

Introduction to  
**MASS  
COMMUNICATION**

*Second Edition*

**BLACK • WHITNEY**

Introduction to  
**MASS  
COMMUNICATION**  
*Second Edition*

JAY BLACK  
*University of Alabama*

FREDERICK C. WHITNEY  
*San Diego State University, Emeritus*

**wcb**

Wm. C. Brown Publishers  
Dubuque, Iowa

## Book Team

Editor *Stan Stoga*  
Developmental Editor *Kathy Law Laube*  
Production Editor *C. Jeanne Patterson*  
Designer *Carol S. Joslin*  
Photo Research Editor *Shirley Charley*  
Visuals Processor *Joyce E. Watters*  
Product Manager *Marcia H. Stout*

## **wcb group**

Chairman of the Board *Wm. C. Brown*  
President and Chief Executive Officer *Mark C. Falb*

## **wcb**

### Wm. C. Brown Publishers, College Division

Executive Vice-President, General Manager *G. Franklin Lewis*  
Editor in Chief *George Wm. Bergquist*  
Director of Production *Beverly Kolz*  
National Sales Manager *Bob McLaughlin*  
Marketing Research Manager *Craig S. Marty*  
Production Editorial Manager *Colleen A. Yonda*  
Manager of Design *Marilyn A. Phelps*  
Photo Research Manager *Faye M. Schilling*

Cover photograph © Cam Chapman

The credits section for this book begins on page C1, and is considered an extension of the copyright page.

Copyright © 1983, 1988 by Wm. C. Brown Publishers. All rights reserved

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 87-070283

ISBN 0-697-00478-3

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America by Wm. C. Brown Publishers  
2460 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, IA 52001

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

# Preface

---

In writing the second edition of *Introduction to Mass Communication*, we continue the main thrust found in the first edition. We have attempted to analyze the mass communication empires on their own terms, to recognize them for what they are—large, sometimes monolithic industries established to earn a profit as well as to serve the interests of their customers. The media are studied here within the broad contexts in which they operate. Technological, economic, political, philosophical, and sociological factors are considered throughout. We try to ask and then carefully answer such questions as:

How does each of the media operate; what technological, economic, and human factors are involved in the production of newspapers, magazines, books, recordings, radio, television, film, and new electronic media?

What are the effects of media upon their audiences? As they fulfill their basic functions of persuading, informing, entertaining, and transmitting culture, to what extent are the media beneficial or harmful to individuals and to society?

What is the nature of media auxiliaries—the indirect but enormously influential advertising, public relations, news, and feature services?

Why have the media developed as they have—into pervasive, profit-oriented concerns, often in conflict with both the government and the governed?

What might the alternatives be to the present mass communications network? Is the future likely to bring more of the same, or are major changes at hand?

What forces in government, society, and within the media themselves serve to put a check on media excesses? Left to their own devices, would profit-oriented media be responsible to society?

Answers to these and many other questions are sought through a balanced study of the overall mass communication system. They cannot be found without some attention to detail, but our approach is not encyclopedic. Names, dates, and other details are cited, but not at the expense of the broader picture.

Mass communication is approached in this text as the central nervous system of society—a concept that suggests a deep, complex interrelationship between society and its means of communication. This approach, we feel, is consistent with audience reactions to the media, as well as with the inherent structures of the media themselves.

The media are often damned on the one hand as pollutants, filling heads with specious trivia, beclouding perception, and feeding confusion in the ranks through rising decibels of noise. On the other hand, media are often heralded as catalysts of the social organism—offering ever-changing, ever-multiplying views of both fantasy and reality—that enrich our lives and bring us to the brink of truth, or self-understanding. The mass media are regarded as both guardians of the status quo and radical vehicles of change.

This paradox emanates, in part, from the composition of the individual media. Because of their diverse, often corporate nature, the media cannot be appropriately perceived from within any one academic pigeonhole. They cut across journalism with their information content and media forms. Sociology and social psychology come into play insofar as the media's involvements with and effects upon large and small audiences. Psychology encompasses the media's effects upon the individual. Political science and economics are involved because media are instruments of political socialization and are at the same time profit-motivated. Advertising and public relations are closely related to dollars and votes. Economics plays an additional role in the relative affluence upon which mass media are so dependent, and in the expanding technology responsible for this development. Most recently, mathematics and engineering have influenced media and communications, not only because of computerization but also because of instantaneous transmission and feedback of individualized, localized, and global information.

Thus, what we offer here is a thoroughly updated and integrated approach to mass communication that distills pertinent contributions from many disciplines. *Introduction to Mass Communication* examines each mass medium in light of its historical development, its relationship to other media, its effects on audiences, and its probable future. The media are also discussed in terms of the broad social functions and their individual characteristics, which are surprisingly complementary.

Helping students understand media has been the foremost consideration of the authors and the book team. For this reason, attention to pedagogical techniques should be evident to even the casual reader. Several hundred pages of carefully researched and written text have been divided into five major parts according to function or theme. Each part is introduced by a short overview aimed at helping students understand that part's place within the broader context of the "social organism." Each chapter begins with an outline of the headings within the chapter, plus a brief introduction, to alert students to the topics covered therein. In addition, capsule commentary statements along the margins of the text highlight events,

concepts, and concerns in the ever-evolving media scene. Subheads, illustrations, boxed quotes, chapter summaries, and reference lists have been carefully designed to render each chapter as accessible as possible. A glossary of terms is included at the end of the book to define and clarify terms used in the text. And for those students who desire additional reading resources, the bibliography will be a useful tool, for it is from many of these sources that we have gleaned much of our information when writing this text.

As practice of what we preach concerning service to clients, we request any feedback you care to give, so that, like other mass media producers, we can adjust our messages to suit our audience and to make ourselves heard. Comments may be sent in care of: Speech and Journalism Editor, Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 2460 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, IA 52001.

We would like to thank the tens of thousands of students and hundreds of instructors who used the first edition of *Introduction to Mass Communication*. Many of the suggestions they have made have been incorporated into this revision. Especially we would like to thank the following reviewers for their help with the manuscripts of both the first and second editions: Ralph Barney at Brigham Young University; ElDean Bennett at Arizona State University; Carol Burnett at California State University in Sacramento; Penny Byrne at Utah State University; Robert Carrell at the University of Oklahoma; Raymond Carroll at the University of Alabama; Mary Cassata at the University of Buffalo; Edgar Eaton at Green River Community College; Michael Emery at California State University in Northridge; David Gordon at Emerson College; Earl Grow at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee; Milton Hollstein at the University of Utah; James Hoyt at the University of Wisconsin in Madison; Donald Jugenheimer at Louisiana State University; Val Limburg at Washington State University; Kelly Leiter at the University of Tennessee; James T. Lull at the University of California in Santa Barbara; Lawrence Mason, Jr., at Syracuse University; John Merrill at Louisiana State University; Sharon Murphy at Marquette University; Carole Oukrop at Kansas State University; William Porter at the University of Michigan; Keith Sanders at the University of Missouri; Robert O. Shipman at Mankato State University; Gerald Stone at Memphis State University; John Wittig at the University of Alabama, Birmingham; and Alan Zaremba at Northeastern University.

A very special thank you goes to William Oates, University of Miami at Coral Gables and one of the nation's leading researchers on new electronic communications systems, for his work in researching and writing the bulk of chapter 10, "The New Electronics."

# Contents

Preface x

## Part One Overview 2



## Chapter 1

### Communication and Audiences 5

Introduction	6
Elements of Communication	6
<i>The Communication Model</i>	8
Elements of Mass Communication	11
<i>Audiences</i>	11
<i>Delayed Feedback</i>	12
<i>Channel Noise</i>	13
<i>Semantic Noise</i>	14
<i>Gatekeepers</i>	15
Functions of Mass Communication	18
<i>Information</i>	20
<i>Entertainment</i>	21
<i>Persuasion</i>	23
<i>Transmission of the Culture</i>	24

Understanding Audiences	29
<i>How Audiences Affect Media</i>	30
<i>Search for Specific Audiences</i>	32
Summary	33
Notes	34

## Chapter 2

### Mass Communication Theory 35

Introduction	36
Causes and Effects	37
The Mass Communication Process	40
Hypodermic or Bullet Theory	42
Individual Differences Theory	43
<i>Selective Perception</i>	44
Social Categories	47
Personal Influence	48
<i>Two-Step Flow</i>	49
<i>Two-Step Critique</i>	49
<i>Social Influence</i>	50
The Theories Modernize	51
Structures and Functions	53
Uses and Gratifications	55
Play Theory	61
Political Socialization and Agenda Setting	63
<i>"Meaning Theory" and Media Dependency</i>	65
McLuhan's Media and Messages	68
Summary	72
Notes	73





## Chapter 3

## Newspapers 79

Introduction	80
The Medium Defined	80
Historical Development	81
<i>Control and Press Freedoms</i>	83
<i>The American Press</i>	86
The Structure of Contemporary Newspapers	95
<i>Ownership and Consolidation</i>	95
<i>Newspaper Operations</i>	98
<i>The News People</i>	99
<i>The Nature of News</i>	102
The Types of Newspapers	103
<i>Big-City Dailies</i>	103
<i>USA Today—A Special Case</i>	106
<i>Community Newspapers</i>	108
<i>Minority Newspapers</i>	111
The Changing Newspaper Business	112
<i>Demographic Changes</i>	113
<i>Reader Interests</i>	116
Newspapers Today and Tomorrow	120
Summary	122
Notes	124

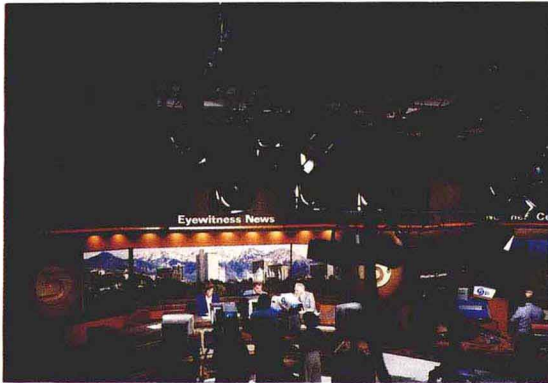
Introduction	127
Historical Development	128
<i>From European Roots to the Civil War</i>	128
<i>The Golden Age: 1865-1900</i>	129
<i>The Twentieth Century</i>	130
<i>Television and Advertising</i>	133
<i>The Circulation Wars</i>	134
<i>Adjustment and Retrenchment</i>	135
The Types of Magazines	137
TV Guide	139
<i>The Newsmagazines</i>	140
<i>City and Regional Magazines</i>	142
<i>Magazines without Ads</i>	144
<i>Controlled Circulation Magazines</i>	144
<i>The Business Press</i>	145
<i>Company Magazines</i>	145
Life Cycles of Magazines	146
<i>Starting a New Magazine</i>	147
<i>Magazine Sales</i>	149
<i>Contemporary Successes</i>	150
<i>Filling the Gaps</i>	155
<i>The Editorial Task</i>	157
Magazines and Advertising	158
<i>Readership Surveys</i>	158
<i>Advertising as Content</i>	161
<i>Marketing Audience Interest</i>	161
The Future of Magazines	162
Summary	163
Notes	164

## Chapter 5

## Books 166

Introduction	167
Historical Development	168
<i>Gutenberg's Bible and the Spread of Literacy</i>	168
<i>Book Publishing in America</i>	170
<i>The Twentieth Century</i>	171
The Types of Books	173
<i>Trade Books</i>	174
<i>Paperback Books</i>	176
<i>Textbooks</i>	177
<i>Professional Books</i>	179
The Business of Book Publishing	179
<i>Editorial</i>	179
<i>Production</i>	181
<i>Marketing</i>	182
New Strategies in Book Publishing	190
<i>Cross-Media Ties</i>	190
Audiences for Books	191
Book Publishing Today and Tomorrow	194
Summary	196
Notes	198





## Chapter 6

## Radio 203

- Introduction 204
- Historical Development 205
  - The Early Days* 205
  - America's Prime Mass Medium* 212
  - The Rivalry with Television* 221
  - FM* 223
- Contemporary Radio 225
  - News* 226
  - Talk and Information* 228
  - Public Radio* 231
  - New Formats* 234
  - Radio's Audiences* 237
  - The Disc Jockey and Music* 238
- The Future of Radio 241
- Summary 242
- Notes 243

## Chapter 7

## Recordings 245

- Introduction 246
- The Recording Industry 246
  - Early History* 246
  - Since World War II* 249
  - The Industry of the '80s* 250
- Trends in Popular Music 254
  - Music Before 1900* 254
  - Early Recorded Music* 254
  - Rock 'n' Roll* 255
- The Future of Recordings 266
- Summary 267
- Notes 267

## Television 268

- Introduction 269
- The Early History of Television 272
- The Networks 276
  - Affiliates* 277
- Public Television 278
  - Public Broadcasting Service* 279
  - PBS Programs and Audiences* 281
- The Ratings 282
  - Nielsen's* 283
  - Arbitron* 284
  - Ratings and Shares* 285
  - The Ratings: Problems and Promises* 287
- Programming 290
  - Next Season's Schedule* 291
  - Non Prime Time* 293
  - Costs of Programming* 296
- Television Audiences 298
- Television Advertising 301
- Television News 304
  - The Technological Revolution* 306
  - The Philosophical Revolution* 309
  - TV News: Criticisms and Problems* 312
- Television Criticism 318
- Summary 322
- Notes 324

## Chapter 9

## Film 327

- Introduction 328
- Historical Development 329
  - Turn of the Century* 331
  - The Feature Length Film* 333
  - The Hollywood Method* 334
  - Sound and the Depression* 335
  - The Postwar Decline* 339
  - The Impact of Television* 340
- The Business of Filmmaking 341
  - Production* 342
  - Distribution* 344
  - Exhibition* 347
- Audiences and Their Guides 348
  - Film Controls* 349
  - Critics* 354
  - The Oscars* 355
- Other Film Types 356
  - Newsreels and Documentaries* 356
  - Propaganda and Education* 357
- Film as a Cross-Cultural Medium 360
  - Fantasy vs. Reality Abroad* 361
  - Foreign Influences Here* 361
- The Future of Film 363
- Summary 366
- Notes 367

## Chapter 10

### The New Electronics 369

- Introduction 370
- New Twists on Over-the-Air Communications 370
  - New Twists on Traditional Broadcasting* 371
  - New Twists Using Microwave and Satellites* 374
- Cable Television: The Wired Nation? 379
  - Advertisers Take Note* 381
  - The Media React* 383
  - Pay Cable* 385
- New Mass Communication over Telephone Lines 388
  - Videotex* 389
  - Information Utilities on Home Computers* 394
- Prerecorded Media 400
  - Videocassette Recorders* 400
  - Videodiscs* 405
  - Microcomputers and The HomeComCen* 408
- Impact and Dangers of Neovideo 410
  - Technical and Economic Factors* 411
  - Social and Philosophic Factors* 413
- Summary 416
- Notes 416

## Part Four

### Media Support Systems 420



## Chapter 11

### Advertising 423

- Introduction 424
- Historical Development 426
  - From Wineskins to National Advertisers* 426
  - Early Agencies* 428
  - Selling Techniques* 429
  - The Early Twentieth Century* 430
  - Postwar Growth* 431
- Advertising Agencies 432
  - Agencies as Mediators* 433
  - Agency Functions* 434

- Advertising Strategies 436
  - Unique Selling Proposition* 437
  - Brand Image* 437
  - Motivational Research* 438
  - Subliminal Advertising* 439
  - Positioning* 441
  - Institutional Advertising* 446
- The Impact of Advertising 447
  - The Psychology of Advertising* 448
- Self-Regulation 451
  - Advertising Organizations' Codes* 451
  - Better Business Bureaus* 452
  - Media Efforts* 452
- Governmental Regulation 454
  - The Federal Trade Commission* 454
- Criticisms and Defenses of Advertising 458
- Summary 461
- Notes 462

## Chapter 12

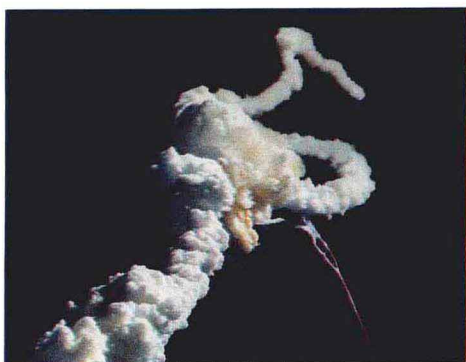
### Public Relations 464

- Introduction 465
- Historical Development 466
- Public Relations in America 467
  - 18th and 19th Centuries* 467
  - The Father of PR* 470
  - World War I to World War II* 471
  - World War II and Beyond* 473
- Public Relations Business Today 473
  - Tools and Functions* 476
  - Audiences for Public Relations* 482
  - A New Model of Public Relations* 483
- Specializations in Public Relations 485
  - Politics and Public Relations* 485
  - Lobbying* 488
  - Not-for-Profit Public Relations* 489
- Self-Regulation of Public Relations 493
- Summary 495
- Notes 496

## Chapter 13

### News Services and Syndicates 497

- Introduction 498
- News Services: Historical Development 499
  - The Associated Press* 500
  - The News Service Operation* 506
  - The Nation's Gatekeepers* 511
  - Gatekeepers for the World?* 512
- Other Pooling Efforts 515
- Feature Syndicates 517
- Summary 520
- Notes 522



## Chapter 14

## Regulation and the Law 527

Introduction	528
Theories of the Press	528
<i>Authoritarianism</i>	529
<i>Communist Application</i>	532
<i>Libertarianism</i>	532
<i>Social Responsibility</i>	535
<i>Other Theories of the Press</i>	535
Limitations on the Media	537
<i>Limitations on Printing</i>	539
<i>Limitations on Distribution</i>	539
<i>Prior Restraint</i>	540
<i>Sedition</i>	542
<i>Libel</i>	543
<i>Invasion of Privacy</i>	547
<i>Obscenity and Pornography</i>	550
<i>Broadcast Regulation</i>	557
The Adversary Relationship	564
<i>Freedom of Information</i>	564
<i>News Management</i>	566
Conflict: The First and Sixth Amendments	567
<i>Cameras in the Courtroom</i>	569
<i>Shield Laws</i>	570
Summary	571
Notes	572

## Ethics and Social Responsibility 574

Introduction	575
Ethical Dilemmas	575
<i>Junkets and Freebies</i>	578
<i>Bribes</i>	581
<i>Commercial Influences</i>	582
<i>Owners and Advertisers</i>	583
<i>Perquisites</i>	584
<i>Credibility Problems</i>	585
Codes of Conduct	587
<i>Newspaper Codes</i>	589
<i>Broadcast Codes</i>	590
<i>Codes—A Conclusion</i>	592
Commission on Freedom of the Press	593
<i>Meaningful News</i>	594
<i>Access for Comment and Criticism</i>	594
<i>A Representative Picture of Society</i>	595
<i>Clarifying Goals and Values</i>	596
<i>The Right to Know</i>	596
<i>The Responsibility of Freedom</i>	597
<i>Improving the Media</i>	597
Toward Professionalism?	604
Summary	606
Notes	607

## Glossary G1

## Bibliography B1

## Credits C1

## Index I1

Introduction to  
**MASS**  
**COMMUNICATION**

# Part One

---

The mass media (newspapers, magazines, books, radio, recordings, television, film, and new electronic communications systems) and their auxiliaries (advertising, public relations, and news and feature services) are significant institutions in today's world. They can be looked at in terms of how they perform in society. Why do they do what they do; how do they reflect and mold the priorities of society; what have they achieved in the past; and what will they be capable of achieving in the future?

The main purpose of the introductory chapters is to come to grips with the basic nature of the mass media and their audiences.

We begin by considering the fundamental character of communication. Without an appreciation of how meaning and information are exchanged among individuals, we cannot fully appreciate the more sophisticated process of mass communication, or communication through complex media to large, anonymous, and heterogeneous audiences.

Our focus is on the four primary functions of communication: (1) information; (2) entertainment; (3) persuasion; and (4) transmission of the culture. These functions are seldom performed singly; rather, they are performed in varying combinations, often with contradictory impacts. We investigate the nature of mass media as social and economic institutions, reliant upon consumer acceptance for their own existence. Media are ever changing to reflect changes in their audiences and levels of economic support. Those media which yesterday appealed to massive conglomerates of audiences are being supplanted by more specialized media, about which so much of this book is devoted.



# Overview

---

In this overview section we look at audiences as consisting of far more than the lowest common denominator of individuals into whom media fare is indiscriminately poured. As individuals, we attend to the media, reacting as individuals seeking to gratify our own special interests and needs. If hundreds, thousands, or even millions of us choose to react similarly, it is still basically an individual decision, even though it appears in the form of mass behavior.

Numerous mysteries surround the process and effects of mass communication. Social scientists and philosophers offer us many explanations of how and why the mass media operate as they do, and what effects they have on society. We devote a chapter to a historical tour of these mysteries. In bygone days there were simple, all-encompassing explanations of the media-societal interface. At mid-century researchers became tentative, recognizing the complexity and individuality of audience members. Recently, evidence is growing that the media do indeed have powerful effects, that they are influential factors in making life meaningful, giving us a sense of self, and shaping our agendas. Such effects are elusive and not easily measured in the laboratory, but that is no reason not to pursue them.

As one media scholar has explained, we shape our tools and then our tools shape us. Our hope in writing this first section of the text is that students understand their media environments well enough so they are not unwittingly controlled by those tools of communication.





# Communication and Audiences

---

# 1

## **Introduction**

### **Elements of Communication**

The Communication Model

*Feedback*

*Interference*

*Mass Communication*

### **Elements of Mass Communication**

Audiences

Delayed Feedback

Channel Noise

Semantic Noise

Gatekeepers

### **Functions of Mass Communication**

Information

Entertainment

Persuasion

Transmission of the Culture

*Stereotypes and Myths*

## **Understanding Audiences**

How Audiences Affect Media

*Longevity*

*Specialization*

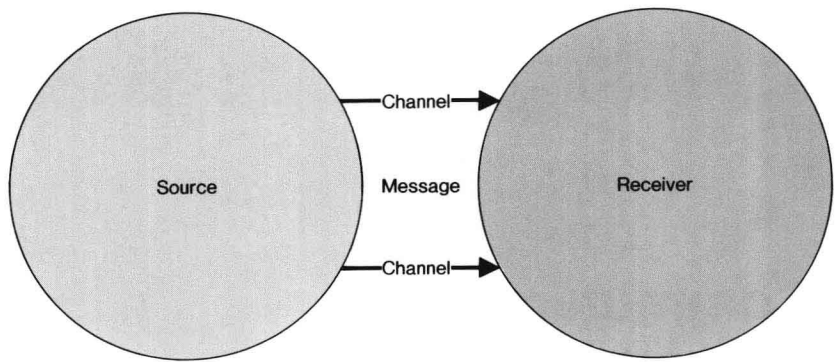
*Audience Expectations*

Search for Specific Audiences

## **Summary**

## **Notes**

**Figure 1.1**  
The basic communication model.



## Introduction

The mass media are newspapers, magazines, books, radio, film, and television and its related technologies. They are generally divided into print media and electronic media. The print media are older, having developed over the last 500 years, while the electronic media are products of the twentieth century.

What do the mass media do in society? They give us baseball scores and tell us about the Middle East; they explain inflation, and they interpret current events. The media sell goods, services, candidates, and opinions. They make us laugh, they create drama, and they bring music into our lives. In short, they communicate.

In order to understand *mass* media and *mass* communication, we need an elementary understanding of the communication process—the events that define communication. That is the subject of the first part of this chapter. The model we will use (fig. 1.1) is later expanded to account for the elements of mass communication. In the final sections we will look at the functions of mass communications and the nature of audiences. (“Communication,” without the “s,” refers to the theory or theoretical process; “communications,” with an “s,” refers to the mechanical means by which communication occurs. Thus “mass media” and “mass communications” are synonymous.)

## Elements of Communication

Communication has a variety of definitions.

No single definition of communication is agreed upon by all scholars interested in the subject; diversity abounds. Sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, linguists, and speech communication specialists all offer definitions, some of which follow. Communication:

is the process of transmitting meaning between individuals;  
is the process by which an individual (the communicator) transmits stimuli (usually verbal symbols) to modify the behavior of other individuals (communicatees);  
occurs whenever information is passed from one place to another;