

A decorative grid of colored squares in the top left corner, arranged in a 4x15 pattern. The colors include orange, red, green, and blue.

SUSAN TYLER EASTMAN

Broadcast/Cable Programming

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES FOURTH EDITION

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BROADCAST/CABLE PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

FOURTH EDITION

SUSAN TYLER EASTMAN
Indiana University

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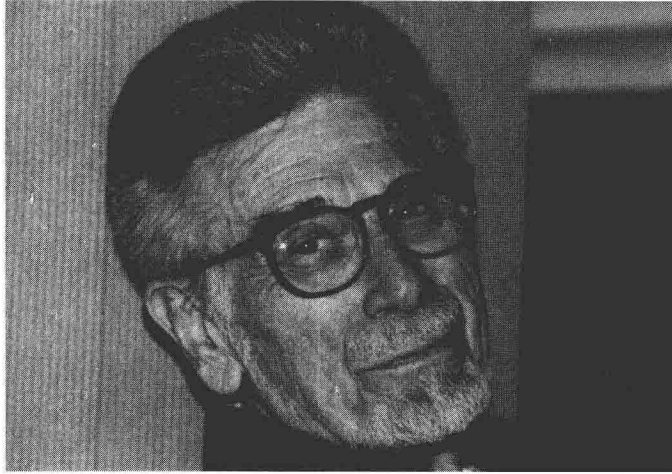
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*This book is dedicated
to the memory of*

*Sydney W. Head
(1913–1991)*



Photograph by Christopher H. Sterling

Sydney W. Head contributed immeasurably to the lives of countless students and colleagues during four decades of teaching and writing. His influence was enormous, both as a scholar of unquestionable integrity and standards and as a respected teacher. His ground-breaking first edition of *Broadcasting in America* (1956) helped define the conceptual parameters and scholarly directions of studies of domestic and international radio and television. His major works included five subsequent editions of that book, three editions of the book you hold in your hands (the first in 1981), plus an anthology on *Broadcasting in Africa* (1974) and a pathfinding text on *World Broadcasting Systems* (1985). He will be long missed for his sage advice, penetrating editing skills, and gentle humor. He died of cancer in 1991 at the age of 77.

PREFACE

FOURTH EDITION

In the years since the third edition of this book, the subject matter has evolved dramatically. Broadcast networks have lost more of their audience to cable, independent stations, and home video; the Fox network has become an established prime-time competitor; the technologies of digital compression and optical fiber promise hugely expanded cable capacity and multiplexed channels, eventually eliminating the channel capacity crunch that has driven cable strategy for most of a decade; the foundation cable networks have developed strongly competitive programming strategies; pay-per-view television is finally succeeding; local cable television is now almost profitable; public television has radically changed its program selection process; peoplemeters have permanently altered the process of collecting audience estimates and demographics for television; in choosing programs, programmers have begun to weigh the international market's potential; coproduction and joint ventures have begun to invigorate the new program production process for broadcasting and cable; and satellites have further stimulated radio syndication and networking. In response to changes in the industry and the publisher's survey of users of this book, the following changes occur in the fourth edition:

- The opening chapter merges the *impact of group ownership with the fundamental principles*

and concepts of programming to reduce repetition and simplify the book's structure.

- The third chapter now *concentrates on the domestic program syndication process*, retaining practical details on station representatives and strategies for negotiating and bidding for programs.
- The perspectives of *Fox and non-Fox independent stations* are now included in the updated chapter on independent television station programming.
- The revised chapter on cable system programming contains an analysis of the implications for operator programming of *digital compression and optical fiber technologies, as well as strategies for tiering*.
- Such topics as *foundation and niche cable networks, multiplexing, and international pay television*, as well as details on *about 60 separate basic cable networks, 6 pay networks, and 6 pay-per-view networks*, are now incorporated in the two chapters on basic and premium cable networks.
- The local cable television chapter contains fresh material covering *innovative models for local news and entertainment channels*, reflecting the altered importance of commercial local cable.
- A single chapter on *information radio now merges the topics of talk and news radio*, shortening the number of chapters and providing a unified perspective on nonmusic formats.

- The chapters on national and local public television explore the industry's radically *new process of program selection* and cover *PBS's increased thrust toward adult and child education*, while continuing to include the prevailing practices in network and station scheduling and evaluation of noncommercial programs.

Despite these changes, the fundamental approach to the subject of programming taken in previous editions remains viable and so much of the content of previous editions has been retained. As the preface to the first edition noted, only on the most generalized level can statements be made about programmers and their functions that apply equally to all sorts of programming situations. The book starts with such generalizations because all types of broadcasting and cable ultimately share certain common attributes, no matter how diverse their other characteristics may be. But the heart of the book lies in the testimony of actual practitioners in varied programming situations.

One caveat should be made at the outset: These authors do not attempt to evaluate programming except in the pragmatic way that programmers themselves judge programs—*by their ability to attract targeted audiences*. This approach does not discount the importance of program quality or absolve broadcasters from responsibility for taking quality into consideration. There is, however, sufficient critical literature available. This book examines objectively how programming decisions are actually made, whatever the wider artistic or social implications of those decisions might be.

ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

Throughout this book, the job of the programmer is divided into three activities—*scheduling*, *evaluation*, and *selection*. Part One opens with a chapter defining these activities, along with other common programming concepts such as

the basics of television and radio strategies. The second chapter in this part reviews the central tools of evaluation, *ratings*, and the third chapter examines the *syndication* side of the program selection process—because these topics form the background for nearly all programming decisions. The three activities of selection, scheduling, and evaluation guide the organization of the remaining chapters, each of which deals with a particular programming situation from the perspective of a practitioner specializing in that type of programming.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book divides into five major sections: After Part One introduces the concepts and vocabulary for understanding the remaining chapters, Parts Two, Three, Four, and Five look at programming strategy respectively for television, cable, radio, and public broadcasting from the perspective of industry programming experts.

- Each *part* begins with a brief *overview*, relating the chapters that follow to each other and to the rest of the book.
- Each *chapter* starts with an *outline* of its headings and subheadings, providing a handy guide to chapter contents.
- A *summary* concludes each chapter, followed by suggested *sources* and *notes*. The readings cite books, reports, and trade publications that expand, support, complement, or contrast with the point of view expressed in each chapter.
- A list of *abbreviations and acronyms* appears near the end of the book.
- A *glossary* summarizes the concepts and vocabulary pertaining to programming. Glossary entries are set in **boldface** in the text; however, boldfacing is not limited to glossary terms.
- An *annotated bibliography* of books, articles, and reports published since 1988 on programming follows the glossary. References appear

ing in the notes are not repeated in the bibliography if they are highly topical or do not relate mainly to programming. For items on specific topics, readers should consult the suggested sources and chapter notes as well as the bibliography.

- A complete *index* to the movies and television and radio program *titles* mentioned in the text precedes the *general index*.
- Finally, a supplementary *Instructor's Manual* provides syllabi, short assignments, information on major projects, lists of videotapes, discussion topics, essay and multiple-choice test questions, and other resources.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For more than a decade, Sydney Head and Lewis Klein worked with me to develop the framework and direction of three editions of this book. I want to express my gratitude for the freedom they gave me, the gentle guidance they provided, and their invaluable help in securing access to people and materials that greatly enhanced every edition of this book. They both contributed strong chapters to earlier editions, much of the content of which remains in this edition. And both colleagues devoted long hours to editing and polishing the book's language in earlier editions, along the way teaching me something about writing and developing concepts that stretch beyond specific situations. They have both left an indelible mark on this book.

Warm thanks also go to the individuals and organizations that assisted with this edition: Chuck Brinkman of KLUV, Steve Eberhardt of KVIL, Bobby Kraig of KPLX, Michael Spears of KKDA AM/FM, Ted Stecker of KSCS, and Chuck Rhodes contributed suggestions to the music radio chapter. Terry Chilly of Prime Network explained the intricacies of regional sports networks. Margaret Josephson

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Susan Tyler Eastman



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