

Com 101

Contextual Influences

Influences on Content

-When thinking about media content, what sort of things influence what we see, hear, etc.

-Five levels:

1. Individual Level

-Characteristics (age, gender, race, etc.)

-Personal and professional background (education)

-Personal Attitudes (ex. Political ideology)

-Professional Roles

-Journalist- cover a story accurately and with little bias as possible

-Owner- goal is to make money for company and stockholders

2. Routines

-All organizations need routines to function

-Allows individuals in the organization to complete tasks

-Goal is to make profit

-Process is that

-Media must obtain and process 'raw product'

-Obtain product from suppliers

-Deliver it to consumers

-Routines help answer the following:

-What is acceptable to the audience?

-What can the audience understand?

-Often results in reliance on things the audience understands/feels comfortable with

-This has changed as fragmentation has increased

-What was once unacceptable on the networks is acceptable on cable

-What are other media outlets doing?

-Another routine is to follow the lead of other media

-Copy hit shows

3. Organizational influences

-Media organizations today largely concerned with profits

-Proliferation of mega-media

-1984: 50 media organizations

-1992: 23

-1997: 10

-Today: 5

-Big media

-Media diversity and democracy

-Bagdikian predictions

-Consequences of mergers

-Vertical integration: controlling all aspects of a media project from production, distribution, promotion, etc.

-Synergy: Combining the strengths of different companies

- Convergence: different media begin to perform similar tasks
- General Electric/NBC/Comcast
 - Sales of \$157 billion in 2009
 - Started as RCA
 - 1926 created NBC
 - Blue and Red
 - 1985 GE bought RCA and NBC
 - 2004 bought Vivendi Universal
- Disney
 - Sales of \$36.1 billion in 2009
 - Started in 1928 w/ Mickey Mouse cartoons
 - 1937- first animated movie
 - 1950s- live action and documentaries
 - International- approximately 25% of earnings
 - Ideal example of synergy
 - Cross promotion
 - Media convergence
 - ABC programing on HULU (Disney part owner)
- News Corporation
 - Sales of \$30.4 billion in 2009
 - Vertical integration
 - Owners both the mean of production and distribution
- Time Warner
 - Sales of \$25.8 billion in 2009
 - Started with Time Magazine in 1922
 - Synergy
- Viacom & CBS
 - Sales of \$13 billion in 2009
 - Twists of history
 - Viacom- film production unit in CBS
 - 1971 forced to spin off by federal regulations
 - 1999 Viacom bought CBS
 - 2005 Viacom & CBS technically split
- Other Players
 - Clear Channel- radio
 - Gannett- USA Today
 - New media giants- Google, Apple, Yahoo
- Influence
 - Characteristics of organization
 - Hands off vs. hands on
 - In plain sight
 - Disagreement between USA executives and producers results in producers leaving show
 - Show changes as a result
- Size of Organization

- Large organizations will have different goals and ways of making money compared to smaller companies
- Media Monopoly
 - Fragmented media audience
 - No longer one massive media audience
 - Hundreds of options
 - Growth of cable
 - Growth of magazines
- Fragmentation and size
 - More demographic-based genre/content programming
 - ESPN
 - Cooking Channel
 - History Channel
 - Oxygen
 - Spike TV
 - Results of mega-media programming
 - Hundreds of Options
- 4. External Pressures
 - Source pressure- Big organizations with power can garner greater coverage
 - You vs. WSU
 - Corporations can get their voice heard
 - Interest group pressure
 - Focus on the Family and American Family Association – Promote ‘family values’
 - Campaigns to voice opinion
 - Advertisers- Threaten to pull money from program
 - Fewer stories about car accidents, negative effects of tobacco
 - More than 75% of editors said advertisers have threatened to pull money (Australia)
 - 90% have felt pressure in US
 - Other organizations
 - NFL and ESPN
- 5. Ideology
 - Ideology is a formal and articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs.... That can be abstracted and ‘worldviews’
 - US ideology
 - Economic- capitalism, private ownership, free markets
 - Political- liberal democracy, people have equal worth
 - Ideology in media maintains boundaries
 - Identify content we don’t want to see as a society