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Communications Media in the Information Age

THIRD EDITION

Media Now

Communications Media in the Information Age

Third Edition

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Preface

We wrote this book to lead a new generation of textbooks about mass communication. Our focus is on all types of communication that are mediated by technology. We expanded the traditional focus to include new media that are rapidly changing our conceptions of “mass” media—and even blurring the meaning of that term—such as computers, the Internet, and the digital telecommunications infrastructure that underlies all the media. 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. Our approach is to provide an integrated treatment of “traditional media” and “new media,” rather than grafting new media issues onto an old media textbook outline.

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 title, *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 (cable, satellite, computer media, interactive television, the Internet, and digital 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. Students in media, advertising, journalism, and public relations now find jobs faster if they also know how to design and construct a Web page and how to find information on the Web. Many students find their first jobs in innovative places—with phone companies and Internet service providers, in corporate telecommunications departments and Web design firms, and so on—but discover that they do not always know enough to succeed in these new environments. Further, most of today’s stu-

dents will have four or five different careers in their lives. As they move on to their second careers in different fields in the information economy, they may lack a basic understanding of what those industries are about. Or, as they move up within the diversified conglomerates that own the media, they may reach a dead end because their knowledge is too narrowly focused. 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 was published, 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, but also to new alliances such as AOL Time Warner. And despite the recent downturn in the fortunes of Internet companies, the Web seemingly pervades all aspects of the daily lives of our students, from how they research their course papers to how they listen to music.

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 raise critical and ethical 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 and affects them directly. It is important to expose them to—and to demystify—communications technologies and the economic and social forces that shape technology. This book is designed to help both professor and student do that.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

In this third edition, our goal is to expand our book's innovative coverage of the technology and the social implications of convergence. We have continued our in-depth coverage of traditional media, with full chapters for magazine and book publishing, newspapers, audio and radio, film, and TV. We have expanded and updated coverage of computer media, communications infrastructure, and the relationship between media and society, and media and the individual. We have also expanded our coverage of ethical issues and updated and revised information on policy and law.

Critical Commentary

We have expanded our critical coverage and commentary on the communication industries. Students must gain both professional knowledge and critical appreciation of the changing communication media in order to understand media and prepare for careers in the area. Each media chapter now contains specific issue attention to political economy and to cultural impacts of the media. We focus throughout these chapters and in the law and policy chapter on changes in the concentration of ownership resulting from both industry imperatives and the deregulation in the 1996 Telecommunications Act. We also focus on the implications of many changes for the diversity of content and the quality of the information created.

Expanded History

As educators, we owe our students an introduction to mass communications that is both cutting-edge and historic, so Chapter 1, "The Changing Media Environment," now includes the development of the Information Society and the basics of media convergence. For greater perspective, we have expanded our coverage

of the history of communications media throughout the book.

Demystifying Digital Technology

We have greatly expanded our coverage of digital communications technology to encompass emerging topics such as digital music, high definition television, broadband Internet connections, cable modems, and digital compression. We believe our explanations of technology continue to be easy to read while still providing vital detail. They appear as boxed features so that instructors who wish to go easy on the technological aspects can make them optional reading. 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 media, since these are the easiest starting points for nontechnical readers.

Updated Features

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

- *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.
- *Technology Trends sections* Special attention is given to technological changes in the media
- *Boxed Features* Boxed features are designed to target specific issues:
 - Media & Culture** highlights cultural issues in the media.
 - Media Ethics** analyzes an ethical issue in depth, followed by questions for reflection.
 - Profile** focuses on key media figures.
 - Media Watch** focuses on economic and 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 (in select chapters) 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:

- **Integrated Web activities** Placed right alongside pertinent topics in each chapter, these activities point students to Web sites that include illustrations and research materials. Many of them are structured so that students can respond to posed questions and post their answers on-line. Additional Web illustrations and research resources are found at the end of each chapter and on the Media Now Resource Center, where they are keyed to important concepts found in the text. 
- **Media Connection CD-ROM** A companion compact disc accompanies each copy of the text, providing a gateway to the Media Now Resource Center companion Web site. This Web site features 20 Media in Motion animations that visually reinforce technical concepts students traditionally have the most difficulty with; Lecture Connection chapter outlines and illustrations for each chapter that students can use to take notes during lectures; and Media Online hyperlinks to chapter-related URLs, many with accompanying exercises. This Web site also includes the Web and InfoTrac College Edition activities featured in the text, chapter-by-chapter interactive quizzes, an on-line glossary, and updated and additional chapter information. For 

instructors, this site provides sample syllabi, PowerPoint® slides, updated test item questions, suggested readings, a career hotlink, and a “contact the authors” section. Additionally, the CD-ROM features a hyperlink to InfoTrac College Edition® and a preview of Thomson Learning WebTutor®.

- **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 900 scholarly and popular periodicals, dating back four 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. 
- **Instructor's Resource Manual** with sample syllabi, chapter outlines, test questions, lecture discussion questions, CNN Mass Communication Video correlation guide and discussion guide, as well as additional audio-visual resource information.
- **MediaLink 2.0 CD-ROM.** A Multimedia Presentation Tool for Mass Communication, by Richard Caplan, University of Akron. This unique CD-ROM is a presentation tool that allows instructors to create great multimedia lectures with a searchable database of art, media, CNN video clips, hyperlinks, and PowerPoint® slides.
- **ExamView®** computerized and on-line testing. Create, deliver, and customize tests in minutes with this assessment and tutorial system for both Windows® and Macintosh® systems. This cross-platform CD-ROM offers a guide to help instructors create tests of up to 250 questions, using up to 12 question types.

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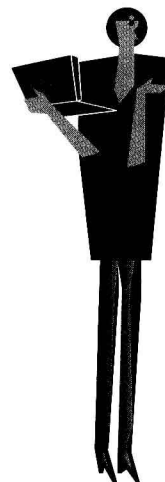
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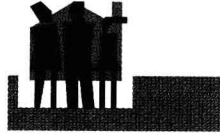
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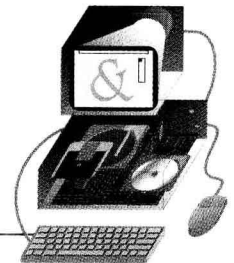
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