Chapter 7 - Media

Section 7.1
Mass Media Today

- Controlling the political agenda
- Media events
  - Carefully staged
- Commercials
  - 60% of presidential campaign budget
  - Nearly always negative
- Image-making
Media Events

• **Purpose** - Shape image or draw attention
  – News Releases
  – News Briefings
  – News Conferences
  – Leaks / Trial balloons
  – On the Record / Off the Record
  – On Background / On Deep Background
7.1 How do politicians control their public image?

a. Penning articles for Op-Ed pages
b. Informal Q&A sessions with journalists
c. Tightly-scripted media events
d. Frequent visits to talk shows
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The Development of Media Politics

- Government Regulation of Electronic Media
- From Broadcasting to Narrowcasting: Rise of Cable and Cable News
- Impact of the Internet
- Private Control of the Media
The Print Media

- Newspapers and a free press
- Newspaper readers better informed
  - Yet, circulation declines
- Online news
  - How to make money?
- Magazines
  - Suffering same fate
Newspapers

• Early papers financed by political groups
• “Yellow Journalism”
• News influenced by major publications
• National news
  – Associated Press
• National newspapers
  – Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor and USA Today

• Newspaper readers
  – Politically informed
  – Active citizens
• Newspaper circulation
  – Decline since television
The Emergence of Radio and Television

- Radio - 1930s
- Television – post-WWII
- Cable television – 1980s
- Internet – 1990s
- End of the golden age of network news
Watergate Scandal and the Vietnam War

• Changed government’s relationship with press
• Press more suspicious about political motives
Investigative Journalism

• Media’s intent to reveal political scandals
Government Regulation of Electronic Media

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC) 1934
  - Limits monopolies
  - Stations must serve public interest
  - Fair treatment rule
  - Right-of-reply rule
  - Fairness doctrine abolished
From Broadcasting to Narrowcasting: Rise of Cable and Cable News

- A general audience no more
  - Changing usage patterns
  - Infotainment

- A general audience no more
  - Breaking news
  - "Talk radio on television"
  - "Outrage discourse"
  - Selective exposure

- A general audience no more
  - From prestige to profit
FIGURE 7.1  How the audiences of cable news channels have polarized into rival partisan camps

Percent who regularly watch...

Fox News
- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent

CNN

MSNBC

The Impact of the Internet

- Information at your fingertips
  - Pop culture over politics

- Facilitating communications
  - Meetup and Facebook

- Blogs
  - Equal weight with professional journalists?
**TABLE 7.1** Top 25 Lycos searches for the week of the first 2008 presidential debate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Search Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Clay Aiken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Paris Hilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>YOUTUBE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Travis Barker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Pamela Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Kim Kardashian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>DJ AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Britney Spears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Dragonball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Lindsay Lohan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Sarah Palin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Megan Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Naruto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>WWE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Kanye West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Lance Armstrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Biggest Loser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Bristol Palin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Lehman Brothers Bankruptcy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>RUNESCAPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Kendra Wilkinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Carmen Electra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Jennifer Hudson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Eva Mendes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Political bloggers

Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images
Private Control of the Media

- Private v. public ownership
  - Private more common in U.S.
  - Public more common abroad
  - Freedom of the press varies

- Profit orientation
  - Advertising revenue
  - Decline of foreign news reporting
After several years of mergers and acquisitions, a small number of corporations have come to dominate the print, broadcast, cable, and Internet industries. The "big five" are Time Warner, Disney, Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, Bertelsmann, and Viacom (owner of CBS). (Table 13.2 shows the media holdings of Viacom.) What factors precipitated this media conglomeration? What effects, if any, does media conglomeration have on news reporting?

SOURCE: Media Reform Information Center (www.corporations.org/media).

NOTE: Included are newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations, books, music, movies, videos, wire services, and photo agencies.

FIGURE 13.1 Number of Corporations That Control the Majority of U.S. Media
## TABLE 13.2 Who Owns What? Viacom (top)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Television</th>
<th>Cable TV Stations</th>
<th>Cable TV Production and Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBS stations: 17</td>
<td>MTV</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPN stations: 18</td>
<td>MTV2</td>
<td>TV Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other local stations: 5</td>
<td>Nickelodeon</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VH1</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spike TV</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TV Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Cable TV Stations</th>
<th>Cable TV Production and Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infinity Broadcasting</td>
<td>MTV</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viacom Outdoor Systems</td>
<td>MTV2</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nickelodeon</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Cable TV Stations</th>
<th>Cable TV Production and Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paramount Pictures</td>
<td>MTV</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramount Home Entertainment</td>
<td>MTV2</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nickelodeon</td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VH1</td>
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<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comedy Central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Spelling Television
- Big Ticket Television
- King World Productions

- Stations: 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publishing: Simon &amp; Schuster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Simon & Schuster Adult**  
*Publishing Group*          | **Simon & Schuster Children’s**  
*Publishing Group*          |  
| • Atria Books               | • Aladdin Paperbacks            |  
| • Howard Books              | • Atheneum Books for Young Readers |  
| • Pocket Books              | • Libros para Niños             |  
| • Scribner                  | • Little Simon                  |  
| • Simon & Schuster          | • Little Simon Inspirations     |  
| • Strebor                   | • Margaret K. McElderry Books   |  
| • Free Press                | • Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers |  
| • Touchstone and Fireside Group | • Simon Pulse                  |  
|                             | • Simon Spotlight               |  
|                             | • Simon Spotlight Entertainment  |  
| **Simon & Schuster Audio**  | **Simon & Schuster UK**         |  
| **Simon & Schuster Digital**| **Simon & Schuster Australia**  |  

**Source:** “Who Owns What?” Columbia University, Graduate School of Journalism, *Columbia Journalism Review*, 27 June 2006 (www.cjr.org/tools); and “About Simon” (www.simonsays.com).
7.2 Watching only news programs that reflect the viewer's politics is called

a. Selective exposure
b. Narrowcasting
c. Infotainment
d. High-tech politics
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Reporting the News

Jerry Sandusky
Finding the News

- Beats
- Trial balloons
- Symbiotic relationship
- Pulitzer Prize winning journalism
Presenting the News

- Skimming off the cream
  - 10-second sound bites
  - Complex policy issues ignored
  - Politicians can't present issues
  - Politicians can avoid issues

- Presidents rebuffed
  - Shunted to cable
Bias in the News

- Do the media have a liberal bias?
  - Conservatives focus
    - “Liberal” views of reporters
    - *liberal* bias
  - Liberals
    - Corporate control of mass media
    - *conservative* bias

- "If it bleeds, it leads"
  - Visual stimulation: no talking heads
### TABLE 7.2  Stories citizens have tuned in and tuned out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The explosion of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts of hurricanes Katrina and Rita</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles riots in 1992</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987 rescue of baby Jessica McClure from a well</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 earthquake in Haiti</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of hostilities against Iraq in 2003</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court decision on flag burning</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing of Osama bin Laden in a raid by U.S. forces</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage of Obama’s health care reform bill in 2010</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest of O. J. Simpson</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obama’s decision to send 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The partial shutdown of the federal government in 2013</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 presidential election outcome</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sex abuse scandal involving Penn State football coach Joe Paterno</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impeachment trial of President Clinton in the Senate</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the rollout of Obamacare was going in December 2013</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obama’s decision to reject the Keystone oil pipeline</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Supreme Court decision allowing corporations and unions to pay for ads about political candidates</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic violence in the Darfur region of Sudan</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage of the Communications Deregulation Bill</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDA’s 2013 proposal to severely restrict trans fats in foods</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3 Why do news outlets seek to entertain rather than educate?

a. They do try to educate, but they aren't successful at it.

b. They are motivated by profit.

c. They believe education is the job of schools.

d. They understand that it is the best way to present complex issues.
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The News and Public Opinion

- How influential are the media?
- Agenda-setting effects
  - Sets criteria by which public evaluates leaders
  - Emphasizes one event over another
  - Focuses on misstatements
7.4 In what area are the media most influential?

a. Agenda-setting
b. Voting choices
c. Approval rating of officials
d. All of the above
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a. Agenda-setting
b. Voting choices
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d. All of the above
Policy Entrepreneurs and Agenda Setting

- **Policy agenda**
  - Many issues compete for attention from government
  - Interest groups, parties, politicians, agencies, all push their priorities

- **Policy entrepreneurs**
  - Political activists depend upon the media
  - Protests attract coverage
7.5 What is one way for an interest group to gain media coverage?

a. Write letters to politicians
b. Send out requests for donations
c. Stage a protest
d. Set up a meeting with a public official
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Understanding the Mass Media

- The Media and the Scope of Government
- Individualism and the Media
- Democracy and the Media
The Media and the Scope of Government

Media as watchdog
- Press criticism does more good than harm
- Reporters hold negative views of public officials

Media as skeptic
- Constrains government
- Focus on injustices enlarges government
Individualism and the Media

- TV furthers individualism
  - No need for intermediaries
  - Candidates can reach individual voters

- TV focuses on individuals
  - Personality important
  - Focus on executive branch
Democracy and the Media

- "Information is the fuel of democracy"
  - But more info does not equal more competence

- Superficial by demand
  - Profit motive again
  - Public appetite shapes choices
7.6 What is an example of the media as watchdog?

a. Televising a campaign speech
b. Reporting about an abuse of power
c. Criticizing a politician's wife
d. Polling citizens on an issue
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