ELECTRONIC MEDIA: Then, Now, and Later

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ISBN 0-205-34530-1
(Please use above number to order your exam copy.)

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Preface
The pages of this Preface may have slight variations in final published form.
Until perhaps ten years ago, teaching an introductory course on electronic media meant teaching the history, structure, economics, content, and regulation of broadcasting. Broadcasting and broadcasters were at the epicenter of all that was electronic media. In fact, the concept of a world of electronic media that didn’t revolve around broadcasting and that wasn’t based on the traditional mass communication model seemed far away and abstract.

Much has changed in the last ten years, however. Today, students live in a nonlinear, digital world in which traditional broadcasting plays a much diminished role. For example, they no longer need to wait for over-the-air radio to hear new music or even their favorite tunes. The Internet provides multiple streams of music, much of which can be shared and downloaded for future playback on computers or portable devices. Many college dorm rooms now provide high-speed Internet connections, which facilitates music and movie file sharing. Furthermore, college students are beginning to pass up the multicomponent stereo systems and small-screen television sets that have been popular since the 1960s. Instead, they’re designing their own entertainment and information systems by selecting from among a variety of compact, portable, high-quality music playback devices, digital televisions, computers, and high-speed Internet connections. Students have also become more adept than ever before at handling, editing, and storing media content for their personal use. Finally, they’re also becoming online content providers, with live journals and blogs.

So, given all these developments, does this mean that the traditional electronic media are not worth discussing? Should teaching about electronic media begin with the birth of the World Wide Web? Is the predigital world irrelevant or obsolete? Obviously, we don’t think so.

*Electronic Media: Then, Now, and Later* is rooted in the notion that studying the past not only facilitates understanding the present but also helps in predicting the future. Just as we can show how broadcast television spawned the cable industry, we can trace how the cable industry led to the satellite industry and how both have led to a digital world—one in which convergence has blurred the lines separating media functions and in which old-style broadcasters have expanded, consolidated, and adapted what they do to embrace new forms of electronic media.

The study of electronic media should address more than just the delivery systems used to reach mass audiences. Personal electronic devices that deliver information and entertainment selected by individual consumers should be covered as well. Devices such as digital phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs)—which are capable of surfing the Internet, recording and sending video images, playing music, and allowing interpersonal communication with voice or text—have changed the modern lifestyle
to the point that they must be included in any discussion of the digital electronic media revolution. Digital video recorders, such as TiVo, may change how audiences schedule their time with television, giving a different meaning to the network concept of appointment viewing.

This book provides a link between the traditional world of broadcasting and the contemporary universe of digital electronic media, which offers individuals increasingly greater control over listening, viewing, and electronic interaction. As both emerging electronic media professionals and discriminating electronic media consumers, today’s students must know about these changes and understand how they will affect the future of the industry.

**Organization of the Text**

With the knowledge that what comes next is based on what came before, we would like to acknowledge Edward R. Murrow and his programs *Hear It Now* (1950–1951) and *See It Now* (1951–1958) for suggesting the structure of this text. Each chapter of the book is organized chronologically into these sections:

- **See It Then** begins with the invention or inception of the topic (e.g., television) and traces its development up to the 1990s and the Telecommunications Act of 1996.
- **See It Now** discusses activities and developments from the 1990s to the present.
- **See It Later** starts with the present and makes general predictions about what will happen in the digital world of tomorrow.

Underlying this organization is the idea that change in electronic media rarely occurs without past events providing the opportunity or demand for change.

Chapter 1 summarizes the history of electronic media, introduces industry terms, and discusses current media trends. Chapters 2 through 5 give overviews of the various delivery systems: radio; television; cable, satellite, and microwave; and the Internet, respectively. In these chapters, topics include the history and characteristics of each medium, its place in today’s world of electronic media, and what place it will likely have in the future.

Chapters 6 through 8 look behind the scenes of electronic media. Chapter 6 considers how programming is developed for the various delivery systems. We watch television to see a program, we listen to the radio to hear music, and we use the Internet to connect us to information. Clearly, content is essential to the existence of electronic media. Chapter 7 is about advertising. The electronic media industry couldn’t survive if it provided its content for free, so it sells its viewers, listeners, and users to advertisers, who pay the content providers for the opportunity to advertise their goods and services to the media audience. Chapter 8 looks at audience measurement and sales, considering the complex relationship among the numbers of viewers, listeners, and users; the popularity of programming; and the cost of advertising to reach desired consumers.

Chapters 9 through 12 cover the business and regulatory sides of the electronic media industry. Chapters 9 and 10 investigate ownership and operation of the various types of delivery systems. Chapter 11 focuses specifically on corporate media, an area in which many students will likely find careers. Chapter 12 covers regulation of the electronic media industry along with the legal and ethical issues faced by its professionals.

The last two chapters of the book consider electronic media from a consumer standpoint. Much has been written in academic journals and the popular press about the
social and cultural effects of mass media. Chapter 13 condenses available research and presents several theoretical perspectives, tying them to contemporary issues and concerns. Moving away from theory to application, Chapter 14 is a guide to consumer use of new electronic media devices. It discusses new technologies, how they are used or will be used, and how they are changing people’s lifestyles today and perhaps tomorrow.

Features
Special features are sprinkled throughout the text to enrich students’ learning experience and keep them informed and interested:

- Each chapter opens with a graphic outline of the See It Then, See It Now, and See It Later sections, which offers students an overview of the chapter’s content and organization. That outline is followed by a set of learning objectives, which focuses students on the key points to be discussed.

Thousands of college students across the United States study electronic media to prepare for careers in radio, television, cable, satellite, and the Internet. Most of them have selected electronic media as a major because they believe that a career in this field will be creative and exciting. Others enter the field in the hope of achieving fame, success, and perhaps wealth. Some students study electronic media simply because they have been entertained by it most of their lives, and still others feel that they can create programming that is at least as entertaining as what is available now.

These are all good reasons to study electronic media and pursue a career in this field. However, many students miss the “big picture” because they do not understand that the field of electronic media is a business and that the programming of media is a creative or artistic endeavor, the driving force behind the industry is business. (Maybe that’s why they call it ‘show business,’ not ‘show arts’.) It is certainly true that without entertainment and informative programming, stations will have nothing to transmit to the audience, and if the audience doesn’t receive entertaining and informing programming, it will not tune in.

For commercial stations, which comprise over 90 percent of all stations in this

Business and Ownership

In this chapter, you’ll learn about:
- The business models for electronic media
- The requirements for ownership and management
- The various departments in electronic media facilities
- The differences between broadcast and cable and satellite ownership
- The changing configurations of electronic media ownership

SEE IT THEN
Finding a Business Plan That Worked

Business Models
Ownership of Broadcast Stations
Ownership of Cable and Satellite Providers
Ownership of Other Delivery Systems

SEE IT NOW
Ownership of Broadcast Stations
Ownership of Cable and Satellite Providers
Ownership of Other Delivery Systems

SEE IT LATER
Broadcast Stations
Cable and Satellite Providers
Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Systems
The Internet
• Zoom-Ins provide Web links to lead students to further exploration, along with exercises and activities that students can enjoy in the classroom and on their own.

• FYI boxes supplement the text discussion with interesting facts and in-depth information about such topics as how to create HTML (Chapter 5), media coverage of 1960s violence and civil unrest (Chapter 13), and how advertisers plan to combat ad skipping on digital video recorders (Chapter 14).
• Career Tracks introduce experts in electronic media, who share the experiences that led them to their current jobs and give tips for getting started in this challenging industry.

• The factoid quiz that runs along the bottoms of the pages will prompt students to test their knowledge and learn interesting and relevant information pertaining to the chapter.
A young David Sarnoff at his wireless radio transmissions. The United States (Hilliard board began sending signals out by the Titanic on one ship, the Carpathia, to clear the airwaves to allow information about survivors to the ship to rapidly take on water. After the Titanic's famous call, although about 1,500 perished during the days that the tragedy occurred, other ships in the area had already heard the signal and responded to Europe. At best, the United States had somehow stocked this period like, bringing signals to all kinds of copyright problems and issues. The Web is almost impossible to regulate. Music industry regulators have the difficult task of chasing after building a clientele of about 80 million files are available for copying on illegal services like KaZaa, WinMX, and Grokster ($2,000, so not many people had one. Today's cell phones, even those without a music player, can download music for free). It's legal for music owners to record their personal, store-bought CDs in another format or to a portable player, sharing copies with others who haven't. Although it's legal for music owners to record their personal, store-bought CDs in another format or to a portable player, sharing copies with others who haven't, the advantages of moving your music files from your PC to a portable player are many. With the push of a button or two, the song is copied onto the user's computer (Cohen, 2000). Taking a bus ride or long flight, grocery shopping, exercising, and other mundane activities are all easier to do with music. Gone are the days when a song clip could take up to an hour to download and be so garbled that it couldn't be understood by the artist or song and saw who else on the network has it on their computers. With the downloading into a user's computer, the song is copied onto the user's computer (Cohen, 2000). 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Finally, each chapter ends with a summary of content, which students will find useful in both their initial reading and later review of the text.

Supplements to the Text

Student Resources

COMPANION WEBSITE: WWW.ABLONGMAN.COM/MEDOFFKAYE1E The Companion Website contains chapter learning objectives, summaries, flashcards, and Web links and features crossword activities and practice tests. In addition, it uses flash animation to show how various communication technologies work, such as AM/FM waves, cable television, cellular phones, and the Internet.

Instructor Resources

INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL AND TEST BANK The Instructor’s Manual contains chapter-at-a-glance grids, chapter summaries, learning objectives, lecture outlines, and key terms with definitions. It also provides ideas to activate class discussion and exercises to illustrate the concepts, principles, and skills of mass communication. The Test Bank contains multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay questions.

TESTGEN COMPUTERIZED TESTING This user-friendly interface enables instructors to view, edit, and add questions, transfer questions, and print tests in a variety of fonts. “Search” and “Sort” features allow instructors to locate questions quickly and arrange them in a preferred order.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION PACKAGE This text-specific package is a collection of lecture outlines and graphic images keyed to every chapter in the text. Hot links in the slides direct lecturers to the Companion Website, which provides animated illustrations of technical processes and ideas. (This package is available at http://suppscentral.ablongman.com.)

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to this project: Amy Smith, Amanda Souers, Brenna Sapper, Steve Campagna, Brahm Resnik, Moira Tokatyan, Donna Castillo, Jeff Marmorstein, Price Hicks, Steve Paskay, Chris Wooley, and Dan Houck.

Thanks, as well, to the folks at Allyn & Bacon:

- Molly Taylor, Series Editor: Thanks for initiating the book and for cracking the whip and keeping us moving with the project.
- Mandee Eckersley, Senior Marketing Manager: We’re counting on you to let the world know about the book.
Michael Kish, Editorial Assistant, and Jennifer Wall, Development Editor: Thanks for your direction and for the endless e-mails telling us what more we still had left to do.

Donna Simons, Senior Production Administrator, and freelancers Susan Freese and Denise Hoffman: Thanks for putting together all of the pieces and turning our manuscript into a book.

We would also like to thank those individuals who reviewed an early draft of this book for Allyn & Bacon and provided useful comments and suggestions: Stephen Adams, Cameron University; William Jenson Adams, Kansas State University; Stewart Blakley, Brenau University; Mark J. Braun, Gustavus Adolphus College; Craig A. Breit, Cerritos College; John Chapin, Penn State University; Andrew M. Clark, University of Texas at Arlington; Diane M. Dusick, San Bernardino Valley College; David J. Fabilli, Point Park College; Rodney Freed, University of Tennessee at Martin; G. Richard Gainey, Ohio Northern University; C. Benjamin Hale, Texas Wesleyan University; Scott Healy, Sullivan County Community College; Tim Moreland, Catawba College; Steve Muntz, Marshalltown Community College; Michael D. O’Brien, Northwestern College; John M. Odell, City College of San Francisco; Jerry R. Renaud, University of Nebraska–Lincoln; Bennett Strange, Louisiana College; Douglas L. Sudhoff, Northwest Missouri State University; Randall Vogt, Shaw University; Justin P. West, Holyoke Community College; and Norman Youngblood, Texas Tech University.

A number of individuals were willing to provide personal information for the Career Tracks features. Our thanks go to Jennifer Burgess, John Dille, Doug Drew, Trey Fabacher, Jason Moore Greenke, John Montuori, Reggie Murphy, Norm Pattiz, Jay Renfroe, Kent Takano, Mavel Vidrio, and Chris Wooley. We appreciate the special help of these individuals as well:

- John Dille for his patient reading and suggestions for the business chapters
- Steve Dick of Southern Illinois University for creating a terrific Companion Website and for saving us from having to learn flash animation
- Glenn Reynolds, Instapundit blogger extraordinaire, who over several lunches taught us everything we know about blogging and vlogging
- Jim McOmber, for taking time away from his legal studies at Vanderbilt University to begin the test bank questions, and John Dillon of Murray State University, for successfully completing those questions, many of which are sure to have students groaning
- Lynn Medoff, whose editing help came at just the right time
- Stephen Perry of Illinois State University for writing a fabulous Instructor’s Manual that is sure to liven up classroom discussion
- Stephen Perry and Arnold Wolfe of Illinois State University for creating the PowerPoint materials

Finally, to our families:

- My special thanks and love to my wonderfully patient family—Lynn, Sarah, and Natalie Medoff—who gave me sympathy and tolerated my unavailability until the book was finished.
- A big thank-you hug and lots of love to my husband, Jim McOmber, for listening and nodding politely whenever I groused about the book. Jim, I promise I’ll make up for all those lost weekends we could have spent on the golf course.
- Hugs and kisses to our mothers, Esther Medoff and Janina Kowalewski.

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