FIFTH EDITION

MEDIA TODAY 5

Mass Communication in a Converging World

JOSEPH TUROW

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— 5TH EDITION —

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JOSEPH TUROW

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For Oriana Avra

About the Author

Joseph Turow is the Robert Lewis Shayon Professor of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. He has been described by the *New York Times* as "probably the reigning academic expert on media fragmentation." He holds a PhD in communication from the University of Pennsylvania, where he has taught since 1986. He has also served on the faculty at Purdue University, where he received two departmental teaching awards, and has lectured at many other universities in the United States and around the world. For 2010, he was awarded an Astor Visiting Lectureship by Oxford University. He is a fellow of the International Communication Association and was named a distinguished scholar by the National Communication Association.

Turow has authored nine books, edited five, and written more than 150 articles on mass media. His other books include *The Daily You* (Yale University Press, 2012); *Playing Doctor: Television, Storytelling, and Medical Power* (University of Michigan Press, 2010); *Niche Envy: Marketing Discrimination in the Digital Age* (MIT Press, 2006); and *The Hyperlinked Society* (coedited with Lokman Tsui, University of Michigan Press, 2008). Additionally, he is the editor of the New Media World book series out of University of Michigan Press. Turow currently serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Poetics*, and *New Media and Society*. He has also written about media and advertising for the popular press (e.g., the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Boston Globe*) and has been interviewed on National Public Radio.

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Preface

Our Approach to Studying Media Today

Welcome to *Media Today: Mass Communication in a Converging World!* As the subtitle suggests, this fifth edition of *Media Today* uses convergence as a lens that puts the reader at the center of the profound changes in the 21st-century media world. Through the convergence lens, readers learn to think critically about the role of media today and about what these changes mean for their lives presently and in the future. The book's media systems approach helps readers to look carefully at how media are created, distributed, and exhibited in the new world that the digital revolution has created. In this way, *Media Today* goes beyond the traditional mass communication textbook's focus on consuming media, to give students an insider's perspective on how media businesses operate. How exactly does Google profit from web searches? What will the magazine look like in five years?

Joseph Turow—who has been teaching Intro to Mass Communication for well over a decade—demonstrates the many ways that media convergence and the pervasiveness of the Internet have blurred distinctions between and among various media. After looking at the essential history of each media industry, Turow examines the current forces shaping that industry and explores the impact of emerging trends. From newspapers to video games or social networking to mobile platforms, Turow's *Media Today* prepares students to live in the digital world of media, helping them to become critical, media-literate consumers of mass media and, if they go on to work in mass media industries, more alert, sensitive practitioners.

Media Today, Fifth Edition, is characterized by its focus on the following:

- convergence
- consumer education
- comprehensive media industry coverage
- contemporary student-friendly examples

Convergence

Today, it is impossible to write about the workings of the newspaper, television, magazine, recording, movie, video game, advertising, and public relations industries without taking into account fundamental changes being wrought by websites, blogs, e-mail, MP3 files, and multimedia streams. Consequently, readers will find that every chapter incorporates digital media developments into the main flow of the material.

Consumer Education

The overarching goal of the fifth edition of *Media Today* is to help students become media-literate members of society. Being media-literate involves applying critical thinking skills to the mass media. It also involves reasoning clearly about controversies that may involve the websites students use, the mobile devices they carry, the television shows they watch, the music they hear, the magazines they read, and much more. It means becoming a more aware and responsible citizen—voter, worker, adult—in our media-driven society.

After reading *Media Today*, students should be

- savvy about the influences that guide media organizations,
- up-to-date on political issues relating to the media,
- sensitive to the ethical dimensions of media activities, and
- knowledgeable about scholarship regarding media effects.

Comprehensive Media Industry Coverage

What distinguishes mass communication from other forms of communication is the industrialized—or mass production—process that is involved in creating and circulating the material. It is this industrial process that generates the potential for reaching millions (and even billions) of diverse anonymous people at roughly the same time. *Media Today* uses this production-based approach to scrutinize the media in order to show students how the industrial nature of the process is central to the definition of mass communication.

Media Today also introduces the media as an interconnected system of industries—not as industries totally separate from one another. Of course, an introductory text cannot begin with a sophisticated exploration of boundary blurring. Students have to first understand the nature of the mass communication process. They must become aware that taking a mass communication perspective on the world means learning to see the interconnected system of media products that surrounds them every day in new ways.

Contemporary Student-Friendly Examples

As much as possible, the textbook incorporates stories and events that are happening *now*. In the text, readers will find a wide variety of pop culture examples taken from across different industries—from music to TV to video games.

How to Use This Book

Unlike other texts for the introductory course, *Media Today* takes a media systems approach out of the conviction that the best way to engage students is to reveal the forces that guide the creation, distribution, and exhibition of news, information, entertainment, education, and advertising within media systems. Once students begin to understand the ways these systems operate, they will be able to interact with the media around them in new ways.

Many features have been built into the text not only to help students learn about the inner workings of key industries in mass communication, but also to help them engage with this media, deepening their understanding of their own roles as both consumers and producers of media.

Chapter Opening Pedagogy

Chapter Objectives

Students are provided with the key learning objectives for the chapter at the very beginning so that they know what is ahead of them.

Vignettes

Relevant and current stories about events or trends in the world of mass communication connect students with what they will read in the chapter and how the information applies to the world in which they live.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1 Discuss what mass media convergence means and why it is important

2 Explain the differences between interpersonal communication and mass communication

3 Explain why an unorthodox definition of mass communication makes the term especially relevant in today's media environment

4 Explain the meaning and importance of culture's relationship with the mass media

5 Analyze the ways in which the mass media affect our everyday lives

6 Explain what the term "media literacy" means

7 List the key principles involved in becoming media-literate

"Whoever controls the media controls the culture."

ALLEN GINSBERG, POET

"Information is the oxygen of the modern age."

RONALD REAGAN, U.S. PRESIDENT

The Great "Television Everywhere" Rumble

During the year 2012, grown men and women fought in U.S. government offices over two words: "television everywhere." In one corner was Dish Network, a major satellite-television provider. On the other side was the huge entertainment company Time Warner together with Dish's major competitors, companies that own large cable systems.

The fight had been brewing since 2009, when Dish wanted to market its Slingbox service. Slingbox is a device that allows a traveler in a Seattle hotel room to watch a baseball game that is showing only locally in his hometown of Boston. Dish was offering a customized version with recording capability. The company believed the offering gave it an advantage over its satellite and cable competitors, and it wanted to use the "television everywhere" label to signal that advantage. So it asked the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to call "television everywhere" a Dish trademark. A

Quotes for Consideration

Compelling quotes from media figures draw attention to key ideas and spark discussion.

Timelines

New timelines in all the industry chapters help students visually organize the relevant historical information that has shaped that particular industry. Students can go to the book's companion website to explore the historical events and figures in more depth using our interactive timeline feature, which links to further resources such as newspaper clippings, photos, video clips, and more.

Figure 14.1 Timeline of the Video Games Industry
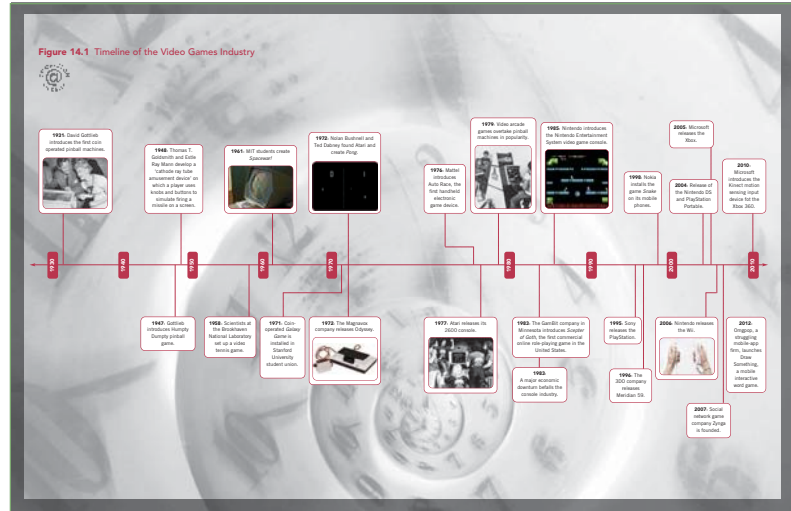
MEDIA TODAY & CULTURE BANNING OF HOLLYWOOD FILMS AROUND THE WORLD

As part of its distribution strategies, Hollywood creates movies that potentially have a global appeal. These blockbusters, as they often are called, deal with the fantasies of traveling throughout space or surviving alternate universes, such as the storylines seen in science fiction. They also show the high adventures of chases, mysteries, or quests. To tell these tales, the films rely on visual spectacles, incorporating action sequences, special effects, and brief dialogue. As a result, these films are critiqued for their lack of plot and character development.

Although these Hollywood films sometimes do gain immense profits through global distribution, not all films are received the same way in all countries. Some countries require a re-edit before the film can be shown in the country's theaters, whereas other countries ban them altogether. Reasons for both actions vary from country to country, and they often depend on cultural values, political climates, and other factors.

China, for example, issues guidelines through the State Administration of Radio Film and Television in China. One decree discourages more fantastical elements, including time travel, myths, reincarnation, and even negative thinking[1] and thus has discouraged such films as *Looper*, which involves an assassin killing targets sent back in time, and even *A Christmas Carol*. China also banned two-dimensional versions of James Cameron's *Avatar* to reduce its competition against locally produced works, even though the film went on to earn more than $182 million there.[2]

Other films are banned for their portrayals of local cultures. A more recent installment of *Rambo* was set in Myanmar (also often called Burma), and the film portrayed the Burmese soldiers as sadistic enemies.[3] Vietnam also bans films for their representations of the Vietnamese people, such as *Platoon* and *We Were Soldiers*. Nigeria banned *District 9* for its portrayal of Nigerians as gangsters who sleep with aliens and otherwise exploit them.[4]

Graphic and violent content also can be a reason for a film ban. Vietnam banned both *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and *The Hunger Games*.[5] Germany banned public screenings of *Saw 3D* for its violation of a law about violent acts.[6] New Zealand banned *Hostel: Part II*.[7] Other reasons for films being banned in various countries include representations of sexuality and religion.

Updated Media Today & Culture Boxes

New Media Today & Culture boxes provide stories about current trends in media around the world and help students appreciate the media's global impact. Discussion questions encourage students to think about how different cultural perceptions or experiences may inform the way media are experienced around the world.

New Media Literacy Questions

Throughout the chapters, students will find media literacy questions that ask them to reflect on what it means to be a consumer of mass media and how that impacts their lives.

is known for extreme violence, which is portrayed in the show. The program came under heavy criticism after airing episodes in which extreme violence was enacted on the matriarch of the gang (Gemma): one scenario in which she was gang-raped by members of a rival gang and another in which she was severely beaten by her husband of many years.

violence by the police or military), are socially strong.

Moreover, Gerbner argues, the overall message of TV violence is that we live in a scary, mean world. He and his colleagues found support for this view through a two-pronged research design. First, they conducted a content analysis of many hours of television entertainment programming, using a careful definition of violence and noting who is violent to whom and under what conditions. Next, they conducted a telephone survey of a random sample of the U.S. adult population and asked the people questions about how violent the world is and how fearful they are. They found that heavy viewers of television are more fearful of the world than light viewers. Over time, these viewers also engage in more self-protective behavior and show more mistrust of others than do light viewers.

THINKING ABOUT MEDIA LITERACY

When you think of the word "romance," what kind of scene comes to your mind? Do patterns of media messages "cultivate"—that is, reinforce and extend—your mental picture of romance? If so, which ones and why?

Gerbner maintains that although this phenomenon affects the individual, it also has larger social implications. The message of fear helps those who are in power because it makes heavy viewers (a substantial portion of the population) more likely to agree to support police and military forces that protect them from that scary world. Not incidentally, those police and military forces also protect those in power and help them maintain control over unruly or rebellious groups in society.

Gerbner's cultivation research and the critical approaches of political economists

Key Terms

Key terms and their definitions have been placed where students need them most—next to their usage in the text. Students can practice their mastery of these terms by using the flash card feature on the companion website.

EDITORIALS

Opinions regarding hard news are usually reserved for editorials. Unlike hard news and investigative reports, an **editorial** is a subgenre of news that expresses an individual's or an organization's point of view. Some editorials are written in the name of (and express the point of view of) the person who wrote the piece, whereas others are written in the name of the entire news organization—for example, the newspaper that printed the piece or the television station that aired it.

News organizations may also allow their reporters and knowledgeable people who do not work for their firm to present editorial comments. **Columnists** are individuals who are paid to write editorials on a regular basis—usually weekly, monthly, or daily. Editorials by the most famous columnists, such as Dave Barry, Peggy Noonan, and Anna Quindlen, are carried by many news outlets across the United States and even around the world. On the web, columnists may show up on journalistic websites (such as CNN.com or Slate) or on **blogs,** online sites written in the style of journal entries, often in reverse chronological order. A well-known example is the *Huffington Post* group of political opinion blogs. They include regular columns by Arianna Huffington, talk show host Tavis Smiley, and Fox program host Greta Van Susteren, as well as opinion pieces from a wide spectrum of celebrities and non-celebrities from different fields.

editorial
subgenre of news that concentrates on an individual's or an organization's point of view

columnists
individuals who are paid to write editorials on a regular basis—usually weekly, monthly, or daily

blogs
journalistic websites or opinion sites in which writings are in the style of journal entries, often in reverse chronological order

SOFT NEWS

Whereas news workers generally consider hard news reporting a place for objective, accurate, and balanced reporting with little (if any) editorial commentary, they consider another news category, **soft news**, to be an area in which the reporter's opinions and biases can show through. As you may be able to tell by its name, soft news (also known as the human interest story) is the kind of story that news workers feel may not have the critical importance of hard news but nevertheless would appeal to a substantial number of people in the audience. Cooking spots, articles on the best ways to shovel snow without injuring your back, video clips highlighting local students in community plays or recitals—these are topics that news workers consider soft rather than hard news.

soft news
the kind of news story that news workers feel may not have the critical importance of hard news but nevertheless would appeal to a substantial number of people in the audience

INFORMATION

One way to understand the difference between news and information—a difficult distinction to draw for some—is to say that **information** is the raw material that journalists use when they create news stories. On the most basic level, a piece of information

information
the raw material that journalists use when they create news stories
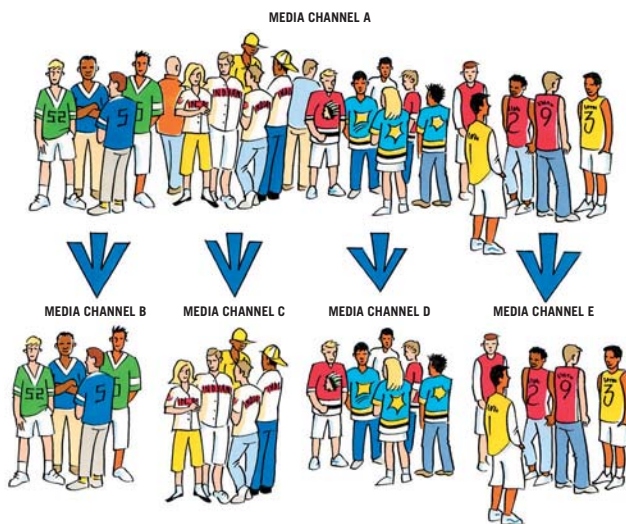
New Infographics

Newly rendered art is vibrant, instructive, and provides students with a good study tool for understanding key concepts in the text.

Figure 1.1
The arrival of the diverse array of media channels has had a fragmenting effect on audiences—as audience members move to watch, read, or listen to a new channel, fewer people use any single channel.

End-of-Chapter Materials

Media Ethics Case Study

Students are given ethical issues to explore and report on based on a debate or topic that was covered earlier in the chapter.

Case Study
TEENS AS A CONSTRUCTED AUDIENCE

The idea One way to get a feel for the idea that audiences are constructed is to see how advertisers actually construct audiences. In this case study you will go through recent advertising trade magazines to see how marketing and media executives talk about an important audience—teens. You will also explore what their construction of teens means for the ways they try to reach teens and persuade them to buy products.

The method To conduct this study, you need to know how to use a periodical database in your school's library. The most popular databases are Factiva and LexisNexis. Knowing how to use these sorts of databases will help you learn a lot about the state of media today. Reading magazines for ad practitioners may help you get a summer—or permanent—job in a media firm.

1. Ask someone who knows how to use the database to show you how to do a full-text search of the weekly trade magazine *Advertising Age* for the past six months. Tell that person that you would like to investigate how *Advertising Age* used the term "teen" or "teenager" during that time.
2. You may find that *Advertising Age* used the term a lot during that period. Ask your professor what proportion of the articles you should read. If there are a hundred articles or more, the class might divide into groups of two or three people in each group. That way each group can share findings on different articles and summarize them.
3. For each article, note the title and date and then answer the following questions on a sheet of paper:
   a. On what topic does it mention teenagers?
   b. How does it describe teenagers? How and to what extent does it divide teens by gender, class, spending power, physical characteristics, personalities, or other categories?
   c. Does the article make comparisons between teenagers and other groups in society? If so, how?
   d. What does the article say about teenagers' value to advertisers, uses of different media, and uses of different products?
   e. What, if anything, does the article say about how media firms create media to attract teens?
   f. What, if anything, does the article say about how media firms and advertisers are creating advertisements to attract teens? With what messages and images do they think they can persuade them?
4. Once you and your group have taken notes on all the articles, make an outline of a report that discusses what you learned about how teenagers are constructed by advertisers, why, and with what consequences for commercial messages and for media.

collaborative activity	information	setting
columnists	informational ads	shelf space
cooperative advertising	initial public offering (IPO)	soft news
creative personnel	investigative reports	soft-sell ads
demographic indicators	investment banks	stock offerings
demographics	journalists	subgenres
distribution	lifestyle categories	surveys
dramedy	loan	syndicate
editorial	mass media production firm	talent guild
education	media practitioners	track record
entertainment	objectivity	trade incentives
exhibition	on-staff worker	typical characters
focus group	patterns of action	venture capitalists
format	powerful distributor	vertical integration
formula	product placement	

Questions for Discussion and Critical Thinking

1. After reading this chapter, what reasons can you find for why media industries spend so much time trying to learn more about their audiences? What advantages does that practice offer the industries?
2. Are there any advantages for audiences in all this research?
3. What do you think of the ideas of "objectivity" in print and on camera? Do you think those principles are enough? Can you think of any news examples from either medium that seem objective by these standards?
4. How are freelancers an important part of media industries?

Review Questions

End-of-chapter review questions give students the opportunity to recall topics discussed in the chapter and to test their conceptual understanding of these topics.

New to This Edition

- **Reduced page length without reduced comprehensiveness.** Because we know student and instructor schedules are jam-packed, edits have been made to reduce the amount of detail in some areas of the text in order to allow for more space for current trends in mass communication.
- A new chapter dedicated entirely to **video games**.
- **Public relations and advertising** chapters were condensed and are now discussed as part of the chapter (chapter 4).
- Consideration of the Internet and convergence that begins in chapter 1 and flows throughout the entire book, better reflecting today's media environment.
- Enhanced discussions about and coverage of social media integrated throughout the book as it relates to all industries and the media business as a whole.

Companion Website

A freshly updated website provides students and instructors with all the tools they will need to learn and teach their mass communication course: **http://www. routledge.com/cw/turow.**

For Students

The student website features content-rich assets to help students expand their knowledge, study for exams, and more. Features include the following:

- *Practice quizzes for each chapter*: help students test their knowledge and prepare for exams.
- *Interactive key-term flash cards*: provide students with a fun way to review important terms and definitions.
- *Interactive timeline*: brings the timelines from the chapters to life and allows students to learn more about the important people and events that shaped the media business.
- *Chapter Recaps*: summarize the key points and themes of each chapter.
- *Media Today internship and career guide*: offers students information and job listings to help them get started in a career in media.
- *Links to further resources*: direct students to key media websites for further study and the latest news on media industries.

For Instructors

The password-protected instructor website provides completely updated instructor support materials in the form of the following:

- *Complete, online, and downloadable instructor's manual revised for this update*: updated by Chenjerai Kumanyika of Pennsylvania State University, this manual summarizes the key learning objectives of each chapter and provides instructors with discussion starters to help build a dialogue in the classroom.
- *Correlation guide*: for instructors who were using the fourth edition of the text, this is a guide to how content has been changed or moved so that instructors can better organize their courses.
- *Extensive expanded test bank*: provides multiple-choice, true–false, and fill-in-the-blank questions as well as new short-answer questions for exams for each chapter.
- *Fully revised PowerPoint presentations*: offer lecture outlines for each chapter, along with a set of slides for every figure in the text.
- *New sample syllabi*: help instructors plan their courses using the new edition.
- *Textboxes* from previous edition of *Media Today* for instructors who would like to continue to incorporate them into their classes.
- *Links to all videos from the Interactive Timelines,* plus additional video recommendations.

Acknowledgments

A book such as this is impossible to create alone, and so there are several people to thank. My wife Judy has with every edition been supportive with her encouragement and smart advice. At the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, a number of graduate students helped with research and editorial work. Special thanks go to Nora Draper, Bo Mai, and Katherine Wong for their work on this edition. Sharon Black, the great Annenberg librarian, has always been ready to help with the best references available.

At Routledge, I am indebted to my editor Erica Wetter, whose enthusiasm and suggestions for this major revision were an important incentive. Rebecca Pearce, the development manager, has been both a vigilant taskmaster and a dedicated, creative organizer of the project. Heather McIntosh of Boston College offered smart editing advice as I wrote the chapters, in addition to authoring the "Media Today & Culture" boxes. Additional thanks go to textbook marketing manager Ellie Pike, development editor Alf Symons, copy editor Stephanie Ernst, and proofreader Kim Hendrix.

I would also like to thank all the reviewers (including those who chose to remain anonymous and are not listed here) whose suggestions during the reviewing process helped me greatly as I prepared the fifth edition:

Mimi Adams, *Louisiana Tech University*
Amy Bonebright, *Liberty University*
Carolyn Byerly, *Howard University*
David Edwards, *South Central College–Fairbault*
Tony Gault, *University of Denver*
Meredith Guthrie, *University of Pittsburgh*
Roger Heinrich, *Middle Tennessee State University*
Nina Huntemann, *Suffolk University*
Shandra R. Huntt, *Howard University*
Joonseong Lee, *California State University–San Marcos*
Chuck Lubbers, *University of South Dakota*
Nicole Maurantonio, *University of Richmond*
Heather McIntosh, *Boston College*
Connie Hicks McMahon, *Barry University*
Nora Paul, *University of Minnesota*
Whitney Pisani, *Collin County Community College*
Jack Powers, *Ithaca College*
Sharaf Rehman, *University of Texas–Brownsville*
Meghan Sanders, *Louisiana State University*
Ann Savage, *Butler University*
Tammy Trujillo, *Mount St. Antonio College*
Therese Villenueve, *Citrus College*
Scott Weiss, *Montana State University–Billings*

To the Student

I hope that you will find *Media Today* fun to read, helpful for understanding the media-saturated world around you, and (if you're so inclined) useful for thinking about a future career in mass media. More likely than not, you've grown up with all or at least most of the media we cover in this book. Your family has probably had newspapers, books, magazines, CDs, radios, and a television set in your home from the time you were born. It's likely, too, that you have also had a computer and the Internet in your home from the time you were small. In one sense, then, you're already an "expert" at mass media: you've seen a lot of it, you know what you like, and you know what you don't like. At the same time, there's probably a lot about the content mass media present, the industries behind them, and their roles in society that you haven't considered yet.

The purpose of *Media Today* is to introduce you to these ideas, with the expectation that they will help you think about the media you think you already know in entirely new ways. To get the most out of this text, use all the bells and whistles that come with it. The chapter objectives, the marginal glossary, the timelines, the art and photo selections, and the boxed features all have been created with an eye toward making the text itself as clear and relevant as possible. The companion website **(http://www. routledge.com/cw/turow)** will also be of enormous value for learning more about book topics, studying for exams, learning about careers in mass media, quizzing yourself, and more. Get to know all these learning aids, and let us know what you think of them.

Best wishes,
Joe Turow

MEDIA TODAY

1 Understanding Mass Media, Convergence, and the Importance of Media Literacy

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1   Discuss what mass media convergence means and why it is important

2   Explain the differences between interpersonal communication and mass communication

3   Explain why an unorthodox definition of mass communication makes the term especially relevant in today's media environment

4   Explain the meaning and importance of culture's relationship with the mass media

5   Analyze the ways in which the mass media affect our everyday lives

6   Explain what the term "media literacy" means

7   List the key principles involved in becoming media-literate

> "Whoever controls the media controls the culture."

ALLEN GINSBERG, POET

> "Information is the oxygen of the modern age."

RONALD REAGAN, U.S. PRESIDENT

The Great "Television Everywhere" Rumble

During the year 2012, grown men and women fought in U.S. government offices over two words: "television everywhere." In one corner was Dish Network, a major satellite-television provider. On the other side was the huge entertainment company Time Warner together with Dish's major competitors, companies that own large cable systems.

The fight had been brewing since 2009, when Dish wanted to market its Slingbox service. Slingbox is a device that allows a traveler in a Seattle hotel room to watch a baseball game that is showing only locally in his hometown of Boston. Dish was offering a customized version with recording capability. The company believed the offering gave it an advantage over its satellite and cable competitors, and it wanted to use the "television everywhere" label to signal that advantage. So it asked the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to call "television everywhere" a Dish trademark. A

trademark is a distinctive sign or phrase that businesses connect to a product or service to tag it with a special name and personality. If the U.S. government agency gave its permission, only Dish could use the phrase "television everywhere" to market and advertise its products.

Time Warner and the cable systems cried foul. Time Warner showed the trademark office that it and its cable-industry partners had used "television everywhere" to describe its HBO Go service before Dish filed to claim the term for itself. HBO Go allows people who subscribe to Time Warner's HBO pay-cable channel to view many of the channel's programs on computers and tablets such as the iPad that connect to the internet. True enough—but why the rumble? Why did all those companies try to shoot down Dish Network's attempt to own the words "television everywhere"?

To begin understanding why large companies would spend the time and energy to face off against one another over two words, you first have to realize that the fight is actually over one word—"everywhere." Time Warner and its allies realize they are moving into a world that is like no other in history. It is a world of not just television everywhere but also newspapers everywhere, books everywhere, magazines everywhere, movies everywhere, and more. To companies involved in these media businesses, the changes are exciting and scary at the same time. Many are jockeying to shape the new world and define themselves in it. The firms fighting Dish don't want it to grab a title that symbolizes this new era.

The Dish battle represents just one small skirmish in what will certainly be a decades-long transformation of the media system in the United States. The changes will surely affect you as a citizen, as a consumer, and as a worker—especially if you choose to work in one of the media industries. It's important, then, to ask and answer some basic questions:

- Precisely what is happening that is so transformative?
- Why are those things happening?
- How will it impact me as a citizen, a consumer, and a worker?
- What can I do to help myself, my family, and my society as the changes unfold?

Media Today is about helping you answer these questions. Over the next several chapters we will take an excursion through industries and businesses that relate directly to our everyday lives. We will look at how the media industries got here, what they're doing, and where they seem to be going. We'll explore what is changing about them and what is not. And we'll develop a way of thinking about them that will help you analyze them long after you've read this book.

This chapter begins the journey with exploration of an everywhere-related idea that guides much of the work of executives at Dish Network and Time Warner and throughout the media system: media convergence.

Introducing Media Convergence

Let's take the words one at a time. *Media* are platforms or vehicles that industries have developed for the purpose of creating and sending messages. Think of telephones, television, movies, music recordings, magazines, and newspapers. *Convergence* occurs when two or more things come together. *Media convergence* takes place when products typically linked to one medium show up on many media. When you can get a Red Sox baseball game broadcast in Boston to show up on your laptop computer and or your Android phone in Seattle, that is convergence. When you can transfer an Adele music album from your laptop to your iPod, iPhone, iPad, or Xbox, that is convergence.

Until recently, media convergence was not a common activity. To the contrary, people associated every medium with a particular kind of product. The telephone meant conversations via a special device between two people not located in the same place. Television meant audiovisual programs on a special set with a glass front. Movies meant audiovisual programs made for projection onto a big screen. Newspapers meant printed stories on large sheets of paper circulated daily or weekly. Music recordings were plastic discs or tape cartridges made to be played on phonographs or tape decks.

It's not as if the media were sealed off from one another. Musical recordings showed up on radio all the time. Movie plots sometimes came from books, and theatrical films did show up on television. But these activities involved negotiation by companies from different industries. (The industries that guided particular media and their products were worlds unto themselves.) Moreover, actually moving the products from one medium to another could take a lot of work. One important reason was that the technology—that is, the machinery and materials—of the media industries were very different from one another. Certainly, most members of the audience didn't have the equipment to carry out such transfers. And it was hard to imagine a print magazine such as *Cosmopolitan* sharing a screen with the ABC television program *Modern Family*.

"Wait!" you might be yelling at this page (or more likely saying to yourself). "That's still the case. When I hold *Cosmo* or *Sports Illustrated* in my hand, I can't put it into my TV set." You're right. But as the lawsuit about "television everywhere" indicates, executives in industries that have historically thought of their content as specific to particular media are now trying to get their products—the content you read, watch, and hear—in front of their intended audiences wherever they are. If you're a loyal reader of *Cosmo* or *SI* or most any major magazine, you probably know it has a website. It probably has an application ("app") for people who have an iPad or another tablet. And it likely has a way to allow access for those who want to read it on their smartphones.

But we're not talking here only of the merger of magazines and the web. Media convergence is taking place with so many media that it is quickly becoming the way media executives do their work, no matter what their industry is. If you're into college sports, you probably have heard about March Madness, the basketball tournament that pits college teams against one another toward finding a National College Athletic Association (NCAA) champion. Until just a few years ago, the only place you could see the matchups outside the stadiums was on your television set, with the CBS television network and Turner's TNT cable network showing various games. But convergence has changed everything. Take what went on during March 2012 as an example. In addition to the television presentations, the over-the-air TV network CBS, the magazine *Sports Illustrated* (owned by the same company that owns Turner), and the NCAA itself allowed free viewing of select games on their websites. For true sports fanatics there was even more. If they paid $3.99, CBS and Turner would allow them full access to all 2012 NCAA Division 1 Men's Basketball Championship games. Moreover, they could watch the games on their computers, on their mobile phones, and on tablets: truly "television everywhere."

Why is media convergence happening now? Why do companies carry it out? When do they do it? How do they do it? When are companies—and workers and industries—winners because of convergence, and when are they losers? How are individuals and society at large affected by the new developments in media today? How might they be affected in the future? Are there government policies or other organized initiatives that try to ensure the best possible outcomes for all involved with the media system?

You probably realize that these questions cannot be answered in two or three paragraphs. Answering them is a project for this book as a whole. The goal is to help you answer these questions not just right now but also in the future, as you move through your personal and professional life. To start, it's useful to step back and ask what the media we will be exploring have in common. The answer is that they are all involved in the process of mass communication. Media convergence is, in fact, a central aspect of mass communication today. This chapter will unpack what that means. We will explore and define communication, media, and culture, and we will consider how the relationships among them affect us and the world in which we live. We will also

consider why the term "mass communication" remains relevant in the 21st century, contrary to what some writers say.

Introducing Mass Communication

To understand why some writers suggest that the idea of mass communication doesn't connect to what's going on in today's world, we have to look at how the term has traditionally been used. Over the past hundred years, people who wrote about mass communication tended to relate it to the size of the audience. That made a lot of sense at one point. From the mid-19th century onward, new technologies such as high-speed newspaper presses, radio, movies, and television provided access to the huge "masses" of people. Not only were those audiences very large; they also were dispersed geographically, were quite diverse (i.e., made up of different types of people), and typically were anonymous to the companies that created the material. The essential reason that newspapers, radio, television, and other such media were considered different from other means of communication had to do with the size and composition of the audience.

This perspective on mass communication worked well until recently, when the key aspects of the traditional definition of mass communication as reaching huge, diverse groups no longer fit. The reason is that the arrival of many channels—including the growing number of radio and TV stations, the rise of video recorders, the multiplication of cable networks, and the rise of the web—led to **audience fragmentation** (see Figure 1.1). That is, as people watched or read these new channels, there were fewer

audience fragmentation
the process of dividing audience members into segments based on background and lifestyle in order to send them messages targeted to their specific characteristics

MEDIA CHANNEL A

MEDIA CHANNEL B **MEDIA CHANNEL C** **MEDIA CHANNEL D** **MEDIA CHANNEL E**
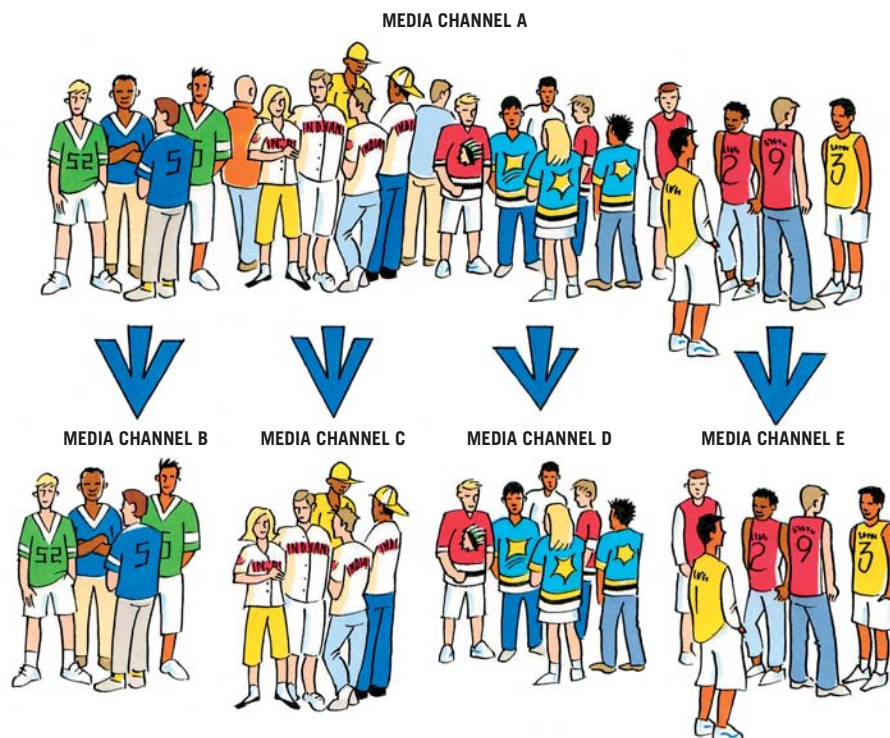
Figure 1.1
The arrival of the diverse array of media channels has had a fragmenting effect on audiences—as audience members move to watch, read, or listen to a new channel, fewer people use any single channel.

people using any one of them. Because these new media channels do not necessarily individually reach large numbers of people—the "masses"—some writers have suggested that we can abandon the term mass communication.

However, the view in this book is that mass communication is still a critically important part of society. As we will see, what really separates mass communication from other forms of communication is not the size of the audience—it can be large or small. Rather, what makes mass communication special is the way the content of the communication message is created.

mass production process
the industrial process that creates the potential for reaching millions, even billions, of diverse, anonymous people at around the same time

THINKING ABOUT MEDIA LITERACY

Throughout the chapters you will see media literacy questions such as this one. These questions will ask you to engage that chapter's ideas and concepts critically, often asking you to connect them with your own experiences.

Mass communication is integral to how our society functions. Can you think of some ways that society would change if the different forms of mass communication disappeared? How might those changes be beneficial? Detrimental?

industrial nature
the aspect of industrialized—or mass production—processes involved in creating the message material that distinguishes mass communication from other forms of communication. This industrial process creates the potential for reaching billions of diverse, anonymous people simultaneously.

communication
refers to people interacting in ways that at least one of the parties involved understands as messages

messages
collections of symbols (words, signs) that appear purposely organized (meaningful) to those sending or receiving them

interpersonal communication
a form of communication that involves two or three individuals signaling to each other using their voices, facial and hand gestures, and other signs (even clothes) to convey meaning

mediated interpersonal communication
a specialized type of interpersonal communication that is assisted by a device, such as a pen or pencil, computer, or phone

medium
part of a technical system that helps in the transmission, distribution, or reception of messages

Mass communication is carried out by organizations working together in industries to produce and circulate a wide range of content—from entertainment to news to educational materials. It is this industrial, **mass production process** that creates the potential for reaching millions, even billions, of diverse, anonymous people at around the same time. And it is the **industrial nature** of the process—for example, the various companies that work together within the television or internet industries—that makes mass communication different from other forms of communication even when the audience is relatively small and even one-to-one. To help you understand how mass communication relates to other forms of communication, let's take a closer look.

The Elements of Communication

Communication is a basic feature of human life. In general, the word "**communication**" refers to people interacting in ways that at least one of the parties involved understands as **messages**—collections of symbols (words, signs) that appear purposefully organized (meaningful) to those sending or receiving them.

When you signal your needs or thoughts to others, the signals you send are both verbal and nonverbal. When Jane shouts excitedly to her friend Jack and leaps with joy into his arms after she wins a tennis match, that's a form of communication. It's likely that Jack, whose arms she almost breaks, realizes that she wants to tell him something. People who study communication would typically call the interaction just described **interpersonal communication**, a form that involves two or three individuals signaling to each other using their voices, facial and hand gestures, and other signs (even clothes) to convey meaning. When you talk to your parents about your coursework, discuss a recent movie over dinner with friends, or converse with your professor during her office hours, you are participating in the interpersonal form of communication

Mediated interpersonal communication can be described as interpersonal communication that is assisted by a **medium**—part of a technical system that helps in the transmission, distribution, or reception of messages. The medium helps communication take place when senders and receivers are not face-to-face. The internet is an example of a medium, as are radio, CD, television, and DVD. (Note that the term "medium"

A common sight today, interpersonal communication through both direct and mediated means. Mediated interpersonal communication methods such as Skyping allow people to keep in touch in a more visual way than was ever possible in the past.

is singular; it refers to one technological vehicle for communication. The plural is media.) When you write a thank-you note to your grandmother, send an e-mail to your graduate teaching assistant, or call a friend on the phone, you are participating in the mediated form of interpersonal communication.

Although interpersonal, mediated interpersonal, and mass communication have their differences, they have a central similarity: they involve messages. Eight major elements are involved in every interaction that involves messages: the **source**, **encoding**, **transmitter**, **channel**, **receiver**, **decoding**, **feedback**, and **noise**.

Take a look at Figure 1.2. It illustrates how these eight elements appear in the process of interpersonal communication in an imaginary conversation between TV personality Jon Stewart and a student named Sally. Now take a look at Table 1.1. It lays out the ways these elements are similar or different across interpersonal communication, mediated interpersonal communication, and mass communication. The table also presents examples that highlight these similarities and differences.

The main difference between mass communication and the two forms of interpersonal communication relates to the nature of the source and the receiver. In the interpersonal modes the source and the receiver are individual people—Jon Stewart schmoozing face-to-face with Sally in the library, for example, or Jon gossiping over the phone with another student named Geraldo. In the case of mass communication, the source is an organization—for example, the Comedy Central television channel (where you can view Jon Stewart's show) or the *USA Today* newspaper. When you read a particular newspaper article or watch a particular program, you may think that sources are individual people, not organizations. After all, the name of the author is on the article, and you can see the actors who work on the show. Why, for example, shouldn't we consider Jon Stewart the "source" on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*?

The answer is that he is only the most visible of an entire firm of people that prepared the mass media material. If Jon were in the same room as you telling you
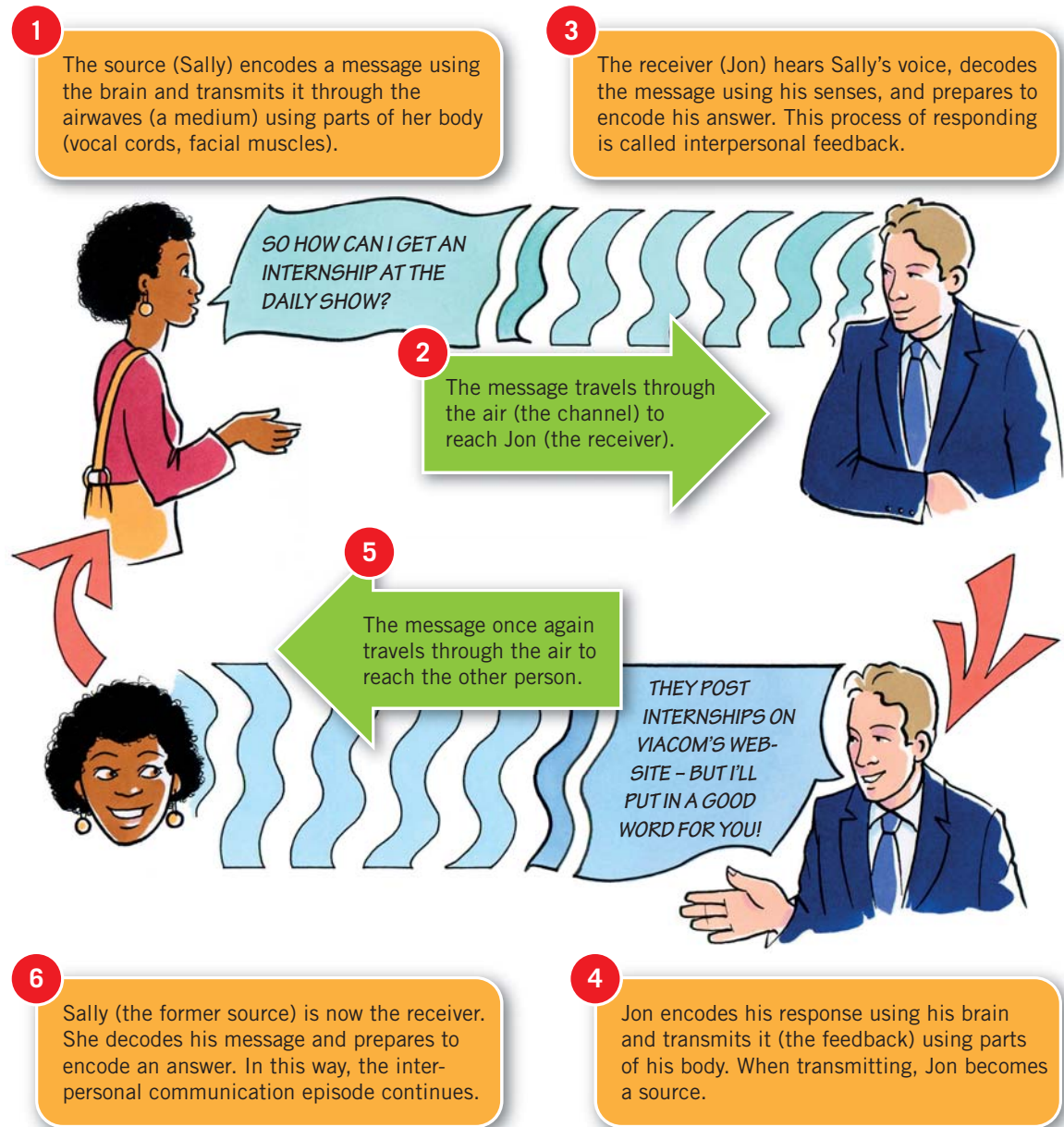
1 The source (Sally) encodes a message using the brain and transmits it through the airwaves (a medium) using parts of her body (vocal cords, facial muscles).

3 The receiver (Jon) hears Sally's voice, decodes the message using his senses, and prepares to encode his answer. This process of responding is called interpersonal feedback.

SO HOW CAN I GET AN INTERNSHIP AT THE DAILY SHOW?

2 The message travels through the air (the channel) to reach Jon (the receiver).

5 The message once again travels through the air to reach the other person.

THEY POST INTERNSHIPS ON VIACOM'S WEB-SITE – BUT I'LL PUT IN A GOOD WORD FOR YOU!

6 Sally (the former source) is now the receiver. She decodes his message and prepares to encode an answer. In this way, the inter-personal communication episode continues.

4 Jon encodes his response using his brain and transmits it (the feedback) using parts of his body. When transmitting, Jon becomes a source.

Figure 1.2

In this model of interpersonal communication, information moves from a starting point at the source (Sally), who transmits the message over the channel, to the receiver (Jon) for decoding.

about what he just read in the newspaper, he—as an individual—would be a source. But when you watch him do his monologue on *The Daily Show*, Jon is no longer the source. That's because behind him is an organization that is creating the news satire for him to present. Sure, Jon is reading the messages, and so it may seem that he should be called "the source." But the writing team of *The Daily Show* helped him write the script, produced and edited the videos he introduces, and prepared his set for the broadcast. Moreover, the photos and clips he satirizes sometimes come from news firms, such as ABC News. So Jon is really just the most visible representative of an organizational source. And the Comedy Central organization is interacting with other organizations (ABC News, companies that provide it with supplies for

Table 1.1 Comparing Elements Across Different Forms of Communication

Element of communication	General meaning of the element	How do we understand that element in interpersonal communication?	How do we understand that element in mediated interpersonal communication?	How do we understand that element in mass communication?
Source	The originator of the message	It is an individual.	It is an individual.	It is one or more organizations.
Encoding	When the source organizes and prepares to send the message	It takes place in an individual's brain.	It takes place in an individual's brain.	It takes place in an organization using technology.
Transmitter	Performs the physical activity of sending the message	It is the person's vocal cords.	It is the person's vocal cords and technology (e.g., a phone).	It is a person's vocal cords and technology (e.g., a phone).
Channel	Pathway through which the transmitter sends the message	It is the air.	It is the air and technology (e.g., wires).	It is the air and technology (e.g., wires).
Receiver	The person or organization that gets the message	It can be one person or a few individuals in the same location.	It can be one or many individuals in one or more locations.	It is typically many people in different locations.
Decoding	The process by which the receiver makes sense of the message	It takes place in an individual's brain.	It take place first via technology and then in an individual's brain.	It take place first via technology and then in an individual's brain.
Feedback	A response to the message	It is immediate and directly to the source.	It is immediate and directly to the source.	It may be immediate or delayed and is generally indirect: other parts of the organization receive it and tell the source.
Noise	A sound in the communication situation that interferes with the delivery of the message	It can be environmental (e.g., noise in a park), mechanical (the person coughs so much the message gets lost), or semantic (the speaker doesn't know the language well).	It can be environmental, mechanical (e.g., park noise or static on the line), or semantic.	It can be environmental, mechanical, and semantic, sometimes caused by organizations.

the programs, advertisers that support the program, and many more) in order to get *The Daily Show* on the air.

Mass Communication Defined

And so we come at last to the definition of mass communication that we have been building: mass communication is the industrialized production and multiple distribution of messages through technological devices. The industrial nature of the process is central to this definition of mass communication. Figure 1.3 illustrates this point by using *The Daily Show* as an example.

As the definition suggests, mass communication is carried out by mass media industries. Think, for example, of the movie industry, in which many different companies—from production studios to film providers to catering firms—work

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