company and through licenses with companies like Columbia Records, spurred the sale of both cylinders and players. By the 1910s, flat disc recordings became more prominent. In 1904, Caruso's recording of *Vesti la Giubba* from Pagliacci was recorded. It would eventually become the first million-selling sound recording. Both classical and contemporary music were popular sellers, and by 1921, annual sales were more than 47 million. The rise of radio put a dent in sales of recorded music, however. Still, by 1929, 34 million recordings were sold annually (Lesk, 2003, p. 74).

#### B. Cinema

Early experiments with cinema took place in the late 19th century, with Edison first demonstrating his kinetoscope in 1894 and the Lumiere brothers projecting an early film, *L'Arrivée d'un Train en Gare de la Ciotat*, in 1895. One of the first "hit" movies, Thomas S. Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, was made in 1903 and was a full 12 minutes long. From that point, the movies grew quickly, both as an art form and in terms of cultural influence: Griffith's full-length feature, *The Birth of a Nation*, premiered in 1915. Charles Chaplin became a huge star in the late teens with his two-reel comedies; his masterpiece feature *The Gold Rush* was made in 1925. "Talkies," led by the Warner Brothers film *The Jazz Singer*, began to be popular in 1927. Movie attendance grew to 80 million a week by 1930; during the Great Depression people may have been broke, but they still used their scarce nickels and dimes to buy movie tickets (Pautz, 2002).

#### C. Radio

Radio began as a hobbyist medium, with operators building their own sets so they could transmit as well as receive audio information. As radio's populari-

ty grew, people began to purchase receive-only radio sets to listen in on other people's broadcasts. Department stores that sold radios would set up a station of their own to drive sales of receivers. The long-term success of radio would depend upon creating a commercial base for the programming. In the 1920s the advertiser-supported model became pervasive, leading the way for the growth of CBS and the two NBC radio networks, which came to dominate listener time and attention. Rural electrification in the 1930s helped create more radio homes away from the cities. By 1930, 40% of all homes had a radio; by 1938, radio penetration had jumped to 82%.

By the 1930s, mediated culture had transformed American life. Americans all listened to the same recording artists—Bing Crosby and Rudy Vallee; they all listened to the same radio shows—Amos 'n' Andy and Gene Autry; and they all went to theatres to see the same movie stars—James Cagney and Marlene Dietrich.

Thus, while Americans still studied Shakespeare and Longfellow in school, they spent far more time with Jack Benny and The Lone Ranger.

#### D. Media education history

While school curricula were largely unaffected by this cultural transformation, authors and advocacy groups made the case for their preferred media. Baker has identified educational media artifacts dating back to the early 20th century (Baker, n.d.). In 1917, Ernest A. Dench published a book, *Motion Picture Education*. The 1922 book *Film: Its use in popular education*, noted that "The children of to-day are such habitual Cinema-goers that too much cinematograph is to be discouraged, but the film used in proper perspective in the schools will excite and increase interest in science, industry, art, geography, travel, history, biography, and literature" (Jackson-Wrigley, 1922, p. 11). One suggested use, for composition, could have been taken from a contemporary media literacy course: "... a portion of the story be shown, and that when the children have returned to the school they should be asked to invent a title or to summarize the film as far as it has been shown, and complete it according to their own ideas. At a future sitting the remaining portion of the film would be exhibited and the children would then compare it with their own efforts" (pp. 27-28).

The predominant flavor of media literacy education in the early 20th century took the form of educators advocating use of media in education, such as that

offered by *Educational Screen*, a magazine launched in 1922, that:

... is published to give American education, and every American who believes education important, the thing that they have needed ever since the so-called "visual movement" started—namely, a magazine devoted to the educational cause and to no other; a magazine distinctly intellectual and critical, rather than commercial and propagandist; a magazine written and produced exclusively by those whose scholarly training, experience qualify them to discuss educational matters. (Seattler, 2004, p. 163)

Outside of schools, some communities, churches, or other organizations formed their own listener guilds to advise members on quality programs to listen to and advocate for certain kinds of programs. This kind of organization would eventually become common for public church-licensed stations across the U.S.

In the 1960s the formal study of film became a new subject of instruction in schools, particularly in English classes, where films were examined alongside traditional narrative forms like novels and plays. During this time, film scholarship increased in quality and quantity. While earlier books like Knight's *The Liveliest Art* (1957) were mostly descriptive histories, new scholarship offered ways to understand how films created meaning within cultural or aesthetic contexts. While films are generally a commercial product created by a team of technicians, the auteur theory, popularized by Andrew Sarris (1968), held that the director was most often the author of a film, and that some directors developed styles of themes, storytelling structures, or plastic elements that could be distinctly personal. For example, Orson Welles, trained in the theatre, often used long takes and deep focus to develop a scene, using camera and actor movement to create meaning. As an illustration of a thematic interpretation of auteur theory, consider how director Frank Capra used fables of the common man to show triumph over the adverse economic conditions of the 1930s economic depression in films like *It Happened One Night* and *Meet John Doe*.

Genre theory, borrowing from earlier structuralist analyses like Cawelti's *The Six Gun Mystique* (1971), held that genres implicitly promised audiences certain narrative structures and motifs, which could be respected for a classic film, or stretched to create new kinds of meaning. For example, one structure implicit in the

film musical is the story of discovered romance, then working through antagonism and conflict on the way to a mythical marriage, symbolically consummated by dancing at the end. While this is the structure of all Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers films, the genre was tweaked in 1940's *The Barkleys of Broadway*, which begins with the couple married and bickering. Film westerns grew darker and more complex in the 1960s as a reflection of a more complicated, ambiguous world. These kinds of structures were explored by Kaminsky (1974) and Feuer (1982).

Schatz (1988), building on both auteur theory and genre theory, looked at institutional constraints and opportunities, making the case that the studio can be the "author" of certain films.

Film theory became more accessible, as early works by authors like Sergei Eisenstein (1949) and Andre Bazin (1967) were reprinted and read in the classroom. Students could read about Eisenstein's theories of montage, then create their own short 8mm films to test them. Many a baby carriage has been pushed down the steps and filmed by students, eager to recreate the Odessa Steps sequence from the film *Battleship Potemkin*. Indeed, this very homage has appeared in feature films created by authors who formally studied film theory, history, and criticism, ranging from Woody Allen (*Love and Death*) and Brian de Palma (*The Untouchables*). Films on videotape or videodisc could be viewed repeatedly and analyzed in slow motion or frame-by-frame. Films became more widely available, as schools built libraries of films on tape and as video rental stores sprouted across the country. For the first time it was possible for an enthusiast to own a collection of favorite films.

Foreign and independent filmmakers, trained in film theory and criticism and taking advantage of lower cost 16mm cameras and a larger independent film distribution system, put these principles into action in feature films that reached ever-larger audiences. In France, Jean Luc Godard and Francois Truffaut started their careers as film writers at the journal *Les Cahiers du Cinema*. Godard's first feature film, *Breathless*, a deconstruction of the American gangster film genre, is filled with reflexive elements, like intentional jump cuts or scenes in which the characters directly address the camera. In the U.S., a new kind of filmmaker, trained in film school, became influential. Many of the "American New Wave," including filmmakers George

Lucas, Francis Ford Coppola, and Martin Scorsese, attended film school.

Studying films or television provided one path to greater media literacy. But others found value in teaching production work. In the mid-1960s, *Media Now*, a pioneer program in Red Oak, Iowa, arose out of the need to share audio-visual resources across several school districts. *Media Now* was developed by middle school teacher Bill Horner and AV specialist Ron Curtis, who received grant money to curate audiovisual resources and to develop original materials. By 1968 the focus turned to developing a high school curriculum. The program eventually comprised a student workbook, a student book of readings, a teacher guide, a media dictionary, and a library of 50 hands-on exercises, which were physically shipped to participating schools. According to Jensen, “the package on ‘Lighting’ contained a Styrofoam head plus a book of activities on how to light it for various emotional effects (dramatic, scary, etc.) The ‘Basic Camera’ package included a kit to make your own camera plus a hand viewer to look at your film!” (2002).

*Media Now* was based upon seven modules: media hardware, media production, media genre, media evaluation, media interpretation, media aesthetics, and media presentation. The modules could be flexibly deployed in a semester-long course, as part of a related course, or as independent study materials.

Fellow Iowan, media activist, and Federal Communications Commissioner Nicholas Johnson facilitated a grant that allowed *Media Now* to scale nationally. The program was eventually used in 500 school districts across the nation.

An evaluation study of *Media Now* by Curtis (1975) found that after completing the program, “student usage of media had improved attitudes toward school and that students selected a greater diversity of program types” (p. 1).

Inspired by the work of Marshall McLuhan, John Culkin, S. J., in 1964 wrote a film studies curriculum as part of earning the doctorate in the school of Education at Harvard University. Culkin developed a relationship with McLuhan, popularized his work, and helped bring him to Fordham University, where Culkin served on the faculty. There he developed a curriculum that brought inquiry about film, television, and other mass media into humanities and arts courses. In 1969 Culkin left Fordham and found-

ed The Center for Understanding Media, a stand-alone organization dedicated to teaching media literacy education. Through this organization, Culkin was able to reach a national audience with his ideas about media literacy education.

One program that Culkin’s organization eventually reached was the Mamaroneck school system in suburban New York. A “perfect storm” of the right change agents in the school system (including a principal with a background in educational radio), progressive parents (many active in the arts), and a state grant helped purchase a complete television studio and distribution system in 1966. What made the Mamaroneck experiment stand out was that, while television was used to distribute traditional teaching, it was primarily used as an “instrument of writing” (Moody, 1999). Children produced diverse shows, including news, instruction, and arts programs. Some of the positive outcomes were unanticipated: a dyslexic student found his first success in school through television production, while another used television to learn to speak without stuttering. In 1970, The Center for Understanding Media helped secure a \$123,043 grant from the Ford Foundation to “to develop a school program to promote understanding media, especially television, film and photography. The new course was intended to draw upon skills, resources, and teaching experience which was at that time spread across the English, Music, and Art departments. Students would learn to analyze the media in terms of aesthetic, economical, sociologic and psychological” factors (Moody, 1999, p. 98). Photography, film and television were included, and the curriculum was broadened to reach more students. While there was no formal evaluation, anecdotal evidence presented by Moody suggests the program to be successful.

While the Red Oak and Mamaroneck programs have received the most attention, countless educators across the country brought media literacy education to their students through production work and critical analysis assignments. But these educators often worked along, blazing their own trails. But scholars started addressing the issues in more formal ways, often with empirical tests heralding a new maturity. While individuals used media literacy education in limited, applied ways, the new scholarship helped define the breadth of the field and disseminate best practices. It also helped to legitimize the study of media literacy education in the classroom.

## 4. Searching for Commonality

In Buckingham's view, the key concepts around media education are production, language, representation, and audiences. "Production" is based upon the concept that "media texts are consciously manufactured" (2003, p. 54). At the heart of an inquiry on production is research and a close look at the economic motives for creating the message. "Language" includes both verbal languages as well as semiotic ones; the general "rules" for constructing meaning in a given medium, as for example, in editing a film, increasing tension by alternating shots and speeding up the pace of cutting between them. Or, in cinematography, by suggesting psychological isolation for a character by shooting her with a telephoto lens with shallow depth of field. "Representation" has to do with presentation of stereotypes, what is shown and what is omitted from the message, or bias and objectivity evident in the message. "Audiences" has to do with how the audience is addressed, which groups are targeted by the message, how the audience finds and uses the text in its daily life.

Kellner & Share (2007) divide the field of media education into four different approaches. The "powerful media" model is ascribed to Postman (1985). This view holds that the media (television in particular) are powerful in part because audiences are passive, and also because of the time and attention our culture gives media messages.

The second approach is through media arts education—the notion that learning to construct media messages implicitly teaches media literacy. The authors note that while learning media production can be valuable, it is not sufficient to teach media literacy without a critical orientation, noting "Many of these programs tend to unproblematically teach students the technical skills to merely reproduce hegemonic representations with little awareness of ideological implications or any type of social critique" (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 61).

The third approach, media literacy movement, "attempts to expand the notion of literacy to include popular culture and multiple forms of media (music, video, Internet, advertising, etc.) while still working within a print literacy tradition" (p. 61). This tradition is criticized for being too objective and neutral, rather than being an agent of change, a hostage of its "con-

servative base that does not engage the political dimensions of education and especially literacy" (p. 61).

Critical media literacy, the fourth approach, combines elements of the previous three, "but focuses on ideology critique and analyzing the politics of representation of crucial dimensions of gender, race, class, and sexuality; incorporating alternative media production; and expanding textual analysis to include issues of social context, control, resistance, and pleasure" (p. 62). The audience here is viewed as active and always exploring the link between power and information.

Taking a more applied position, Hobbs (2011) uses "five communication competencies as fundamental literacy practices that are now part of learning across all the subject areas" (p. 12). These are:

- **ACCESS.** Finding and sharing appropriate and relevant information and using media texts and technology tools well.
  - **ANALYZE.** Using critical thinking to analyze message purpose, target audience, quality, veracity, credibility, point of view, and potential effects or consequences of messages.
  - **CREATE.** Composing or generating content using creativity and confidence in self-expression, with awareness of purpose, audience and composition techniques.
  - **REFLECT.** Considering the impact of media messages and technology tools upon our thinking and actions in daily life and applying social responsibility and ethical principles to our own identity, communication behavior, and conduct.
  - **ACT.** Working individually and collaboratively to share knowledge and solve problems in the family, the workplace, and the community, and participating as a member of a community at local, regional, national, and international levels. (p. 12)
- "Access is always media specific" writes Hobbs (2011, p. 13). For example, video production involves disparate activities such as formatting a memory chip, learning to focus a zoom lens, connecting a microphone, and exporting footage to a computer. These "basic competencies" are necessary but not sufficient conditions for making a successful video. Hobbs notes "most of us tend to learn the access skills we need to use on a day-to-day basis . . . both teachers

and students need time to play with the new tools, messing around and exploring so that they can continue to develop particular access skills when they need them” (p. 14).

The “analyze” dimension is the most multi-dimensional. Hobbs says this is “considering the author, purpose, and point of view to understand how they are constructed and the assumptions that underpin them” (p. 14). Multiple, sometimes overlapping critical approaches can be used. A feminist reading of a music video? Sure. A Marxist analysis of the financial support of a blog? You bet. A Freudian reading of a Hitchcock film? Fair game. This openness also leads to some of media literacy’s biggest criticisms. When an English class works through Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and then watches a film of it on Friday as a reward, there’s no explicit analysis involved. There’s such broad room for analysis, one must put a lot of trust in the educator. Critics argue that this approach lacks rigor or structure.

Analysis can be daunting because it will “inevitably involve issues of values and ideology” (Hobbs, 2011, p. 15). This “embedded point of view” can create conflict when values collide. For example, a documentary on hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” may seem anti-environment to some, while against domestic energy production to another.

The “communicate” dimension goes back to the roots to the media literacy movement. The idea here is

to learn the codes that create meaning in a text, implicitly making them more transparent when they’re encountered in an existing text. For example, a student may learn that a shot composed with a low camera angle makes a character appear more powerful. After making a film, the student may be more aware of camera angles in films and television shows.

The “reflect” dimension offers an opportunity to consider ethics and social responsibility in media messages. This might include inquiry into digital etiquette, ethics of remixing or sharing, or a consideration of how different ethnic groups are represented in the media. When any student can instantly publish to a worldwide audience the message is potentially powerful. Reflection helps assure ethical, purposive communication.

“Act” is the dimension that facilitates the solving of real-world problems through communication, says Hobbs. Working through using media for personal communication helps create effective communicators that are connected to something larger—whether it’s a social group at school, an interest group, family, or government.

When the field of media literacy education was developing, “media” largely meant television, radio, and film. As the Internet has become an important message delivery channel, digital literacy has become an important part of overall media literacy. But computer literacy initially was more of a threat to media literacy education than it was a component.

## 5. Computer literacy

The earliest computers, such as the World War II-era ENIAC 1, were developed for technical calculations, such as calculating trajectories for artillery. The ENIAC was hardly user-friendly, weighing 30 tons, using 200 kilowatts of electricity, and deploying 19,000 vacuum tubes (Weik, 1961). Computers would largely remain in the province of engineers throughout the 1970s, until the first hobbyist personal computers were developed and marketed. In the public mind, computers were more science fiction than science fact.

Between 1977 and 1980, personal computers gained traction in the marketplace and in our culture. In the first wave, computers were primarily sold to hobbyists, who would use them to play games and write simple programs. They often utilized an ordinary

television set for their display. Popular models from this era included the Apple II, the Commodore Vic20 and 64, the Atari 400 and 800, and various models from Tandy/Radio Shack. These computers could be expensive (a 1977 Apple II with 4k of RAM retailed for \$1298, while one with 48k RAM cost \$2638) (Macfilos).

Notions of “literacy” around these early computers can be extracted from contemporary messages. A 1980 magazine ad for Apple computers reads:

Apple is a real computer, right to the core. So just like big computers, it manages data, crunches numbers, keeps records, processes your information, and prints reports. You concentrate on what you do best. And let Apple do

the rest. Apple makes that easy with three programming languages—including Pascal—that lets you be your own software expert. (Modern Mechanix, 2007)

Early attempts to operationalize or measure computer literacy reflected these uses. Johnson, Anderson, Hansen, and Klassen (1980), funded by the National Science Foundation, performed a meta-analysis of knowledge, skills, and abilities taught in precollege computer literacy classes. After combing through more than 50 syllabi and generating more than 2,000 test items, the study summarized a subset of 63 items into six categories: hardware; programming and algorithms; software and data processing; applications; impact; and attitudes, values, and motivation. Here's a sample question from the hardware section: "Identify the five major components of a computer: input equipment, memory unit, control unit, arithmetic unit, output equipment." In the programming and algorithms section, sample questions included "correct errors in an improperly functioning algorithm" and "develop an algorithm for solving a specific problem." Under software and data processing, a question asks "select an appropriate attribute for ordering of data for a particular task." These kinds of knowledge have very little to do with the concept of media literacy.

In the mid-1980s the IBM PC running MS-DOS became the dominant computer platform. While personal computers continued to be used for a wide variety of tasks, including programming and gaming, this era marked the ascendance of office applications, especially word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation applications. Prior to IBM's entry, the hardware landscape was notable for a lack of technical standards. The IBM PC and MS-DOS operating system standard brought a "critical mass" to personal computing. Developers quickly moved to support this new standard, particularly with business applications. The default 80-character monitor configuration facilitated word processing. And other manufacturers including Compaq quickly started shipping "clones" or compatible computers, further cementing the standard. Offices and some homes rushed to place these computers into service (Koenig, 2011).

In this era, notions of computer literacy shifted. While programming and technical knowledge were previously dominant as constructs of literacy, the new emphasis was on the ability to use standard office applications, particularly word processing, spreadsheet, and database software.

The Office of Technology Assessment explicitly linked media literacy to computer literacy in its 1982 report, stating, "media literacy will include computer literacy—the ability of individuals to use an information system to help them at home and at work. While individuals will not need to be experts in computer science, they will need to know how to use computer programs and information banks and how to evaluate critically the results they get" (p. 19).

In 1985, Haigh wrote "Five years ago, I would have said that anyone who was going to use a computer as a tool would have to learn to program, but this is no longer true" (p. 163). Haigh then listed four kinds of software packages that people would use: word processing ("can effectively introduce students to the computer as a tool, and can become a first step toward achieving widespread computer literacy"), spreadsheets, graphics, and information retrieval. Writing before email and the public Internet were widely utilized, Haigh wrote, "Indeed, it is in communication rather than in mathematics where the computer may eventually make its most important educational contribution" (p. 166). This statement was prescient, especially in light of the fact that most computers were not connected to networks. The Hayes Smartmodem, the first widely available way to easily go online (via telephone line) was introduced in 1981 for \$279 (Infoworld, 1981, p. 9). Yet, even with a modem, there were relatively few places to connect. And, at 300 baud, the connection is painfully slow, taking approximately three seconds to fill one 80-character line with text (Cavalier, 2007).

In the mid-1990s, notions of computer literacy were again revised to account for the emergence of the Internet. Under this model, using search engines, accessing information online, and even building web sites were seen as essential skills for people who were "computer literate." Congruent with this was the emergence of a more media-rich desktop computer experience, which included graphics production, multimedia content delivered through CD-ROMs, and use of email.

While this was a new way for the general public to use computers, technologists had long been envisioning a tool that would serve as an information appliance. This is the beginning of a conceptualization of computer literacy that is directly connected to media literacy traditions.

"As we may think" was the title of a 1945 essay by Vannevar Bush, published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. In it, Bush proposed a futuristic device, the memex,

which in some ways foreshadowed today's Internet-connected computers.

While Bush largely got the details wrong (he was keen on advances in the analog technology of the day, such as dry photo imaging, telephone exchanges, and punched cards), he basically posited modern hypertext:

A memex is a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. It is an enlarged intimate supplement to his memory.

It consists of a desk, and while it can presumably be operated from a distance, it is primarily the piece of furniture at which he works. On the top are slanting translucent screens, on which material can be projected for convenient reading. There is a keyboard, and sets of buttons and levers. Otherwise it looks like an ordinary desk.

In one end is the stored material. The matter of bulk is well taken care of by improved microfilm. Only a small part of the interior of the memex is devoted to storage, the rest to mechanism. Yet if the user inserted 5000 pages of material a day it would take him hundreds of years to fill the repository, so he can be profligate and enter material freely.

Most of the memex contents are purchased on microfilm ready for insertion. Books of all sorts, pictures, current periodicals, newspapers are thus obtained and dropped into place. Business correspondence takes the same path. And there is provision for direct entry. On the top of the memex is a transparent platen. On this are placed longhand notes, photographs, memoranda, all sorts of things. When one is in place, the depression of a lever causes it to be photographed onto the next blank space in a section of the memex film, dry photography being employed. (1945, Section 6)

Another pioneer who predicted computers that could access databases, interlink records, and create a unique path of discovery was Ted Nelson. In his self-published 1987 books *Computer Lib/Dream Machines* (they were combined in one volume, one reading from the front cover, the other from the back), Nelson described a utopian world of computer use and learning, including the concepts of hypertext, stretchtext (which gets shorter or longer according to the user's interests), hypergrams (graphics that yield detailed or ancillary views on demand), hypermaps, and thinkertoys ("a computer display system that helps you envision com-

plex alternatives") (p. 330). Nelson's self-published and hand-illustrated tome was a flaming arrow shot over the bow of the staid computer industry of the time, which had not yet entered consumer markets.

Nelson further articulated his vision, which dated back to 1960, in *Literary Machines* (1980). His dream, the Xanadu project, is remarkably like today's Internet, with some key differences. Xanadu was envisioned with two-way linking between documents, making it even more interconnected than the Internet. Because of Xanadu's structure, only one version of every document need be published. All references to that document call that very file. Nelson imagined strong intellectual property protection for authors on Xanadu, with links triggering micropayments between users according to each document's use and popularity. While Nelson's ideas have gained traction in the world of ideas, they have never been viable in the marketplace. Indeed, *The Economist* compared Nelson to Charles Babbage, who envisioned elaborate mechanical computers but could never build one that worked (2000).

While Nelson has continued to tinker with Xanadu, the social web has grown up to become its real-world alternative. The key characteristics of the social web are interconnectedness of people with similar interests ("friends" or "followers") and the ability of anyone to publish—whether a 140-character "tweet" on Twitter, comments on a news site, a Facebook status update, or long-form content on a blog or wiki.

Changes in the web have brought with them changes in how people operationalize computer literacy. Epperson (2010) surveyed schools with computer literacy courses, and found traditional office skills (taught in 83.7% of courses) still dominant, followed by technical terminology (63%), computer software (61.7%), and computer hardware (58.2%). This vocational approach is to be expected. But also prominent in surveyed computer literacy courses was information literacy (taught in 46.7% of courses), impact of technology on societal issues (44.3%), and intellectual property issues (43.9%). Programming was only taught in 26.9% of the courses.

Information literacy processes to help people find, process, and use information are at the heart of the Big6 model, which dates as far back as Eisenberg and Berkowitz's work (1999). Activities at the core of the Big6 model include task definition, information seeking strategies, location and access, use of information, synthesis, and evaluation. This process is technology-agnostic, making it relatively evergreen; it would be

equally useful for a trip to the library or an Internet search query.

As teaching of programming and office applications have declined, “computer literacy” has morphed

## 6. Empirical Studies

While media literacy education advocates have published abundantly, there are relatively few data-based studies extant. There are many possible reasons for this, including gaining all of the necessary assents to work with students—human subjects not of majority age. While it’s easy to get behind media literacy education concepts, the devil is in the details. What are the dependent variables? And perhaps most importantly, how is the media literacy education implemented? There’s a world of difference between a good teacher and a bad one, just as there is between a successful lesson plan and a poor one. In short, designing a rigorous study and measuring impact is difficult and beyond the reach of many researchers.

Still, there is evidence across the literature that media literacy education can be effective.

### A. *Interpersonal interventions*

Potter has summarized the research around how children consume media at home (2013). Research on coviewing media content with an adult shows mixed results. Salomon (1977) found that coviewing with parents resulted in increased understanding of educational content. Nathanson (2001) found that children reported greater enjoyment of programs when coviewing with parents. But other studies have found negative outcomes of coviewing, such as increased aggression in children when exposed to television violence (Nathanson, 1999) or increases in children’s believing the TV characters are like real people (Messaris & Kerr, 1984). A general negative outcome from coviewing is that the presence of an adult authority figure during shows that feature adult themes functions as a kind of “endorsement,” implicitly approving violence in the mind of the child, for example (Nathanson, 2002). In the case of older adolescents who viewed together, Nathanson found that coviewing could lead to antisocial behavior (2001).

Restrictive mediation is a strategy in which an adult places inappropriate media content “off limits” to a child. While this can be an effective strategy, it can

also have the effect of making the forbidden content seem desirable and can lead to negative attitudes toward the parent. Further, restrictive mediation can lead the child to seek the content elsewhere, such as at a friend’s house (Nathanson, 2002).

Active mediation is a media literacy strategy in which an adult consumes media content with a child, using the common experience as a springboard for discussion about the meaning of the text, understanding of commercial messages and other cognitive or affective variables. Studies have generally found positive impacts for active mediation, in particular for reducing negative effects. Parents can influence how children interpret messages (Austin, 1993), and parental involvement helps reduce negative effects from exposure to violence (Singer, Singer, & Rapaczynski, 1984). Children who watch television with an adult can be more skeptical about news (Austin, 1993) and show more understanding of fictional narratives (Desmond et al, 1985). The negative effects from scary movies can be lessened for some children via active mediation (Cantor, 2001). Reid (1979) found that advertising effects can be reduced through active mediation.

Media literacy groups have created resource materials to facilitate active mediation. The National Association for Media Literacy Education has a one-page guide, “Key questions to ask when analyzing media messages,” at <http://bit.ly/9sgM7C>. The Center for Media Literacy offers “Five key questions for media literacy” at <http://bit.ly/ZpzjXO>.

*B. Assessing school programs*

In schools, students are graded and teachers are evaluated. Assessment is integral to the activities that happen at school. But in the case of media literacy education it can be difficult to ascribe a causal relationship between a classroom activity and a learning outcome. As Christ and Potter ask:

The troublesome question is this: How is it decided that a student is becoming or has become media literate? Is a “B” average in all

courses the mark of literacy or are assumptions of literacy tested with assessment strategies? Also, what should be assessed? Knowledge? Skills? Behaviors? Attitudes? Affect? Values? (1998, p. 11)

Hobbs and Frost (2003) note that early attempts to measure the success of media literacy education rely upon short-term interventions and immediately measured effects. These studies typically would offer a short course of media literacy training, then test students for short-term recall. The first school-based, long-term study of media literacy education was conducted in Australia by Quin and McMahon (1995) involving 1,500 students. Hobbs and Frost followed that study with similar inquiry in the United States, using a 12-week course in media literacy education about understanding news as the treatment condition in a quasi-experimental design. The study found that students exposed to the media literacy curriculum outperformed students in the control condition in terms of understanding the message, target audience, representation in the story, similarities to the genre, and points of view expressed (Hobbs & Frost, 2003).

Media literacy education in the context of a language arts curriculum was next examined by Hobbs (2007). This study offered an assessment of a media literacy education program that was taught in high school grade 11 English classes in Concord, New Hampshire schools. The study uses multiple methods, including interviews with teachers and students, classroom observation, and a quasi-experimental study conducted over a school year. In a quasi-experimental design, instead of using random assignment between treatment and control groups, naturally-occurring groups are selected. Compared to true experiments, quasi-experiments generally offer less control (lower internal validity) but offer a more lifelike setting (higher external validity). Hobbs found that students exposed to the media literacy education condition showed significant improvements in reading comprehension, critical reading, and quantity and quality of writing. As a check on the results, the improvements were still observed after controlling for the students' grade point averages.

### *C. Media literacy education in health*

Perhaps the most-researched aspect of media literacy education addresses how the media form images of health and body image. Irving, DuPen, and Berel (1998) used a one-time training session to teach high school girls about media representations of attractiveness. The

study found that students who had the training were less likely to internalize a "thin" beauty standard and showed lower perceived realism of media beauty images. College-age women were the subject of a study by Coughlin and Kalodner (2006). Two groups, one at risk for eating disorders and the other not at risk, were administered a two-session media literacy training course. The study found no change in the not-at-risk group, but the at-risk group reported significantly less body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness, feelings of ineffectiveness, and internalization of societal standards of beauty. The at-risk group showed no change in three other indicators of eating disorders. The study concluded "media literacy may be an effective secondary prevention intervention for eating disorders" (2006).

Using an experimental design, Kusel (1999) found that training grade-school girls about how commercials present beauty (for example, extremely thin models and flawless skin) along with other media literacy tools, resulted in improved diet, body satisfaction, self-esteem, ideal body stereotype internalization, and beliefs about the media.

In a study that compared the efficacy of self-esteem training and media literacy education on risk factors for eating disorders, eighth-grade boys and girls were administered one of three conditions (self-esteem training, media literacy education, and control group) and measured at three times over a three-month period (Wade, Davidson, & O'Dea, 2003). Students in the media literacy condition showed lower concern for body weight than did students in the other two conditions.

In a study by Hinden, Contento, and Gussow (2004), parents of children in Head Start programs were given media literacy training over a four-week period. The program was designed to help the parents manage food requests from their children. The researchers found that dieticians could adequately train the parents and that the program significantly improved parental knowledge about nutritional issues (such as reading and understanding food labels) as well as knowledge of food commercials, and TV mediation strategies.

Watson and Vaughn (2006) explored the length of the media literacy education intervention as applied to female body image. They found that all media literacy treatments were effective in improving body image, but the longer-term interventions (four sessions one week apart) were most effective.

Media literacy education has also been used to change attitudes about drug and alcohol use among

children and adolescents. Austin and Johnson (1997) used an experimental setting to explore how media literacy education would affect the attitudes of third graders toward drinking of alcohol. They found positive effects for media literacy education, particularly for girls, and that a treatment featuring alcohol-specific ads was most effective.

Gonzalez, Glik, Davoudi, and Ang (2004) explored the role of media literacy education in attitudes and behaviors of adolescents toward tobacco use. The study used an eight-week weekly intervention. The results showed not only a significant change in attitudes in the treatment group, but also a reduction in tobacco use. Primak, Gold, Land, and Fine (2006) measured smoking behavior and student scores on a smoking literacy scale among adolescents and explored the relationships between the two. The study found that students with higher smoking literacy were less likely

to smoke, implicitly providing support for media literacy education on smoking issues.

Using a quasi-experimental method, Pinkleton, Weintraub, Cohen, Miller, and Fitzgerald (2007) explored media literacy messages about tobacco use with students. The authors found differential effects between non-smokers and smokers. Non-smokers were more likely to be influenced in the early stages of the intervention, while smokers were more likely to be influenced in later stages. The study found overall support for the efficacy of media literacy education on smoking reduction and/or cessation.

Media literacy education varies widely, whether it's where the interventions are delivered, their duration and intensity, or their overall effectiveness. Overall, however, there is good support for the value for media literacy education, whether it's delivered in schools or one-on-one by a parent or other adult mentor.

## 7. Looking Forward

A construct is a bundle of variables that can be loosely assembled to form a concept. For example, the notion of political conservatism was popularly summarized by Wisconsin governor Lee Dreyfus, who said the federal government's role should be limited to three things: "defending our shores, delivering our mail, and staying the hell out of our lives." But today, conservative values have changed and splintered; some conservatives have gone the way of the Tea Party and libertarianism, while others are active in intensely personal social issues such as family preservation and reproductive rights. Somehow, though, they're all conservatives.

Constructs change, and so they have with media literacy education. Today the most sweeping change is the digital transformation of virtually all communications. Computer literacy, once entirely the realm of programming, is today broadly conceived in a way that's relevant to all computer users. Today, we all need to be computer literate. From the library science field comes the concept of "information literacy," intimately tied to media literacy but beyond the scope of this essay. One aspect of information literacy is "crap detection," or the ability to vet a fragment of information based upon context and research (Rheingold, 2012). We all need a kind of personal sense that says,

don't share that information, don't click on that link from that unsolicited email. As we share news and information daily through social networks, and as these fragments of knowledge become viral, crap detection has become an essential 21st century skill.

Directly related to information literacy is news literacy, which takes up many of the issues associated with media literacy, such as representation. News literacy applies those concepts to the contemporary practice of journalism. Who is a journalist today? It used to be simple to understand. A small subset of highly trained information workers, all of whom subscribed to the same set of values: objectivity, layered oversight of writing and editing, and core values including timeliness, impact, proximity, honesty. Their work was monetized by advertising and direct sale. They did not have a position to defend or an opinion in the discussion. While we do not license journalists in the U.S., everyone used to know who was a journalist and who was not. Fast forward to today. Bloggers, pure-play digital publishers, social gadflies, and celebrities who are famous simply for being famous—these are the influencers who compete with journalists for our attention. Many people use Twitter or Facebook as their news feed today, relying on an army of untrained but eager social sharers to spread news.

While this by itself doesn't seem like cause for the end of the world, it's also a terrible way for citizens to run a democracy. Stories about reality show contestants multiply, while the school board remains uncovered. Cat pictures go viral, while otherwise intelligent people think that Kofi Annan is a drink at Starbucks. Sadly, while traditional publishers struggle to make digital distribution pay, it's never been easier or cheaper for the common man or woman to jump in and publish for him or herself.

Thought leaders eagerly try to fill this void. Stony Brook University School of Journalism has launched its Center for News Literacy. Educator Dan Gillmor has released a how-to guidebook, website, and open community called *Mediactive* (2010), in which he hopes to elevate the quality of the new pure-play digital publishers to proudly take their seats alongside traditional journalists in the marketplace of ideas.

And new kinds of publishers are creating new kinds of journalism—hyperlocals, industry verticals, aggregators, specialized curators, ventures that previously fell below the noise floor, stuff that could not pay for itself before the Internet existed.

There's still a lot of junk out there. And there always will be. So our first line of defense is an educated citizen, someone who understands how the mediated world works. Someone who will think before they click. Someone who has some sense of media literacy.

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## Additional Resources

In addition to the material reviewed in Professor Kamerer's essay, many other resources exist, both on

online and in research conducted by scholars around the world. The next sections present, first, web-based resources—the web sites of organizations dedicated to media literacy—and, second, research studies and policy statements about media literacy.

### *Online resources*

- A&E Classroom.** <http://www.aetv.com/class/medialiteracy/>
- Cable in the Classroom.** <http://www.ciconline.org/Resource/media-literacy-101>
- Center for Social Media.** <http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/fair-use/related-materials/codes/fair-use-and-media-literacy-education>
- Center for Media Literacy.** <http://www.medialit.org/>
- Citizens for Media Literacy.** <http://www.main.nc.us/cml/>
- Community Media Center.** <http://www.grcmc.org/medialit/what.php>
- Consortium for Media Literacy.** <http://www.consortiumformedialiteracy.org/>
- Discovery Education.** Media Literacy. [http://web2012.discoveryeducation.com/media\\_literacy.cfm](http://web2012.discoveryeducation.com/media_literacy.cfm)
- European Association for Viewer's Interests.** A Journey to Media Literacy (video). <http://vimeo.com/37670223>
- European Commission.** Media Programme. [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-literacy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-literacy/index_en.htm)
- Girls Inc.** Media Literacy. <http://www.girlsinc.org/about/programs/media-literacy.html>
- International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth, & Media at NORDICOM.** <http://www.nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse.php>
- Ithaca College.** Project Look Sharp. <http://www.ithaca.edu/looksharp/?action=about>
- Jesuit Communication Project.** <http://jcp.proscenia.net/>
- Media Literacy Project.** <http://medialiteracyproject.org/>
- Media Literacy.Com.** <http://www.medialiteracy.com/>
- Media Education Lab (Renee Hobbs).** <http://mediaeducationlab.com/about/renee-hobbs>
- NAMLE: National Association for Media Literacy Education.** <http://namle.net/>
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills.** <http://www.p21.org/>
- PBS Teachers: Digital Media Literacy.** <http://www.pbs.org/teachers/digital-media-literacy/>
- Signis (World Catholic Association for Communication):** [http://www.signis.net/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=46](http://www.signis.net/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=46).
- The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.** Teacher's Guide. <http://www.oscars.org/education-outreach/teachersguide/medialiteracy/index.html>
- The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.** <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/key-facts-media-literacy.pdf>
- The Journal of Media Literacy.** <http://journalofmedialiteracy.org/>
- UNESCO.** Media and Information Literacy Clearinghouse. <http://milunesco.unaoc.org/>

- University of Connecticut.** Northeast Media Literacy Conference. <http://medialiteracy.education.uconn.edu/>
- University of Oregon.** Media Literacy Online Project. <http://mlop.proscenia.net/>
- Wikiversity. Media Literacy.** (This document was originally developed by graduate students.). [http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Media\\_literacy](http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Media_literacy)

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## Book Reviews

**Chang Kyung-Sup** and **Bryan Turner** (Eds). *Contested Citizenship in East Asia: Developmental Politics, National Unity, and Globalization*. New York: Routledge, 2012. Pp. 266. ISBN: 978-0-415-59446-2 (cloth) \$138.00; 978-0-203-84174-7 (e-book), contact publisher for pricing.

*Contested Citizenship in East Asia* presents a broad range of topics on citizenship practices and philosophies that shape these conventions. This collection includes both empirical research and theoretical discussions to trace developments of various forms of citizenship in the Far East. The first part of the anthology introduces the historical context of modern citizenship formation in societies such as China, Korea, and Japan. The book then focuses on how the rhetorical and political construct of citizenships in these nations are accomplished. The concluding chapter discusses the shared traits these case studies have and their implications on social research about citizenship.

The first chapter introduces how citizenship as a concept has been defined particularly in the context of Western societies. In tracing arguments on social and national citizenship, this chapter brings these constructs to Japanese and Chinese societies with particular attention to the contemporary cultural and structural changes in each. Chapter 2 explicates the ways in which cultural philosophies and significant historical events influenced citizenship development in Eastern Asian societies. These past experiences are then juxtaposed with the current pressure under globalization whereby quick assimilation to the Western style of modernity and citizenry became a necessity to survive. The third chapter contours trajectories in which China, Japan, and Korea as Confucianism-based societies affected by unique political and economic struggles came to formulate distinctive relationships between its citizens and state. Hence, the historical contexts and major forces in constructing rights, memberships, and obligations in these eastern nation-states are foregrounded.

Chapters 4 through 7 explore ideologies and practices toward citizenry around the Taiwan Strait. The concept of corporate citizenship whereby economic development is intertwined with states' governing practices resurfaces through Chapters 4 to 7. In Chapter 4 Lee and Chen examine the impact of the right to private property on the Chinese homeowners' potential participation in the larger political arena. Chapter 5

illustrates that it is imperative for corporations to ensure their responsibilities as citizens to stabilize society by sustaining adequate employment rates. The intricate relationships between entrepreneurs and nation-states remain the focus in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 points to how both Chinese and Taiwanese governments established various types of preferential treatment with lower tax rates to entice capital for its own domestic economic growth. Chapter 7 contemplates the future implications between various integrating practices of neoliberal citizenship in Hong Kong and national subjectivity production in Mainland China. The first favors market freedom and personal interests over national interests while the later emphasizes on citizens' commitment to national interests.

Shifting the focus to Japan and Korea, two other societies heavily influenced by Confucianism, Chapters 8 to 12 highlight social issues such as elder care, women's working rights, demographic changes, the impact of the colonial past and globalizing present faced in the contemporary Japanese and Korean societies. Chapter 8 provides an illustration on how women's right to full citizenship was compromised with welfare policies in the post-industrial Japanese economy where marital and fertility rates are low and numbers of female professionals and elder care need are high. From a post-colonial perspective, Chapter 9 examines how the Ryukyu people's cultural and national identity has been tied to the economic, political, and military activities with both Japanese and American governments. Chapter 10 sheds light on the policies and rhetoric of economic development utilized by conservative leaders in South Korea to construct its citizenry. Within such "mercantilist developmentalism" (p. 189), Chapters 11 and 12 focus on how newcomers such as brides from China and Southeast Asia, and North Koreans who defected to South Korea become partial citizens whose value and participation are dictated by their economic and political contribution to their host society.

The concluding chapter borrows Turner's definition of citizenship as "a status conferring membership of a political community that determines a person's share in the collective resources of that community" (p. 244). Citizenships in East Asia are viewed as intertwined with the relationships among states, markets, and civil societies and consequently form a developmental citizenship to secure and promote stable societies.

This collection gathered essays from sociological perspectives to examine and compare various macro-

level developmental policies and rhetorical construction of citizens. Its investigations in an area with scarce research no doubt sheds lights on the field of communication research. More specifically, the ways in which cultural values, societal norms, historical events, and neoliberal agendas drive policies that shape relationships between these Asian nation-state governments and their subjects can benefit intercultural/international communication researchers interested in the impact of structural arrangements on group interactions. Further, its attention to the trans-Asian movements energizes the vibrant research area of Asian communication. Specifically by introducing critical lenses of identity and policy-making processes, this anthology highlights the ways legitimate memberships are gendered, nationalized, and classed. In unpacking these multiple forces in modern citizenship constructions, issues on social inclusion/justice are consequently raised and interrogated.

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**Gauntlett, David.** *Making is Connecting: The Social Meaning of Creativity, from DIY and Knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0.* Cambridge, UK/Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2011. Pp. x, 286. ISBN :978-0-7456-5001-2 (cloth) £60.00, \$64.95; ISBN 978-0-7456-5002-9 (paper) UK£16.00, \$19.95.

In this wide-ranging book, David Gauntlett, a Professor at the University of Westminster's Communication and Media Research Institute, discusses the thorny topic of creativity, a word which he admits may be overused, but which he also says (p.16) is something we do quite a lot. To my mind, to be human is to be creative. To an extent, within the circumstances with which life presents us, we create our own lives and our very identities. When I was a child, people seemed to make things more often than they do now. My mother sewed and embroidered; my grandmother knitted and crocheted; my grandfather, mother, and uncle gardened. The whole family did the decorating and my dad and uncle did woodwork things. My favorite uncle made me a tricycle from odds and ends of tubular metal and some spare wheels (it was a time of austerity—nothing changes!) and one of my great-uncles made orthopaedic shoes and splints as part of his work as a shoe mender, while his wife painted. Television cut down the time that people seemed to have to do

these things, but Gauntlett suggests that the Internet has allowed a new or changed type of creativity. I recently went to a Farmers' Market and was told by one of the ladies selling hand knitted goods, that she had taught more people to knit in the last two months than in the rest of her life—so there does seem to be a resurgence in the making of things. This may have something to do also with the financial climate. Gauntlett actually tried out some of the material in this book in a module he taught at the university.

Gauntlett's intention is that the book will foster the conversation about "the power of the Internet and the World Wide Web" (p. 1), a place where he believes everyday creativity has flourished recently. This power, he suggests, has "gone beyond the online world to all kinds of activities in everyday life" (ibid). In his introduction he asks the reader how Ruskin, writing on medieval cathedrals, and William Morris, can have affected his understanding of the Web today, and how the ex-Catholic priest Ivan Illich's writings on human happiness "line(s) up with the latest studies by economists and social scientists today, and then connect(s) it with knitting, guerrilla gardening, and creative social networks" (p. 2).

The author explains his title in three principal ways: because materials, ideas, or both have to be connected to make something; because acts of creativity usually involve a social dimension, and because through making and sharing something we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments (p. 2). His desire to write such a book was triggered by his sociological interest in media's place in the lives of people and the way in which the Web has become main stream. Secondly, it was exciting for him to participate in this exciting new world of participation—people could respond to something that he had put on the web. Thirdly, he was supposed to be doing research about people, what they did and why, and was still a little unhappy about just interviewing them to find out. For this reason, he developed some creative new research methods. The one that springs to mind here is his Lego project. He gave various people pieces of the plastic toy and asked them to build their identity. I was present at his inaugural professorial lecture and it was a joy to see the faces of some of the older academics there when they were presented with a little packet of Lego—some of them taking on the project with more grace than others.

Web 2.0 is, he believes, what Tim Berners-Lee intended when he invented the Web in 1990. Instead of what Gauntlett describes as “separate gardens that could be visited” (i.e., each website separate from the others), which was perfectly acceptable (p. 5), Web 2.0 is more like a collective allotment—people work together collaboratively in a shared space. While I have my doubts about this, since much of the Web is about individual’s own spaces, there is little doubt that this is increasingly true.

Gauntlett suggests that we are moving from a “sit back and be told” culture, in which education is top-down: a teacher gives pupils nuggets of information and this input is then examined at a later date, a system that has been the basis of much of standard education for some years and which was institutionalized in the U.K. and the U.S.A. by governments, much as it was earlier in some European nations; now we are moving, he believes, to a “making and doing culture.” Instead of a sit back and take it passive model, we are moving to a system that allows for more creativity, social connections, and personal growth. He quotes from a 2010 Kaiser Family Foundation survey that showed that 74% of 12–18 year olds had created a profile on social networking sites, 49% had read blogs, 28% had written one, and 25% had posted a video. He notes also that there has been a resurgence in craft activities, clubs and fairs, and in DIY technology equivalents, like robotics (pp. 9–10). He attempts to define creativity, using a variety of researchers and authors, but notes that if, following Lumsden, “creativity [is] a kind of capacity to think up something new that people find significant,” then there is a “strong emphasis on the end product, and the judgement of others” (p. 12),

Gauntlett’s book attempts to make connections between everyday creativity’s value and the connection with a “recent explosion of online creativity” (p. 12) while considering what has been said about the values, ethics, and the benefits of traditional craft and DIY activities. It is not a set of case studies, however, but considers the general making of “stuff”—handicrafts that connect us with others as a form of communication, be it through pottery, knitting, or the Web.

Creativity is important for society, he states, since—crucially—he suggests that it makes it political. The example he gives is the Transition Movement, which believes we face huge problems through climate change and the time when oil will run out, but it is positive about human resilience and creativity that they believe will surmount the problems.

The book first forgets about the Internet and explores philosophical, political, and practical explanations for the reasons that humans want to make things, centered mainly on Ruskin and Morris. His third chapter looks at recent craft and DIY ideas and innovations. In Chapter 4 he returns to the Internet, looking at creative online environments, the values of social connections and collaborations. Chapter 5 considers happiness and research on it, and Chapter 6, social capital. His seventh chapter discusses the need for the tools that enable creative expression and the differences that this makes; this follows Ilich’s philosophy. Chapter 8 ponders the criticisms leveled at the Internet in its Web 2.0 form and those who are enthusiasts for it. His concluding chapter draws all these strands together to give five key principles behind “making and connecting” and what these imply for the media, for education, for our work, for our political situation, and for the environment. I leave it for the readers to make their own conclusions about this book, which is easy to read and engaging, but draw your attention to Gauntlett’s point that:

Creativity is a gift, not in the sense of it being a talent but in the sense that it is a way of sharing meaningful things, ideas, or wisdom, which form bridges between people and communities. Through creative activity where making is connecting, we can increase our pleasure in everyday life, unlock innovative capacity, and build resilience in our communities, so that we can face future challenges with confidence and originality. (p. 215)

As long as connections are made with real people, rather than through cyberspace, and people continue to connect with their community for real, Web 2.0 provides a valuable tool through which creativity can be nurtured. While I am by no means a technophobe, I do like to point out that the number of people who actually have any meaningful access to the Internet is quite low in world terms—even if it is increasing quite rapidly. Vast swathes of the world’s population are still unable to read or write—so the Internet is of no value to them. Yet we have had several hundred years to teach them such elementary skills, which take little equipment or technology. Even in the U.K., after 143 years of compulsory education, there is still a large number of people who are functionally illiterate—and the same can be said for the USA. If the Web can be used to help in the quest to educate people, then it will be a good thing—but teaching needs to be creative too.

David Gauntlett, who is an engaging man, is to be congratulated on this book which has taken on an enormous field and has made a valuable step towards addressing some of the problems presented and the discussions around them.

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**Havens, Timothy and Amanda Lotz.** *Understanding Media Industries*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. vii-x 272. ISBN 978-0-19-539767-3 (paper) \$34.97.

Although it is not the usual practice in this journal to review textbooks, I feel this volume may be the exception for several reasons. There are many textbooks that flood the U.S. market in media communication studies, but as an introduction to the field of *media industries* and their practices, this book carries special weight because it gives important up-to-date details about the structures and practices of these industries and provides a theoretical framework that is in-depth. For people from other countries, there is a second advantage: it is important to understand the nature of the media industries in the U.S.A. for both policy reasons—if the intent is to promote national industries to compete or to protect those industries from being undermined if that is the concern—and for simple information on how these industries are changing at a rapid pace.

The book takes an Industrialization of Culture approach to the media industries in Chapter 1 so that the emphasis is placed on the *mutual influences* of such factors as *mandates* (basic purposes, i.e., public or commercial), *conditions* (regulation and economics of the industries—including conglomeration and consolidation of ownership) and *practices* (creative workers' practices as well as industry structures and strategies). This approach includes many elements of the political economy of culture approach to the study of cultural production of media texts but questions what it considers the overly deterministic approach by some more critical researchers who see ownership and economic power as the overriding elements in explaining advanced media industries. Consequently, the authors are careful to argue for *agency within these media industries* even though accepting some “forces that circumscribe agency” (p. 15). Also in this chapter they identify the commercial media's response to the risk of

producing media content with a number of practices that limit that risk and guarantee a return on their investment including intentional overproduction, artificial scarcity, windowing, formatting, economies of scale, and segmentation of audiences.

Chapter 2 on Mandates does not provide much that is new to most readers, but the authors remind us that many countries now have a mixed national mandate with some public/noncommercial media along with some commercial media, especially in broadcast media and cable television. They also remind the readers of their position with the comment: “Even though we begin with mandates, we don't view them as deterministic. Deterministic approaches often try to explain the behavior of media industries through one aspect—typically something like a belief that the commercial mandate . . . to make profits will lead it to operate only in one particular way” (p. 40). They also provide a brief history of radio broadcasting in the U.S.A. as an explanation of a preamble of what transpired in later decades of concentration and conglomeration of media in the 1980s and 1990s.

The argument in Chapter 3 on Technological Conditions makes the case for the Industrialization of Culture model and makes another argument for the model: technology itself does not influence media practice but only through a complex process of interaction within the stated model in Chapter 1. Thus the authors argue by exploring the adoption of the Sony Walkman that the technology went through a process of *cultural* representation, identity, and cultural processes of production and of consumption (p. 52). In short, the approach mitigates the inclination to call technology itself as a determining factor, but rather only a *mutually determining* one, thus avoiding the issue of overdetermining the cause of change and reducing it to one simple influence. They further clarify the new practices that the new technologies like the Internet and cable channels foster. “The points to keep in mind, however, are: first, technology doesn't change media texts, but it does open up opportunities for new textual practices that certain entrepreneurs pursue; second, these practices are also shaped by—but *not determined by* (italic in original)—economic and regulatory conditions as well as technological ones” (p. 58).

Chapter 4 on regulation does not contribute much that other good textbooks have not dealt with, but it does so within the Industrialization of Culture framework. Their list of regulatory practices, however, is perhaps more inclusive than most. They point out that

in broadcast and cable media there is often regulation of content, structure, ownership, copyright, scheduling, distribution, rate control, license renewal, and anti-trust that all enter the picture as to the role of government in these media. They end with the story of how the FCC mandated the introduction of HDTV which for many other countries would be seen as not unusual but for the cultural experience of the U.S.A. could be seen as “*massive* government regulatory involvement” (emphasis added p. 91).

The next chapter, Economic Conditions, is the most complex and most difficult to explain to readers. The authors begin with the issue of ownership with the usual review of the Paramount Decree of 1948 and the history of the conglomeration and consolidation, but their main point is to distinguish between their position and the “conglomeration equals homogenization” model of McChesney and Bagdikian, which they argue is logical but has problems because “we do not know enough to make decisive statements about the internal operations of these conglomerates . . .” (p. 101). In short the industries are too complex to come to simple cause-effect models of influence of making texts, much less of influencing audiences. Their review and summary of costs seems both useful and clear: overhead costs, market and distribution costs, and the “freelance” labor costs of certain media industries (i.e., short contracts on different projects vs. regular long term wages). Funding mechanisms for production and distribution of different media industries is also a useful addition to the usual discussion (with two brief cases on the economics of gaming and television). Finally discussion in some current detail about advertising-supported media and subscription and direct pay media might be of special use for readers living outside the heavily commercialized U.S.A. media landscape (though that is changing in many countries).

The chapter on Creative Practices and Roles offers a complicated and somewhat superficial treatment of workers at all levels of the media industries. The authors end the chapter somewhat questioning their framework of worker agency at these different levels as opposed to the more common critical argument for the heavy influence of owners and money sources. “[O]ne consequence of allowing agency of individuals [in production] is that attempting to explain operation of media industry gets very messy. The Industrialization of Culture framework allow for this ‘mess’—and, as we hope the examples throughout this

chapter illustrate, even workers responsible for day-to-day decisions play an important role in media industry operation” (p. 143).

The two chapters on distribution and exhibition and the auxiliary practices are useful but contain less important lessons for communication scholars. Still they do highlight the changes that are taking place because of technologies of distribution through digital means like the Internet and the increasingly useful role of research into audiences that both companies like Nielsen and others play as well as some of the newer social media.

The final three chapters of the book deal with the larger topics of the Growth of the Symbolic Economy (9), Digitization (10), and Globalization (11). In many ways these are central to the changes in media industries over the past 15 years or so. They have been mentioned in previous chapters but are brought together in these summary chapters more explicitly. In defining the growth of the symbolic economy, the authors depend on the Fordist and Post-Fordist distinctions made by media political economists and have more to do with media practices than directly with the growth of the various media economies. The authors summarize the changes in the past three decades: “While today’s media environment is characterized by tailored media products, global media conglomerates, deregulation, flexible work arrangements, casualization of the labor force, and increased consumer surveillance, these changes are extensions of earlier historical processes . . . are fundamentally tied to economic change, not to technological changes” (p. 199). But then they take back the seeming definitive statement by saying that globalization and digitization are hard to distinguish from the economic aspects of Post-Fordism because all are mutually influential. This leaves readers with some confusion.

On digitization the presentation adds little that has not already been said in the last decade of discussion of the Internet and the variety of changes that the translation of digital media into mainstream media has made. But they conclude that even with the seeming shift in power in the hands of consumers by the expansion of choice, the top down models of older media will retain their power over production of content and capture of media audiences. The final chapter on globalization adds some specific examples of media distribution like simultaneous releases of film and music and even some television, but there is no in-depth discussion of consequences.

The book has a very detailed glossary that explains highlighted terms throughout the text (16 pages of terms, in fact) that should be of help to beginning readers in this field. Also there is a brief but useful index.

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**Martelle, Joe.** *Radio Pro: Radio Pros & Legends Share Their Secrets to Success.* Albany, GA: BearManor Media, 2012. Pp. xxxiv, 706. ISBN-1-59393-256-1 (paper) \$49.95.

*Radio Pro* offers a lot of information about more than 100 of America's top broadcasters as they share categories of advice in the world of broadcasting. The front cover of the book says it all—"Radio Pros & Legends Share Their Secrets to Success." This book makes it very clear that the secrets of success are not being shared for a historical purpose nor an entertainment purpose, but clearly as a helpful guide from which any person may learn what it takes to be a real radio pro.

The book is written for those who have a passion for radio. Thus, a brief chapter of six pages simply titled, "The Beginning," precedes Chapter 1. It is not simply a narrative of how Martelle developed an interest in radio, but it is a thorough assignment for those with passion for radio and for radio wannabees. The assignment is to study the masters! Martelle provides partial lists of pioneer radio personalities and television personalities whom he believes people should study. In addition, he gives advice on how to obtain radio and television programs from the personalities. He best summarizes in his statement that "learning from radio's first pros is the key in developing *who you are* as a radio personality" (p. 6).

Chapter 1, "Learn from the Masters—Radio's Pioneer and First Air Personalities," begins with the radio rule to be remembered—"Learn from radio's pioneer personalities but **keep your own unique style**" (p. 7, emphasis in original). Throughout this chapter, Martelle introduces many personalities ranging from vaudevillians Joe Weber and Lew Fields to Jack Webb, star of radio and TV's long-running *Dragnet*. After much useful information about different personalities, Martelle summarizes subsections within the chapter with a brief "Radio pro lesson." For example, after providing details about Jack Benny, the Radio Pro Lesson

is "know your audience and key demographics and play to them!" (p. 20). The author really chooses to emphasize the practical ways an individual can develop into a radio pro.

Chapters 2, 3 & 4 focus on the how to's of developing your style, breaking into the industry, and being successful once on-air. Chapter 2, "How to Develop Your Own Air-Style," examines the answer to this common question—be yourself. "More than 150 best-in-the-business broadcasters took time to contribute to this book, and nearly all made reference to one significant point on how to be a successful air-talent . . . you need to be yourself on the radio!" (p. 39). Martelle reminds readers that

You are encouraged to follow examples and suggestions outlined in this book by some of America's top radio pros, but that doesn't mean changing your style and in the process losing your own unique sound and personality. You are a one-of-kind radio personality with your own special brand. Don't ever forget it! (p. 40)

The chapter gives other advice to be sifted out by the individual to match his/her personality. Chapter 3, "How to Break Into Radio," examines the perspectives of several radio pros that answered this question. "Nearly all listed *passion* as the key ingredient in reaching that goal!" (p. 73, emphasis in original). The end of the chapter really reminds each individual that they play the major role. "There is one certain way to reach your goals and that's to keep plugging away at it! All you have to do is make the commitment to do great radio, day in and day out!" (p. 88).

Chapter 4, "How to be a Successful Air Personality," focuses on the road to success in the same way as most success literature—if you think you can or if you think you can't either way you are right. In this chapter, individuals are reminded, "you will never succeed on the radio or off until you truly believe you can succeed" (p. 93). Thus, "success or failure as a radio pro depends entirely on your own attitude!" (p. 93). Legendary air personality Bruce Bradley says, "it takes balls, talent, and focus" (p. 93) to be successful in radio, whereas, Paul Perry argues aspiring radio personality must possess talent, desire, and discipline to be successful (p. 106). Overall it is clear, it takes each individual and his/her attitude to be directed towards success.

Chapter 5, "The Seven Powerful 'P's' to Perfection as an On-Air Radio Pro," explores *passion, positivity, preparation, practice, perseverance, performance, and patience*. Some clear advice in this

chapter includes (1) “every time you throw that mic switch on, do so passionately!” (p. 118); (2) be positive and remain positive; “being positive is all about what you create in your own mind, no matter how many negative things may come your way” (p. 121); (3) the key is to be prepared and stay prepared “if you prepare yourself and still come up short in the radio ratings race that doesn’t mean you’re a loser. You’re only a loser when you don’t prepare to go on the air” (p. 122); (4) practice is key because “reading commercial copy, introducing songs with little gems of relevant and interesting info about the artist, telling stories on the air in a relaxed, natural flow, all this and so much more is what goes into being a real on-air radio pro. All of this is only accomplished after it is done repeatedly over and over again” (p. 124); (5) “perseverance is the quality of being persistent. Being persistent is the difference between not achieving and great achievement” (p. 125). It also includes being open to change; “one thing you can bank on in radio is change! As a radio personality you will find conditions change in radio on an almost moment- by-moment basis” (p. 128); (6) the performance must have spark—“the spark has to be there every single day no matter what’s going on in your life. That’s what makes a pro” says Nancy Quill, a mid-day air personality on Magic 106.7 Boston since 1982 (p. 133); and (7) your greatest efforts will be the result of working day and night over a long period of time to accomplish your goal just like any other great artist, that’s patience (p. 137–138). The chapter also provides four honorable mentions—persistence, pride, promotion, and perfection.

The next chapter, “How to Communicate Effectively,” explores both oral and written communication. The one simple technique to help in communicating effectively with others is summarized as: “First of all, listen to what the other person is saying. Next, imagine yourself in the other person’s shoes. That’s it!” (p. 148). Also, in this chapter there is a Radio Lesson 101 rule “always make sure your mic is on the off position, when not in use” (p. 151). It is emphasized for individuals to remember “communicating effectively on the radio is a God-given gift” (p. 155). Written memos and emails are two of the written communication channels of choice. Chapter 7, “The Importance of Show Prep,” explores the value of show prep to you and your show (p. 165). “As an air-talent you need to be a SHOW PREP junkie!” (p. 165). The chapter explains how to begin with a day sheet and provides a sample day sheet. The chapter goes on to emphasize

the importance of always being prepared to go on the air and grade your performance and your daily show. In brief, show prep is a process that begins with planning and ends with evaluation.

Chapter 8, “The Art of Interviewing,” is very simply stated as “being interested and attentive to what the other person is saying” (p. 185). The chapter goes into detail about the master interviewer of kids—Art Linkletter. It also provides a great list of pointers for successful interviewing. Chapter 9, “Attitudes and Actions,” emphasizes that a positive attitude is a must in radio, regardless of your job. The author and pros are adamant about the advice of “don’t change a radio station’s format without prior approval from management.” In addition, there is some useful advice on how to handle getting fired.

The next set of chapters explores specific positions within the radio industry—program directors, general managers, and consultants. The chapter on “Program Directors, Friend or Foe?” explores the position and role of a program director. Martelle argues that the program director is the most thankless position in a radio station (p. 233). He also offers much advice and pointers for the program director. A strong component of this chapter is the stages of a radio personality’s career—stage one is the radio newbie; stage two is the radio pro; and stage three is the seasoned radio personality (p. 266). In addition, the author offers a special bulletin to air-talent everywhere “your program director should not be perceived as your enemy” (p. 272). Thus, he offers some key points for air-talent to remember in regards to how to work with their program director.

Chapter 11, “Inside the World of General Managers,” puts a key emphasis on how managers can demonstrate respect at work to their talent (p. 280), as well as some things radio managers want talent to be aware of when working in the radio environment. The chapter does not end without challenging managers to take the time to look in the mirror to determine whether they are a good manager or a bad manager through 12 questions (p. 287–288). Finally, the chapter explores some of the differences between male and female general managers

Chapter 12, “The Role of Consultants,” puts it very plainly that “the primary mission of a consultant is to find out what’s wrong with a radio station and fix it” (p. 299). Guy Zapoleon founder of Zapoleon Media Strategies in Katy, Texas, offers some of the serious issues facing radio: (a) consolidation, (b) too-tight play

lists, (c) Top-40 radio out of touch, and (d) diminished role of the radio personality (p. 303). In addition, Zapoleon offers eight basic steps to fix radio's woes: (1) admit there is a problem and take a hard look at ourselves; (2) build a brain trust to create and execute your strategy, (3) get to know your listeners and ask them what you can do to be better; (4) create custom solutions for listeners; (5) make a promise and deliver on it RELENTLESSLY; (6) give the consumer (listener) better variety and a better product; (7) music-based stations should test their music often, listeners want a variety; and (8) create a unique radio station with GREAT live personalities (p. 314). Walter Sabo, Jr. also offers valuable advice. The last chapter in this section, "A Woman's Perspective on Working in Radio and On the Air," opens with a brief history of pioneer radio women. Also details from a 1995 report from *Inside-Radio/M Street Corp.* are provided.

The next set of chapters deal with programming, promotions, and formats—beginning with morning drive time, the key spot on any radio station. Chapter 14, "How to Win in Morning Drive," uses more than 60 pages to give detailed advice about the most lucrative and yet the toughest shift in radio. "In every radio format, including music-focused stations, morning drive talent play fewer songs and lean on their personalities to keep a smooth conversational flow going throughout their shows. Radio management knows a station gathers a large listening audience through a strong morning drive show" (p. 350). The chapter also provides five basic rules to be a successful morning drive radio personality (p. 377), the six C's to success (p. 377–378), and a list of 35 suggestions on how to make our journey as a morning drive talent more successful (p. 404–405).

Chapter 15, "Radio Promotion: Marketing and Publicity" explores the multi-faceted areas including a brief history of promotion, one of radio's first promotions, the purpose of radio promotions, the role of the radio promotions director, and many tips on how to get publicity for your station, your show, and you. In addition, the chapter gives enduring information about personal appearances and station remotes. Chapter 16, "Radio Formats—News, Talk, and Sports," is literally divided into these three parts. Part 1 focuses on news, beginning with the birth of radio news, and the history of radio news-wire services versus radio. Also explored are some of radio's memorable pioneer personalities, the war years of WWII and radio news personalities, the years after WWII radio news personalities, and how to prepare for a

career as a radio news journalist. Part 2 focuses on talk—the author argues, "real talk radio consists of spellbinding rhetoric and dramatic exchanges between the show host and the caller, along with tough but polite interviews with news makers of the day. Excellent talk radio should focus on something of importance, whether it be local, national, or the problems of the world affecting us all!" (p. 487). The section offers many pointers on how to be a successful talk radio host. In addition, several talk radio experts give advice on how to prepare for a career as a talk show host. Part 3 focuses on sports. The section opens with a focus on some of sports firsts on radio. It also offers much advice for those interested in being a play-by-play voice. In addition, some of the challenges women sportscasters had to overcome are highlighted. Chapter 17, "Radio Formats—Music," explores the issue of personality. First, the distinction is made between a disc jockey and a radio personality. Second, personality is the key to radio's success regardless of the format. Third, there is a list of some of the basics to keep in mind, regardless of the station format. The chapter explores music formats but emphasis is on how the personality is the foundation.

Chapter 18, "Attorneys, Agents, Ratings, and Contracts," investigates the legal aspects of radio, asking, "Should air-talent have an agent or attorney?" The chapter offers several questions one may ask when making this decision. In addition, Martelle offers insight as to why he believes every air-talent needs an attorney. At the same time, many other radio pros offer their differing insights. Chapter 19, "Some Things to Know About a Career of an On-Air Pro," is a chapter "designed as a catch-all of radio information" (p. 581). A sample of topics covered in this chapter includes: (1) the importance of radio internships, (2) how to handle a job interview—including how to dress, (3) a reminder that radio pros are found in cities and towns of all sizes and not just in major markets, (4) weekend warriors and the importance of part-timers in radio plus 10 commandments for weekend air talent, (5) a reminder to not burn the candle at both ends, (6) the role of a radio producer, (7) the importance of solid working relationships between air-talent and sales staff, (8) how to do quality production, (9) age discrimination and how it can affect you, (10) always keeping the keys to the radio station on you, and (11) 10 Commandments for real radio pros such as *Thou shall cherish my air shifts!* (p. 581, 593). The

advice in this chapter is very practical for the wannabees, beginners, and seasoned professionals.

Chapter 20, “Who Inspired the Radio Pros Who Contributed to this Book,” is a goldmine of 50 individual radio pros giving narratives on who inspired them to enter radio (p. 611). The 50 individuals’ comments are arranged alphabetically by last name. The chapter begins with Mike Addams who has been on the air since June 1965 (p. 611) and ends with Mark Williams, a nationally-known talk show host who has worked various radio markets from Boston to California (p. 631). A variety of inspirational narratives are the treasure of this chapter.

Chapter 21, “Radio’s Future,” begins by exploring radio’s past as a way to exemplify why radio’s future is bright. A strong premise of the chapter is that radio is a survivor. Radio has weathered three major wars, undergone many programming metamorphoses, and undergone many technological changes (p. 642). Also, the chapter is clear in its discussion of how deregulation has affected radio. A solution for radio’s future is “it needs to get back to being local” (p. 646).

The book is interspersed with great photographs of many of the radio pros. It also has an afterword and an index. What is not displayed in this book review is the nearly 150 voices that encourage, guide, edify, and represent the world of on-air personality professionals. Martelle has more than 40 years of experience and credits learning about personality radio from legendary radio pioneers like Don McNeill—host of ABC-Radio’s long-running *The Breakfast Club*—Arthur Godfrey, and Art Linkletter (p. 4). He has studied the masters and interviewed many of the pros in order to share with individuals a guide to becoming a success in radio.

Although this book is not a typical textbook or reference book, I think this could be an excellent capstone book or one that could be the motivation behind an audio production or radio course where the end product will be audition tape. Anyone with a passion for radio would find this book a joy to read!

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**Swartz, Omar, Katia Campbell, and Christina Pestana.** *Neo-Pragmatism, Communication, and the Culture of Creative Democracy*. New York and Bern: Peter Lang, 2009. Pp. xii, 175. ISBN 978-1-4331-0731-3 (paper) \$35.95.

This book presents a carefully crafted extended argument for “how what we call, along with philosopher John Dewey . . . , a ‘creative democracy’ can be cultivated and advanced through a heightened awareness of the ways in which communication shapes individuals and society” (p. 2). The authors first provide an introduction to their philosophical and methodological assumptions and then take the reader through the intellectual history of “creative democracy” before sketching an educational proposal to accomplish such a democracy.

In Part I, in which they review assumptions, they set out a definition of democracy as “a community committed, at its core, to rejecting selfishness, greed, nationalism, and a radical atomization as typified in the United States today” (p. 13). The book, then, advocates change and builds its argument carefully, paying attention to current (negative) practices in the U.S. Because social justice must constitute part of a true democracy, the authors argue “the necessity of rethinking our current approach to education and public discourse” (p. 41) in Chapter 2. To show why this matters, they then sketch out the argument for communication as epistemic, identifying the communicative imagination as a key component (Chapter 3). Though this appears in the preparatory material, the epistemic nature of communication lies at the very heart of the argument. If how we communicate influences our thinking, then democracies must pay careful attention to how communication shapes our imagination. They conclude this first part by reminding the readers of their own methodology of reflexive critical scholarship—an engaged scholarship rather than the objective approach. “By applying theories, research, and conclusions to real-world contexts based on our political and social commitments, we are able to more fully engage the real problems that face us as a society and, specifically, we are able to address issues of social justice and social inequality” (p. 70).

The second part of the book, one that provides more of the intellectual foundations for the project, traces the history and nature of several philosophical approaches: perspectivalism and cosmopolitanism (Chapter 5), creative democracy in the writings of four philosophers (Chapter 6), and alienation and power (Chapter 7). Cosmopolitanism—a key idea—“stresses self-reliance, knowledge as a communal, perspectival process rather than as access to ahistorical truth” (p. 87). The four philosophers whose work grounds the argument are Friedrich Nietzsche, Ralph Waldo

Emerson, John Dewey, and Richard Rorty. The chapter provides a brief introduction to each one and a discussion of his arguments for democracy. For them, creative democracy is “a state of mind and a cultural way of being that emphasizes the potentiality and humanity of people above blind allegiance to religious, legal, or political dogma” (p. 105).

Part III of the book brings the argument to a conclusion with a proposal for an educational and communicative approach based on critical education. In this, the authors follow Paolo Freire and reject what they call a Platonic model of education, one that simply presents truths deduced from an ideal world to students. To facilitate such critical education, they propose a wider use of service learning in Chapter 9.

The book presents an important and challenging proposal for communication and political science and, indeed, for all education. The authors argue their case clearly and provide an abundance of examples and explanations. Written during the Bush presidency in the U.S., the book draws its examples from what the authors regard as a failure of democracy during that period; though these examples seem a bit dated, the reality they describe still exists in the U.S.

The book has an extensive set of references and an index.

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**Tang, Wenfang and Shanto Iyengar** (Eds.). *Political Communication in China: Convergence or Divergence between the Media and Political System?* London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2012. Pp. vi, 137. ISBN 13:978-0-415-52266-3 (cloth) \$125.00.

This volume is brief but a relatively up-to-date reading of what the relation of China’s Communist Party (CPP) and government is to the technology driven communication system and what the future holds for the political system in these circumstances. That is a tall order for what was a reprint of a relatively brief special issue of the journal *Political Communication* in 2011. The concise introduction by two well known political scientists and communication scholar (Iyengar) is clear and to the point. The advantage of such a succinct summary of recent research is that it brings the reader a current reading of the situation of freedom of speech in an authoritarian regime as well as

a largely quantitative approach to answering this question with data from China’s mainland territory. The book should appeal to journalists as well as political scientists and scholars of political communication.

In the first article, a Dutch political scientist studies how the marketization of Chinese media (those depending not on state subsidies but reader interest and support) is related to the increasingly negative coverage of the U.S.A. in Chinese media. With a blend of both qualitative and quantitative methods, the author makes a compelling case for seeing a causal connection between newly marketized media creating negative news about the U.S.A. when they focus on non-sanctioned (state approved) topics because the state is less interested in how these topics are treated and negative coverage may encourage attention by more readers. On the contrary, sanctioned topics are covered more in official publications and news seems less negative on the whole. The bind for Chinese marketized papers is to try to appeal to both reader interests in negative news about the U.S.A. and to conform to the Propaganda Department’s support of the government’s foreign policy dictates.

The article by Lei Ya-Wen is perhaps the strongest endorsement of the optimistic theories of the democratic influence of the Internet. Using a representative national sample in the China World Value Survey (2007), the author argues for the position that the large number of Internet users are more politically involved and better informed than the non-users. He makes careful statistical arguments for this conclusion’s validity. This is the first analysis of a nationally representative sample to make the case for the Internet mutually causing more political involvement of users as well as the other causative factor of self-selection by already politically motivated users. In brief, this conclusion fits into a number of researchers supporting the notion that the continued spread of the Internet will move China toward a more democratic society.

The third article is on the standards of communications between politicians and journalists in Taiwan since the loosening of restrictions in 1986 by the KMT and the first opposition president elected in 2000. The authors (an English researcher and a Taiwanese graduate student) used in-depth semi-structured interviews (22 in all) among politicians/their intermediaries, and journalists to gather information about the nature of political communication in the 2008 national elections. The conclusion is that Taiwan is seen as a young democracy whose politicians and journalists have not

yet understood how to negotiate the norms of political reporting. It is further argued that this “knowledge deficit” theory of emerging democracies is complicated by the simultaneous rising commercialization of media in Taiwan that also promotes sensationalism and political partisanship.

A group from the University of Connecticut, one American professor and two doctoral students, carried out a paper and pencil survey of two sets of university students in eastern China in June 2010, resulting in a sample of 182 valid respondents. Despite a small sample size, the authors argue that university students are the most likely to be Internet users and those in the age group 10–29 represent almost 63% of total users thus making their responses on political Internet discussion of great interest. Their conclusions are of a “moderately positive impact of the Internet on political involvement” (p. 92). They further argue that it is not the technology but political attitudes, trust in media, and trust in the social system (to change?) that are the principal predictive elements in the survey that show small but encouraging trends of Internet users toward political participation.

Another article represents a study by two Duke Professors and one from American University. The strength of this study is that it is based on a randomly sampled survey in two Chinese cities, one in eastern China where people had access to some foreign media sources (from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and elsewhere) and one in central China. One finding was that equality of access had made the two samples much more similar in results than the researchers had assumed. In short, a small sample of people (14%) regularly made use of foreign sources in Internet and TV. This can be argued to be small or not, depending on one’s interpretation. The authors make the argument that this is a sign of some decrease in the power of state control over access to information among a variety of media sources. On another score, the authors argue that regarding attitudes of Chinese citizens toward the U.S.A., there needs to be a distinction made between general attitudes about the U.S.A. and those related to restricted topics concerning U.S. policy toward China, policies toward other developing countries, and toward Taiwan. They argue that too often research lumps together these two areas. They find a large and significant difference between these two sets of attitudes: generally much more positive attitudes regarding science and technology, education, democracy, and American movies and TV than in the three policy areas.

A final article by a Chinese professor from the University of Buffalo concerns the modernization of the official Xinhua News Agency from the 1990s on. The article is based on a number of interviews with officials at Xinhua and elsewhere in China and points out its growth in size, organization, and professionalization over the past two decades. The other theme that seems at odds with the generally positive estimate of Xinhua as indicated by that agency’s officials is the author’s repetition several times that Xinhua remains unchanged in its mission to promote the policies of the state and party. The article provides an in-depth historical account of this agency from earliest time of change in 1978 to the present and examines the many internal factors that promoted changes. Still, the author’s assertions of the unchanged basic mission of the institution puts him more on the side of the authors of this book who see relatively small chances of more liberal change for China in the near future despite growing media access.

The usefulness of this volume is that it provides a good deal of empirical evidence on a topic that many have speculated on without sufficient evidence. The research in this small book provides a relatively updated discussion of a critical issue in political communication. The volume has footnotes and useful references at the end of each chapter as well as a brief index at the end of the book.

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**Vannini, Phillip** (Ed.). *Popularizing Research: Engaging New Genres, Media, and Audiences*. New York and Bern: Peter Lang, 2012. Pp. x, 220. ISBN 978-1-4331-1181-5 (paper) \$38.95.

All scholars want others to know the fruits of their research but, as Phillip Vannini points out in the introduction to this collection, the academic world seemingly conspires against that desire by its system of publication for scholarly audiences, specialized journals, and prejudice against “popular” venues. Ruth Garbutt, one of the contributors to this volume, expands on this by commenting on how academics have identified “the need for researchers to write in an academic way and follow expected conventions in order to be ‘accepted’ and to have a research career. However, the scholarship and sophistication required of academia is not always helpful in terms of making research accessible for people with learning disabili-

ties, or in terms of popularizing research” (p. 133). Many, however, still manage to get the results of research into the communities that can benefit most from it—often the communities that provided the subjects or information for the research. That success forms the core of *Popularizing Research*.

This book brilliantly accomplishes several goals. First, it presents research from a variety of disciplines that has reached the public, along with commentaries from the researchers. In this, the book and its accompanying website must be experienced rather than read. The text offers, for example, the goals, methods, procedures, and audience of a documentary film maker; the website links to the film. Following the anthropological principle of “show, then tell,” “almost all the contributors were asked to deliver a ‘show’ to be uploaded on the website and a ‘tell’ to be featured on the book. The ‘tell’ . . . was meant as a narrative reflection on the experience of producing and distributing popularized research” (p. 8). Vannini continues:

Each chapter is meant to strike a compromise between two extremes: the practical extreme of teaching technical components of research popularization (e.g., how to use Adobe Creator to edit media material) and the abstract extreme of reflecting on the epistemological value of popularized research. As a result, the information presented in each chapter is meant to stimulate and guide readers to popularize research and to provide them with a rough directory on the possibilities available. (p. 8)

Second, the book serves as a kind of research methods textbook. Many of the examples begin in qualitative methods, but one could just as well present quantitative studies (as do several of the authors). The key lies in how to present what one has discovered. Here, the essays are truly eye-opening, suggesting imaginative and persuasive ways to communicate important ideas. From this perspective, anyone teaching a research methods class should certainly study this book and think seriously about assigning it to their students.

Third, the book—while not addressed specifically to communication researchers—calls to them both in the (communication) media the contributors employ and in the self-reflexive sense of these communication media. To set the book and the website side by side offers an important understanding of the possibilities of contemporary communication.

Vannini has divided the book and the website into nine sections, based on the media the various researchers have chosen to disseminate their work: film, visual media and graphics, exhibits and installations, audio, periodicals, books and reports, dialogue (often via social media), performance, and publicity. Each of these sections presents three or four case studies. Each fascinates, though some offer more detail on the research results than others, a result of the audience that the authors/creators chose. For example, Frank Sligo and Elspeth Tilley chose cartoons to best reach their audience of mixed-skill adult literacy program participants while Vivienne Brunson, Joe Robinson, Jeffrey Goatcher, and Rowena Hill used multimedia artwork to get the word out to communities where fire responders had come under attack. In each case, the presentations work well on the level of the community while this academic reader at least wanted more detail.

The first section, on film, has three different documentary projects. These may be the least surprising in the collection since documentary has long played a role in communication and anthropology departments. It could well be quite novel in other academic areas. Similarly, while visual media and graphics also appear in media departments, the use of cartoons, graphic novels, and photovoice applications offer new ways to present data for almost every discipline. And the idea of an exhibit certainly seems informative (judged by so many museum presentations); the particular exhibits described here move from a typical curatorial effort to a social science creative leap.

The section on audio includes case studies of radio, rap music, and audio documentary, the latter a study of sonic culture. Scholars will recognize two of the examples of periodicals—telling the research story through op-ed pieces and through magazine writing—the third surprises. Aliaa Dawoud chose to write a short story about her research results in order to better communicate with the community whose political opinions and media consumption patterns she had studied. The section on the use of books and reports seems fairly close to the academic mainstream until one considers the intended audience. New to the mix come social media, which in themselves offer the possibility of an ongoing dialogue with research participants. Brandy King and Michael Rich’s account of the “Ask the Mediatrician” website as an information source for parents on their children’s media habits gives a very helpful presentation for communication researchers. But similar things can occur in other disciplines as Mike

Evans and Jon Corbett demonstrate with their project on the popularization of Métis history in Canada.

Performance presentation includes theatre, poetry, and dance. The final chapter encourages scholars to learn to use the tools of publicity to make their work known. Press releases, outreach to new media journalists, storytelling, popular books all are available. In many cases, an individual's university press office will happily assist.

As noted, the book provides reflections (the "tell") on the experiences (the "show"). The "shows" themselves reside on the website, [www.popularizingresearch.net](http://www.popularizingresearch.net). The website republishes Vannini's introduction and then follows the same organizational structure as the book. As a website, it allows more accessible switching among sections and some additional indexing. Unfortunately, some inconsistencies appear. Some presentations have embedded video or graphic material while others link to external pages. Some of the external pages appear in a new browser tab or window while others leave the popularizingresearch site altogether.

The overall project—book and website—forms a terrific compendium of ideas for presenting research. Would that more members of the academy would embrace it.

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**Wagner, Rachel.** *Godwired: Religion, Ritual, and Virtual Reality*. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. Pp. vi, 266. ISBN 978-0-415-78144-2 (cloth) \$130.00; 978-0-415-78145-9 (paper) \$39.95; 978-0-203-14807-5 (e-book), pricing available from publisher.

As more people spend more time with their computers, either online or engaging in local exploration or play, they increasingly touch on matters of religion. The Internet has captured those with religious interests, just as it has captured others. But computing and the Internet also seem to have a religious aspect. Some people seek it directly, searching out various online religious sites or using the Internet to supplement information about their religious traditions. Others—and a growing group—engage in religious-like virtual activities. This group forms the core of Rachel Wagner's interest in *Godwired*. More particularly, she investigates video games, the players of such games, and the elements of the games. "*Godwired* addresses this rich

relationship between religion and 'virtual reality' (which I define as any form of digital technology that involves user engagement with software via a screen interface)" (p. 1). Such virtual reality involves "world-building" or "the imagining of a world in which we are in control, in which things make sense, in which what we do has profound meaning, and in which we can enact our ideal selves" (p. 2). And these characteristics, she argues, mirror or imitate or form part of the religious imagination.

In many ways, *Godwired* rests on an extended analogy: that the virtual reality of video games resembles religious activities. The virtual reality and the games involve narratives, ritual, a sense of the Other, a construction or discovery of identity, community, good and evil, and other aspects that religious activities share. While always thought-provoking, Wagner sometimes seems to take the analogy beyond its initial claim. When she argues that games resemble religion, she also tends to accept that religion is like games, that the two become identical. That challenging claim finds some support, though at times this support appears ambiguous.

Wagner approaches each of her chapters in a similar way. After introducing the theme (narrative, say), she offers a general introduction in which she defines key terms and sets out questions. And, in a very valuable contribution to the overall discussion, she creates a kind of dialogue among the writers and researchers who have explored the topic, allowing their work to come into contact. By doing this she identifies areas of agreement and, perhaps more importantly, areas that the virtual worlds of gaming may call into question.

The chapter on narrative identifies authority—the authority of the text and the authoritative interpretations—as important in how people interact with narrative, whether biblical narrative or the narrative world of games. By making narratives into games, Wagner can then point out five different ways of thinking about stories: "(1) stories as games; (2) stories as fate; (3) stories as potential narratives; (4) stories as catharsis; and (5) stories as interactive systems" (p. 27). For each, she introduces theorists and practices.

Wagner then turns to ritual—for games do indeed involve ritual practices. After a brief history of gaming, she presents five similarities between games and stories: interactivity, play, rules, narratives, and conflict. These five categories then provide the framework in which we meet the various theories of ritual, each of which Wagner tests against the virtual world of gam-

ing. In the game world, players meet an “Other,” whether an opponent, an ally, or a presence who forms the background of the game. The next chapter explores this idea with, as usual, a general introduction and key categories. “By synthesizing the views of a host of scholars from a variety of fields, five primary streams of discussion emerge, each with different implications about virtual reality’s relationship to the sacred: (1) virtual reality as hierophany; (2) virtual reality as multiple worlds; (3) virtual reality and the magic circle; (4) virtual reality as streaming, that is, as increasingly fluid with physical reality; (5) virtual reality as a reflection of already existing earthly things, or put another way, as a mere human construct” (pp. 79-80). For each of the approaches to the Other or to the sacred, Wagner finds a parallel in the virtual world.

She then turns to questions of identity, particularly identity formation and how this occurs in both religious and virtual worlds. More and more people seek out an identity—through spiritual searching or through affiliation with a group. This dialogic approach, when coupled with the virtual reality of game playing and the ability to take on multiple identities in the virtual world, suggests that traditional ideas of personal identity may not be complex enough to fully describe this human phenomenon. Identity connects with community. People find themselves with others and understand themselves in terms of those relationships. The virtual world, though, has connected people into communities not previously imagined. Wagner takes the reader through approaches to community, including how various religious groups have experimented with online evangelism and religious gaming as ways to increase community. She completes the chapter with an account of community in virtual worlds ranging from *Second Life* to games.

The last chapters of the book shift their approach slightly to introduce the reader to perhaps more problematic ideas: violence in games and the ways that games structure violence. While acknowledging violence in religious texts, Wagner looks primarily at the game world. Intentionality and purpose hold one key to the theories of violence and both help to contrast (but sometimes to compare) gaming violence with violence in religious ritual. Using violence as a kind of bridge, Wagner next turns to apocalyptic. Once again both appear in religious literature and in gaming. She notes, “video games, especially first-person shooters, resemble a very specific religious form of the magic circle: apocalypses” (p. 187). Much of the imagery of gaming

could easily find its place in this ancient imaginative genre of the end times. In both religion and games, such end times discourse involves a world under threat, widespread angst, secret knowledge, a messiah, and anonymous (or pseudonymous) sources.

Wagner ends the book with a consideration of the nature of religion. Drawing on a long history of the sociology of religion, she asks “how religions work” (p. 206). And from this functional approach, many parallels arise in the virtual world of gaming. This, of course, takes the reader to the heart of the discussion: we learn a great deal about both gaming and religion in this presentation. How much can the similarity teach about each of these realms? The book amply rewards a close reading and provides a great deal of food for thought.

The book includes an extensive bibliography, covering gaming, virtual worlds, and religion. It also features an index.

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## Briefly Noted

**Block, Alex Ben and Lucy Autrey Wilson (Eds.).** *George Lucas’s Blockbusting: A Decade-by-Decade Survey of Timeless Movies Including Untold Secrets of Their Financial and Cultural Success.* New York: itbooks, HarperCollins, 2010. Pp. xxix, 944. ISBN 978-0-06-177889-6 (paper) \$29.99.

As its subtitle suggests, this book examines highly successful films from the last 100 years, from 1913 to 2005. The editors provide an introduction to each decade (the organizing unit for the book), including a brief political and economic history, an overview of the film industry trends of the period, distribution patterns, and exhibition practices. Each section also includes film statistics with money expressed in both unadjusted dollars and 2005 equivalent dollars. The heart of the book lies in the discussion of the films themselves. The editors present the plot, production notes, and distribution notes for each of the 300 selected films as well as release notes (revenues, director, producer, production company, story, cast, filming locations, genre, format, release date, awards, etc.).

Appendices list sources for film awards, financial and statistical references, general works on film, film magazines, production reports, and online sources. The

volume also has an extensive index. All in all, this is an excellent film reference for U.S. film.

**Brungs, Robert A.** *Written in our Flesh: Eyes Toward Jerusalem*. St. Louis, MO: ITEST, 2008. Pp. xiv, 347. ISBN 1-885583-16-8 (paper) \$15.95. [Available from Institute for Theological Encounter with Science and Technology, Cardinal Rigali Center, 20 Archbishop May Drive, Suite 3400A, St. Louis, MO 63119]

From 1968 until his death in 2006, Fr. Robert Brungs, S.J., directed the Institute for Theological Encounter with Science and Technology (ITEST), a center dedicated to fostering dialogue among the major intellectual and cultural movements in the 20th century. Focused on organizing conferences and promoting dialogue, ITEST brought key thinkers together and worked to publicize their discussions and ideas. This book gathers into one volume many of Fr. Brungs' own writings. The first chapter—his reflections on priesthood—includes a great deal of autobiographical information. The next chapter publishes many of his letters (or excerpts from them). Chapter 3 publishes his writings on the relationship of faith and science, while Chapter 4 summarizes his talks at ITEST conferences. The last chapter contains his last three articles from the ITEST bulletin.

Appendices provide an index of Chapter 5, a bibliography of Fr. Brungs' writings, photos, his obituary, and the funeral homily by Fr. John Kavanaugh, S.J. Unfortunately, the book does not contain a table of contents nor a complete index of all material published here.

**Bucht, Catharine and Maria Edstöm** (Eds.). *Youth Have Their Say on Internet Governance: Nordic Youth Forum at EuroDIG Stockholm June 2012*. Göteborg, Sweden: NORDICOM, 2012. Pp. 63. ISBN 978-91-86523-53-4 (paper). Free.

This small booklet presents both an overview of Internet use in the Nordic countries (with a focus on youth) and a representative sample of the voices of young people who attended a meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in 2012. This forum had a threefold aim: “(1) to let the youth discuss Internet governance on their own terms, (2) to allow them to participate in the debates at the EuroDIG [European Dialogue on Internet Governance] conference, and (3) to let their ideas travel through this report so that their voices can be heard at the IGF in Baku and elsewhere”

(p. 9). In addition to the statistics and some acts of the conference (such as the speech of H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden), the booklet offers interviews with participants as well as summaries of key discussion points.

The young people (14–18 years old) represented in the booklet argue that Internet safety is best protected by knowledge rather than censorship, that they should have “the right to personal and professional integrity” as well as privacy and security (p. 28). Delegates considered the Internet as a place for freedom, but did recognize the risks of manipulation. They saw little disconnect between online and offline social networks. Among key suggestions:

- Parents should be educated and empowered to take part in a dialogue with their children instead of trusting that this be done by computer programs, companies, or regulators.
- Schools should teach young people how to think critically, assess information, and determine which sources can be trusted.
- Politicians should take action. “Politicians need to realize that the Internet has become a huge part of our lives. They have the opportunity to teach us how to surf safely.” . . .
- The young people want their knowledge to be used. (p. 34)

Participants met online and in small groups to discuss aspects of Internet governance before attending the forum, a time where the organizers offered a mix of small group discussion, plenary sessions, and preparation of short film clips.

Appendices to the booklet contain sample resources, documents, and projects as well as descriptions of the six sponsoring agencies.

**Carlsson, Ulla** (Ed.). *Children and Youth in the Digital Media Culture: From a Nordic Horizon*. Göteborg, Sweden: NORDICOM, 2010. Pp. 251. ISBN 978-91-86523-04-6 (paper) SEK200; €20; \$25.00.

In a departure from its usual global perspective, NORDICOM presents this 2010 yearbook of current research on youth and media with a focus just on the Nordic countries. The book builds on the occasion of the 2010 World Summit on Media for Children and youth, which took place in Sweden. Recognizing that researchers from around the world would attend, the editors decided to draw together detailed information from “the research communities of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden” (p. 8).

After a general introduction to both global and Nordic perspectives on the topic, the book presents research on the two main themes of NORDICOM: media literacy and youth culture (as it connects with digital culture). In the first section, researchers note how media literacy has changed over the years, taking place as much outside of school as within it. Tapio Varis offers a perspective on how researchers have come to understand media literacy, “summarized in four areas of ability: access, analysis, evaluation, and creative production. All of these skills boost aspects of personal development: consciousness, critical thinking, and problem solving abilities” (p. 78). According to Ola Erstad new digital competencies offer possibilities to move from “naive participation” to civic engagement. Sirkku Kotilainen then demonstrates how this new digital culture will require new skills; the media literacy community must adapt to the new reality.

The second part of the yearbook presents nine research reports: “From TV Viewing to Participatory Cultures” (Ingegerd Rydin & Ulrika Sjöberg); “The Extensions of Youth” (Thorbjörn Broddason, Kjartan Ólafsson, & Sólveig Margrét Karlsdóttir); “Growing Up in a Commercial World” (Ingunn Hagen); “Advertising Directed at Children” (Gunilla Jarlbro); “Fandom, New Media, Participatory Cultures” (Irma Hirsjärvi); “Playfulness in Children’s Media Usage” (Pål Aarsand); “Addiction and Randomness” [on gambling games and massively multiplayer games] (Faltin Karlsen); “Influences of Mediated Violence” (Cecilia von Feilitzen); and “The Kids are Alright [sic]: Perspectives on Children’s Online Safety” (Elza Dunkels).

The last part of the yearbook contains a compilation of statistics on the media use of young people in the Nordic countries. This valuable summary aims not just at a static representation, but at a sense of the developments in the media sectors. Catharina Bucht, the compiler, notes, “Under each section the aim has been to present time series with statistics on access and use, but also to include ad hoc figures or findings from recent surveys in each country” (p. 202). She cautions, however, that the different countries collect and sort the data in different ways, so one must exercise some caution in comparisons.

As with all the publications of NORDICOM, this yearbook presents valuable information and research. Each essay has its own reference list and notes. Though there is no index, the detailed table of contents provides a good guide to finding things.

**Cvjetičanin, Biserka** (Ed.). *Networks: The Evolving Aspects of Culture in the 21st Century*. Zagreb: Institute for International Relations, Culturelink Network, 2011. Pp. x, 281. ISBN 978-953-6096-57-2 (paper). €30; PDF download at <http://www.culturelink.org/publics/joint/networking/networking.pdf>

The volume “marks 20 years of [Culturelink’s] continuous networking and research activities in cultural development, cultural policies, intercultural communication, and international cultural cooperation” (p. 3). Culturelink began in 1989 as a collaborative venture between UNESCO and the Council of Europe to promote connections among those working “in the field of culture throughout the world” (p. 9). Often focused on policy research, Culturelink brings researchers and practitioners together as well as linking them through ongoing publications. “Cultural action and cultural cooperation have always preceded formal political processes, and professional bodies like Culturelink have made important contributions to integration processes, as former socialist and communist countries joined the Council of Europe one by one after 1989” (p. 9).

This work examines Culturelink’s activities under six headings. An introductory section offers three historical views, noting among other things the context from which Culturelink emerged, the reasons behind its foundation, and a look at its evolution over the years. The second part focuses on policy, particularly on the development of cultural policy, as national or regional networks joined together. Essays in this section offer reflections on cultural policy in the digital age, on contemporary imperatives for cultural policy, on the formation of research in emerging sectors, and on the democratization of culture in Third World networks.

The third part looks more specifically at the effects of the growing digital world. These include, of course, a new dynamic in networking itself—with improved communication and the sharing of resources. Web 2.0 has had a profound impact on the culture sector and on networking practices, perhaps even more than these professionals can imagine. Not only researchers but also cultural creators make use of these digital resources, even to offering a “virtual museum of Avant-Garde Art” (pp. 119–128). These discussions lead easily into Part 4, which examines artists and their work. More mobile, they work now in transnational spaces, even without leaving home.

Part 5 presents practical studies on “different aspects of cultural networks: examples of good prac-

tices in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and Latin America” (pp. 169–245). These nine chapters consider not only the different regions but also different kinds of networks and different uses of networks. One might ask along with the writers about the commonalities among the various Asian cultures, European ones, and Pacific Island cultures. The book concludes with a selection of three essays on how network culture is itself evolving. This kind of intercultural communication has evolved from occasional international meetings and journal publication to shared enterprises and new “best practices.”

The volume has an appendix with biographical information on each contributor, but no index. Each chapter has its own notes and reference list.

**Danet, Brenda and Susan C. Herring** (Eds.). *The Multilingual Internet: Language, Culture, and Communication Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xvi, 443. ISBN 978-0-19-530479-4 (cloth) \$99.00; 978-0-19-530480-0 (paper) \$35.00.

The Internet, online communication, SMS services, and computer-mediated communication (CMC) in general provide a wonderful real-world laboratory for linguistics and language study. Addressing non-English speakers’ online language use, this collection publishes 17 studies as part of an ongoing research study of online multilingualism. Early CMC protocols, considering only the English-speaking world, used a limited ASCII character set of the 26 Roman letters, their capital versions, the numbers from 0 to 9, and some punctuation. Only many years later did computer programmers take other languages and scripts into account with extended character sets. So Internet users adapted. The studies in this volume attempt to document uses and understand this new world of linguistics.

Danet and Herring divide the work into five parts. The first considers writing systems, with studies of Gulf Arabic in instant messaging, Chinese language adaptations on Taiwan-based BBS sites, changes in French spelling with abbreviated words in text messages, and the creation of “Greeklish,” or Greek expressed in English orthography. Each study fascinates as each reveals the wonders of human creativity, particularly in the reduction of words into as few characters as possible—demanded by early text-messaging systems on mobile phones with limited keyboards. Part 2 examines linguistic features of CMC with studies of interaction on Japanese sites,

instant messaging in Hong Kong, and the use of Catalan (versus Spanish) in online forums utilizing machine translation. Part 3 turns to gender, a particularly important feature of languages that encode gender, but also an important aspect of interpersonal relations. Studies in this section examine turn-allocation in a Thai chat room, conversational norms and politeness in a Portuguese network, and types of expressivity in a Japanese housewives’ chat room.

Multilingual individuals both have choices and must make choices as to which language to speak in different settings; even monolingual speakers make choices of linguistic codes. Studies in Part 4 examine Egyptians’ online language choice, Swiss citizens’ language choices, code switching in German-based online forums, and language choices among Swedish speakers. One theory to explain the preponderance of English among non-English speakers holds that English has become a neutral language. Among the Swiss, for example, rather than choosing (or privileging) one of the four languages of the country, citizens choose English since people speak it independently of any political or cultural division.

The last section examines broader perspectives: the challenges posed by the European Union and its attempt to encourage democratic participation, for example—these are not only political challenges but linguistic ones as well. The overall phenomenon of the Internet also raises interesting issues of how much linguistic diversity matters in the worldwide community. As the Internet moves from the domain of an elite to a regular part of people’s lives (fueled by the spread of mobile telephony and texting), the question of which language will only increase.

**Ellingson, Laura L. and Patricia J. Sotirin**. *Aunting: Cultural Practices that Sustain Family and Community Life*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010. Pp. xiii, 223. ISBN 978-160258152-4 (cloth) \$29.95.

As the authors note early on, everyone who has an aunt has a story about an aunt. The topic has personal and cultural resonance, but not so much a presence in the research tradition on kinship, whether in sociology, communication, anthropology, or family studies. “We intend this study,” they write, “to provide a more nuanced and critical view of aunts than those offered in contemporary nonfiction trade books that celebrate our aunties, contributing to the work of scholars and practitioners in family communication and

family studies, sociology and anthropology of kinship, and women's studies" (pp. ix–x).

This ethnographic study explores this important relationship primarily through interviews, but also through personal experiences and observations. In some ways the book and the research serve to “reimagine aunting”: “We encourage readers to think of the aunt not as a person or even a role, but as a practice, as something people do. . . . [W]e follow recent research that emphasizes family as a dynamic experience rather than as a static accomplishment” (p. 4). This choice led them to ask research participants to tell them stories of aunting. And they find that “aunting is a choice” and that “aunts embody flexibility” (p. 5).

Individual chapters deal with aunting as “caring for kin,” “constructing kin,” “mentoring and modeling,” and “carrying on the family.” Other chapters address “aunts at a distance” and the relationship between self and an aunt. Filled with stories, the book introduces the notion of aunting through memorable characters—and familiar ones. The experience is so close to us, it’s a wonder that more people have not chosen to study this important relationship. Ellingson and Sotirin conclude with a set of reflections on the contemporary relationships revealed in their data. Among other things they note the different ways of “doing families and communities.” They also point out, “A second vital implication of our analysis of aunting lies in its simultaneous connection to and resistance of traditional femininity within the family” (p. 173).

The book contains an appendix on methodology as well as notes and an extensive reference list and an index.

**Epstein, Joyce L.** *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*. Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2011. (Second edition). Pp. xix, 634. ISBN 978-0-8133-4447-8 (paper) \$53.00.

Improving schools and educational outcomes has echoed as a theme in the United States for a century or more, with suggestions and solutions ranging from smaller classes to the use of technology. In this volume Epstein reports on over 30 years of research on partnerships and their success. “In partnerships, educators, families, and community members work together to share information, guide students, solve problems, and celebrate successes. Partnerships recognize the shared

responsibilities of home, schools, and community for children’s learning and development” (p. 4).

Epstein has arranged the book in sections (each consisting of material she has solely authored or authored with various colleagues) addressing theory, research, policy implications, practice, and strategies. The theoretical chapters propose a theory of family and school, and propose a research agenda on community partnerships. The research chapter reports on findings about parental involvement, about teachers’ responses to parental involvement, about teacher-parent involvement in inner-city schools, about parents’ reactions to teacher practices, about single parents and education, about parental attitudes, about student achievement in schools with partnership programs, about homework practices, and about student reactions to teacher practices.

Epstein then turns to applying this research, first to public policy. Here she looks at state and district policies as well as how school districts meet national priorities. The next two chapters turn to practical frameworks. The first examines best practices in caring for children while the second turns to linking family, community partnerships, and student learning. The last chapter sets out strategies for action in each area: policy, practice, and research.

Each chapter has its own reference list; the book has a comprehensive index.

**Souza, María Dolores and Patricio Cabello** (Eds.). *The Emerging Media Toddlers*. Göteborg, Sweden: NORDICOM, 2010. Pp. 55. ISBN 978-91-89471-95-5 (paper) SEK 120, €12.

This short booklet presents research on “infants’ and toddlers’ ownership and use of media, especially in the complex context of family and media industry in different societies” (p. 7). The studies, drawn from around the world (though primarily focused on Latin America and other places with a body of research on young children’s media) examine not only traditional “children’s media,” but also “screen technologies,” such as those found in computers and tablets. The collection features summaries of studies in Chile, France, the South Pacific (particularly New Zealand), and Sweden. In addition, the booklet included interviews with children’s media researchers in the United States and Venezuela.

Because it brings together and introduces summary materials, the booklet holds particular value since so little research on this important area exists.

