

SIXTH EDITION

# The Dynamics of Mass Communication



Joseph R. Dominick

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# The Dynamics of Mass Communication

**Joseph R. Dominick**  
*University of Georgia, Athens*



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## About the Author

**Joseph R. Dominick** received his undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois and his Ph.D. from Michigan State University in 1970. He taught for four years at Queens College of the City University of New York before coming to the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia where, from 1980 to 1985, he served as head of the Radio-TV-Film Sequence. Dr. Dominick is the author of three books in addition to *The Dynamics of Mass Communication* and has published more than thirty articles in scholarly journals. From 1976 to 1980, Dr. Dominick served as editor of the *Journal of Broadcasting*. He has received research grants from the National Association of Broadcasters and from the American Broadcasting Company and has consulted for such organizations as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Chemical Society.

# Preface

**W**ell, it was time for a little makeover. I began work on the first edition of *Dynamics* in 1980, long before PCs, the Internet, fax machines, digital TV, cellular phones, Rollerblades®, and sun-dried tomatoes. A lot has changed over the last 20 years or so: the media, society, and the basic introductory mass media course.

## Issues and a Critical Perspective

When *Dynamics* first appeared, many introductory courses were designed for students who would ultimately go on to a career in the media. Consequently, these courses had a professional slant and provided an overview of the workings of the various media. Over the years, however, many intro courses incorporated a more issues-oriented, critical perspective on the media. The professional orientation was still present, but other, more-analytical and critical topics, such as the impact of cultural and historical factors, were given more attention. This new edition of *Dynamics* was designed to accommodate that shift.

## A Five Chapter Diet

Moreover, after going through several editions, many textbooks can become cluttered with information that is added with each new revision. The sixth edition of *Dynamics* has been streamlined and reorganized to make the book less wordy and more user-friendly.

To be specific, the total number of chapters in the book has been reduced from 23 to 18 to make the text more compatible with the traditional semester time frame. The material from the fifth edition's three history chapters has been incorporated into the appropriate media chapter. The material on audiences and feedback has also been condensed and placed within the media chapters. Finally, the fifth edition's two chapters on media effects have been reorganized into a single chapter. It is hoped that these changes will make text chapters easier to assign and improve the clarity of classroom discussion.

## New Content

Chapter 3 "Historical and Cultural Context" is new to this edition. This chapter responds to the requests of users for a discussion of media in the days before the invention of printing and also provides additional information about the telegraph and photography. In keeping with increased interest in the relationship between mass communication and culture, the chapter also contains an examination of the historical cultural significance and impact of the media. In that same connection, Chapter 2 "Perspectives on Mass Communication" now contains a discussion of the history of the critical/cultural approach along with an explication of its key concepts.



### **New Issues—Oriented Boxes**

The new edition also contains more than 60 new-boxed inserts. Many of these inserts take an “issues” perspective and highlight social and ethical concerns that are currently prominent in the field. Material on diversity in the media has been added to several chapters; in keeping with the increased emphasis on the critical/cultural approach, the new edition contains seven boxed inserts that are illustrative examples of the technique.

### **The Omnipresent Internet and The Information Age**

The last major change from the fifth edition concerns Chapter 11 “The Computer and the Internet”. The new edition has been expanded and now contains a lengthy discussion of the World Wide Web and an expanded section on the social impact of the Internet. The chapter also examines the economics of online media and discusses the vexing problem of measuring the online audience.

In addition to the above, I have added new, Information Age–type material to all chapters. Chapter 1 “Communication: Mass and Other Forms” discusses the Internet as a mass medium and the changes it has brought to the mass communication process. Chapters 4, 5, and 6, which deal with print media, now contain sections that discuss online newspapers, magazines, and books. The connection between the Internet and the radio and sound recording industries is discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively. Chapter 9 “Motion Pictures” includes both a look at how the film industry is using the net as well as an expanded section on film promotion and a new discussion of the DVD technology. Chapter 10 “Television” now has more information about noncommercial broadcasting and DBS as well as new sections on digital TV.

New material in Chapter 12 “News Gathering and Reporting” examines online news media and computer-assisted reporting. A new discussion of online PR and advertising has been added to Chapters 13 and 14. Chapter 13 also contains a new section dealing with the challenge of public relations in a multicultural environment. Chapter 15 “Formal Controls: . . .” contains material on three recent developments: the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Food Lion trespass case, and regulations concerning the Internet. Chapter 16 “Ethics and Other Informal Controls” examines in detail the controversy over the use of hidden cameras.

The last two chapters in the new edition look at the impact of the media. Chapter 17 “The Global Village: . . .” examines the impact of the Internet on global communication. Chapter 18 “Social Effects of Mass Communication” has been updated to include a section on researching the Internet.

### **Currency**

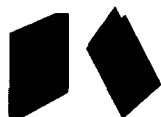
And, as is the usual case with new editions, every chapter has been updated and revised to reflect statistical developments and other changes since the last edition; all tables now include the most recent information available. A list of key terms and a list of relevant web sites have also been added to the end of each chapter. Finally, the book has been given a spiffy new design so that it is more attractive to look at and easier to read.

## Some Things Remain the Same

Despite all these changes, past users of *Dynamics* will notice some constancy from previous editions. The emphasis on media economics is maintained in the sixth edition. Mergers and convergence continue to affect the industry, and the impact of the bottom line continues to be important for students to understand. Further, the emphasis on the social impact of the media has been preserved; given the continuing concern over the relationship between media and antisocial behavior, and the effects of media on politics and other topics, this material seems crucial for students. The V-chip and content ratings for TV programs are now a reality, and the press has received strong criticism for both the intrusive way it covers celebrities and the salacious way it reports political sex scandals.

Once again, I have tried to keep the writing style informal and conversational. As before, I have chosen examples from popular culture that I hope all students are familiar with. Technical terms are boldfaced and defined in the glossary. There are boxed inserts in every chapter that highlight and illuminate key points in the text. As in previous editions, the book contains a copious amount of tables, figures, and charts to aid understanding.

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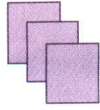
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The supplements listed here may accompany *The Dynamics of Mass Communication*, Sixth Edition. Please contact your local McGraw-Hill representative for details concerning policies, prices, and availability as some restrictions may apply.

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I wish to thank all the students and instructors who have used the first five editions of this book and who were kind enough to suggest improvements. As mentioned in the text, feedback in the mass communication situation is difficult and these comments were greatly appreciated. Several colleagues deserve special mention. Barry Sherman, Kent Middleton, Dean Krugman, and Andy Kavoori provided valuable help. James Weaver at Auburn University gave the fifth edition a close reading and made helpful suggestions. Doctoral students Keisha Hoerrner, Carolina Alzura, and Rita Van Sant provided material for the book as well as useful feedback.

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In closing, I'll repeat what I've said many times before. The media are a vital force in our society; I hope this book helps us understand them even better.

Joseph R. Dominick

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