

PREFACE

Purpose

Telecommunications is one of the most potent forces in the world today. It influences society as a whole, and it influences every one of us as an individual. As each year passes, telecommunications grows in scope. The early pioneers of radio would never recognize today's vast array of electronic media—broadcast television, cable TV, direct broadcast satellite, DVDs, videocassettes, the Internet—just to name a few. Neither would they recognize the structure that evolved in such areas as regulation, advertising, and audience measurement. They would marvel that their early concepts of equipment have led to such developments as audio recorders, cameras, video recorders, digital effects generators, nonlinear editors, computer graphics, and satellites. If they could see the quantity and variety of programming available today, they might not recognize that it all began with amateurs listening for radio signals on their “primitive” crystal sets.

All indications are that telecommunications will continue to change at a rapid pace. As it does, it will further affect society. All people, whether they be individuals working in the telecommunications field or individual members of society, have a right to become involved with media and have an obligation to understand why people need to interact with the media. Some knowledge of the background and structure of the industry is an essential basis for this understanding.

A major goal of this book is to provide just that kind of knowledge so that intelligent decisions about the role of telecommunications can be made both by those who are practitioners in the field and those who are members of the general society.

Organization of the Book

Extensive Updating

This is the eighth edition of this book, the first appearing in 1983. This edition is somewhat reorganized and greatly updated to include the many changes that occurred in the media field in the last few years. For example, just about everything related to the Internet has been rewritten. The book has also been changed to take into account the many mergers and buyouts and the changes brought about because financial interest-domestic syndication is no longer in effect. The start-up of satellite radio, issues related to digital TV, success of DVD, changes in the telephone business, effects of digital on worldwide

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communication, alterations in advertising and ratings as the audience further fractures, rapid technological changes—all of these and more are updated in the book. Photos and drawings have also been refreshed.

New! Addition of Movies Chapter

This is the first edition of the book to have a chapter on movies. The decision to add it was made because of the confluence of technologies related to movies and conventional electronic media. The line between “films” and “videos” is blurring as films incorporate electrons and videos use traditional filmic techniques. A number of faculty have indicated that they now teach movies in their courses that used to be devoted to radio and television.

Forms and Functions

The book is divided into two parts, one dealing with forms and the other dealing with functions. The first section deals with the various media forms—radio, broadcast television, cable television, movies, DBS, tapes, discs, the Internet, organizational and personal telecommunications, and international electronic media. The second section deals with functions and covers business practices, programs, laws and regulations, ethics and effects, advertising, audience feedback, and production, distribution, and exhibition.

New! Chapter Section Numbers

The subheadings within each chapter are numbered 2.1, 2.2, etc. This should help when referring to specific sections or trying to find particular information. Throughout the chapters, references are made to other sections of the book that can enhance the material at hand. For example, if you are reading about infomercials in the advertising chapter and have not yet read the programs chapter to understand what infomercials are, the book directs you back to that section, in this case 9.12.

Flexible Chapter Sequence

The chapters may be read in any sequence; some of the terms that are defined early in the book, however, may be unfamiliar to people who read later chapters first. The glossary can help overcome this problem. It includes important technical terms that the reader may want to review from time to time, as well as terms that are not necessary to an understanding of the text but that may be of interest to the reader. The new chapter section numbers will also be an aid to using the chapters in any order.

The Beginning and Ending

The book begins with a short prologue on the significance of telecommunications that points out the importance of media. It ends with a short epilogue on career opportunities in the field.

Special Features

Issues and the Future

All the chapters should lead the reader to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the particular subject being discussed. Each chapter has a section on “Issues and the Future.” This should prepare the readers for fast-changing events that they will read about in newspapers and magazines.

Structure

Each part of the book begins with an overall statement that relates the chapters to one another. Each chapter begins with a pertinent quote and a short introduction. At the end of each chapter, a summary outlines major points in a manner slightly different from that given within the chapter. For example, if the chapter is ordered chronologically, the summary may be organized in a topical manner. This should help the reader form a gestalt of the material presented.

Issues Boxes

Each chapter has a critical thinking box. These discuss current and controversial issues, often of an ethical nature. They end with a series of questions designed to stimulate the readers’ thinking.

Review Guides

Marginal notes appear in each chapter. These notes highlight the main subject being discussed in the adjacent paragraphs. Taken together, these notes serve as review points for the reader. Throughout the text, important words are boldfaced. These, too, should aid learning and are defined in the glossary.

Further Study

Chapter notes, which appear at the end of each chapter, are extensive and provide many sources for further study of particular subjects.

Supplementary Materials

The supplementary materials available with this text include a CD-ROM packaged with the text, a website, test items, and videotapes.

CD-ROM

The CD-ROM includes material students can use to study and material instructors can use in class. There are class activities, learning objectives, sample test questions, exercises, questions for critical thinking, and websites. The material is constructed in an interactive manner. For example, students are shown whether or not they have given the correct answer to the sample questions, and websites are linked to the sites listed.

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The website is located at <http://www.mhhe.com/gross>. It includes an Instructor's Manual, PowerPoint presentations, and additional links to material that will help students study. Also included for students is *INTERLINK, The McGraw-Hill Internet Guide for Mass Communication and Telecommunication Students and Instructors*, by Joseph Bridges of Malone College. It offers insights and practical guidance for general use of the Internet. <http://www.mhhe.com/interlink>

MicroTest III

The questions in the test item file are available in print as well as on MicroTest III, a powerful but easy-to-use test-generating program by Chariot Software Group. MicroTest is available for Windows and Macintosh personal computers. With MicroTest, an instructor can easily select the questions from the test item file and print a test and answer key. The instructor can customize questions, headings, and instructions; can add or import his or her own questions; and can print the test in any choice of fonts the printer supports. Instructors can obtain a copy of MicroTest III by contacting their local McGraw-Hill sales representative.

Videotapes

McGraw-Hill sales representatives can advise instructors concerning selected free videotapes that they can obtain to enhance lectures.

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