

The book provides us with much information about the economic, social, and environmental effects of the microelectronics industries, but little about the computer's sensory and psychic effects and its power as an interactive medium. (The section on videogames, for example, is weak.)

Occasionally, minor glaring errors occur, an example being the identification of 16K of random access memory as 16,000 bits (p. 192) instead of bytes (128,000 bits). Humanistically, one might quarrel with the author's assertion that "information has become a clearly defined commodity," (p. 204), and for substantiation and for interest a bibliography would have been useful. Generally, however, the book provides an excellent, lucid introduction to the present and imminent effects of computerization on civilization.

Reviewed by: R.D. Berg

World Broadcasting in the Age of the Satellite  
W.J. Howell, Jr.  
Ablex-Publishing Corporation, 1986  
Norwood, New Jersey

World Broadcasting in the Age of the Satellite presents a comparative study of radio and television broadcasting throughout the world. It contains nine chapters divided into three major parts: I. Frames of Reference in World Broadcasting, II. Four Worlds of National Broadcasting, and III. **Previewing and Reviewing World Broadcasting.**

In the introductory chapter, Howell explains the major terms and concepts found in the book and the basis on which comparisons are

made. A number of different taxonomies are introduced here, some of which seem irrelevant to the "Four Worlds" taxonomy which the author ultimately employs as his comparative framework. The Four Worlds are (1) the English-speaking west plus Western Europe and Japan, (2) the Communist system, (3) the Third or Developing World, and (4) stateless cultures existing within juridical states. Chapter 2 reviews the activities of both intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the realm of broadcasting.

In Part II, there are five comparative chapters which examine in case study format the broadcasting systems of countries such as the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, France, Italy, West Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan, the U.S.S.R., and other communist systems, plus developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. These systems are compared generally in terms of ownership, financing and programming.

While the scope of the comparison is vast, there is no question that the detail of description in the case studies of the western systems is far greater than that found in treatment of either communist or developmental systems. For example, Canadian broadcasting merits eleven pages, while Cuba is treated in three paragraphs. This criticism made, however, the crucial differences in these varying systems do become apparent. For example, there is an excellent discussion of the different meanings attached to the concept "freedom of the press."

Part III both traces, and tries to predict, the impact of new technology, (satellite broadcasting, cable and VCR), on world broadcasting. It is clear that the book is far from closed on this question, and that technological developments can either help to "create" or "solve" problems, depending largely on one's view of the world.

Overall, the Howell book is well-balanced ideologically, pointing out the major problems of each major type of communication system within the context of that system. When comparative judgments are made, these are fair and follow logically from the evidence presented. All types of media systems are compared on similar criteria, and a major strength of the book is found in its world wide comparative scope. Tables are numerous and helpful in summarizing material. The main weakness is a lack of detail and background of communications systems outside the western world.

Reviewed by: Walter C. Soderlund  
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Current Research in Film:  
Audiences, Economics and Law  
Bruce A. Austin (ed.)  
Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1985  
Norwood, New Jersey

Since the late 1970s, Film Studies as a discipline within North America has come to display many of the signs of paradigmatic coherence. Polemics within the field are increasingly rooted in shared sets of terms and premises, and the theoretical developments produced over the last decade in influential journals such as Screen have trickled down to undergraduate text-books, and laterally into such hitherto isolated enterprises as the writing of corporate histories. For a discipline which suffered for decades from an eclecticism and discontinuity with few parallels elsewhere, this new coherence has brought a sense of community to the field, and an elusive academic respectability. At the same time, a heightened awareness of the political stakes within theoretical debates has meant that a high level of vigilance exists concerning the acceptability of certain concerns and procedures within academic writing on film.