

SECOND EDITION

MEDIA NOW

Communications Media in the Information Age

Straubhaar • LaRose



MEDIA NOW

Communications Media in the Information Age

Second Edition

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Preface

We wrote this book to be the first in a new generation of textbooks about mass communications. Our focus is on the kinds of communications that are mediated by technology. We expanded that focus to include new media technologies that were rapidly becoming “mass” media, such as computers, the Internet, and telecommunications. Our theme is that the convergence of these technologies is creating a new communications environment. Our goal is to prepare students to thrive in that environment.

The specific reason we wrote this book is that we could not find an existing introductory mass communications textbook that adequately prepares our students for the real world as it stands today. Our new title for the second edition, *MEDIA NOW: Communications Media in the Information Age*, reflects our desire to focus on the cutting edge of both the traditional mass media (magazines, books, newspapers, radio, film, and television) and the new media (computer media, Internet, and telecommunications).

We saw too many students diligently studying mass media in the traditional way—only to discover after graduation that the vast majority of today’s real jobs require skills and a knowledge base that their textbooks had barely touched on.

In the last few years, students in advertising, journalism, and public relations have often found jobs faster if they also know how to design and construct a Web page and how to find information on the Web. Students also find jobs in innovative places—at phone companies, in corporate communications divisions, and so on—but discover that they do not always know enough to succeed in these new environments. Their introductory textbooks paid little or no attention to the telecommunications and computer industries and to how industries that had always been disparate are now converging.

Since our first edition, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 changed the rules to further encourage convergence and competition across media industries. That has led to fairly traditional combinations, such

as the merging of movie studios, television networks, and cable operations, and also to new alliances such as the one created when NBC and Microsoft joined forces to produce both a cable news channel and Web site.

Today’s television production or journalism students are as likely to end up working for a media conglomerate controlled by an electronics company as they are for a stand-alone TV station or magazine. Those students need to understand the large, diverse interests of such firms if they are to rise in the company from their first jobs. Many of the best entry-level jobs in the Information Society, for which a well-prepared communications student can compete, are outside the traditional mass media—in Internet Service Providers, software design firms, or telephone companies.

This book shows where today’s communications industries came from and how they got to where they are. But, more importantly, it also seriously assesses their trajectories into the future. It helps students understand how mass media are being transformed as they converge with technologies such as the computer, Internet, and telephone. It helps them create a vision of their future in the Information Society and information economy.

Our purpose is not to be cheerleaders for communication technology. In fact, we try to raise critical issues about the implications of information technologies parallel to our discussion of the implications of mass media. However, we have seen the lights turn on behind our students’ eyes when we begin a class discussion with a headline from the morning paper. They realize that the convergence of technologies we are talking about is not dry history or mere speculation, but is really happening right now. Most of them already have some personal experience with it, and the rest have a strong curiosity about it. It is important to expose them to—and to demystify—communications technologies. This book is designed to help both professor and student do that.

easy to read while still providing vital detail. We also include a great deal of anecdotal material to bring the subject to life. The historical treatments begin with the very earliest forms of each technology or medium, since these are the easiest starting points for non-technical readers.

Global Media

The revised and updated Chapter 15, “Globalization of Communications Media,” looks at how countries are developing media comparatively, the globalization of media companies, and the increasing flow of media around the world.

New Features

This book comes with a rich set of new features to aid in learning:

- *What's Ahead* Each chapter opens with a brief summary of the chapter.
- *Chapter Outline* A succinct chapter outline provides a quick view of the main topics.
- *Glossary* Key terms are defined in the margins, and a complete glossary is included in the back of the book.
- *Time Lines* Major events in each media industry are summarized in chart form.
- *Internet Links* Throughout the book, students are encouraged to use Internet links to learn more about the media.
- *Boxed Features* Six new boxed features are designed to target specific issues:

Media Ethics analyzes an ethical issue in depth, followed by questions for reflection.

Profile focuses on key media figures.

Media Watch focuses on economics/business developments.

Media Impact examines the impact of some key aspect of media on the individual and society.

Technology Demystified explains technological background information simply.

Technology Trends focuses on technological changes in the various media.

- *Electronic Resources* Many of the boxes and sources cited contain electronic resources—places to look on the Internet or in InfoTrac College Edition for further information. (See below for more information about this resource.)

New Resources for Students and Teachers

For this new edition, important new resources are now available:

- *Book-Specific Web Site* For instructors, this site provides sample syllabi, PowerPoint® slides, updated test item questions, suggested readings, a career hotlink, and a “contact the authors” section. For students and instructors, there are chapter-by-chapter interactive quizzes, an on-line glossary, relevant Internet links for further information on various topics, and updated and additional chapter information.
<http://communication.wadsworth.com/>
- *CNN Mass Communication Video* To help stimulate class discussions, a series of CNN videos, with segments keyed to material in the text, is available to professors by arrangement with Wadsworth. Contact your local Wadsworth sales representative or call 1-877-999-2350, ext. 875.
- *InfoTrac® College Edition* A fully searchable, on-line database, which is updated daily, provides students access to complete articles from over 600 scholarly and popular periodicals, dating back 4 years. This database allows students to expand their knowledge of media issues with contemporary articles from all the major media and video clips from library and network news sources. Exercises for using InfoTrac College Edition are included in a variety of boxed features throughout the text. Additional questions will be featured on the book-specific Web site.
- *Revised Instructor's Manual* with Test Questions, Lecture Guides, Transparency Masters, and transition notes reflecting changes from the previous edition.
- *New PowerPoint® Presentation CD-ROM* Designed to work with PowerPoint®, this flexible presentation tool includes text and images to illustrate concepts in this text.

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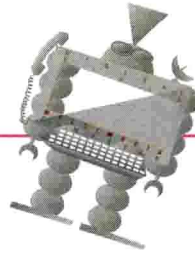
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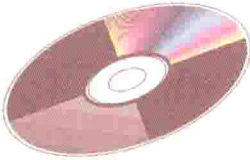
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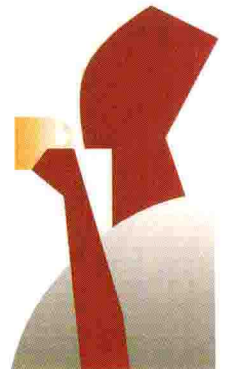
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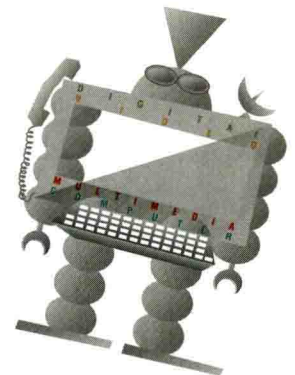
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