

ANNUAL EDITIONS

Mass Media

03/04



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Mass Media

03/04

Tenth Edition

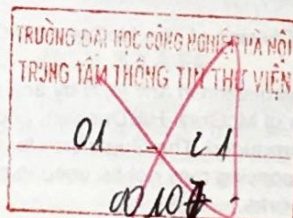
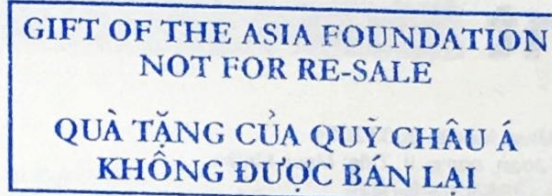
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Joan Gorham

West Virginia University



Joan Gorham completed her undergraduate work at the University of Wisconsin and received master's and doctoral degrees from Northern Illinois University. She is currently associate dean for academic affairs in the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences and a professor of communication studies at West Virginia University. Dr. Gorham is the author of *Commercial Media and Classroom Teaching* and has published numerous articles on communication in instruction. She has taught classes dealing with mass media and media literacy at the high school and college levels, as well as for teachers throughout the state of West Virginia.



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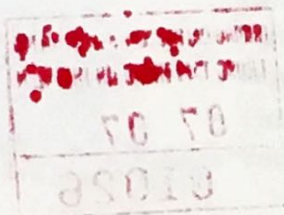
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Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title: Annual Editions: Mass Media. 2003/2004.

1. Mass Media—Periodicals. I. Gorham, Joan, comp. II. Title: Mass Media.

ISBN 0-07-283863-9

658'.05

ISSN 1092-0439

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Tenth Edition

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Printed in the United States of America 1234567890BAHBAH543 Printed on Recycled Paper

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Members of the Advisory Board are instrumental in the final selection of articles for each edition of ANNUAL EDITIONS. Their review of articles for content, level, currentness, and appropriateness provides critical direction to the editor and staff. We think that you will find their careful consideration well reflected in this volume.

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To the Reader

In publishing ANNUAL EDITIONS we recognize the enormous role played by the magazines, newspapers, and journals of the public press in providing current, first-rate educational information in a broad spectrum of interest areas. Many of these articles are appropriate for students, researchers, and professionals seeking accurate, current material to help bridge the gap between principles and theories and the real world. These articles, however, become more useful for study when those of lasting value are carefully collected, organized, indexed, and reproduced in a low-cost format, which provides easy and permanent access when the material is needed. That is the role played by ANNUAL EDITIONS.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, in 1999 the average American spent 3,405 hours—the equivalent of 142 days or 85 40-hour work weeks—consuming mass media messages. Of these hours, 1,548 were spent watching television (690 hours of that network programming), 1,076 listening to the radio, 313 listening to recorded music, 155 reading newspapers, 97 reading books, 80 reading magazines, 56 watching videos at home, 12 watching movies in theaters, 33 playing home video games, and 33 on the Internet. Along with school, the church, and the family, mass media have great potential for shaping American society. And, just as schools and families have been blamed for a variety of society's ills, these media have taken their fair share of criticism.

The mass media are a part of the fabric of American society. Learning how to evaluate media messages critically—asking Who created this message? What is its intent? How objective is it? How does what I am seeing or hearing reflect and/or shape real-world realities?—is a part of being literate in today's society. The organization of these readings reflects this media literacy perspective. Unit 1 introduces concerns that have been raised about the impact of mass media use and content on children, on daily living, and on society. Unit 2 explores media as sources of news and information, along with the public's changing attitude toward news coverage. Unit 3 introduces perspectives on media ownership, regulation, and ethics. Unit 4 addresses the relationships among advertisers, media content, and popular culture. Finally, unit 5 takes a look ahead at the shape of tomorrow's media.

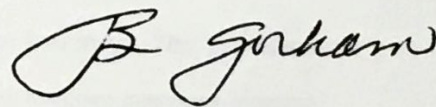
This anthology provides several features that should be very helpful to the reader. These include *table of contents* abstracts, a *topic guide* that suggests how the articles relate to course studies, a list of relevant *World Wide Web* sites that can be used to further explore the topics, and a *test your knowledge* form to summarize key points and new concepts, assess the authors' reasoning, and note the relationship of information and viewpoints in these articles to other course readings and class discussion.

You will find that the writers included in this collection frequently use television as a reference point in describing how mass media messages are shaped and interpreted. This is a reflection of the media focus of the public press and of television's rapid acceptance and continuing presence as the "masses" of mass media. Most of the articles, even those that are primarily descriptive, include an edito-

rial viewpoint and draw conclusions or make recommendations with which you may disagree. These editorial viewpoints are more frequently critical than they are complimentary. They are not necessarily my opinions and should not necessarily become yours. I encourage you to debate these issues, drawing from the information and insights provided in the readings as well as from your own experiences as a media consumer. If you are an "average" American, you have spent a great deal of time with mass media. Your own observations have as much value as those of the writers whose work is included in these pages.

The articles selected for inclusion in this tenth edition of *Annual Editions: Mass Media* reflect three issues of particular concern at the beginning of the new millennium. The first is the ongoing debate over the degree to which the U.S. government and legal system should rightfully be involved in regulating either media messengers or media messages. Of particular concern is media violence and the degree to which violent content is available to, even marketed to, children. The second is an ongoing debate over how news is selected and packaged, and over the place of "hard news," including international coverage, versus "soft news" in attracting and educating media consumers. The third is a heightened awareness of a media landscape profoundly altered by corporate mergers and technological change.

As always, those involved in producing this anthology are sincerely committed to including articles that are timely, informative, and interesting reading. We value your feedback and encourage you to complete and return the postage-paid *article rating form* on the last page of the book to share your suggestions and let us know your opinions.



Joan Gorham
Editor

Contents

To the Reader

Topic Guide

Selected World Wide Web Sites

v

xi

xiv



UNIT 1 Living With Media

In this unit, eight articles discuss the concerns raised about the impact of mass media on daily living and on society.

Unit Overview

xvi

1. **A Defense of Reading**, Marie Winn, from *The Plug-In Drug: Television, Computers, and Family Life*, Penguin Books, 2002

In this chapter from the 25th anniversary edition of *The Plug-In Drug*, Marie Winn compares **mental processes** associated with **reading and listening to the radio to those used when viewing television**.

2

2. **The Suddenly Crowded Queen-Size Bed: A Wake-Up Call to TV and Movie Fright**, Joanne Cantor, from *Mommy, I'm Scared: How TV and Movies Frighten Children and What We Can Do to Protect Them*, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998

Joanne Cantor argues that **television and movies** create **feelings of fear** and anxiety responses that persist long after children view traumatic content.

8

3. **Media Violence and the American Public: Scientific Facts Versus Media Misinformation**, Brad J. Bushman and Craig A. Anderson, *American Psychologist*, June/July 2001

Over the past 50 years, news reports of the link between **media violence and aggression** have changed from claims of a weak link to a moderate link and back to a weak link. In this article, two Iowa State University researchers analyze **statistical findings of scientific studies**, and they conclude that the link, which has strengthened over time, is clearly a positive one.

15

4. **The Whipping Boy**, Jib Fowles, *Reason*, March 2001

Jib Fowles argues that the belief that **television violence** causes hostile behavior is "a whipping boy, a stand-in for other clashes, real or imagined." This article summarizes **social conflicts** that contribute to **misdirected antitelevision violence crusades**.

28

5. **The Color of Ratings**, Av Westin, *Brill's Content*, April 2001

A veteran broadcaster interviews television news executives, producers, correspondents, and crew and concludes that in a **ratings-obsessed** management culture, stories about **minorities** are routinely rejected.

34

6. **Gimme a Break!**, John McWhorter, *The New Republic*, March 5, 2001

In his review of Donald Bogle's book *Primetime Blues: African Americans on Network Television*, John McWhorter provides a history of television's portrayal of **black characters and black issues** across the last half century. He concludes that there are clear signs that **the color line is dissolving**.

40

7. **Can TV Improve Us?**, Jane Rosenzweig, *The American Prospect*, July/August 1999

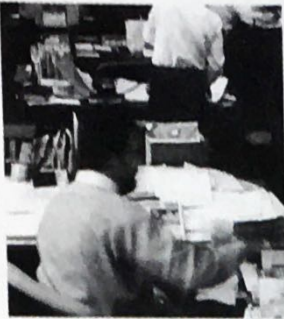
Beginning with a case study of television's role in the **designated driver campaign**, Jane Rosenzweig contends that television content can indeed result in **positive feedforward effects**. Media have power to educate and influence, and **advocacy groups** are most effective when they are working with television rather than protesting against it.

47

8. **Ozzy Without Harriet**, Jonah Goldberg, *National Review*, June 17, 2002

While government debates giving tax write-offs to television networks for **embedding antidrug messages** into their programming, Jonah Goldberg finds MTV's *The Osbournes* to be an unintentional antidrug message in media.

52



UNIT 2

Covering News

Eleven articles in this unit provide critical perspectives on news gathering and how it is delivered to the public, along with the public's changing attitude toward news coverage.

Unit Overview

54

9. **Real-Time Responsibility**, Stephen Jukes, *Harvard International Review*, Summer 2002

Governments are finding it increasingly difficult to **control news flow and spin**. At the same time, pressures of an **accelerated news cycle** and demand for instant analysis are challenging core journalistic values of **objectivity and accuracy**.

56

10. **Explaining the Rage**, Alina Tugend, *American Journalism Review*, December 2001

In this article, Alina Tugend explores how well the media in the United States have done in analyzing the **reasons why much of the Muslim world hates us**. She finds a plus in the events of September 11, 2001, in the fact that more attention is being paid to events in the rest of the world by both American journalists and readers.

59

11. **The View From Abroad**, George A. Krinsky, *American Journalism Review*, January/February 2002

George Krinsky describes differences in **spin and emphasis** between U.S. and **foreign media coverage** of the **war on terrorism**.

62

12. **The Newsweeklies: New and 'Improved'?**, Cynthia Grenier, *The World & I*, February 2002

This article reviews the history of **weekly newsmagazines**, exploring their shift toward **soft news** that "appears to be firmly entrenched—the post-September 11 lurch toward foreign news notwithstanding."

66

13. **Where TV Has Teeth**, Neil Hickey, *Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June 2001

Neil Hickey looks at **investigative journalism** and its yield of outstanding, expensive, time-consuming efforts that have the potential of triggering significant **social change**.

70

14. **Heeeeeeeeeeeere's Democracy!**, Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 10, 2002

The authors argue that the **blurred distinction between news and entertainment media** requires a new definition of **political communications** and a different set of criteria for assessing them. While most traditional political news is geared toward political elites, an episode of *The Simpsons* or a Jay Leno monologue "can be as politically relevant as the nightly news, maybe more so."

76

15. **"Live" with TAE: Bernard Goldberg**, John Meroney, *The American Enterprise*, March 2002

The American Enterprise associate editor John Meroney interviews longtime CBS news correspondent Bernard Goldberg about his book *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*.

79

16. **ENRON: Uncovering the Uncovered Story**, Scott Sherman, *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 2002

Scott Sherman analyzes **media coverage of Enron** before and after its fall, providing a hindsight lesson in **gatekeeping** choices and asking tough questions in **business reporting**.

83

17. **The Real Computer Virus**, Carl M. Cannon, *American Journalism Review*, April 2001

The **Internet** provides access to an immense cache of information that anyone, including reporters, can acquire—and that anyone can post. Journalists have not been immune to picking up and passing on **misinformation**. This article examines the case for and state of **fact checking**.

89

18. **On Message: A Theater of War at the Pentagon**, David Samuels, *Harper's*, January 2002

David Samuels's detailed account of **Pentagon press briefings** provides an inside view of the complexities of reporters' interaction with and dependence on **government sources** in covering war news.

95

19. **The Priest Scandal**, Carl M. Cannon, *American Journalism Review*, May 2002

Thirteen years ago, Carl Cannon received an award from the White House Correspondents Association for his **investigative reporting** on the Catholic Church's efforts to cover up reports of **sexual molestation by priests**. In this article, Cannon dissects coverage of the issue over the years since, analyzing **why it took so long for the story to gain traction**.

103



UNIT 3

Players and Guides

Ten selections explore how media ownership, regulatory policy, legal rulings, and ethical guidelines shape the media landscape.

Unit Overview

110

20. **Media Mergers: The Danger Remains**, Catherine Yang, *Business Week*, April 29, 2002

Michael Powell, new chairman of the **Federal Communications Commission**, is looking hard at rules limiting **media ownership**. Catherine Yang summarizes **deregulation changes** and their implications.

112

21. **Behind the Mergers: Q&A**, Neil Hickey, *Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June 2002

Columbia Journalism Review editor at large Neil Hickey gives perspective to implications of changing rules limiting **cross media ownership** and **market reach**.

114

22. **Media Consolidation: What Now?**, Michael M. Epstein, *Television Quarterly*, Winter 2002

Michael Epstein, a media lawyer, interviews Andrew Jay Schwartzman of the Media Access Project, a Washington-based advocacy group, about **deregulation**. Topics for discussion include economic and political forces, **vertically integrated media companies**, **antitrust laws**, and **public interest obligations**.

117

23. **Media Money: How Corporate Spending Blocked Political Ad Reform & Other Stories of Influence**, Charles Lewis, *Columbia Journalism Review*, September/October 2000

Charles Lewis examines the increasing **influence of the media industry** on **FCC policy** and the progress of **legislation** dealing with issues such as intellectual property, violence, "must carry" provisions, media ownership, and political advertising.

123

24. **The Reinvention of PBS**, Gay Jervy, *Brill's Content*, April 2001

The **Public Broadcasting Service** is not a network; it is a private nonprofit corporation owned and operated by 347 local affiliate stations, with a "bottom-up" rather than a "top-down" management model. This article provides insight into how PBS works and how it fits into the current broadcasting landscape.

130

25. **Children, Entertainment, and Marketing**, Rhoda Rabkin, *Consumers' Research*, June 2002
In April 2001 Senator Joseph Lieberman introduced a bill to prohibit the marketing of "adult rated media" to young people under the age of 17. Rhoda Rabkin summarizes the history of **voluntary regulation of media**, from the Hollywood **Hays Code** to self-regulation of **comic books** and **music**, then raises concerns about current attempts to identify the **entertainment industry as a health threat to young people**. 137
26. **Ethically Challenged**, Lori Robertson, *American Journalism Review*, March 2001
Lori Robertson looks at recent cases of **plagiarism and fabrication** in news reporting, exploring why reporters cross the line, describing **fact-checking policies**, and reporting on the potential consequences of cut-and-paste journalism. 142
27. **The Information Squeeze**, Charles Layton, *American Journalism Review*, September 2002
Charles Layton explores current tensions in the debate over distinguishing **government secrecy** from **protection of privacy**, as it influences access to information available through the **Freedom of Information Act**. 150
28. **Faking It: Sex, Lies, and Women's Magazines**, Liza Featherstone, *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 2002
While debate over **editorial license** usually centers on news reporting, it is relevant in less austere contexts as well. This article looks at media responsibility to "tell the truth" in articles about sex and relationships in **women's magazines**. 159
29. **The Vanessa Leggett Saga**, Guillermo X. Garcia, *American Journalism Review*, March 2002
Guillermo Garcia traces a reporter's legal battle over interpretation of the **First Amendment** as it related to balancing the press' obligation to cooperate with law enforcement officials against its responsibility to protect the **confidentiality of work product and sources of off-the-record information**. 162



UNIT 4

A Word From Our Sponsor

In this section, seven selections explore relationships among financial backers, advertising, and media content.

- Unit Overview 168
30. **Meet the Niensens**, Elizabeth Jensen, *Brill's Content*, March 1999
Nielsen, the sole provider of **ratings** data for television in the United States, is a key player in determining what viewers see. Elizabeth Jensen describes concerns with how the **Nielsen Media Research** system works and how advertisers use ratings data. 170
31. **Primetime Pushers**, Lisa Belkin, *Mother Jones*, March/April 2001
Lisa Belkin analyzes the outcome of a decade of lobbying by advertising agencies, pharmaceutical companies, and television networks that resulted in the lifting of **Federal Drug Administration** restrictions on "**direct-to-consumer**" **advertising** of prescription medications. 175
32. **News for Sale**, Marion Just and Rosalind Levine, with Kathleen Regan, *Columbia Journalism Review Project for Excellence in Journalism*, November/December 2001
This article summarizes results of a survey of **local television news** directors regarding prevalence and kinds of **sponsor pressure** on story topics and content. 180
33. **Taking Care of Business**, Sharyn Vane, *American Journalism Review*, March 2002
Sharyn Vane looks at **separation of editorial and advertising operations** of newspaper publishers: "Despite ample evidence to the contrary, it's an undeniable part of the journalism culture to view the newsroom as an oasis separate from the messy details of money and business. Yet the truth is very different..." 183