

Broadcasting in America

Head • Sterling

Fifth Edition

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BROADCASTING IN AMERICA

A Survey of Electronic Media

FIFTH EDITION

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with contributions by

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Preface

Even more than its predecessors, this edition of *Broadcasting in America*, which appears three decades after the first, has been heavily revised and updated — and this time restructured as well. These changes are due partially to our own evolving views of the field as well as to the substantial changes going on in the field itself. Starting with universally available broadcasting, we take a more unified approach to the many competing electronic media, dealing with them in an integrated fashion reflecting their true audience and marketplace interaction. Given the widespread use of broadcast content on newer delivery systems (most specifically including cable and videocassette recorders), “broadcasting” in this book’s title and text now generally refers to all of the electronic media. Readers of past editions will note the following:

- We have rearranged the book and reduced the number of chapters to nineteen. Throughout, we have updated and tightened our discussion and grouped related topics together. For example, chapters on media impact and policy have been recast to reflect changes in the field and to make for clearer understanding of relationships.

- We lead off the book with historical background, somewhat condensed from previous editions, using it to lead into the technology chapters that follow. The present role of technology is more clearly seen if we first trace the development of knowledge and application of that technology.

- We have integrated treatment of public broadcasting and the newer technological rivals to radio and television, rather than dealing with each separately as in the fourth edition. We now feel it important to understand the changing interrelationships between broadcasting, cable, and home video (as well as other services with thus far limited audience penetration) all of which compete in the same market for the same potential audience.

- We have retained our approach in the chapters on technology of electronic media — stressing the fundamental physical and policy factors which are essential to a true understanding of how broadcasting and newer electronic media services work, and the different ways that each is limited.

- Economic aspects of the fast-changing electronic media have been given expanded treatment in the three new chapters which make up Part 3, contributed by Associate Professor Lemuel B. Schofield of the University of Miami. His extensive experience in television station supervisory roles, including that of general manager, combined with his legal training (he holds a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania) add new insight to the treatment of station, system, and network organization and operation, as well as to advertising and the many other kinds of media financial support.

- Likewise, we have greatly increased the material on programming process and trends that now make up three chapters in Part 4, contributed by Dr. Susan Tyler Eastman, an

associate professor at Indiana University. Dr. Eastman is senior editor of *Broadcast and Cable Programming* (Wadsworth, 1985), among many other works, and has taught the "BIA course" for more than a decade. She deals with basic aspects of all programming before concentrating on network programs (Chapter 12) and nonnetwork, syndicated programming (Chapter 13).

- The material on electronic media research and consequences in Part 5 has been revised and tightened to cover both industrial and academic research efforts and findings. The chief and best known type of research, that on audience ratings, is now treated together with the analysis of media impact and consequences. The theoretical basis for the latter (Chapter 15) is totally revised for this edition.

- The regulatory chapters in Part 4 have been recast, reflecting the current deregulatory trend. Christopher Sterling, special assistant to an FCC commissioner during the transition from the Ferris to Fowler administrations (1980–82), highlights the regulatory differences between broadcasting and its newer rivals.

- For this edition, Dr. Norman Felsenthal, an associate professor at Temple University, has written the separately published *Instructor's Manual* (available to adopters) and a totally new *Study Guide*. He has worked closely with the authors so his work reflects the substantial changes in the revised main text.

Despite all these changes, our overall goal remains the same: to treat the electronic media within a broad academic perspective, touching on such traditional fields as the physical sciences, history, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. This approach is

rooted in our belief that for purposes of both general and professional education, electronic media should be studied as both the product of social forces and as social forces themselves. We seek to explain how broadcasting and more recent services developed, why they operate as they do today, and what part these services play in American society. We hope to spark readers to draw their own conclusions on the proper role of these services in the future.

As with previous editions, a number of colleagues gave valuable advice and suggestions. Among them were James Anderson (University of Utah) and Timothy Meyer (University of Wisconsin–Green Bay), who guided our revision of Chapter 15; Herbert Terry (Indiana University) and Erwin Krasnow (of Verner, Lipfert, Bernhardt & McPherson in Washington, and former general counsel of the NAB) who gave detailed comments and suggestions on Chapters 16–18; and Charles Clift (Ohio University); Peter Habermann (University of Northern Iowa); Darrel W. Holt (The University of Tennessee, Knoxville); Barry Litman (Michigan State University); George Mastroianni (California State University, Fullerton); Michael J. Porter (University of Missouri–Columbia); John A. Regnell (Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville); Ruth Schwartz (University of California, Los Angeles); David L. Smith (Ball State University); Donna Walcovy (Emerson College); and Judith B. Wallace (University of Miami). Naturally, we assume final responsibility for what we have done with their suggestions.

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