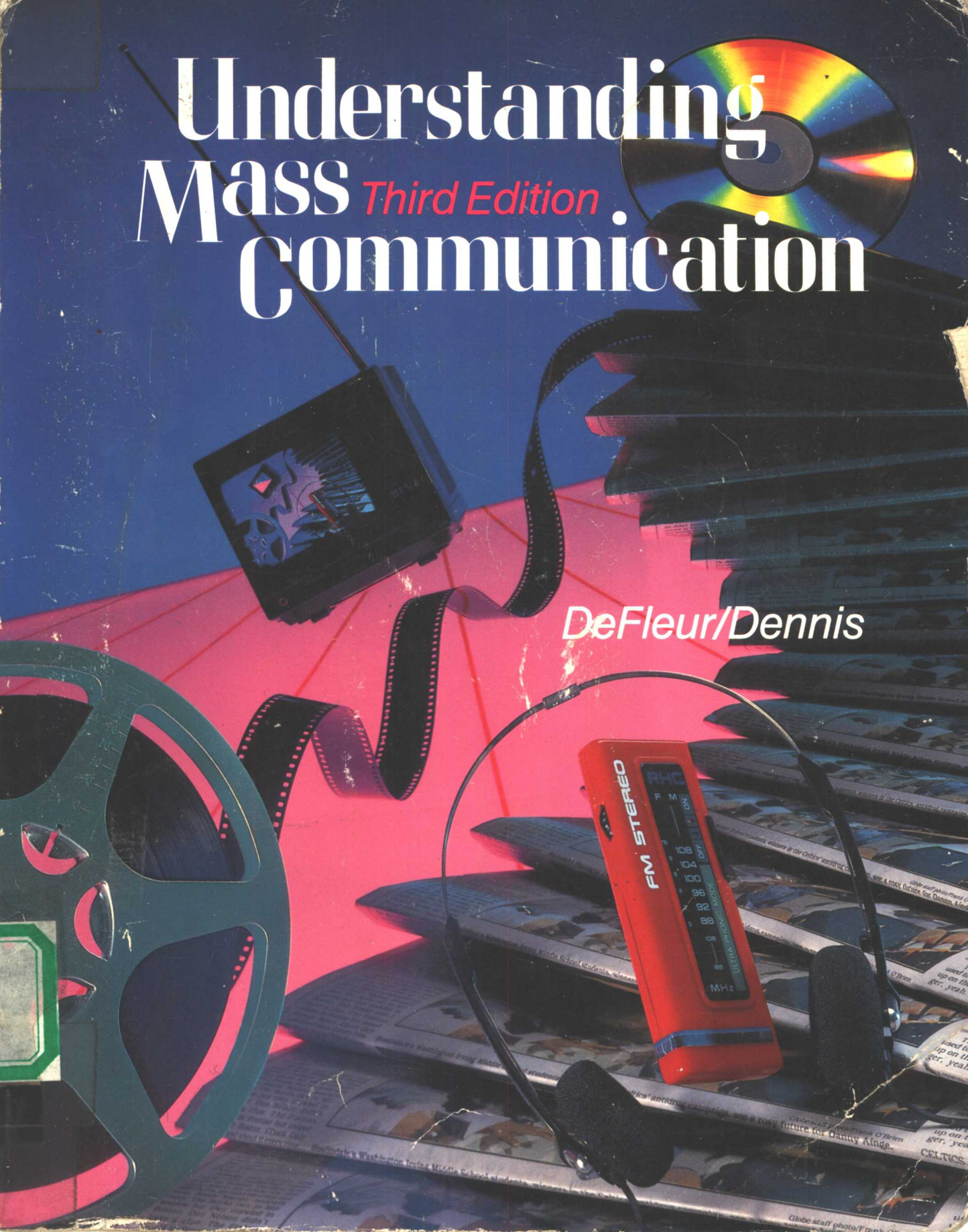


Understanding Mass *Third Edition* Communication

DeFleur/Dennis



THIRD EDITION

Understanding Mass Communication

Melvin L. DeFleur

*John Ben Snow Professor
S. I. Newhouse School for Public
Communications
Syracuse University*

Everette E. Dennis

*Executive Director
Gannett Center for Media Studies
Columbia University*

Houghton Mifflin Company

Boston

Dallas • Geneva, Illinois

Princeton, New Jersey • Palo Alto

Cover Photo Credit:
Part Opening Photo Credits:

Ralph Mercer
Part 1: © David Wells/The Image Works
Part 2: © John Blaustein 1981/Woodfin Camp and Associates
Part 3: © John Ficara 1985/Woodfin Camp and Associates
Part 4: James Holland/Stock, Boston

Acknowledgments:

Chapter 5, p. 164: Theodore Peterson, Magazines in the Twentieth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 442. Reprinted by permission.
Table 5.4: From A Guide to Book Publishing, by Datus C. Smith, Jr. Copyright 1966. Used by permission.
Chapter 6, p. 185: Giraud Chester, Garnet R. Garrison, and Edgar E. Willis, Television and Radio, 4th edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 42. See also fifth edition, 1981. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.
Chapter 7, page 228: From Variety, copyright © 1987. Used by permission.
Chapter 10, pp. 301-303: Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, Glen M. Broom, Effective Public Relations, 6/e © 1985, p. 64. Reprinted by permission of Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
Chapter 15, pp. 456-458: C. J. Hovland, A. A. Lumsdaine, and F. D. Sheffield, Experiments on Mass Communication, Vol. III of Studies of Social Psychology in World War II (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965). Used by permission.
Chapter 16, p. 447: M. C. Davies, "Please don't uplift me . . .": Reprinted by permission of The Saturday Evening Post.
Chapter 17, p. 518: Lonnie C. Carton, Daddies, copyright 1960. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.

Copyright © 1988 by Houghton Mifflin Company.
All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or in writing by the Publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed to College Permissions, Houghton Mifflin Company, One Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. 02108.

Printed in the U.S.A.

ISBN: 0-395-36906-1

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 87-80341

CDEFGHIJ-DOH-9543210-89

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

In *Understanding Mass Communication*, Third Edition, we recognize something that instructors in introductory mass media courses have been saying for years: Students don't need to be *introduced* to mass communication; what they need is a context for understanding it. It is this context that *Understanding Mass Communication* attempts to provide. Building on an account of the history of the print, film, and broadcast media, we provide a detailed description of how these major media and their support industries operate; we then discuss research into the effects of mass media and theories that have developed from that research. It is our goal to present students with the means to better understand the role media play in their world.

Features of *Understanding Mass Communication*, Third Edition

From its first edition, *Understanding Mass Communication* has offered:

- A thorough and interesting description of the print, broadcast, and film media, informed by a solid basis of history and research
- A detailed examination of how economics and politics shape the mass media and the role the media play in American society
- The most thorough coverage available of

research into the effects of mass media on individuals and society

New to the Third Edition The third edition of UMC offers the following new features:

- In Part 1, a full-chapter on economic controls on the media and a full chapter on political controls on the media
- In Part 3, a full-chapter on advertising and a full-chapter on public relations
- In Part 4, a new chapter: Chapter 14, "Research on Mass Communication: An Overview"
- Thorough updating of all chapters: scores of new examples illustrating current mass communication problems and issues
- Sixteen of the seventeen boxed inserts all new; topics include Radio Martí, Aaron Spelling, Tylenol's miracle comeback, disk and tape piracy in the music industry, and the effects of Sesame Street on a generation of children
- An updated art program, including numerous photos, diagrams, tables, and charts.

Organization and Coverage

Part 1, "The Nature of Mass Communication," contains four chapters. In Chapter 1 we define

mass communication and explain the differences between mass communication and basic human communication. In this chapter we also provide information for students who are considering a career in the mass media. Chapter 2 reviews the recent history of each of the major mass media—scientific discoveries that provided the basis for key inventions, innovators who developed technology, and the social and cultural circumstances in which key advances took place; we then discuss the function that each of the media serves in society. Chapters 3 and 4 examine how each of our media has been shaped by political and economic forces: traditions, laws, societal values, and public opinion.

The four chapters of Part 2, “The Communications Industries,” are devoted to detailed discussions of each of the major media. Chapter 5, “The Print Media,” covers newspapers, magazines, and books. Chapter 6, “The Electronic Media,” discusses the rebirth of radio and the rise of television, along with cable TV. Chapter 7, “The Movies,” discusses films in terms of the unique characteristics of that industry; the issues of censorship and evaluation are also discussed. The continuing revolution in media technology is addressed in Chapter 8.

Part 3, “Media Support Systems,” examines the worlds of advertising, public relations, the news industries, and the auxiliaries—the wire services that help distribute the news, syndicates that deliver many kinds of content to local outlets, and measuring services that provide the industries with information about the nature and size of their audiences. The final chapter in this part, Chapter 13, “The Development of Popular Music and the Recording Industry,” traces the beginnings of popular music and the recording industry and goes on to discuss the merging of the two and how both

have shaped the content of American mass communication.

Part 4, “Impact and Consequences of Mass Communication,” looks closely at the world of research. Chapter 14, “Research on Mass Communication: An Overview,” offers a basic discussion of the research process and of why research is important in the study of mass communication; we believe that an understanding of this material is essential preparation for students considering media careers. One of the first goals of mass media research was to understand how the content of print, film, and broadcasting influenced the thought and actions of individuals. Chapter 15, “Media Influences on Individuals,” looks at several classic studies in this area, providing an overview of both how the content of such research developed and how the process of scientific investigation has matured over time. Chapter 16, “Effects of the Media on Society and Culture,” focuses on the media’s role in spreading innovations, disseminating information throughout society, and providing society with an agenda of topics to think about. Finally, Chapter 17, “Indirect Effects of the Media,” offers an overview of theoretical interpretations of media effects; two major theories—modeling theory and meaning theory—are discussed.

Generally, then, our text is not intended to be like others that are available. It explores the topics in ways that we feel will give students greater insight into the development of, the nature of, and the assessment of our nation’s system of mass communication. Obviously, in our thinking, both history and research play a central role in understanding mass communication and the contemporary media. But above all, we remain convinced that a good textbook presents its ideas to students at a level that is geared to intellectual development, as well as to enjoyable reading.

Instructor's Support Materials

Understanding Mass Communication, Third Edition, offers the instructor a completely revised instructor's manual, with a sample week-by-week syllabus, chapter-by-chapter lecture topics, suggestions for guest speakers, assignments, study questions, and key concepts; abundant test items are provided for each chapter. Also available upon adoption are MicroTest, a test-generating program available for IBM and Apple microcomputers, and Grade Performance Analyzer (GPA), a computerized gradebook program.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the significant contributions of many people who helped make this text a reality. Professor Paul Anderson, of the University of Tennessee, Martin, suggested the addition of our chapter on the nature of

research (Chapter 14) and was kind enough to offer his guidance concerning what it should cover. We also want to thank the following people for their valuable comments and suggestions: Larry L. Burriss, Middle Tennessee State University, Martin; John Cambus, California State University, Hayward; Juliet Dee, University of Delaware; Kenneth E. Hadwiger, Eastern Illinois University; Anita Howard, Austin Community College; Harvey Jassem, University of Hartford; Garth Jowett, University of Houston; Robert G. Main, California State University, Chico; Zena Beth McGlashan, University of North Dakota; David Merves, Miami-Dade Community College; John P. Smead, Central Missouri State University; Edgar P. Trotter, Cal State University, Fullerton; and W. Richard Whitaker, State University College at Buffalo.

M.D.

E.D.

TO THE STUDENT

In many respects, the evolution of human civilization parallels humankind's continuous development of increasingly efficient technologies for recording and recovering ideas and transmitting them across time and space. History is usually recounted in terms of political events—who was king and who won the battle. But far more important is understanding the unfolding story of our ever-increasing ability to communicate and assessing the influence that this has had on human life.

Human beings—or perhaps more precisely pre-human beings—began to communicate a very long time ago. About two million years B.C. our remote ancestors (*homo habilis*), who had begun to make crude tools and to tame fire, were probably responsible for the first “communication revolution.” Although we now know from computer-generated models that their skulls, vocal box, larynx, tongue, and other physical features closely resembled those of modern apes and chimpanzees, who cannot imitate human speech, the early hominids could grunt, shriek, and make other noises, just as primates can today. And they certainly could use their arms and other parts of their bodies for gesturing.

It seems likely, then, that the early tool makers slowly developed an ability to communicate among themselves in a way far more sophisticated than that of lower animals. Based on noises and gestures rather than speech and

language, this development marked the human line's entry into the *age of signs and signals*, the first communication revolution, widening the gap between hominids and other species in their environment.

The first prehistoric human beings whose physical structure enabled them to make the incredible range of sounds represented in human language were the Cro Magnon, the first *homo sapiens*. These, our closest ancestors, suddenly appeared in southern Europe and the Middle East a mere 35 to 40 thousand years ago. Other species, such as the Neanderthal (*homo neanderthalensis*), apparently could not compete and became extinct.

The Cro Magnon looked like us and had a skull structure, voice box, larynx, and tongue just like ours. It now seems that they were the first to talk and communicate in the manner of contemporary people, bringing our kind into the *age of speech and language*. In fact, there are grounds for concluding that the Indo-European “mother tongue,” from which about a third of all known languages on earth derive, began as the language of the Cro Magnon.

The next significant step was to record language, which occurred a mere six thousand years or so ago. As we explain in Chapter 2, human beings entered the *age of writing* slowly. First there were elaborate pictures and carvings, which increasingly became stylized and were assigned conventionalized meanings.

Several ancient people developed this technology. Eventually (about four thousand years ago) an alphabet was developed so that people could store and retrieve information with relative ease. This was an incredibly important revolution because it permitted the accumulation of culture to accelerate. This acceleration continued to increase and took perhaps its greatest leap forward in the year 1456, when Johannes Gutenberg developed movable type cast in metal. Gutenberg used his invention to print his famous Bible, and humankind entered the *age of print*.

Finally, today, we have the *age of mass communication*. Our society is deeply dependent on media that could not have been foreseen even at the beginning of the present century, when some of our living citizens were born. This textbook describes, explains, and assesses this latest communication revolution. We live now in an "information society" during the age of mass communication. How did this come about? How do our media function? What are the consequences to us as individuals, and as a society, of our increasing dependency on mass communications?

C O N T E N T S

To the Instructor xi

To the Student xiv

P A R T I

THE NATURE OF MASS COMMUNICATION 1

1

The Process of Mass Communication 3

Defining Mass Communication and
Mass Media 6

Mass communication as a process 6
Which media are mass media? 12

The Elements of Human Communication 14

Symbols, memory, and meaning 14
Sending and receiving messages 16
Complexity and accuracy 18

Face-to-face and Mass

Communication Compared 20

Consequences of using media 21

Consequences of large, diverse audiences 21

Social and cultural influences 22

Professional Communicators: Careers
and Preparation 23

Paths to a career 23

BOX 1 Success Behind the Scenes: A Career
in Sales 26

A journalism perspective 25

A speech-communication perspective 28

Summary 29

2

The Development of the Mass Media 31

The Transition to Writing 32

The invention and spread of writing 33

Copying books by hand 38

Print as a Medium 39

Books and the print revolution 41

Newspapers 43

BOX 2 William Randolph Hearst 50

American magazines 54

Motion Pictures 57

Magic shadows on the wall 57

Movies become an industry 62

Broadcasting 67

The growth of technology 67

Home radio 70

Television 75

Summary 79

Significant Developments in

Mass Communication 80

3

Economic Controls on the Media 87

The Economic Environment 88

American economic values 89

Rules of the game 90

The Media as Businesses 95

The print media 95

The movies 99

Broadcasting 100

BOX 3 CBS News: Journalism vs. the

Bottom Line 102

Summary 106

4

Political Controls on the Media 109

Political Protections: The Constitutional Framework 111

The historical legacy 112

Protection from libel 114

Trial by the media 118

Moral values: Obscenity and pornography 120

The government's secrets during national crises 121

BOX 4 Radio Martí—Information or Propaganda? 124

Protection for reporters' sources 128

Political Constraints: The Agents of Control 129

The courts 129

The legislatures 130

The executive branch 130

Outside pressures on the media 135

Summary 136

P A R T 2

THE COMMUNICATION INDUSTRIES 139

5

The Print Media 141

Forms, Functions, and Audiences 142

The functions of the media 142

Form and function 143

Audiences 143

Newspapers 144

A dual identity 145

Changing functions 145

The communicators: How newspapers are organized 148

The message: Types of newspapers 149

The economics of newspapers 153

BOX 5 The Great Entertainer? 154

Models of media ownership 156

Criticism of newspapers 158

Magazines 163

The communicators: The magazine industry 164

The message: Types of magazines 165

Functions of contemporary magazines 170

Books 171

The publishing industry: An overview 172

The process of publishing 173

Types of publishers and types of books 174

Software publishing 175

The economics of publishing 175

The Future of the Print Media 177

Summary 178

6

The Electronic Media 181

Approaches to Broadcasting 182

- Defining broadcasting 182
- Broadcasting as technology 183
- Technological development and social use 183
- Broadcasting as a production and distribution system 186
- Government regulation 191
- Broadcasting as content 196

Radio 197

- Radio versus television: decline and rebirth 197
- The continuing appeal of radio 199

Television 200

- The technology of television 201
- Technological development 202
- Production and distribution 203
- Television content 205

BOX 6 TV's Formula for Entertainment: Aaron Spelling 206

- Criticizing television 211

Cable TV: An Extension of Television 213

- The potential of cable and fiber optics 213
- Cable television: What it offers 215

Summary 217

7

The Movies 219

Film as a Medium of Mass

Communication 220

- The functions of films 221
- The development of themes and styles 222
- The content of American films 223

Film as an Industry 230

- The film makers 230
- How films are made 231

BOX 7 Hollywood 234

The movie audience 236

Profits 237

From Censorship to Social

Responsibility 239

- Sex and the movies 239
- Censorship and politics 241

Evaluating Films: Criticism and Awards 242

- The critics 242
- The awards 242

Summary 243

8

The Continuing Revolution in Technology 245

What Is the Communication

Revolution? 246

- The rise of the new technology 248
- People, money, and the new technology 249
- Competition and the future 251

What are the New Technologies? 253

- Satellites 254

BOX 8 Conus: News Gathering by Satellite 254

- The cable industry 256
- Information services 262
- Other new technology 264

Social Consequences of the New

Technology 264

Summary 266

PART 5

MEDIA SUPPORT SYSTEMS 269

9

Advertising 271

Advertising as Communication 272

- What is advertising? 272
- The content of advertising 273
- Advertising in America: A brief history 274

The Advertising Industry 277

- Advertising agencies 279
- Media service organizations 281
- Advertising departments 282
- Advertising media 283
- Research on advertising 283

BOX 9 What's in a Name? 284

Criticism and Control of Advertising 287

- The nature of advertising: Economic and social criticisms 287
- Children and advertising 288
- Controls on advertising 289

10

Public Relations 295**A Definition of Public Relations 297****Origins of Public Relations 298**

- Ethics 300
- Recent history 301

Public Relations in Practice 301

BOX 10 Unpoisoning the Well: The Tylenol Comeback 302

- What public relations people do 305
- The public relations industry 306

Research About Public Relations 308

- Criticizing public relations 309

Summary 310

11

The Media and the News Industry 311**What is News? 312**

- Gossip, truth, and the news 312
- An empirical view 314
- A definition 315

Manufacturing the News 315

- The medium and the message 316
- The audience and the news 317

BOX 11 What the People Don't Know: Censorship and the News 318

- Inside the newsroom 320

News Reporting: Changing Styles and Standards 324

- The new journalism 325
- Changes in substance 327
- Precision journalism 329
- The marketing approach 330

Surveillance and Its Implications 331**Summary 334**

12

The Auxiliaries 337**The Role of the Auxiliaries 338****The Wire Services 339**

- Organization of the wire services 339
- Origins of the wire services 340
- AP and UPI: Similarities and differences 341
- The wire services in perspective 344
- The supplemental services 345

The Syndicates 347

- What the syndicates provide 347
- How the syndicates work 349

Measuring Services 351

- Measuring circulations 351
- Measuring the broadcast audience 352

BOX 12 The A.C. Nielsen Company: Rate, Rate Thyself 354

Probing Consumer Behavior 359**Summary 362**

13

The Development of Popular Music and the Recording Industry 365**The Beginnings of Popular Music 367**

- The emergence of ragtime 370
- The bad, bad blues 375
- Gospel and country 377

America Enters the Jazz Age 378

- The original dixieland jazz band 378
- The anti-jazz movement 380

The Phonograph and the Record Industry 382

- Edison's talking machine 383
- Evolving technology 386
- Music and records as business 389

Coming Together: Popular Music, Records, and the Media 391

- Broadcasting the Big Bands 391
- Change at an increasing pace 393
- The new technology 395

BOX 13 Disk and Tape Piracy: A New Kind of Underground Music 396

Summary 399

PART 4

IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCES OF MASS COMMUNICATION 403

14

Research on Mass Communication: An Overview 405

Why Is Research Important? 406

- Sources of trustworthy knowledge 406
- Reasons for conducting research 407
- The century-long debate over the effects of the media 409

BOX 14 News to Fit the Audience:
USA Today 412

The Research Perspective 416

- The assumptions of science and the goals of research 416
- Basic versus applied research 418
- Steps in the scientific method 422

Research Strategies 428

- The use of samples 428
- Measuring variables 430
- Research designs 434

Summary 440

15

Media Influences on Individuals 443

Early Research: A Belief in Maximum Effects 444

- The movies and children: The Payne fund studies 446
- The great panic: Reactions to the invasion from Mars 452

Beyond the Magic Bullet 455

- Persuading the American soldier: Experiments with film 456
- The media in a presidential campaign 458

Television and Children 462

- Children's uses of television 462

BOX 15 CTW and the "Sesame Street" Generation 464

- The impact of televised violence: The report to the Surgeon General 466
- Further research 470

Effects on Individuals: An Overview 471

Summary 474

16

Effects of the Media on Society and Culture 477

Social Change: The Spread of Innovations 478

- The process of adoption 479
- The diffusion of information 480
- The media and national development 483

Setting Our Agenda 485

- The news media and reality: Gatekeeping 486
- The media's agenda 487
- Social problems and the media 489
- Some tentative conclusions 491

Debates about Popular Culture 492

- Folk art, elite art, and kitsch 492

BOX 16 The Big V Principle 494

The media's dependence on popular culture 499
Taste publics 500
Summary 502

17

Indirect Effects of the Media 505

Media Portrayals as Representations of Reality 506
Theories of Indirect Influence 508
 Media portrayals as models for behavior 508
 Media content and shared meanings 510

Research on Media Models 513
 Male and female role models 514
BOX 17 Social Fads and the Media: The Case of Smokeless Tobacco 514
 Models in the soap operas 518
Research on Meaning Theory 521
 Traditional meanings of insanity 521
 Televisions's portrayal of the mentally ill 524
An Overview of Media Research 527
Summary 529

Glossary 533

Index 550

P A R T

1

The Nature of Mass Communication

C H A P T E R

1

The Process of Mass Communication

Defining Mass Communication and Mass Media

- Mass Communication as a Process
- Which Media Are Mass Media?

The Elements of Human Communication

- Symbols, Memory, and Meaning
- Sending and Receiving Messages
- Complexity and Accuracy

Face-To-Face and Mass Communication Compared

- Consequences of Large, Diverse Audiences
- Social and Cultural Influences

Professional Communicators: Careers and Preparation

- Paths to a Career
- A Journalism Perspective
- A Speech Communication Perspective

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*